



**North Dorset
Local Plan Review**
Issues and Options
Consultation

November 2017

North Dorset District Council

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Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DCC	Dorset County Council
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
Ha	Hectares
IOWA	Important Open or Wooded Area
LGS	Local Green Space
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPP1	Local Plan Part 1 (adopted January 2016)
LPR	Local Plan Review (this document)
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NDDC	North Dorset District Council
NDDWLP	North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (adopted 2003)
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OAN	Objectively Assessed Need
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	(national) Planning Practice Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
WDEGS	Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement

Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 6
- 2. Context 13
- 3. Housing..... 19
- 4. Employment 22
- 5. Spatial Strategy..... 26
- 6. Blandford (Forum and St Mary)..... 30
- 7. Gillingham..... 40
- 8. Shaftesbury..... 50
- 9. Sturminster Newton 60
- 10. Stalbridge..... 69
- 11. The Villages..... 76
- 12. Affordable Housing..... 79
- 13. Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing..... 83
- 14. Ensuring the Vitality and Viability of Town Centres..... 87
- 15. Important Open or Wooded Areas 92
- 16. The A350 Corridor 95

1. Introduction

Current Adopted Local Plan

- 1.1 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) was adopted by North Dorset District Council (NDDC) on 15 January 2016. It, along with policies retained from the 2003 North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan,¹ and any 'made' neighbourhood plans, form the development plan for North Dorset. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.²
- 1.2 LPP1 covers the period from 2011 to 2031. It contains a wide range of planning policies including strategic policies and detailed development management policies. In respect of meeting housing needs, the plan details that at least 5,700 net additional homes will be provided in North Dorset between 2011 and 2031. This is an average annual rate of 285 dwellings a year. In terms of employment needs, LPP1 sets out that there is a need for approximately 30 hectares of employment land for the period from 2011 to 2031.

The Need for and Scope of the Review

- 1.3 The Inspector who examined LPP1 recommended a number of modifications to the plan to enable it to be adopted. This included a modification relating to the need for an early review of the plan to take account of new evidence including housing need evidence detailed in the Eastern Dorset 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The modification refers to the fact that the early review of the plan 'will ensure that the Plan remains appropriate for the District and confirm that the plan continues to encourage and secure the development and infrastructure that the District requires'. If the Council does not review the plan it will become increasingly out of date and the Council will have less control in deciding where development is located within the District.
- 1.4 In terms of the scope of the review, the Inspector detailed that it should be all encompassing in respect of its content. It should therefore consider those matters which are covered in LPP1 and those matters which were due to be considered as part of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 2. It is

¹ Policies retained from the 2003 North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan are listed in Appendix A of the Local Plan Part 1 (2016).

² Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

envisaged that once the review is complete the new Local Plan will replace LPP1 and all the retained policies from NDDWLP.

- 1.5 Given the fact that LPP1 has only recently been adopted by NDDC it is likely that a number of its policies will largely be carried forward without any changes. However, as a result of the publication of the Eastern Dorset 2015 SHMA, and more recently, the publication by the Government of 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals' (DCLG, September 2017), a review of housing numbers and location of future housing is needed. In light of the publication of the 'Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy 2016' (October 2016),³ the review will also consider the potential need for additional employment land in excess of that which is proposed in LPP1.
- 1.6 In terms of the period of time covered by the Local Plan Review (LPR), the content of the existing evidence base supports the view that the LPR should cover the years 2013 to 2033. Other local planning authorities in the Eastern Dorset Housing Market Area are progressing their Local Plan Reviews on this basis. However, the plan period covered by the LPR is a matter that will be assessed as the review progresses and it is possible that the plan period will be extended to 2036 given that paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines that Local Plans should be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, but preferably with a 15-year time horizon.
- 1.7 It is also significant in the context of the Local Plan Review that NDDC has recently declared that due to circumstances beyond its control it is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.⁴ This has implications with regards to the weight that can be attributed to certain policies within LPP1 when making decisions on planning applications. A lack of a five-year housing land supply also makes it more difficult for the Council to resist planning applications for new housing development that aren't in accordance with LPP1. In order to address this matter the Council is engaging with a range of parties, including developers, as part of its Accelerating Home Building Programme to help progress large sites within the District that have planning permission or have been allocated for residential development.⁵ The Local Plan Review provides the Council

³ Produced in association with the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole local authorities and the Dorset Local Economic Partnership.

⁴ Press release 31/7/2017, <https://news.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/2017/07/31/development-pressure-north-dorset/>

⁵ The Accelerating Home Building Programme is a joint programme involving North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. It aims to accelerate the delivery of housing development on sites that have been granted planning permission or are allocated for development through a range of different interventions. This

with an opportunity to review existing housing allocations that aren't delivering and allocate additional sites that could contribute towards boosting housing supply in North Dorset.

Duty to Cooperate

- 1.8 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) sets out requirements for local planning authorities regarding the duty to cooperate in relation to the planning of sustainable development. This includes the requirement for local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis.
- 1.9 Paragraphs 178 to 181 of the NPPF also set out the need to strategically plan across local boundaries. Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states 'public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities set out in paragraph 156.⁶ The Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities.'
- 1.10 In addition, the Government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals' considers the matter of the duty to cooperate. As a result of Government concerns regarding the lack of cooperation between local planning authorities on strategic planning matters it is proposing that in the future all local planning authorities should produce a statement of common ground. The Government's consultation proposals detail that the statement of common ground should include, amongst other things, the process for agreeing the distribution of housing need (including unmet need) across an area, and agreed distributions (as agreed through the plan-making process). The statement should also include any additional strategic cross-boundary matters to be addressed by the statement which are not already addressed.
- 1.11 NDDC shares its boundary with East Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council, South Somerset District Council and Wiltshire Council. Furthermore, the Council is part of the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) which consists of the administrative areas of East Dorset, Purbeck, Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole. The Council has and will continue to engage

involves working with a range of parties/organisations including landowners/developers and their agents.

⁶ Paragraph 156 of the NPPF details, amongst other things, that the homes and jobs needed in an area is a strategic priority.

with these neighbouring local planning authorities as it progresses with the Local Plan Review.

- 1.12 The Inspector who examined the LPP1 raised a particular matter relating to the duty to cooperate and recommended a modification to the plan, regarding the duty, to make it sound. The modification relates to long-term growth needs (residential or employment) at Shaftesbury. NDDC has and continues to engage with Wiltshire Council regarding this matter including in respect of Shaftesbury's long term growth needs being met within Wiltshire. Further detail regarding this issue is set out in Chapter 8. Shaftesbury.

What this document covers

- 1.13 This document sets out the key planning issues that currently affect North Dorset, and which are likely to affect the area in the future, and considers options to tackle these issues. This Issues and Options Consultation Document gives people, town and parish councils, community groups, businesses, landowners, developers and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on key issues relating to the review including potential future growth options.

- 1.14 The main issues covered by this document are as follows:
- The amount of residential and employment development required over the plan period
 - The Spatial Strategy - Where should future development be located within the District?
 - Where should future development be located in Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton?
 - Should future development be located at Stalbridge and where?
 - The villages
 - Affordable Housing
 - Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing
 - Ensuring Town Centre Vitality and Viability
 - Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWAs)
 - A350 Corridor

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 1.15 National planning policy is currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national planning guidance is outlined in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF details the Government's planning policies for England and how these are

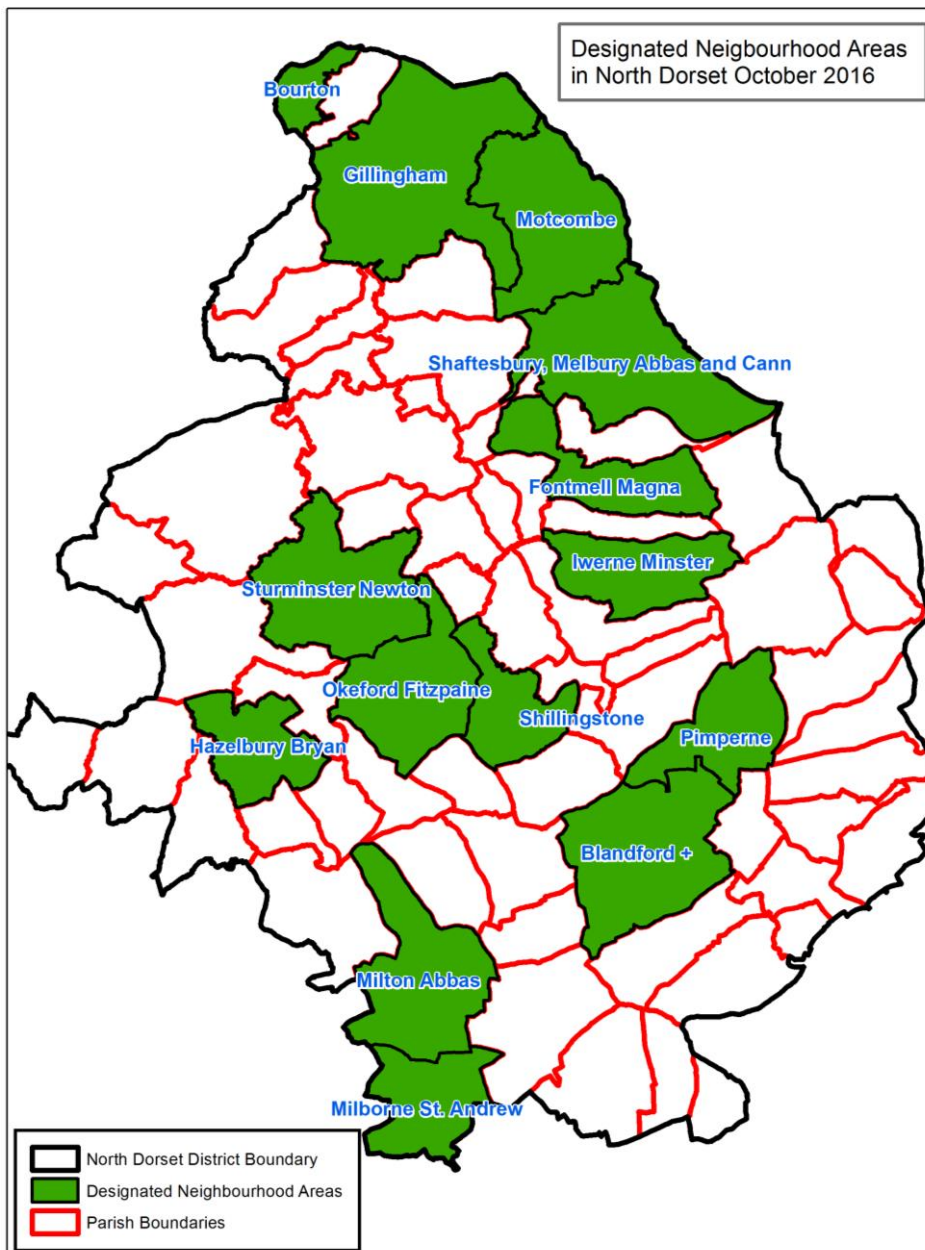
expected to be applied. Furthermore, it provides a framework within which local planning authorities can produce their own distinctive local plans. This Issues and Options Consultation Document has been drawn up taking into account national planning policy and guidance. Therefore, whilst it contains references to the NPPF and the Government's PPG it aims not to repeat large sections of national planning policy or guidance.

- 1.16 In addition to existing national policy and guidance, the consultation document has been drafted in the context of the content of the Government's Housing White Paper, 'Fixing our broken housing market', and the Government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals'. The White Paper, which was published along with supporting documents on 7 February 2017, sets out the Government's proposals to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England. Both the White Paper and the consultation proposals cover a range of planning policy matters and indicate the Government's 'direction of travel' in respect of a large number of these. Where it is of particular relevance to the options being considered in this document specific reference is made to the content of the Housing White Paper and/or the consultation proposals.
- 1.17 The Government has stated that it intends to publish a revised version of the NPPF during the spring of 2018. The revised NPPF will set out in national planning policy a number of planning policy initiatives which are detailed in the Housing White Paper.

Neighbourhood Planning in North Dorset

- 1.18 As of October 2017 there are fourteen designated neighbourhood areas in North Dorset. They are: Gillingham, Bourton, Shaftesbury (including Melbury Abbas and Cann), Shillingstone, Blandford + (including Blandford Forum, Bryanston and Blandford St Mary), Sturminster Newton, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Iwerne Minster, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan. They are identified on the map below.
- 1.19 The Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2031 was 'made' (adopted) by NDDC on the 21 February 2017 and so forms part of the development plan for North Dorset. Neighbourhood plans for the other thirteen areas are being progressed by neighbourhood plan groups in conjunction with the respective town and parish councils. The examiners' reports relating to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015–2031 and the Bourton Neighbourhood Plans have recently been published.
- 1.20 In producing this Issues and Options Consultation Document, NDDC has taken into account the neighbourhood plan that has been 'made' and those which are being progressed. The Local Plan Review is not seeking to undermine those neighbourhood plans. Rather it is hoped that

through a collaborative approach NDDC and town and parish councils with neighbourhood plan groups can work together to ensure that there are no conformity issues between the Local Plan Review and neighbourhood plans.



Map 1.1: Designated Neighbourhood Areas in North Dorset

Process and Consultation Going Forward

- 1.21 Both during and following the consultation on this Issues and Options Document, NDDC will continue to progress work on a wide range of evidence based documents that will be required to support the publication of a Preferred Options Document. The Preferred Options Document, which will identify sites for development, will be worked up

following full consideration of the responses that are received to the consultation on this document. In light of the consultation responses to the Preferred Options Document the Council will work up its submission version of the plan for consultation. Once the submission version of the plan has been consulted upon it will be submitted for examination. The examination will be conducted by a Government appointed Inspector.

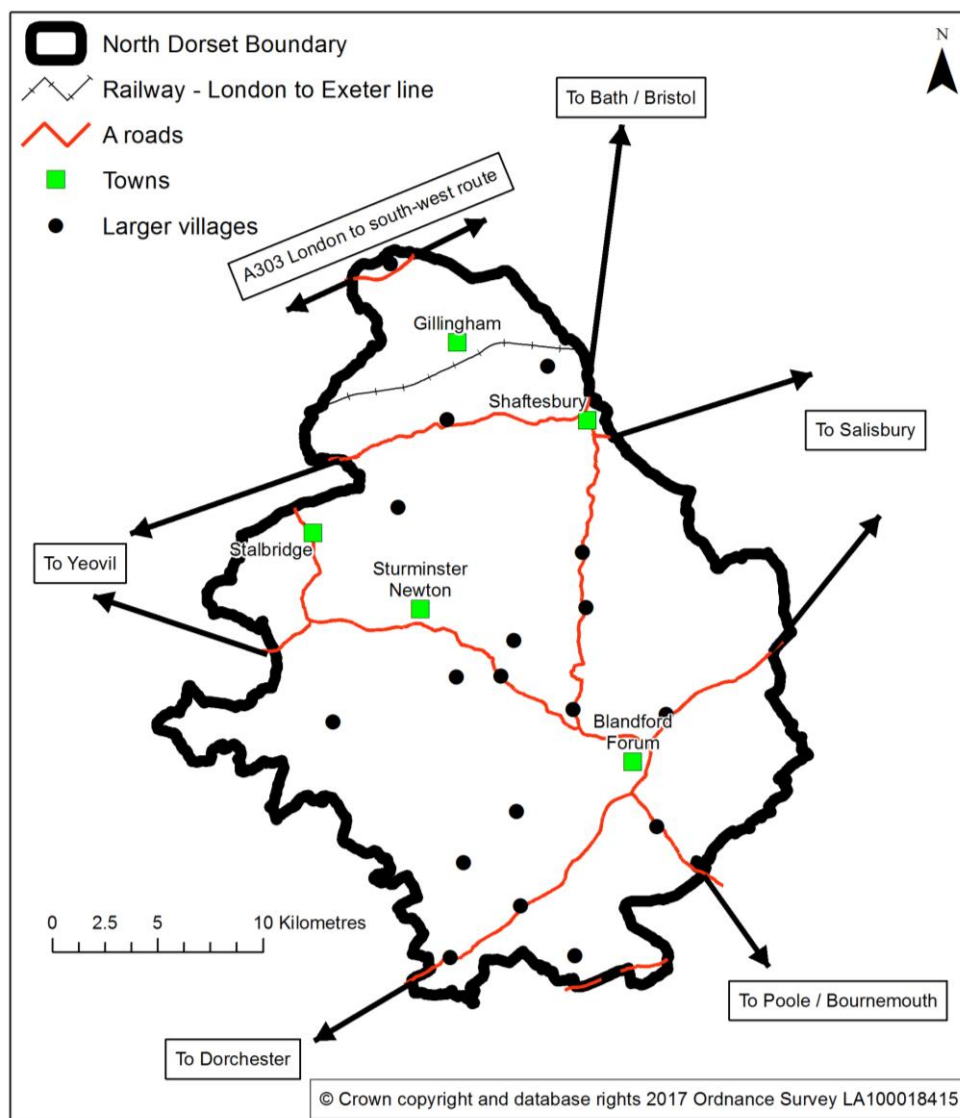
- 1.22 In producing the Local Plan Review, NDDC will follow best practice in terms of public engagement and consultation. NDDC's Statement of Community Involvement is being reviewed and the current aim is that it will be consulted upon next year. NDDC acknowledges that the current timetable for the Local Plan Review as set out in the Local Development Scheme needs to be revised. This will be revised in the near future.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.23 The objective of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to ensure that the Local Plan Review, wherever possible, achieves sustainable development. The SA process is iterative, in that the stages of the SA occur alongside the development of the review of the Local Plan, feeding into its development throughout the plan making process.
- 1.24 The first stage in the SA process is the preparation of a SA Scoping Report. This document identified the key environmental, social and economic issues for the Local Plan Review and establishes SA objectives for testing the Local Plan proposals as they emerge, with the aim of ensuring that these policies contribute towards achieving sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment, was subject to consultation from July to September 2016. The report was then amended taking into account the responses to the consultation and the final version was published in February 2017.
- 1.25 The following stage in the SA process is the SA of the Issues and Options. The SA identifies the reasonable options for addressing the planning issues considered in the Issues and Options Document for the Local Plan Review, highlights the potential environmental, social and economic impacts associated with each, and evaluates their overall performance in terms of sustainability. This helps to inform the decision as to which approach to take at this early stage in the Local Plan Review and influences the development of more sustainable policies in the longer term, helping to meet the overall objective of the SA process for the Local Plan Review of achieving sustainable development. The SA of the Issues and Options is being consulted upon alongside this Issues and Options Document.

2. Context

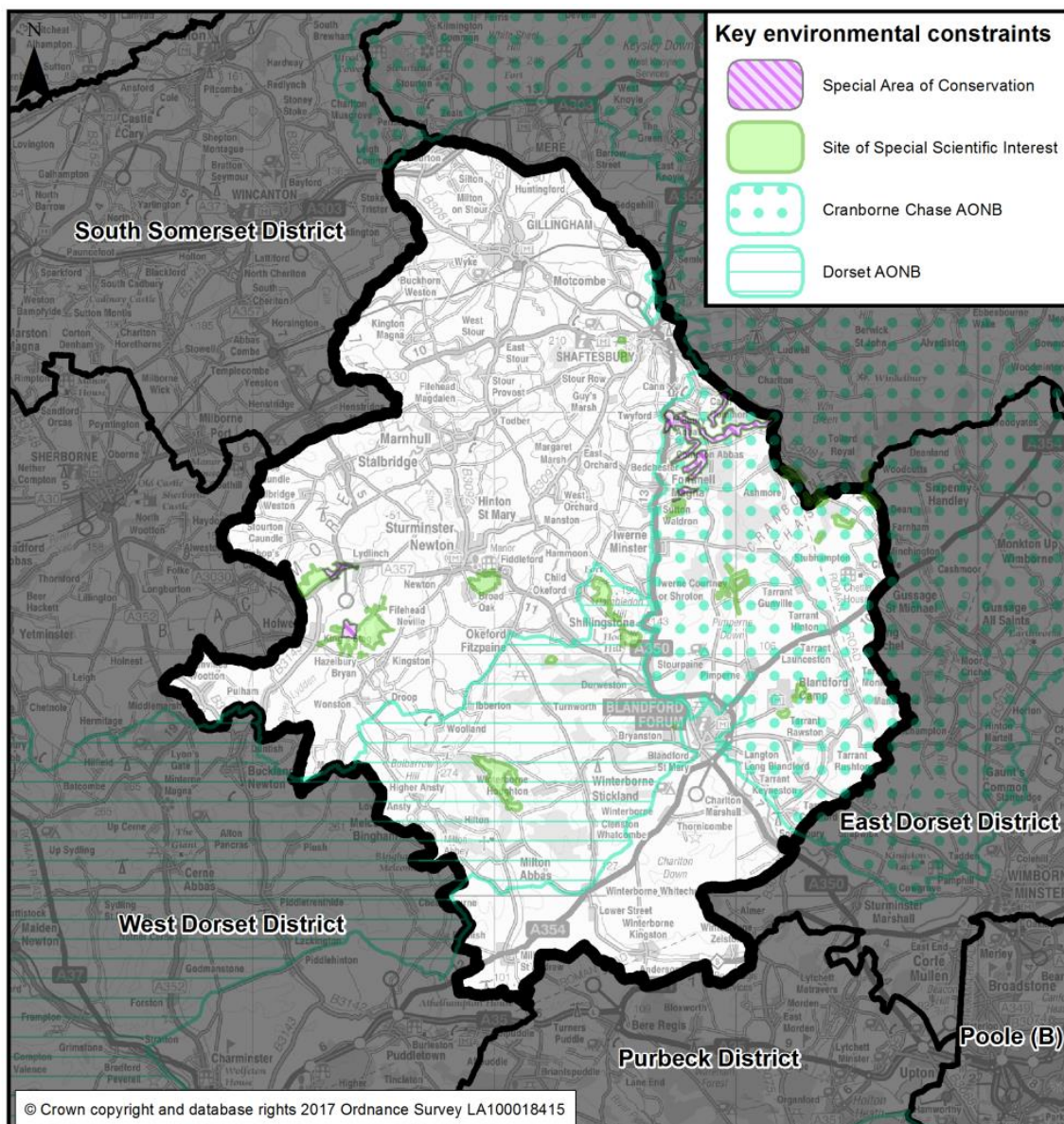
- 2.1 North Dorset is a rural district of some 61,000 hectares. It is the most northern district in Dorset. It neighbours the district authorities of East Dorset, West Dorset, Purbeck and South Somerset, and the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset.
- 2.2 North Dorset contains four main settlements: Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. In addition, Stalbridge and a large number of villages are located within the District. Residents of the villages largely rely on the four main towns and Stalbridge to access facilities and services. There are also links between the District and settlements outside including Poole, Bournemouth, Dorchester, Yeovil and Salisbury.



Map 2.1: Principal Settlements and Strategic Road/Rail links

Environmental Issues

- There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the District (Cranborne Chase AONB and Dorset AONB) covering almost 40% of the land area.
- North Dorset is home to a diverse range of wildlife habitats and species and has a large number of environmental designations. There are two designations, Fontmell and Melbury Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Rookmoor SAC, which are of European importance.

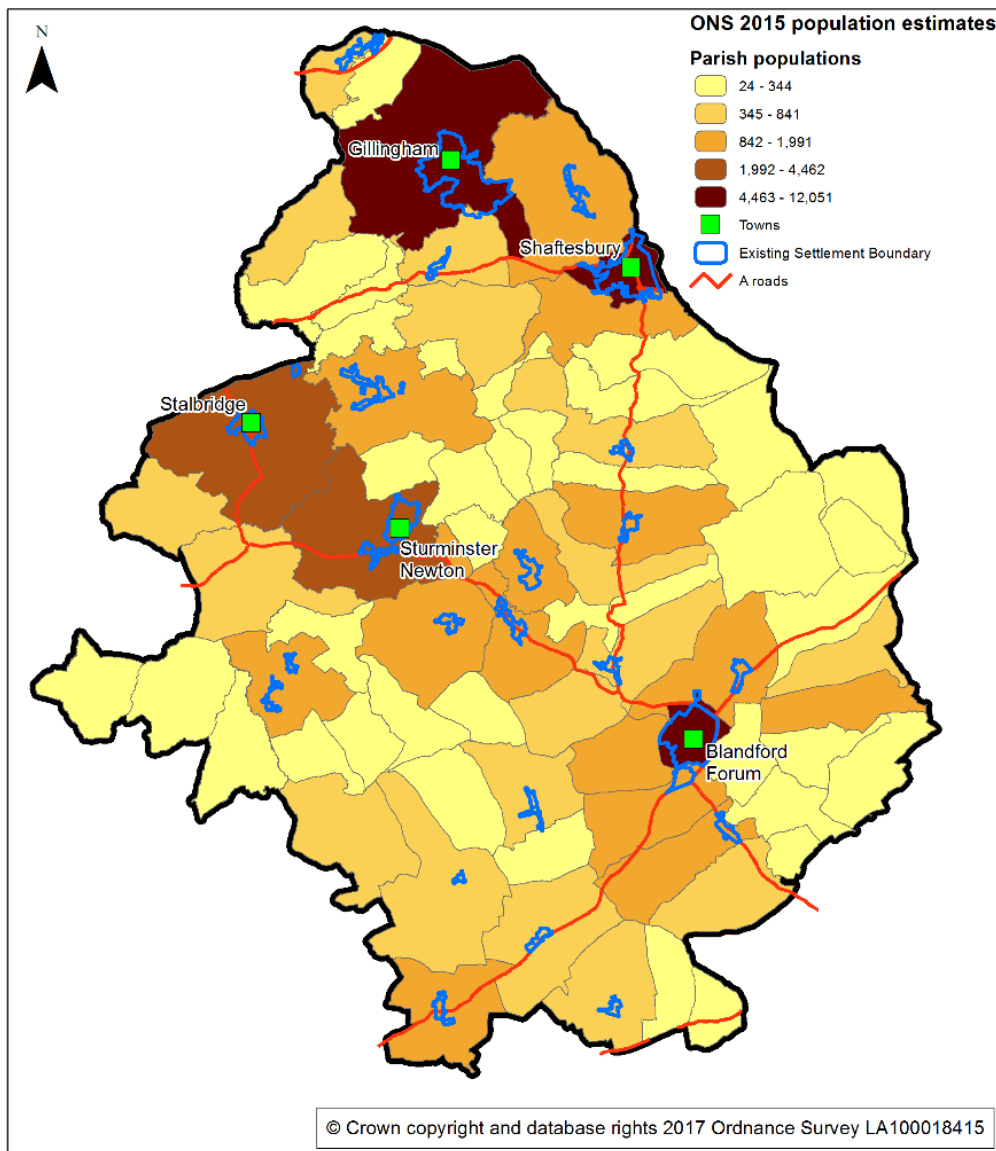


Map 2.2: Key Environmental Constraints

- The District has some important green infrastructure networks such as the North Dorset Trailway which offer opportunities to enhance the enjoyment of the natural environment and enable trips to be taken by non-motorised modes of transport.
- North Dorset District has a rich historic environment. Heritage assets in North Dorset include about 180 scheduled monuments, nearly 2,500 listed buildings, 48 conservation areas and 8 registered historic parks and gardens.
- Sizeable areas of land, including at or adjoining three of the main towns (Blandford, Sturminster Newton and Gillingham), are at risk of flooding. The frequency and severity of flooding is anticipated to increase with climate change.
- The majority of the agricultural land within the District is identified as good quality in the national Agricultural Land Classification dataset. Areas of land to the south of Shaftesbury and to the west of the A350, between Blandford and Shaftesbury, are of especially good quality.

Social Issues

- North Dorset's population is estimated to be 70,700 (2015 mid-year estimate). The District's population has increased by approximately 7% (5,000) over the last 10 years. ONS population projections suggest that the population of North Dorset will grow to 73,000 by 2021 and 79,100 by 2037.

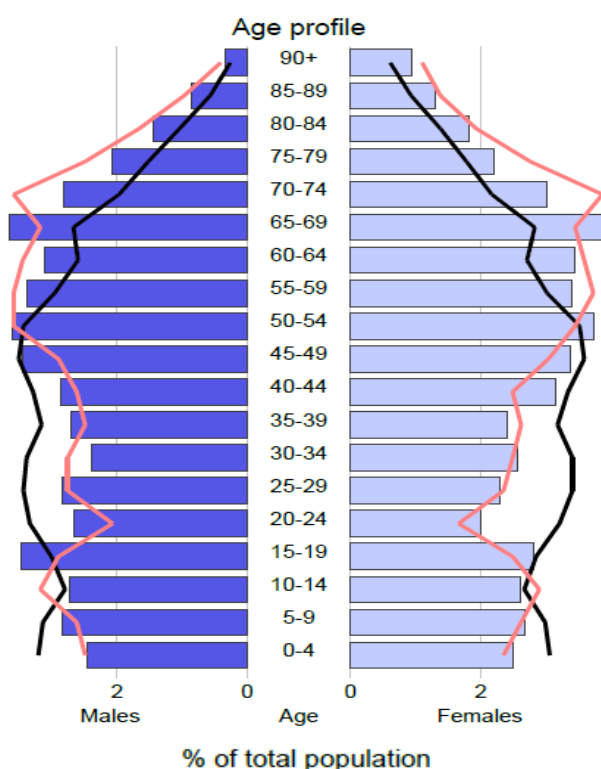


Map 2.3: Population Distribution across the District

- In terms of population density, the district has 1.16 people per hectare, which is lower than the average for Dorset and over three times lower than the average for England.
- The average house price in North Dorset was £254,249 in November 2016 (Land Registry). The affordability of housing for first time buyers is a key issue with the 2016 median ratio of house prices to incomes being approximately 9.5 in North Dorset.⁷ The ratio in North Dorset is significantly higher than the national average.

⁷ The most up-to-date median affordability ratio for North Dorset is based on the house price to earnings ratio published by ONS in March 2017.

- The Council’s housing register has approximately 1,050 people registered on it for North Dorset (September 2017).
- The District has a higher proportion of people aged 65+ than the national average (24% compared to 18%), although this proportion is not as high as in Dorset as a whole (28%).
- North Dorset has a lower proportion of young people (under 30 years old) than the national average, and the proportion of people aged 30–64 is roughly the same.
- The District has a higher dependency ratio (number of children aged under 16 and those of state pension age or above compared to the working population) than England as a whole (75.5% compared to 60.7%)
- Future projections indicate that there will be a significant increase in the proportion of residents in the over 65 age group.
- The life expectancy at birth of females and males in the District is 85.2 and 81.9 respectively. This is close to the life expectancy in Dorset and higher than the average life expectancy in England.



- North Dorset 2015 (Male)
- North Dorset 2015 (Female)
- England 2015
- North Dorset 2020 estimate

Economic Issues

- The output of businesses in North Dorset, as measured through Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population, has risen since 2010 but remains below the national average.
- The unemployment rate in North Dorset is low. The latest figures (March 2016) detail that only 0.6% of the working age population is claiming out-of-work benefits.
- Across Dorset, including North Dorset, the ageing population means that a high proportion of the labour force is nearing retirement age and there is likely to be a significant shortfall in labour supply by 2024 unless there is greater in-migration of working age people.
- Tourism in North Dorset supports 6% of employment and generates £76 million per annum. Tourists primarily come to enjoy the character of the District's historic settlements and its attractive countryside (wording based on paragraphs 6.33 and 6.34 of LPP1).
- The promotion of healthy lifestyles and activities offer significant economic opportunities in the District for those who live, work and visit North Dorset.
- The majority of businesses in Dorset, as is the case across the south-west of England, are small, employing between 0–4 people.
- North Dorset has a higher proportion of businesses within the agricultural sector than the national average, reflecting the rural character of the District.
- In terms of employees by sector, the largest sectors are wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles (19%), manufacturing (13%), education (13%) and human health and social work activities (13%).

3. Housing

- ***How many dwellings should be built over the plan period?***

Introduction

- 3.1 Establishing the amount of housing development required to meet future needs is an important part of the planning process. It helps to ensure that local authorities plan for the required levels of housing within their respective plan areas and therefore contribute towards the aims of sustainable development. Both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Government's Housing White Paper highlight the critical need to boost the supply of housing.

Current Policy Approach

- 3.2 Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) details that at least 5,700 net additional homes will be provided in North Dorset between 2011 and 2031 to deliver an average rate of about 285 dwellings a year. This housing requirement is based on the Bournemouth/Poole Housing Market Area 2011 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (published in 2012).
- 3.3 The latest monitoring data that is available for North Dorset identifies that by the end of March 2017 there had been 1,286 net dwelling completions since the start of the current plan period (1 April 2011). This figure is lower than LPP1 expects (285 x 6 years = 1,710). This shortfall partly explains why North Dorset District Council (NDDC) is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Reason for Change

Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015)

- 3.4 The NPPF currently outlines that when planning for housing, local planning authorities must work with neighbouring authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment which identifies the full objectively assessed need for both market and affordable housing in their housing market area. Towards the end of the examination of the LPP1, the Eastern Dorset 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published. As previously referred to, the publication of the Eastern Dorset SHMA was one of the main reasons that the Inspector who examined LPP1 committed the Council to an early review of the plan.

- 3.5 The SHMA considers the future need for housing in Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck during the period 2013 to 2033. This includes the number for both market and affordable housing, and size of dwellings required. However, the SHMA does not set policies regarding levels of housing provision and it does not automatically render existing plans or policies out of date.
- 3.6 The Eastern Dorset SHMA, which is based on the 2012 ONS household projections, details that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in North Dorset is 330 dwellings a year up to 2033. This is an increase on the current housing requirement of 285 dwellings a year as outlined in the LPP1. The figure of 330 dwellings a year comprises of the following components:

Base demographic	206 dwellings
Supporting economic growth – additional housing	+105 dwellings
Improving affordability – additional housing	+19 dwellings
Full Objectively Assessed Need	330 dwellings

- 3.7 In addition to the publication of the Eastern Dorset SHMA, the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy (WDEGS) was published earlier in 2017. The WDEGS is a joint economic growth strategy of North Dorset District, West Dorset District, Weymouth & Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth Partnership. The strategy covers the period from 2017 to 2033 and it outlines that by 2033 it will have supported and delivered, amongst other things, 20,000 new homes. Future housing development in North Dorset will contribute towards meeting this aim of the strategy.

Housing White Paper and Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals

- 3.8 The Housing White Paper (published February 2017) sets out the Government’s concerns regarding the current approach to assessing housing need. Furthermore, it details that the Government will consult on options for introducing a standardised approach for assessing housing requirements. Paragraph 1.14 of the White Paper states ‘We want councils to use this new standardised approach as they produce their plans and will incentivise them to do so.’
- 3.9 The Government published its ‘Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals’ on 14 September 2017. This document includes proposals relating to a wide range of planning issues including

the approach that local planning authorities should take to assessing housing need.

- 3.10 The consultation document proposes a standard methodology for assessing housing need for each local authority area. The methodology is based on projections of household growth with an adjustment to take account of market signals based on the median affordability ratio.⁸ On the basis of the standardised methodology that the Government is proposing, the housing need figure for North Dorset would be 366 dwellings a year. This is in excess of the current requirement (285 dwellings a year) outlined in LPP1 and the OAN figure (330 dwellings a year) in the Eastern Dorset SHMA.

Proposed Approach

- 3.11 As a result of the Government's commitment to introduce a standardised methodology for assessing housing need, NDDC considers that currently the most appropriate housing need figure on which to progress the Local Plan Review (LPR) is 366 dwellings a year.⁹ If, following the consultation on 'Planning for the right homes in the right place: consultation proposals', the Government does not introduce the proposed standard methodology into national policy, or it introduces the methodology in an amended form, the Council will review its approach to identifying the annual housing need for the period covered by the LPR. A key part of the LPR process will be to test whether it is possible to meet the housing need figure identified for North Dorset taking into account the numerous constraints, including environmental constraints, that exist across the plan area.

Q1. Do you consider that a housing need figure of 366 dwellings a year is an appropriate figure on which to plan for housing growth in North Dorset? If not, please set out what you consider to be an appropriate figure and provide reasons for this.

⁸ The most up-to-date projections are the 2014-based household projections published by ONS in July 2016.

The affordability ratio compares the median house prices (based on all houses sold on the open market in a given year in a local authority) to median earnings (based on full-time earnings for those working in that local authority area). The latest figures were published by ONS in March 2017.

⁹ It is anticipated that a standardised methodology will be set out in a revised version of the NPPF which the Government currently intends to publish in spring 2018.

4. Employment

- ***How much land should be developed for employment uses over the plan period?***

Introduction

- 4.1 Establishing the amount of employment development required to meet future needs is an important part of the planning process. Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the economic role of the planning system as ‘contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements including the provision of infrastructure’. The NPPF highlights that the economic role should not be undertaken in isolation but balances with the mutually dependent social and environmental roles in the pursuit of sustainable development.
- 4.2 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF outlines that to help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF details that in rural areas, such as North Dorset, planning policies should support economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

Current Policy Approach

- 4.3 The supporting text to Policy 11 (The Economy) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) considers the provision of employment land. It details that all the local authorities in Dorset worked together to assess the future needs for employment land in the area.¹⁰ Projections were updated to take account of the recession and an identified level of need based on 2.5% Gross Value Added (GVA) growth per annum across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.¹¹ The projections also built in additional flexibility allowances of 10% and 20%.
- 4.4 The projections showed a need for 30.5 hectares of employment land for the period 2011 to 2031, including a 20% flexibility allowance. The

¹⁰ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy, GVA Grimley (2008)

¹¹ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Study: Employment Land Projections 2012 Update, Dorset County Council (March 2012)

availability of employment land in North Dorset was also examined and in April 2011, approximately 50 hectares of employment land was identified as being available across the District, which was more than adequate to meet the overall need for employment land.

Reason for Change

4.5 In October 2016 an updated Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (Workspace Strategy) was published.¹² It covers the period from 2013 to 2033 and considers the most up-to-date position in terms of employment land supply and demand across Dorset. In a deviation from the previous workspace strategies it considers supply and demand in relation to Dorset as a whole, Eastern Dorset (which includes the administrative area covered by North Dorset District Council) and Western Dorset. With regards to the demand figures, the strategy considers four different scenarios (Trend, Planned Growth, Accelerated Growth and Step Change) and makes a 10% and 20% allowance for flexibility. The tables below set out the employment demand figures for Eastern Dorset, Western Dorset and Dorset as a whole from 2013 to 2033 based on the different scenarios.

Table 4.1: Trend Scenario (all figures in hectares)

Allowances	Eastern Dorset	Western Dorset	Dorset
Baseline	140.7ha	29.8ha	170.5ha
10% Flexibility	149.6ha	30.9ha	180.5ha
20% Flexibility	158.5ha	32ha	190.5ha

Table 4.2: Planned Growth Scenario

Allowances	Eastern Dorset	Western Dorset	Dorset
Baseline	172.7ha	49.7ha	222.4ha
10% Flexibility	184.8ha	52.8ha	237.6ha
20% Flexibility	196.9ha	55.9ha	252.8ha

¹² Workspace Strategy was produced in association with the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole local authorities and the Dorset Local Economic Partnership.

Table 4.3: Accelerated Growth Scenario

Allowances	Eastern Dorset	Western Dorset	Dorset
Baseline	183.7ha	50.2ha	233.9ha
10% Flexibility	196.9ha	53.3ha	250.2ha
20% Flexibility	210.1ha	56.4ha	266.6ha

Table 4.4: Step Change Scenario

Allowances	Eastern Dorset	Western Dorset	Dorset
Baseline	194.1ha	50.2ha	244.3ha
10% Flexibility	208.4ha	53.3ha	261.7ha
20% Flexibility	222.7ha	56.4ha	279.1ha

- 4.6 With regards to employment land supply the Workspace Strategy considers supply in respect of two scenarios. Scenario 1 is based on calculating figures taking into account current employment land supply identified by the Councils in Dorset and includes all Local Plan employment sites (including existing allocations) and other employment sites identified through employment land reviews that are available to the market.
- 4.7 Scenario 2 follows the same approach with the addition of further sites currently being considered through Local Plan Reviews which have the potential to be formally allocated and form part of the land supply over the study period to 2033. This scenario includes an additional 30 hectares of employment land in the Borough of Poole and approximately a further 27 hectares in Purbeck District which reflects option sites currently being considered through their respective Local Plan Reviews.

Table 4.5: Employment Land Supply

	Eastern Dorset	Western Dorset	Dorset
Scenario 1	276ha	64ha	340ha
Scenario 2	333ha	64ha	397ha

- 4.8 In addition to the publication of the Workspace Strategy, the Western Dorset Economic Growth Strategy (WDEGS) was published earlier this year. The WDEGS is the joint economic growth strategy of North Dorset District, West Dorset District, Weymouth & Portland Borough and Dorset County Councils – the Western Dorset Economic Growth Partnership. It covers the period from 2017 to 2033. It outlines that by 2033 the strategy will have supported and delivered, amongst other things, 70 hectares of employment land. Future employment development in North Dorset will contribute towards meeting this aim of the strategy.

Proposed Approach

- 4.9 Whilst the Workspace Strategy demonstrates that the amount of employment land that is available in Eastern Dorset, and across Dorset as a whole, exceeds the employment land demand requirements up to 2033, North Dorset District Council (NDDC) considers it important that the need for employment land in North Dorset continues to be met over the plan period. This is especially the case at the four main towns which are likely to remain to be the focus for growth in the future.
- 4.10 The latest published monitoring data that is available for North Dorset identifies that there is 34.11 hectares of employment land available in the District.¹³ This includes 14.89 hectares at Gillingham, 6.64 hectares at Shaftesbury and 5.33 hectares at Sturminster Newton. However, the 2016 Annual Monitoring Report states that there is only 5.1 hectares of employment land available at Blandford. More recent monitoring work suggests that this figure is now approximately 3.5 hectares. In addition, the 3.5 hectares that is available is made up of a combination of smaller parcels of land. On this basis, the Council is currently of the view that there is likely to be a need to allocate additional employment land at Blandford through the Local Plan Review.

Q2. Do you consider that additional employment land should be allocated for development at Blandford as part of the Local Plan Review?

Q3. Do you consider that there is a need to allocate additional employment land in any other part(s) of the District?

¹³ North Dorset Annual Monitoring Report 2016

5. Spatial Strategy

- ***Where should future development be located within the District?***

Introduction

- 5.1 Core national planning principles, as set out in paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), include that planning should ‘actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant developments in locations which are or can be made sustainable’. Furthermore, that planning should ‘take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it.’
- 5.2 National policy, as set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF, also states that ‘To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.’

Current Policy Approach

- 5.3 The current spatial strategy for the District is set out in Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1). It details that Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton are identified as the main towns in North Dorset and that they will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages are currently identified in LPP1 as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns.¹⁴ Outside the defined boundaries of these towns and villages, the remainder of the District is subject to countryside policies where development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to meet essential rural needs.
- 5.4 In terms of the approximate scale of housing development at the four main towns during the period 2011–2031, Policy 6 in LPP1 identifies the following:

¹⁴ The eighteen larger villages are: Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch.

Settlement	Number of dwellings
Blandford (Forum and St. Mary)	At least 1,200 homes
Gillingham	At least 2,200 homes
Shaftesbury	At least 1,140 homes
Sturminster Newton	At least 395 homes

5.5 Policy 11 (The Economy) identifies that the following key strategic employment sites will be developed out over the plan period:

- Land off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum
- Brickfields Business Park, Gillingham
- Land south of the A30, Shaftesbury
- North Dorset Business Park, Sturminster Newton

5.6 With regards to development in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages), Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) in LPP1 states that at least 825 dwellings will be provided during the period 2011–2031.

Reason for Change

5.7 As outlined in previous chapters, towards the end of the examination of LPP1, the Eastern Dorset 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published. The Eastern Dorset SHMA details that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in North Dorset is 330 dwellings a year up to 2033, which is an increase on the requirement of 285 dwellings a year as outlined in the LPP1.

5.8 Furthermore, the Government published the consultation document ‘Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals’ on 14 September 2017. This document includes a proposed standardised methodology to assess housing need. On the basis of this methodology, the housing need figure for North Dorset would be 366 dwellings a year. As a result of the Government’s commitment to introduce a standardised methodology for assessing housing need, NDDC considers that the most appropriate housing need figure on which to progress the Local Plan Review (LPR) is 366 dwellings a year.¹⁵

¹⁵ It is anticipated that a standardised methodology will be set out in a revised version of the NPPF which the Government currently intends to publish in Spring 2018.

- 5.9 An essential part of the Local Plan Review (LPR) will be to consider whether the need figure of 366 dwellings a year can be met within the plan area (North Dorset) and whether the existing spatial strategy is the most appropriate strategy for meeting this figure. In considering these matters the Council will take into account the many constraints that exist across the District, especially in and around the towns and the eighteen larger villages.
- 5.10 The Inspector who examined LPP1 acknowledged in his report the numerous environmental constraints that exist. For example, paragraph 23 of his report states: 'The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a key national and local objective (objective 2 of LP1), especially as North Dorset has many protected wildlife sites and almost 40% of the District is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.' Furthermore, paragraph 52 of his report states 'There are a number of significant constraints to development in North Dorset, including two AONBs,'
- 5.11 Turning to the matter of employment land demand and supply, as set out in Chapter 4 (Employment), in October 2016 an updated Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (Workspace Strategy) was published.¹⁶ Whilst the Workspace Strategy demonstrates that the amount of employment land that is available in Eastern Dorset (which North Dorset is located within), and across Dorset as a whole, exceeds the requirements up to 2033, NDDC considers it important that the need for employment land in North Dorset continues to be met over the plan period. Consequently, taking into account the latest monitoring data¹⁷, NDDC considers that whilst there is sufficient employment land at Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton, there is a need to allocate additional employment land at Blandford as part of the LPR process.

Proposed Approach

- 5.12 As set out above, the current spatial strategy seeks to focus growth at the District's four main towns (Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury, and Sturminster Newton). At this stage, NDDC does not intend to change the thrust of this spatial strategy through the LPR process.
- 5.13 However, it does wish to consider whether Stalbridge, the fifth largest settlement in the District, has the potential to accommodate a limited

¹⁶ Produced in association with the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Local Authorities and the Dorset Local Economic Partnership.

¹⁷ Annual Monitoring Report 2016

scale of growth rather than just growth to meet local needs. Given the size of Stalbridge, and the level of services and facilities it provides compared to the four main towns, especially Blandford, Gillingham and Shaftesbury, the Council considers that any potential growth at Stalbridge should be limited to reflect its size and role as a local service centre.

- 5.14 Allowing for some limited growth at Stalbridge would provide the Council with a greater level of flexibility in terms of identifying sites that could meet the local housing need in the District. It is also likely to have advantages in terms of maintaining the vitality and viability of Stalbridge and ensuring the future sustainability of the town. Furthermore, new development provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. Nevertheless, such potential benefits need to be weighed against possible disadvantages. For example, in the past housing development in the rural areas of the District significantly exceeded planned rates and in some cases had a negative impact on the character and appearance of settlements, yet did not always enable rural facilities to be retained or enhanced.

Q4. Do you consider that the existing spatial strategy, as set out in LPP1, should be amended to allow for some limited growth at Stalbridge, beyond just meeting local needs?

Q5. Do you think that the Council should consider implementing any other alternative spatial strategy through the LPR? If so, please explain your reasons why.

6. Blandford (Forum and St Mary)

- ***Where should future development be located in Blandford (Forum and St Mary)?***

Introduction

- 6.1 Blandford comprises the main town of Blandford Forum to the north of the River Stour and the smaller built-up area of Blandford St Mary to the south. Effectively they function as a single settlement and is the main service centre for the southern part of the District. The town lies in the Blandford Gap, where the river cuts through the chalk downland in the southern part of the District. The town is enclosed almost completely by two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs): the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB. Two important roads, the A350 and A354, intersect in the town. Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary have a combined population of 11,912¹⁸ and the town provides services and facilities for its residents and those living across the southern part of North Dorset. Blandford Camp is a large military site located to the north-east of the town with residential accommodation on the site.

Current Policy Approach

- 6.2 The existing spatial strategy for North Dorset is set out in Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1). It provides for the four main towns (Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) functioning as the main service centres in the District. They will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development.
- 6.3 Future residential needs in Blandford are the subject of Policy 16 of LPP1. It is anticipated that at least 1,200 dwellings will be built in Blandford between 2011 and 2031. The current strategy for the town will see the building out of sites already allocated for development or with planning permission in the early part of the plan period, with additional greenfield sites beyond the bypass being brought forward after that date. New development will be supported by the necessary grey, social and green infrastructure, both to meet the overall needs of the town and the more local needs associated with each new development area.

¹⁸ 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics.

- 6.4 In addition to infilling and redevelopment within the existing settlement boundary, Blandford's housing needs will be met through:
- mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site;
 - the development of land to the south-east of Blandford St Mary; and
 - development of land to the west of Blandford St Mary (at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill).
- 6.5 Policy 16 in LPP1 also embraces economic development. The policy states that employment needs in the town for the period up to 2031 will be met through:
- the mixed-use regeneration of the Brewery site;
 - the development of land off Shaftesbury Lane;
 - the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
 - the retention of existing employment sites.
- 6.6 With regards to the provision of infrastructure, Policy 16 in LPP1 states that in the period up to 2031, grey infrastructure to support growth will include:
- the provision and enhancement of walking and cycling links within Blandford between residential areas and key destinations;
 - the provision and enhancement of public transport, cycling and walking links between Blandford and nearby villages (and Blandford camp);
 - the improvement and extension of the North Dorset Trailway along, or close to, the route of the former Somerset and Dorset Railway line for cycling and walking; and
 - the identification of a safeguarded route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall Bypass as part of the development of the land south-east of Blandford St Mary.
- 6.7 In terms of social infrastructure to support growth, Policy 16 states that social infrastructure will include:
- the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange and the provision of neighbourhood halls to serve new development in the northern part of the town and Blandford St Mary;
 - the retention of Blandford Leisure Centre in community use and the upgrading of its facilities;

- the extension of the Archbishop Wake school and either extension of the Milldown school or provision of a new 2 forms of entry primary school; and
- a new doctors' surgery or the expansion or relocation of existing doctors' surgeries.

6.8 With respect to green infrastructure, new or improved facilities will include new sports pitches and associated facilities on land within the settlement boundary of Blandford.

Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031

6.9 The Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015–2031 (NP) was examined during the first half of 2017 and the examiner's report was received in July 2017. The submitted NP covers a range of planning policy issues including the expansion of Blandford to the north and east of the existing settlement boundary. It also included policies relating to community facilities, Blandford Forum Town Centre, Green Infrastructure, Local Green Spaces and design. The examiner found that the plan met the basic conditions relating to the production of a neighbourhood plan, subject to two modifications. As of November 2017, a decision has not been made regarding whether the plan will proceed to referendum. If the plan does progress to referendum, and is subsequently made (adopted), NDDC will take into account those policies within the made NP as it advances with its Local Plan Review.

6.10 One of the modifications that the examiner has recommended relates to the deletion of Policy 1 in the NP which concerns development proposals for land to the north and east of Blandford Forum. Consequently, the development potential of these areas of land, along with other areas of land surrounding Blandford, will be considered through the Local Plan Review.

Reason for Possible Change

6.11 As detailed above, Policy 16 in LPP1 outlines that at least 1,200 dwellings will be provided at Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary during the period 2011–2031. This is based on a housing requirement of 285 dwellings a year as set out in Policy 6 of LPP1. Nevertheless, as detailed in Chapter 3 (Housing), following the publication of the Government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals', NDDC is progressing the Local Plan Review (LPR) on the basis that the local housing need is 366 dwellings a year.

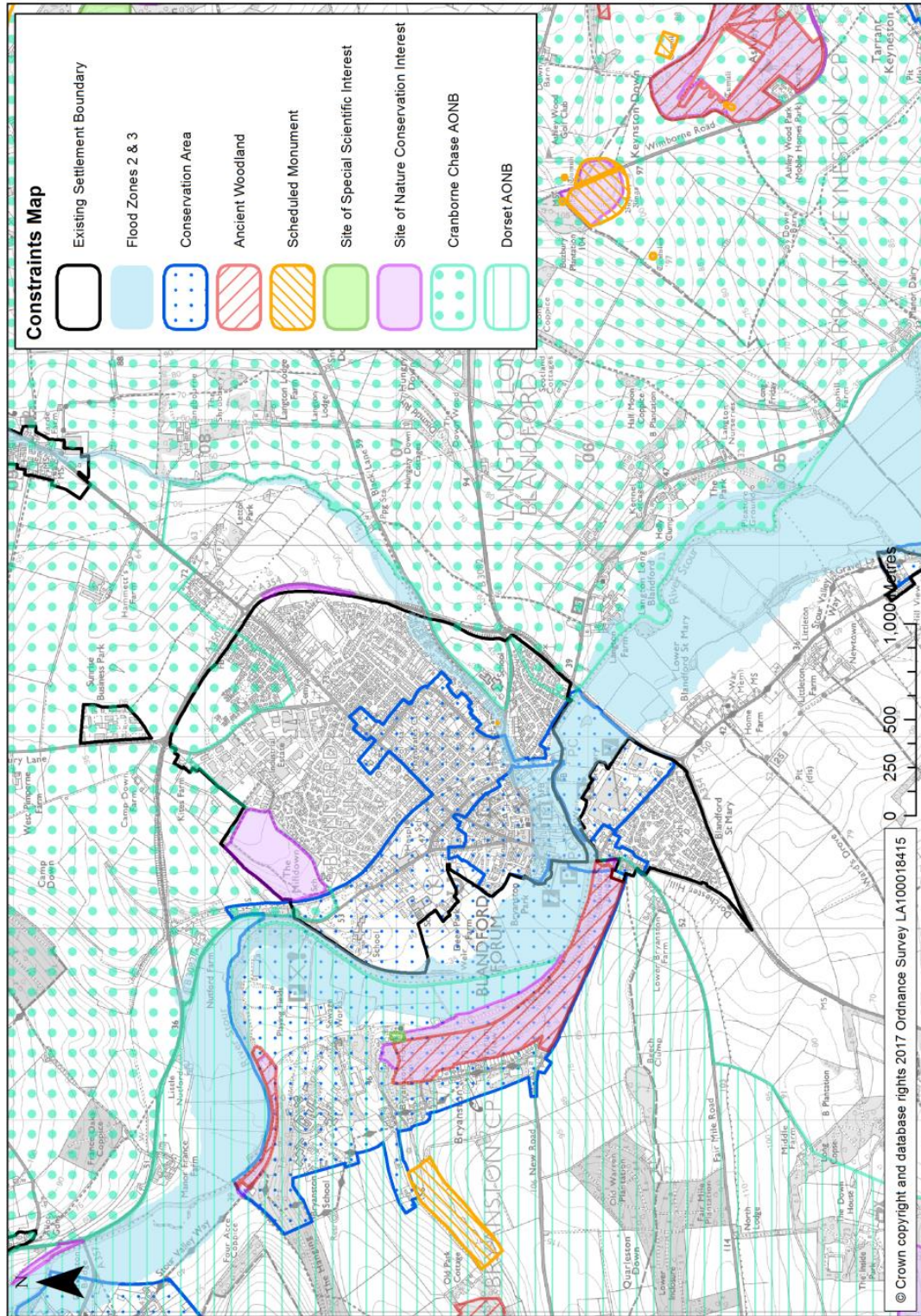
6.12 Consideration needs to be given to whether there is potential for additional growth at Blandford which could contribute towards meeting the additional housing need figure for the whole of the District. Part of

the Council's deliberations will relate to infrastructure demands that would result from development. New development, however, provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. The Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that required infrastructure needs are identified.

- 6.13 With regard to economic development, Chapter 4 (Employment) considers the matters of employment land supply and demand up to 2033. It identifies the limited amount of employment land that is available for development at Blandford. Consequently, the Council is currently of the view that there is likely to be a need to allocate additional employment land at Blandford as part of the LPR.
- 6.14 In terms of the safeguarded routes for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall bypass to the south of Blandford, despite it still being a long-term aspiration, the highways authority (Dorset County Council) does not anticipate that funding for the bypass is likely to be available in the near future. Schemes in the Local Plan need to be considered deliverable over the period of the Local Plan. If the bypass scheme is judged to be undeliverable within the LPR period (which is currently intended to be up to 2033) then it would be difficult for NDDC to argue that the land should remain protected for such a purpose. This means that an alternative use for the safeguarded route could potentially be considered. Please see Chapter 16 (The A350 Corridor) for further details and a specific question relating to the land that is currently safeguarded for a bypass.

Constraints at Blandford

- 6.15 Potential constraints to new development at Blandford include:
- the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB;
 - local nature reserves;
 - flood risk in connection with local watercourses including the River Stour;
 - heritage assets, including a conservation area that covers a large part of the town and land to the south of the town at Crown Meadows; and
 - a constrained highway network, including in relation to the A354 and A350.



Map 6.1: Constraints at Blandford

Opportunities

6.16 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Blandford, in addition to what is already set out in LPP1, is likely to:

Economic

- support economic growth and job creation in the area;
- maintain and enhance services and facilities within the town;
- provide opportunities to make improvements to local infrastructure;

Social

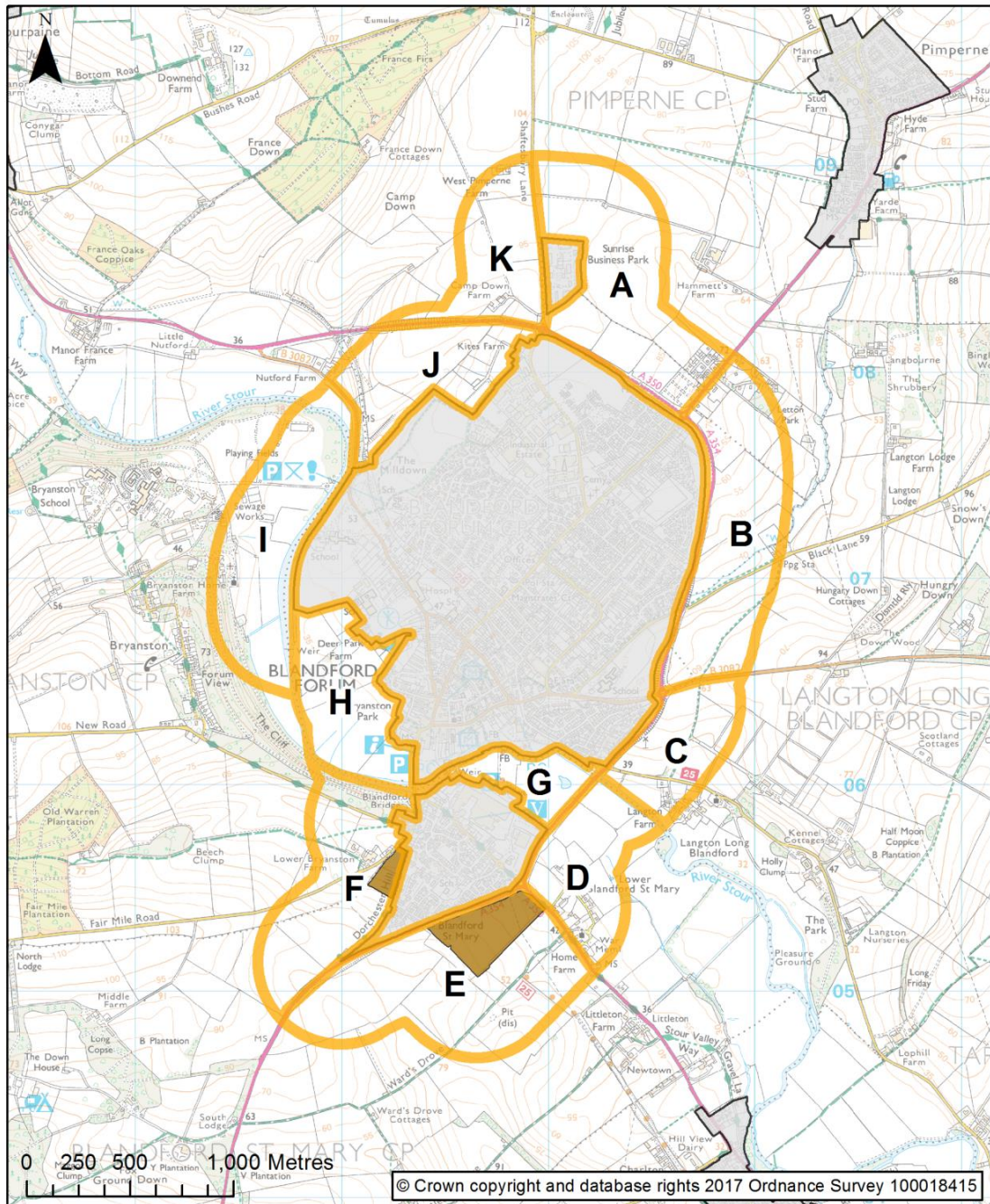
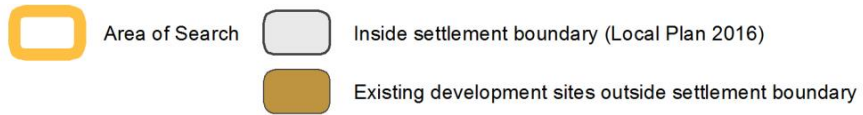
- provide new housing, including affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the town;
- provide opportunities for families to remain in the town;
- improve community facilities, including educational and recreational facilities, in the town; and

Environmental

- provide opportunities for the provision and improvement of formal and informal open space which could potentially bring biodiversity benefits.

Areas of Search

6.17 In considering potential future development options at Blandford, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search resulted in the identification of 11 areas (A to K). Unsuitable areas have been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work in the Sustainability Appraisal. A map showing the areas of search is set out on the following page.



Map 6.2: Blandford – Areas of Search

Area	Name	Issues	Possible development potential?
A	Land between Higher Shaftesbury Road and Salisbury Road	Impacts on the AONB and the landscape. Possible highways/access constraints. The distance to local services and facilities located within the town centre.	✓
B	Land between Salisbury Road and Wimborne Road	Impacts on the AONB/setting of the AONB, the landscape and water quality. Possible highways/access constraints. A part of this area is at risk of flooding.	✓
C	Land to the north of the River Stour	Impacts on the AONB, the landscape and water quality. A small part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
D	Land to the south of the River Stour	Impacts on the setting of the AONB, the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
E	Land to the South east of Blandford St Mary	Impacts on the landscape. Part of this area is currently in use as an operational solar farm (Littleton Solar Farm) and part it is currently safeguarded for a proposed bypass (see paragraph 6.14 above). Furthermore, part of this area is identified as a housing growth area in LPP1 and has been granted outline planning	✓

		permission for residential development (shown on the Areas of Search map). There is potential that further land, to the south-east of the land subject to the outline planning permission, could be identified for possible development.	
F	Land to the west of Blandford St Mary	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the AONB/setting of the AONB, the landscape and heritage assets. Parts of this area (land at Lower Bryanston Farm and Dorchester Hill) form a housing growth area as set out in LPP1.</p> <p>Land at Dorchester Hill has been granted planning permission for residential development (shown on the Areas of Search map). There is further land, to the south-west of the land subject to the planning permission, which could possibly be allocated for residential development.</p>	✓
G	Stour Meadows	<p>Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets.</p> <p>The vast majority of this area is at risk of flooding.</p>	X
H	Crown Meadows	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, water quality and heritage assets.</p> <p>A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.</p>	X
I	Land at Bryanston	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the AONB, the landscape, water quality and heritage assets.</p> <p>A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.</p>	X

J	Land off Tin Pot Lane	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the AONB and the landscape.</p> <p>Possible highways constraints to development relating to the adequacy of Tin Pot Lane.</p> <p>It is understood that there are likely to be ground contamination issues in relation to part of the area.</p> <p>There may be some scope for development in relation to the parcels of land that front onto Tin Pot Lane.</p>	✓
K	Land at Camp Down	<p>Impacts on the AONB and the landscape.</p> <p>The distance to local services and facilities located within the town centre.</p>	X

6.18 Areas A, B, E, F and J have been identified as possibly having some development potential, even if that potential is limited, and so will be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR. The next stage in the LPR process will be to progress the plan towards the publication of a Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation. The responses to the consultation on this document will be fully considered before progressing to the Preferred Options stage.

Q6. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Blandford?

Q7. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Q8. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Blandford?

7. Gillingham

– ***Where should future development be located in Gillingham?***

Introduction

- 7.1 Gillingham, along with Shaftesbury, are the main service centres in the north of the District, which together serve a rural hinterland expanding into Somerset and Wiltshire. The population of the Parish of Gillingham is 12,047.¹⁹
- 7.2 A detailed assessment of the town's growth potential for the period up to 2026 and beyond was published in 2009 and underpins much of the existing planning policy context relating to future development at Gillingham.²⁰ The assessment draws on many of the evidence base studies already produced and identifies the potential for medium and longer-term growth. The assessment recognises the potential for Gillingham to develop its economic and service centre functions in the medium term and the relative lack of environmental constraints adjoining the existing urban area. However it also identifies a number of issues that may limit long-term growth (post-2026, if delivery has taken place as anticipated), including economic potential, town centre capacity, transport and other infrastructure issues and environmental constraints.

Current Policy Approach

- 7.3 Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) in LPP1 outlines the existing spatial strategy for North Dorset. It details that Gillingham, which is identified as one of the four main towns within the District, will function as one of the main service centres in the District and will be a focus for growth for the vast majority of housing and other development. The southern extension of Gillingham is a key site which is critical to the delivery of the spatial strategy over the plan period. A developer-led master plan framework is being produced to co-ordinate the delivery of comprehensive development across the Southern Extension in accordance with Policy 21 (Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation) in LPP1. Part of the site adjacent to Lodden Lakes has already received outline permission for 90 dwellings.
- 7.4 Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) outlines that with respect to housing needs, at least 2,200 homes will be provided at Gillingham during the

¹⁹ 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics.

²⁰ Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009).

period 2011–2031, with about 480 of these classed as affordable homes. This reflects Gillingham’s economic potential, the availability of suitable sites and the relative lack of environmental constraints. Policy 17 (Gillingham) sets out that the town’s housing requirement will be met through:

- infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary, including land to the south and south-west of Bay and at the Station Road mixed-use regeneration area;

together with the development of the following greenfield site:

- the southern extension to Gillingham strategic site allocation.

7.5 In terms of supporting economic development, Policy 17 in LPP1 identifies that employment needs in the town for the period up to 2031 will be met through:

- the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area;
- the development of vacant land to the south of Brickfields Business Park;
- the development of vacant land at Kingsmead Business Park; and
- expansion of the existing business at Peacemarsh.

7.6 With regards to infrastructure, Policy 17 in LPP1 states that grey infrastructure to support growth will include:

- planned strategic capacity improvements to the A303 and mainline railway route;
- local highways capacity improvements at junction of B3081 and B3092;
- the provision of a principal street as part of the southern extension linking the B3081 and B3092;
- enhancements to the transport hub at the railway station to improve interconnectivity between different transport modes and car parking;
- improvements to the route between the railway station and the High Street to make it more attractive to pedestrians and cycle friendly;
- better pedestrian and cycle links between Waitrose, the High Street and new areas of retail and other employment and town centre development in the Station Road area;

- local road improvements around the town, including upgrades to signalised junctions, necessary to accommodate the increased traffic associated with growth; and
 - provision of, and improvements to, cycleways and footpaths linking other towns and villages and new development to the town centre, employment sites and other key locations.
- 7.7 Policy 17 states that social infrastructure to support growth will include:
- improvement or expansion of the existing facilities at RiversMeet and the provision of a new community hall;
 - to support the southern extension of the town in particular, the expansion of St Mary the Virgin Primary School and enhancement of the existing secondary school, a new 2 forms of entry primary school, a doctor's surgery for about 2.5 full time equivalent General Practitioners, and a local centre which should include other essential local facilities such as a community hall, local shops and a pre-school nursery.
- 7.8 In respect of green infrastructure, Policy 17 details that green infrastructure to support growth will include:
- the provision and enhancement formal and informal areas and sports pitches within and close to the town centre, along the corridors of the three rivers, and within proposed new development areas.

Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031

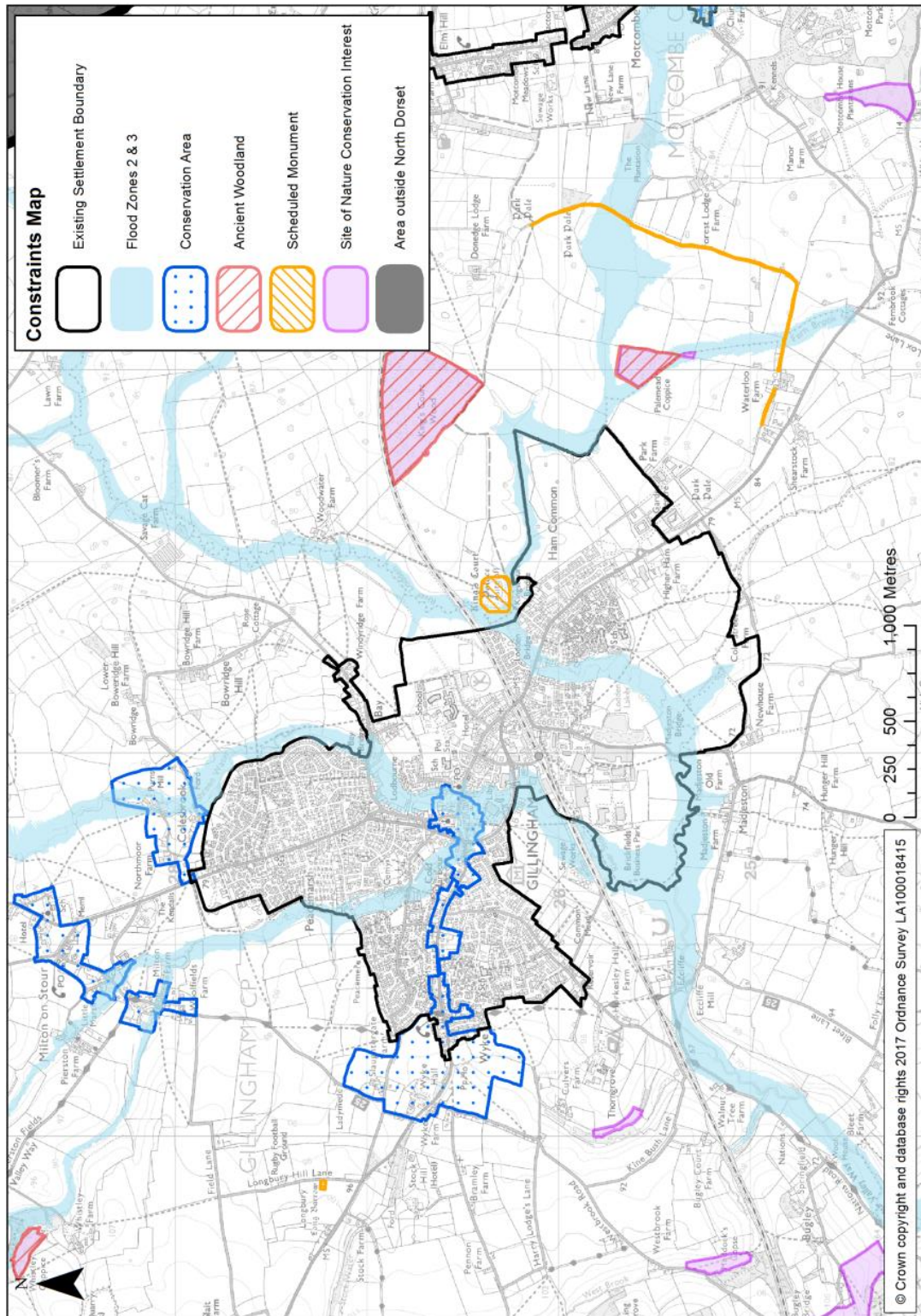
- 7.9 The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031 is at an advanced stage and has been submitted to North Dorset District Council (NDDC) to proceed through the examination process. If the examiner and subsequently NDDC find that the submitted plan meets the basic conditions then it will advance to referendum. If the majority of people who vote in the referendum support the plan then NDDC will make (adopt) the plan and it will become part of the development plan for considering future planning applications within the administrative area covered by Gillingham Town Council.
- 7.10 As the neighbourhood plan has not yet been subject to examination and an examiner's report has not been published, the weight that can be attributed to the content of the neighbourhood plan is limited at this stage. It is in this context that this chapter of the Issues and Options Document should be read.

Reason for Possible Change

- 7.11 As detailed above, Policy 17 in LPP1 outlines that at least 2,200 dwellings will be provided at Gillingham during the period 2011–2031. This is based on a housing requirement of 285 dwellings a year as set out in Policy 6 of LPP1. Nevertheless, as detailed in Chapter 3 (Housing), following the publication of the Government’s ‘Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals’ in September 2017, NDDC is progressing the Local Plan Review (LPR) on the basis that the local housing need is 366 dwellings a year.
- 7.12 Consideration needs to be given to whether there is potential for additional growth at Gillingham which could contribute towards meeting the additional housing need figure for the whole of the District. Part of the Council’s deliberations will relate to infrastructure demands that would result from development. New development, however, provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. The Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that required infrastructure needs are identified.
- 7.13 In terms of economic development, (Chapter 4) Employment considers the matters of employment land supply and demand up to 2033. It is considered that there is no need to provide for additional employment land at Gillingham given the existing employment land that is allocated for development including the land to the south of Brickfields Business Park and the land at Kingsmead Business Park.

Constraints at Gillingham

- 7.14 Potential constraints to new development at Gillingham include:
- the town is sited within a basin at the confluence of three rivers, namely the River Lodden, the Shreen Water and the River Stour, therefore flooding and climate change are an issue;
 - landscape setting including higher ground at Bowridge Hill, Hungerhill, Duncliffe, Thorngrove, Huntingford and Milton-on-Stour;
 - a number of heritage assets, some of which are ‘at risk’, including the Gillingham Conservation Area, Wyke Conservation Area, Colesbrook Conservation Area, King’s Court Palace and Park Pale; and
 - a constrained highway network, especially where the B3081 and B3092 meet at a junction forming the only crossing over the railway in the town.



Map 7.1: Constraints at Gillingham

Opportunities

7.15 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Gillingham, in addition to what is already set out in LPP1, is likely to:

Economic

- support economic growth and job creation in the area;
- maintain and enhance services and facilities within the town;
- provide opportunities to make improvements to local infrastructure;

Social

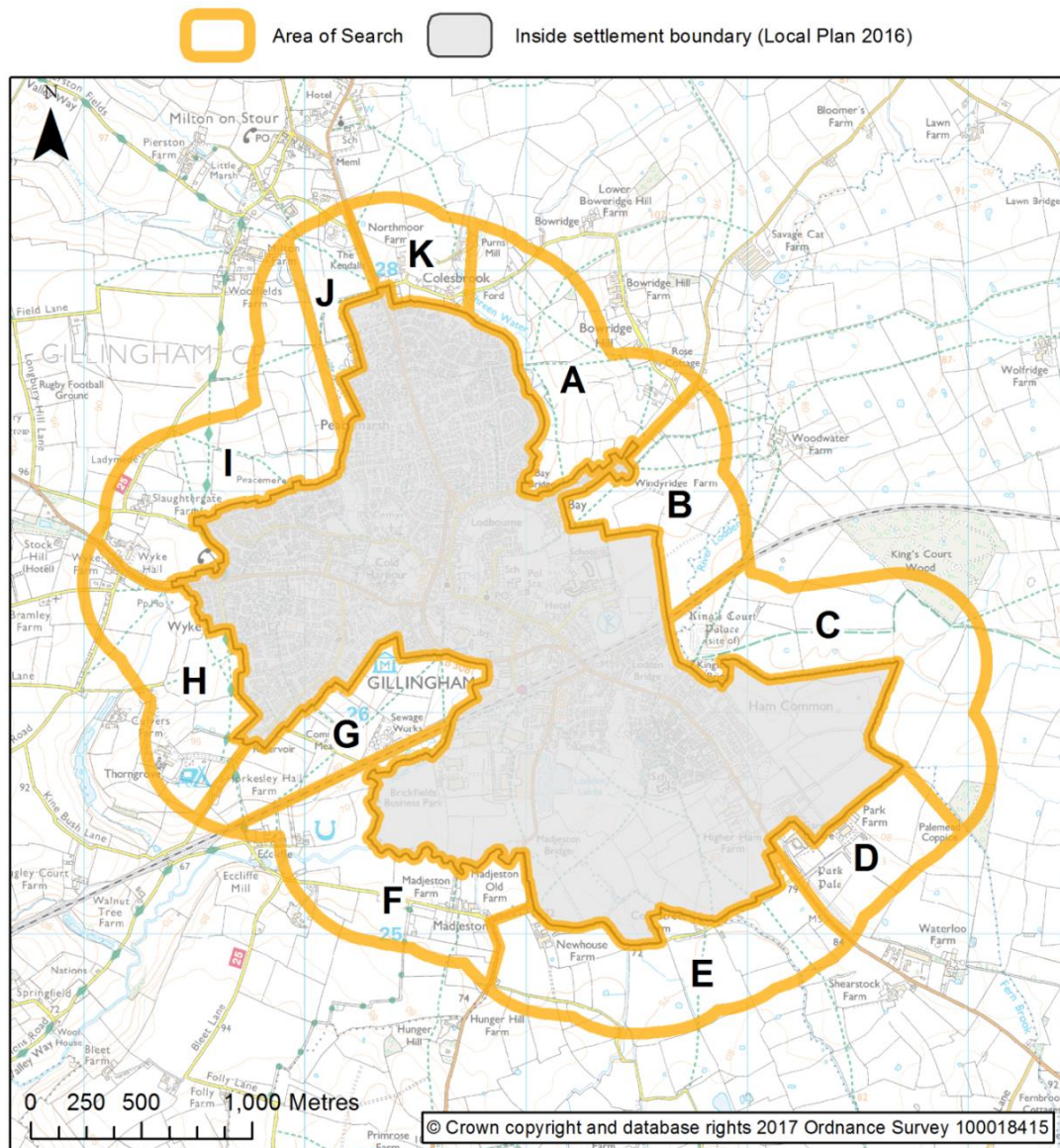
- provide new housing, including affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the town;
- provide opportunities for families to remain in the town;
- provide for improvements to infrastructure in the town; and

Environmental

- provide opportunities for the provision and improvement of open space which could potentially bring biodiversity benefits.

Areas of Search

7.16 In considering potential future development options at Gillingham, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search resulted in the identification of 11 areas (areas A to K). Unsuitable areas have been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work in the Sustainability Appraisal. A map showing the areas of search is set out below.



Map 7.2: Gillingham - Areas of Search

Area	Name	Issues	Possible development potential?
A	Bowridge Hill	Impacts on the landscape and water quality. Part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
B	Windyridge	Impacts on the landscape and water quality.	✓

		Possible highways/access constraints. Part of this area is at risk of flooding.	
C	Royal Forest	Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
D	Park Farm	Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, water quality and a heritage asset.	✓
E	Newhouse	Impacts on the landscape. Surface water flooding.	X
F	Madjeston	Impacts on the landscape and water quality. A large part of this area is at risk of flooding. There are odour issues relating to the sewage treatment works to the north of the railway line. Part of the area is within a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation zone which is related to a use at Brickfields Business Park.	X
G	Common Mead	Impacts on biodiversity and water quality. Part of this area is at risk of flooding. There are odour issues relating to the sewage treatment works located within this area. Part of the area is within a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consultation zone which is related to a use at Brickfields Business Park.	X
H	Wyke	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Possible highways/access constraints. Possible development potential in this area relates to the southern part of this area of search and therefore not within	✓

		close proximity of the Wyke Conservation Area.	
I	Peacemarsh	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Possible highways/access constraints. Part of this area is at risk of flooding. Potential issue regarding coalescence with Milton on Stour. Possible development potential in this area relates to land north of Wavering Lane West.	✓
J	Milton on Stour	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Part of this area is at risk of flooding. Potential issue regarding coalescence with Milton on Stour.	X
K	Colesbrook	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Part of this area is at risk of flooding. Potential issue regarding coalescence with Milton on Stour.	X

7.17 Areas B, D, H and I have been identified as possibly having some development potential, even if only in a fairly limited form, and so will be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR. The next stage in the LPR process will be to progress the plan towards the publication of a Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation. The Preferred Options Document may identify sites for development at Gillingham in addition to the housing growth areas and southern extension identified in the LPP1. It is likely that those areas of search that have possible development potential will require long-term phasing post delivery of the southern extension. This is a matter that will be considered in more detail at the Preferred Options stage. The responses to the consultation on this document will be fully considered before advancing to the Preferred Options stage.

Q9. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Gillingham?

Q10. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Q11. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Gillingham?

8. Shaftesbury

– *Where should future development be located in Shaftesbury?*

Introduction

- 8.1 Shaftesbury, along with Gillingham, provides services and facilities that serve residents who live in the northern part of the District and parts of Wiltshire immediately east of the town. The population of Shaftesbury is estimated to be 8,424.²¹ The historic core of the town occupies a hilltop location and its attractive town centre supports a good range of shops and is a popular tourist destination. In terms of the highway network, both the north–south A350 route and the east–west A30 route pass through the town.
- 8.2 In recent years development at Shaftesbury has primarily been on land allocated to the eastern side. Most of the land that was allocated has now either been built out or has been granted planning permission. The county boundary with Wiltshire runs close to the eastern edge of the town, as does the Cranborne Chase and West Wilshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Current Policy Approach

- 8.3 Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) outlines the existing spatial strategy for North Dorset. It details that Shaftesbury, which is identified as one of the four main towns within the District, will function as one of the main service centres in the District and will be a focus for growth for the vast majority of housing and other development. Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) outlines that with respect to housing needs, at least 1,140 homes will be provided at Shaftesbury during the period 2011–2031, with about 380 of these classed as affordable homes. Policy 18 (Shaftesbury) sets out that the town’s housing requirement will be met through:
- infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary
- together with the development of the following greenfield sites:
- east of the town (land allocated for housing in the Local Plan 2003, inside the existing settlement boundary);

²¹ 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics

- land to the south-east of Wincombe Business Park (outside the settlement boundary); and
 - land to the west of the A350 opposite Wincombe Business Park (outside the settlement boundary).
- 8.4 In terms of supporting economic development, Policy 18 in LPP1 identifies that employment needs in the town for the period up to 2031 will be met through:
- the development of land to the south of the A30;
 - the development of vacant sites on existing industrial estates; and
 - the retention of existing employment sites.
- 8.5 With regards to grey infrastructure, Policy 18 in LPP1 identifies that in order to support growth, the following should be delivered:
- the provision of a new road link from the B3081 to the A30 at Enmore Green; and
 - improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and residential development to the east of the town.
- 8.6 In addition, Policy 18 states that the route of the Shaftesbury Outer Eastern Bypass will continue to be protected from development that would prejudice its implementation.
- 8.7 In terms of social infrastructure, Policy 18 in LPP1 identifies that to support growth, the following should be delivered:
- the provision of a new community hall;
 - a new 2 forms of entry primary school, an extension to the secondary school, and expanded further and adult education; and
 - a new or expanded doctors' surgery.
- 8.8 In respect of green infrastructure, new or improved facilities will include informal recreation space associated with the development of sites to the east of the town.

Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.9 Shaftesbury Town Council is currently undertaking work to produce a neighbourhood plan for the town. Preliminary work has been undertaken, including a household survey, but a draft plan has not yet been published for consultation. This means that it is difficult at this stage to infer the types of policies that the neighbourhood plan might

contain. North Dorset District Council (NDDC) will take into account policies contained within the neighbourhood plan as it advances. Furthermore, it will consider the implications that these policies may have in terms of the Local Plan Review (LPR).

Reasons for Possible Change

- 8.10 As set out above, Policy 18 of LPP1 states that at least 1,140 dwellings will be provided at Shaftesbury during the period 2011–2031. This is based on a district-wide target of 285 dwellings a year as set out in Policy 6 of LPP1. Nevertheless, as detailed in Chapter 3 (Housing), following the publication of the Government’s ‘Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals’ in September 2017, NDDC is progressing the Local Plan Review (LPR) on the basis that the local housing need is 366 dwellings a year.
- 8.11 Consideration needs to be given to whether there is potential for additional growth at Shaftesbury which could contribute towards meeting the additional housing need figure for the whole of the District. Part of the Council’s deliberations will relate to infrastructure demands that would result from development. New development, however, provides possibilities for improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. The Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that the required infrastructure needs are identified.
- 8.12 In terms of economic development, Chapter 4 (Employment) considers the matters of employment land supply and demand up to 2033. It is considered that there is no need to provide for additional employment land at Shaftesbury given the existing employment land that is allocated for development to the south of the A30. The site is currently being marketed and NDDC is exploring options for funding infrastructure on the site, in order to create serviced plots.
- 8.13 In respect of the route of the Shaftesbury Outer Bypass Corridor, despite it still being a long-term aspiration, the highways authority (Dorset County Council) does not anticipate that funding for a suitable scheme is likely to be available in the near future. Schemes in the Local Plan need to be considered deliverable over the period of the Local Plan. If the outer bypass scheme is judged to be undeliverable within the LPR period (which it is currently intended would be up to 2033) then it would be difficult for the District Council to argue that the land should remain protected for such a purpose. This means that an alternative use for the reserved land on the eastern edge of the town could potentially be considered. Please see Chapter 16 (The A350 Corridor) for further details and a specific question relating to the land that is currently safeguarded for an outer bypass at Shaftesbury.

Constraints at Shaftesbury

8.14 Potential constraints to new development at Shaftesbury include:

- heritage assets including a conservation area that covers a large portion of the town, as well as 6 scheduled monuments and 280 listed buildings in and near to the town;
- landscape constraints including the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB which is in proximity of the town;
- biodiversity assets such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest to the west of the town, and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest in the town (Castle Hill) and to the west and north of the town;
- the existing level of social infrastructure, particularly in terms of the schools and the doctors' surgery; and
- the capacity and impact of the existing highways infrastructure including in respect of the A350 and the A30.

Opportunities

8.15 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Shaftesbury, in addition to what is already set out in LPP1, is likely to:

Economic

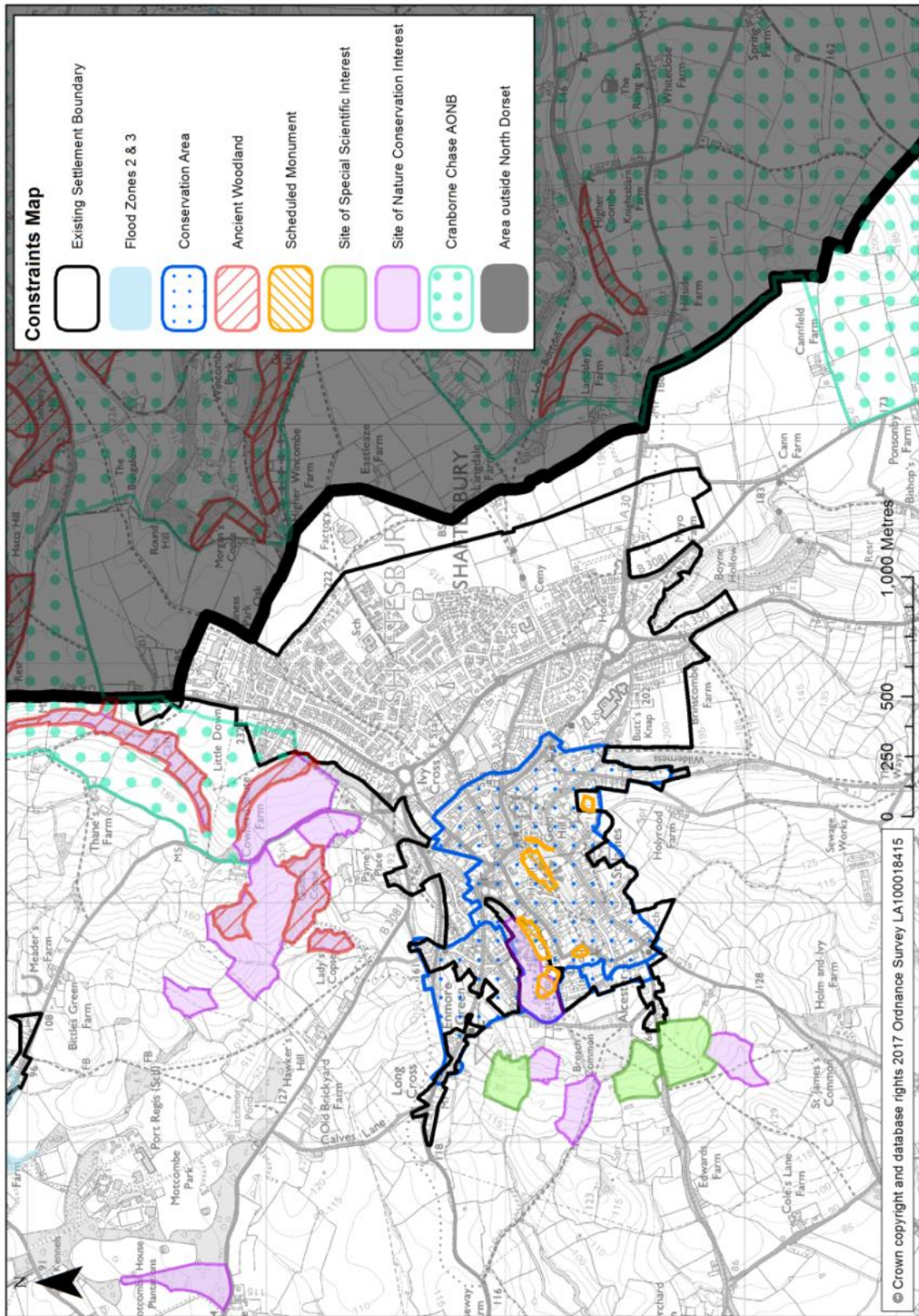
- support economic growth and job creation in the area;
- maintain and enhance services and facilities within the town;
- provide opportunities to make improvements to local infrastructure;

Social

- provide new housing, including affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the town;
- provide opportunities for families to remain in the town;
- provide for improvements to infrastructure in the town; and

Environmental

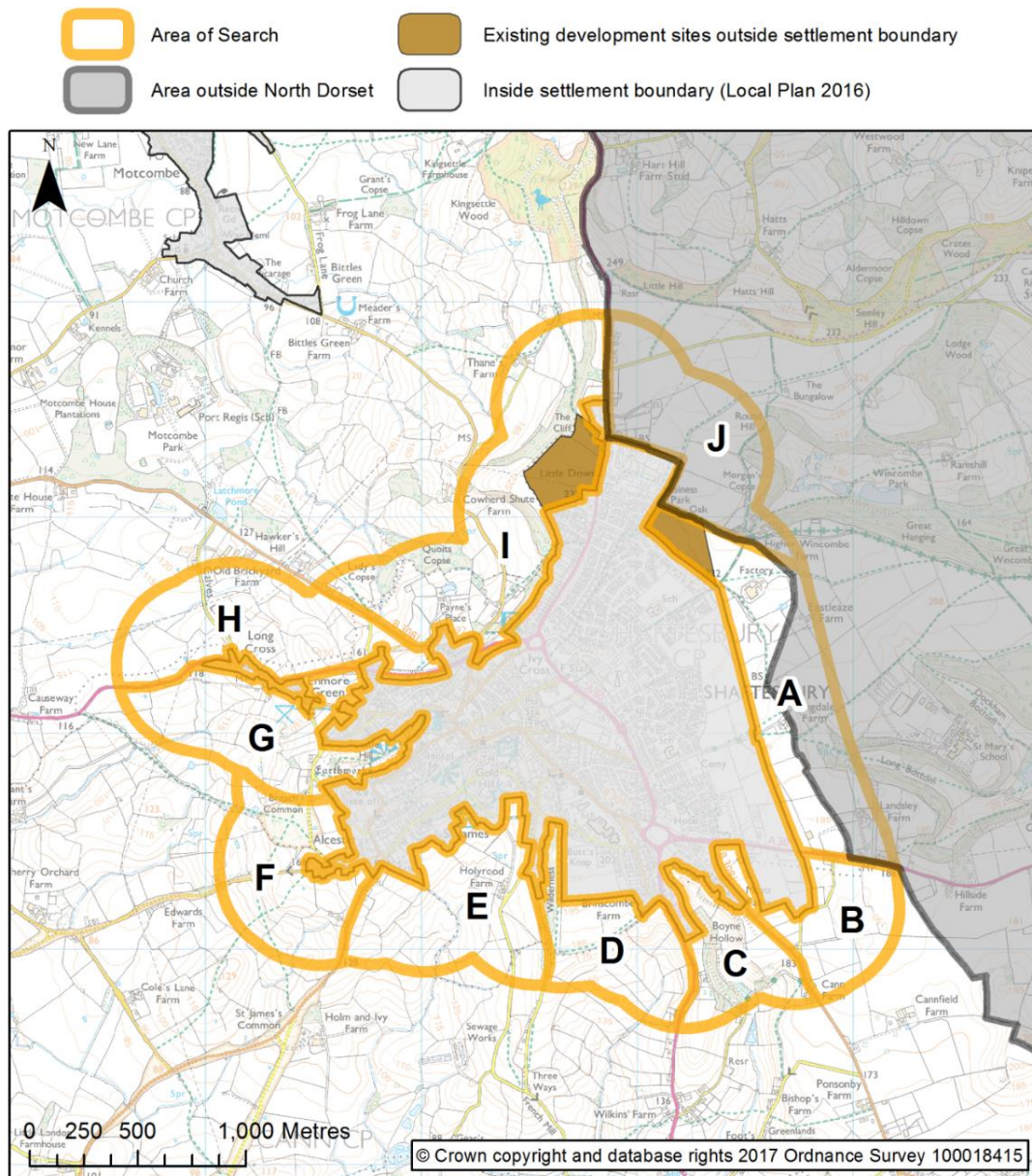
- provide opportunities for the provision and improvement of open space which could potentially bring biodiversity benefits.



Map 8.1: Constraints at Shaftesbury

Areas of Search

- 8.16 In considering potential future development options at Shaftesbury, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search resulted in the identification of 10 areas (areas A to J). Unsuitable areas have been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work in the Sustainability Appraisal. A map showing the areas of search is set out below.
- 8.17 It should be noted that area J, and approximately half of area A, are within Wiltshire and therefore are areas that NDDC cannot plan for directly. LPP1 recognises that a variety of environmental constraints (as outlined above) mean that the potential for expansion at Shaftesbury is limited. It explains that to meet the longer-term needs of the town, the District Council will need to work with Wiltshire Council, under the duty to cooperate, to bring forward the early consideration of development on land adjacent to Wincombe Business Park. If it is deemed necessary to develop in this area, then this land should be allocated for development in a plan produced by Wiltshire Council. NDDC will continue to work with Wiltshire Council on a range of cross boundary issues as the LPR progresses.



Map 8.2: Shaftesbury – Areas of Search

Area	Name	Issues	Possible development potential?
A	Land to the east of Shaftesbury	<p>Impacts on the setting of the AONB and the landscape.</p> <p>The distance to local services and facilities situated within the town centre.</p> <p>Part of this area is identified as a housing growth area in LPP1 and has</p>	✓

		<p>been granted outline planning permission for residential development (shown on the Areas of Search map).</p> <p>Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been dug along the western edge to serve the recent residential estate on the east of the town.</p> <p>Part of this area is currently safeguarded for an outer bypass. Please see Chapter 16 (The A350 Corridor) for further details and a specific question relating to the land that is currently safeguarded for an outer bypass at Shaftesbury.</p> <p>The boundary with Wiltshire County runs through the middle of this area. NDDC would only be able to propose development within its Plan Area as part of the Local Plan Review.</p>	
B	Land between Salisbury Road (A30) and Higher Blandford Road	<p>Impacts on setting of the AONB and the landscape.</p> <p>The distance to local services and facilities situated within the town centre.</p> <p>Noise and disturbance etc from possible future employment uses on the land to the south of A30 may impact on the living conditions of future occupiers of a residential development.</p>	✓
C	Land Higher Blandford Road and A350	<p>Impacts on the landscape.</p> <p>There is a significant number of large trees on this site.</p> <p>The area contains Boyne Hollow and the topography is particularly uneven.</p> <p>There are important views from Shaftesbury within this area.</p>	X
D	Land between	Impacts on the landscape.	✓

	A350 and French Mill Lane	<p>The topography is uneven in this area and there are important views from Shaftesbury.</p> <p>Although a large part of this area is considered unsuitable for development there may be potential that a limited amount of land could be identified for development to the south of Shaftesbury School Playing Fields. However, this would be dependent on the land not be required for education purposes.</p> <p>There are possible access/highways constraints relating to this land.</p>	
E	Land between French Mill Lane and the B3091	<p>Impacts on the landscape and heritage assets.</p> <p>The topography is uneven in this area and there are important views from Shaftesbury.</p>	X
F	Land between B3091 and Breach Common	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape and heritage assets.</p> <p>The topography is uneven in this area and there are important views from Shaftesbury.</p>	X
G	Land south of Long Cross and A30	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape and heritage assets.</p> <p>The topography is uneven in this area and there are important views from Shaftesbury.</p>	X
H	Land north of Long Cross and A30	<p>Impacts on the landscape and heritage assets.</p> <p>The topography is uneven in this area.</p> <p>The area also includes land that will be developed for the construction of the Enmore Green Link Road.</p>	X
I	Land between B3081 and A350	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, AONB/setting of the AONB and the landscape.</p> <p>The topography is uneven in this area</p>	✓

		<p>and there are important views from Shaftesbury.</p> <p>Part of this area is identified as a housing growth area in LPP1 and has been granted outline planning permission for residential development (shown on the Areas of Search map). The Council considers that there is no potential to identify further land for large scale development beyond that subject to the outline planning permission.</p>	
J	Land between A350 and Higher Wincombe Farm	This area is not within North Dorset district. Any future allocation relating to this land would have to be made by Wiltshire Council.	

8.18 Areas A, B, D and I have been identified as having development potential, even if that potential is limited, and so will be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR. The next stage in the LPR process will be to progress the plan towards the publication of a Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation. The responses to the consultation on this document will be fully considered before progressing to Preferred Options stage.

Q12. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Shaftesbury?

Q13. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Q14. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Shaftesbury?

9. Sturminster Newton

– *Where should future development be located in Sturminster Newton?*

Introduction

9.1 Sturminster Newton is located in the western part of North Dorset. It comprises of the main town of Sturminster on the northern side of the River Stour and the smaller village of Newton to the south. It, along with Stalbridge and Marnhull, provides services and facilities that serve residents who live in the western part of the District. The population of Sturminster Newton is 4,462.²²

Current Policy Approach

9.2 Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) outlines the existing spatial strategy for North Dorset. It details that Sturminster Newton, which is identified as one of the four main towns within the District, will function as one of the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. Policy 19 (Sturminster Newton) outlines that in respect of housing needs at least 395 dwellings will be provided at Sturminster Newton during the period 2011–2031. It sets out that housing needs will be met through:

- infilling and redevelopment within the settlement boundary, including the redevelopment of land in and around the Station Road area;

together with the development of the following greenfield sites:

- land to the north of the former livestock market at Market Hill;
- land to the north of Northfields; and
- land to the east of the former Creamery site.

9.3 In terms of supporting economic development, Policy 19 in LPP1 identifies that employment needs in the town for the period up to 2031 will be met through:

- the development of North Dorset Business Park; and
- the retention of Butts Pond Industrial Estate.

²² 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics

- 9.4 With regards to infrastructure, Policy 19 in LPP1 states that grey infrastructure to support growth will include:
- improved walking and cycling links between the town centre and new developments;
 - the extension of the North Dorset Trailway to the north-west of the town, including the provision of a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Stour; and
 - the improvement of pedestrian/cycle links between Sturminster and North Dorset Business Park.
- 9.5 Policy 19 states that social infrastructure to support growth will include:
- the promotion of The Exchange building as a community and cultural hub;
 - the retention and expansion of the leisure centre; and
 - an extension to the secondary school and the relocation and expansion of the primary school.
- 9.6 In respect of green infrastructure, Policy 19 details that green infrastructure to support growth will include:
- a green buffer between Butt's Pond Industrial Estate and new housing development on land north of the former livestock market; and
 - additional allotments on land to the east of the town at Elm Close Farm.

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031

- 9.7 The Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031 has been submitted to North Dorset District Council (NDDC) for examination. The submission version of the plan includes policies that deal with housing numbers and housing sites at Sturminster Newton. If the examiner, and subsequently NDDC, find that the submitted plan meets the basic conditions then it will proceed to referendum. If the majority of people who vote in the referendum support the plan then NDDC will make (adopt) the plan and it will become part of the development plan for considering future planning applications within the administrative area covered by Sturminster Newton Town Council.
- 9.8 The approach that NDDC takes towards planning for future development at Sturminster Newton will be influenced by the progress of the neighbourhood plan. However, given that the neighbourhood plan has not yet been subject to examination and an examiner's report has not been published, the weight that can be attributed to the content of the

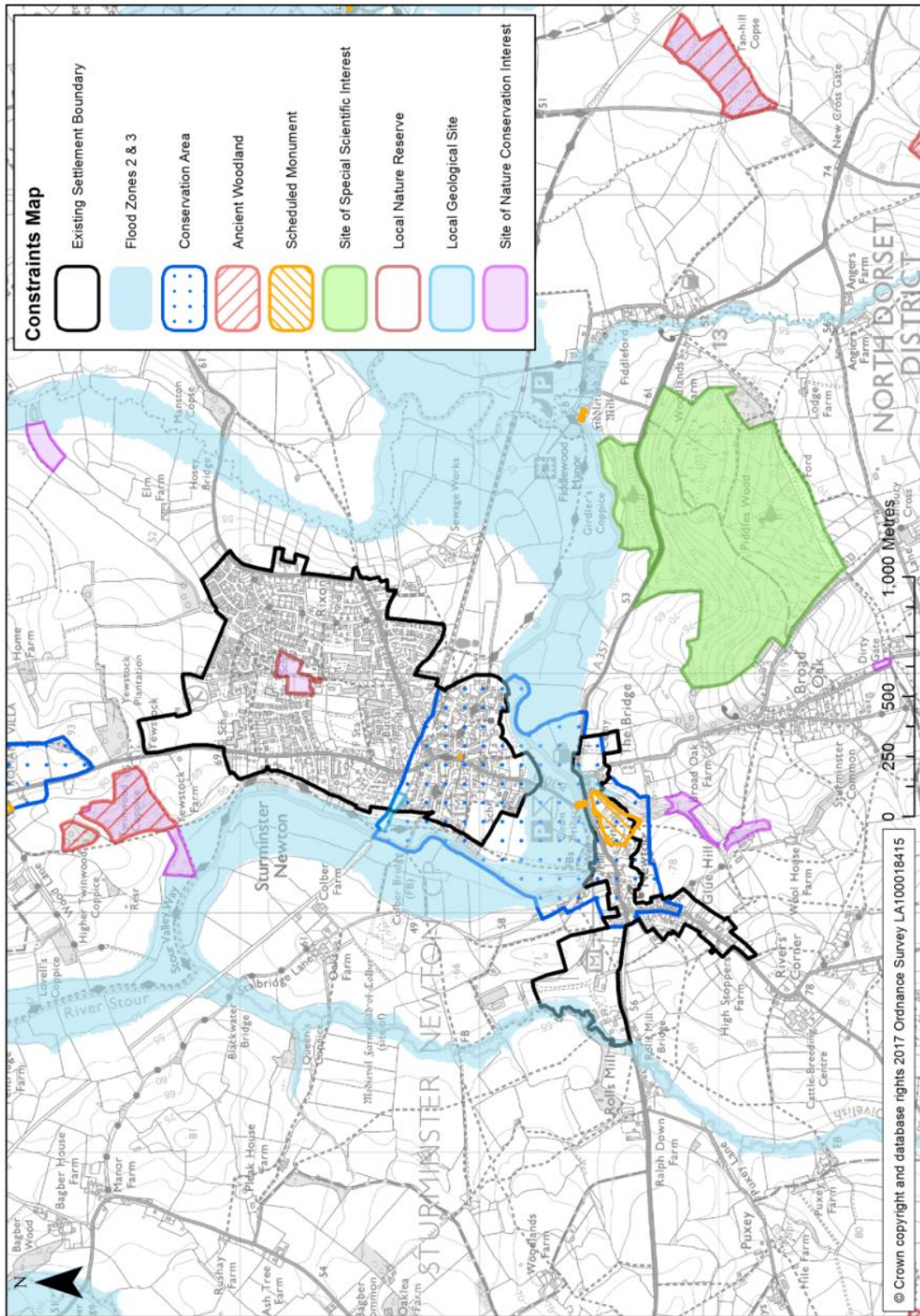
neighbourhood plan is limited at this stage. It is in this context that this chapter of the Issues and Options Document should be read.

Reason for Possible Change

- 9.9 As set out above, Policy 19 of LPP1 states that at least 395 dwellings will be provided at Sturminster Newton during the period 2011–2031. This is based on a district-wide target of 285 dwellings a year as set out in Policy 6 of LPP1. Nevertheless, as detailed in Chapter 3 (Housing), following publication of the Government’s ‘Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals’ in September 2017, NDDC is progressing the Local Plan Review (LPR) on the basis that the local housing need is 366 dwellings a year.
- 9.10 Consideration needs to be given to whether there is potential for additional growth at Sturminster Newton which could contribute towards meeting the additional housing need figure for the whole of the District. Part of the Council’s deliberations will relate to infrastructure demands that would result from development. New development, however, provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. The Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that required infrastructure needs are identified.
- 9.11 In terms of economic development, Chapter 4. Employment considers the matters of employment land supply and demand up to 2033. It is considered that there is no need to provide for additional employment land at Sturminster Newton given the existing employment land that is allocated for development at North Dorset Business Park.

Constraints at Sturminster Newton

- 9.12 Potential constraints to new development at Sturminster Newton include:
- a large number of heritage assets including a conservation area that covers, amongst other things, a sizeable part of the town centre;
 - a constrained highway network, especially the B3092 that passes through the town centre;
 - the risk of flooding relating the River Stour; and
 - the uneven topography of the land that surrounds the town.



Map 9.1: Constraints at Sturminster Newton

Opportunities

9.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Sturminster Newton, in addition to what is already set out in LPP1, is likely to:

Economic

- support economic growth and job creation in the area;
- maintain and enhance services and facilities within the town;
- provide opportunities to make improvements to local infrastructure;

Social

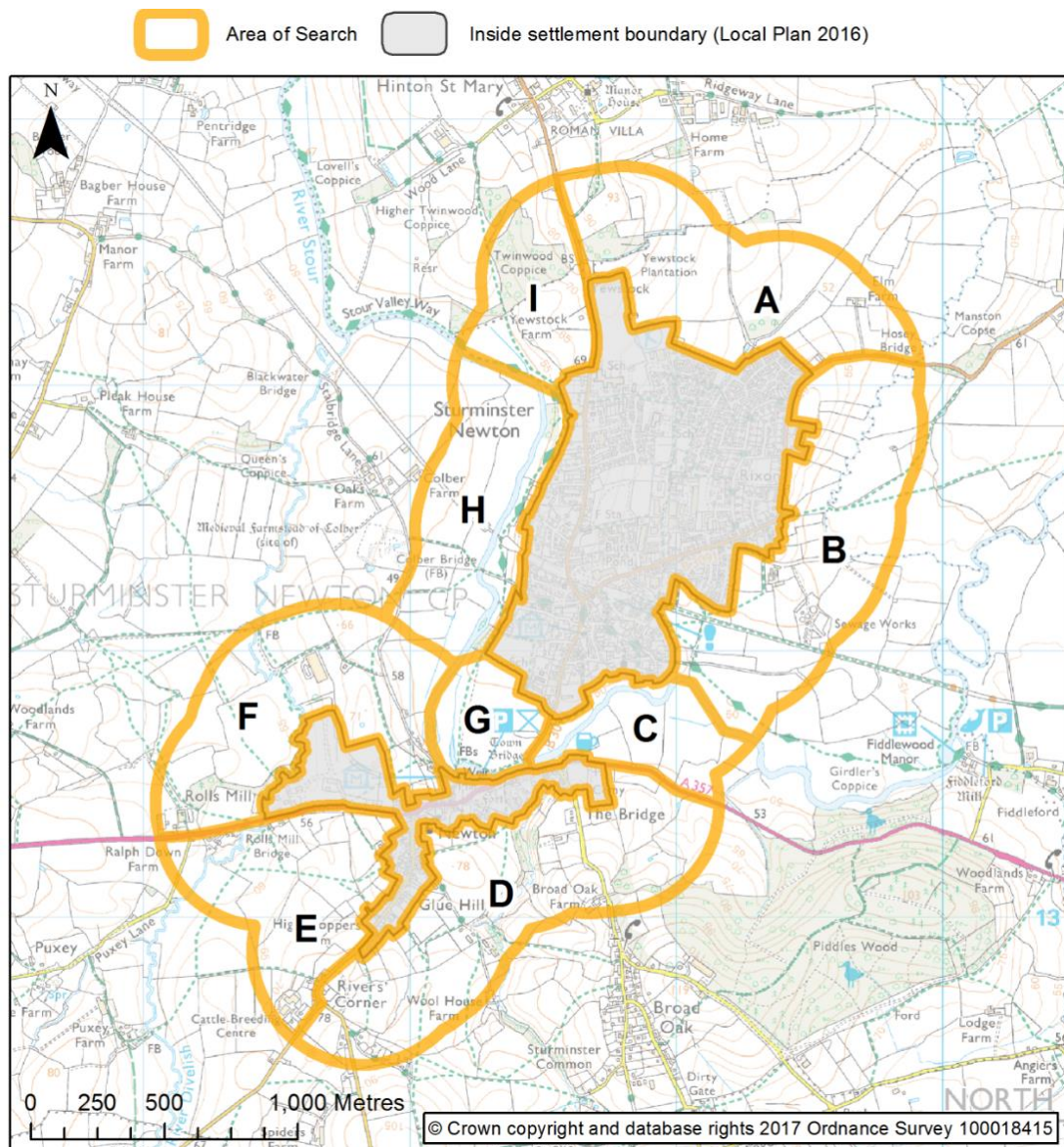
- provide new housing, including affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the town;
- provide opportunities for families to remain in the town;
- provide for improvements to infrastructure in the town; and

Environmental

- provide opportunities for the provision and improvement of open space which could potentially bring biodiversity benefits.

Areas of Search

9.14 In considering potential future development options at Sturminster Newton, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search resulted in the identification of 9 areas (areas A to I). Unsuitable areas have been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work in the Sustainability Appraisal. A map showing the areas of search is set out below.



Map 9.2: Sturminster Newton - Areas of Search

Area	Name	Issues	Possible development potential?
A	Land between B3092 and Manston Road	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. Part of this area is identified as a housing growth area (Land north of Northfields) in LPP1.	✓
B	Land to the east of	Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape and water quality.	✓

	Sturminster	<p>Part of this area is also at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Odour issues relating to the sewage treatment works off Bull Ground Lane. Also highways/access constraints in respect of Bull Ground Lane.</p> <p>Although a large part of this area is considered unsuitable for development, part of this area is identified as a housing growth area (Land east of the former Creamery) in LPP1. There might be potential that further land could be identified for development to the north-east of this housing growth area.</p>	
C	Land between the River Stour and the A357	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, water quality and heritage assets.</p> <p>A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Poor accessibility to local services and facilities situated within the town centre.</p>	X
D	Land to the south of Newton	<p>Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape and heritage assets.</p> <p>Poor accessibility to local services and facilities situated within the town centre.</p>	X
E	Land between Glue Hill and the A357	<p>Impacts on the landscape and water quality.</p> <p>Poor accessibility to local services and facilities situated within the town centre.</p>	X
F	Land surrounding North Dorset Business Park	<p>Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets.</p> <p>Part of this area is at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Living conditions/amenity issues relating to locating residential</p>	X

		development adjacent to employment uses.	
G	Land to the south of Sturminster Newton Recreation Ground	Impacts on the landscape, water quality and heritage assets. A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
H	Land to the west of the River Stour	Impacts on the landscape and water quality. Highways/access constraints. A large part of this area is at risk of flooding.	X
I	Land at Yewstock Farm	Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, water quality and a heritage asset. A small part of this area is also at risk of flooding.	X

9.15 Areas A and B have been identified as possibly having some development potential, even if only in a fairly limited form, and so are likely to be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR. However, this will be dependent on the progress that is made in respect of the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031 and the consultation responses received in relation to this document. The Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation, may identify sites for development at Sturminster Newton in addition to those growth areas identified in the LPP1. Nevertheless, a final decision on this matter is likely to be dependent on several factors including the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The responses to the consultation on this document will be fully considered before advancing to the Preferred Options stage.

Q15. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Sturminster Newton?

Q16. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Q17. What are the additional infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Sturminster Newton?

10. Stalbridge

- ***Where should possible future development be located in Stalbridge?***

Introduction

- 10.1 Stalbridge is located in the western part of North Dorset, close to the border with Somerset. It, along with Sturminster Newton and Marnhull, provides services and facilities that serve residents who live in the western part of the District. The population of Stalbridge is 2,753.²³

Current Policy Approach

- 10.2 Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) outlines the existing spatial strategy for North Dorset. It details that the four main towns (Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) will function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. With regards to Stalbridge, Policy 2 outlines that it and the eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns. Therefore, under the current policy context, development proposals at Stalbridge that seek to meet some of the strategic needs of the District are contrary to the core spatial strategy set out in LPP1.
- 10.3 A neighbourhood plan is not currently being progressed for Stalbridge. Furthermore, as far as NDDC is aware Stalbridge Town Council does not currently intend on producing a neighbourhood plan.

Reason for Possible Change

- 10.4 The reason for the possible change, in terms of Stalbridge meeting some of the strategic development needs of the District, is set out in Chapter 5 (Spatial Strategy). As detailed in that chapter, NDDC wishes to consider whether Stalbridge, which is the fifth largest settlement in the District, has the potential to accommodate a limited scale of growth rather than just providing for growth focused on meeting local needs. Given the size of Stalbridge, and the level of services and facilities it provides compared to the four main towns, especially Blandford, Gillingham and

²³ 2015 Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics

Shaftesbury, the Council considers that any potential growth at Stalbridge should be limited.

- 10.5 Allowing for some limited growth at Stalbridge would provide the Council with a greater level of flexibility in terms of identifying potential sites that could contribute towards meeting the local housing need figure (366 dwellings a year) for the District which has been identified by the Government as part of 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation' published September 2017. Chapter 3 (Housing) provides further information regarding the matter of housing need in the District.
- 10.6 Allowing for some limited growth is also likely to have advantages in terms of maintaining the vitality and viability of Stalbridge and ensuring the future sustainability of the town. Furthermore, new development provides possibilities in terms of improving the existing infrastructure provision in the town. Nevertheless, such potential benefits need to be weighed against possible disadvantages. For example, in the past housing development in the rural areas of the District significantly exceeded planned rates and in some cases had a negative impact on the character and appearance of settlements, yet did not always enable rural facilities to be retained or enhanced.
- 10.7 With regards to infrastructure, the Council is updating the existing Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of the LPR to ensure that infrastructure needs are identified. The Council considers that the grey, social and green infrastructure that would be required to support future growth at Stalbridge includes, amongst other things, the following:
- improvements to the highway network;
 - the extension of the North Dorset Trailway towards both Sturminster Newton and Templecombe, which is located in Somerset;
 - pedestrian and cycle network infrastructure including improved integration with the North Dorset Trailway, open spaces and community facilities;
 - public open space, play provision and new or enhanced sports/community facilities;
 - health service provision in the town; and
 - education facilities including pre-school provision.
- 10.8 Under the duty to cooperate, as required by legislation and national planning policy, NDDC will liaise with South Somerset District Council regarding the infrastructure needs at Stalbridge and the wider area. This will include highways matters and the extension of the North Dorset Trailway.

10.9 The Council is currently considering three outline planning applications for large scale residential developments at Stalbridge. These applications relate to sites off Lower Road, Barrow Hill and Thornhill Road. Whilst these proposals are outside the existing settlement boundary, and Stalbridge is not a focus for growth in the LPP1, the Council will have to consider the applications in the context that the District does not currently have a five-year housing land supply. If one or more of the planning applications is granted planning permission then the Council will take this into account when deciding upon its approach to possible future development at Stalbridge as part of the Preferred Options Document.

Constraints at Stalbridge

10.10 Potential new development at Stalbridge is constrained by:

- a number of heritage assets including a conservation area that covers a large part of the town and land beyond the settlement boundary including to the north and west of the town; and
- an inadequate highway network, particularly relating to the A357 that passes through the town.

10.11 In addition to the above there is an area to the south of Stalbridge which is at risk of flooding. However, given the fact that any potential growth at Stalbridge is likely to be limited in scale, flooding is unlikely to be a constraint.

Opportunities

10.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Future growth at Stalbridge is likely to:

Economic

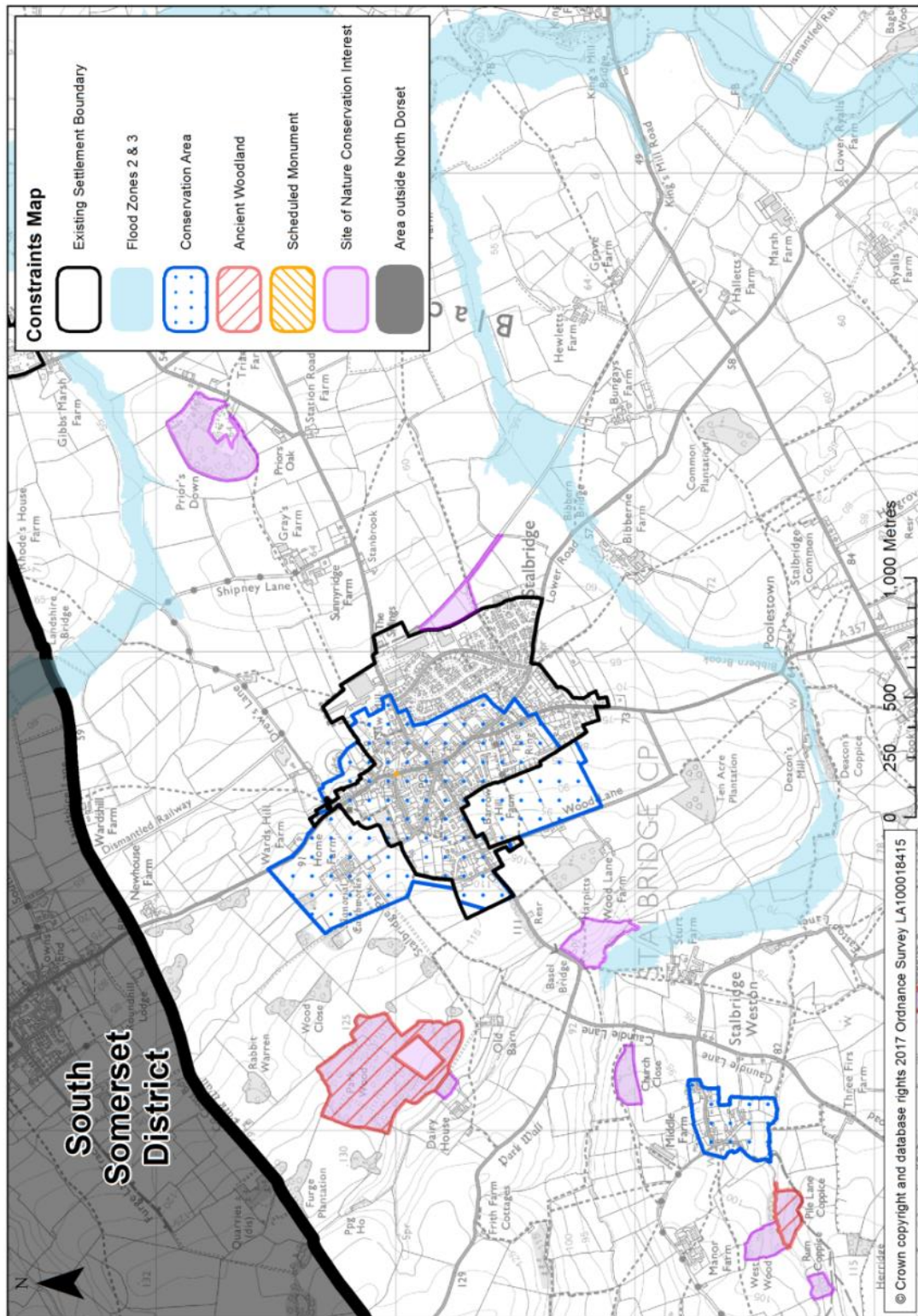
- support economic growth and job creation in the area;
- maintain and enhance services and facilities within the town;
- provide opportunities to make improvements to local infrastructure;

Social

- provide new housing, including affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the town;
- provide opportunities for families to remain in the town;
- improve community facilities, including recreational facilities, in the town; and

Environmental

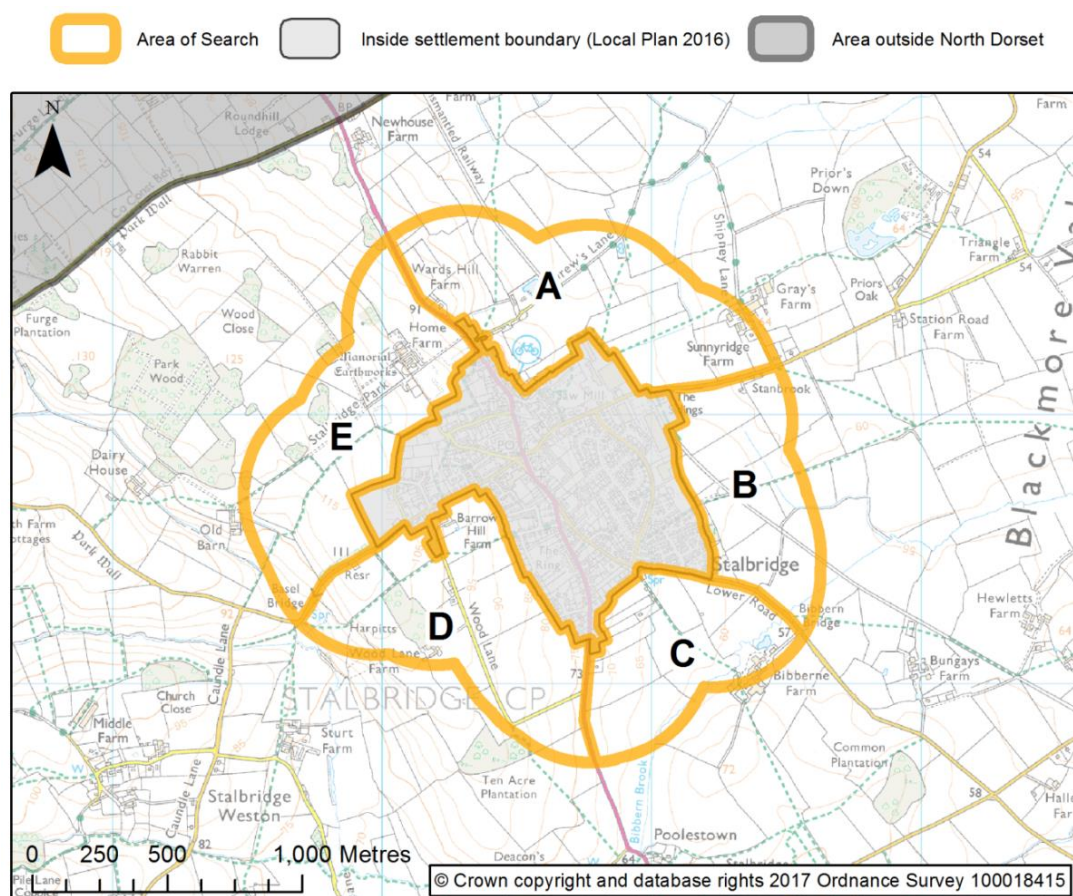
- provide opportunities for the provision and improvement of open space which could potentially bring biodiversity benefits.



Map 10.1: Constraints at Stalbridge

Areas of Search

- 10.13 As has already been set out, allowing some limited development at Stalbridge to meet some of the strategic development needs of the District would require a change to the Council’s current spatial strategy as detailed in Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) of the LPP1. The Council is consulting on this matter as part of this document and the consideration of areas of search for possible development at Stalbridge needs to be considered in this context. The Council will consider the responses to the consultation on this document before making a decision regarding whether to identify possible development sites at Stalbridge as part of the Preferred Options Document.
- 10.14 In considering potential future development options at Stalbridge, the Council has undertaken a 360 degree search around the existing settlement boundary that is defined for the town. The search has resulted in the identification of 5 areas (areas A to E). An unsuitable area has been discounted through an assessment exercise which has drawn on, amongst other things, the appraisal work set out in the Sustainability Appraisal. A map showing the areas of search is set out on the following page.



Area	Name	Issues	Possible development potential?
A	Land between A357 and Station Road	Impacts on the landscape. Possible highways constraints relating to the capacity of the highway network at Stalbridge.	✓
B	Land between Station Road and Lower Road	Impacts on biodiversity and the landscape. Possible highways constraints relating to the capacity of the highway network at Stalbridge.	✓
C	Land between Lower Road and Thornhill Road	Impacts on the landscape. Possible highways constraints relating to the capacity of the highway network at Stalbridge.	✓
D	Land between Thornhill Road and Barrow Hill	Impacts on biodiversity, the landscape and a heritage asset. Possible highways constraints relating to the capacity of the highway network at Stalbridge.	✓
E	Land between Barrow Hill and A357	Impacts on the landscape and heritage assets. Possible highways constraints relating to the capacity of the highway network at Stalbridge.	X

10.15 Areas A, B, C and D have been identified as possibly having some development potential, even if that potential is limited, and so may be subject to further detailed consideration through the LPR. The next stage in the LPR process will be to progress the plan towards the publication of a Preferred Options Document, which will also be subject to consultation. The responses to the consultation on this document will be fully considered before progressing to the Preferred Options stage. Subject to, amongst other things, the consultation responses received in respect of amending the existing core spatial strategy set out in LPP1, the

preferred options document may identify sites for development at Stalbridge.

Q18. Do you agree with the conclusions regarding the areas of search identified at Stalbridge?

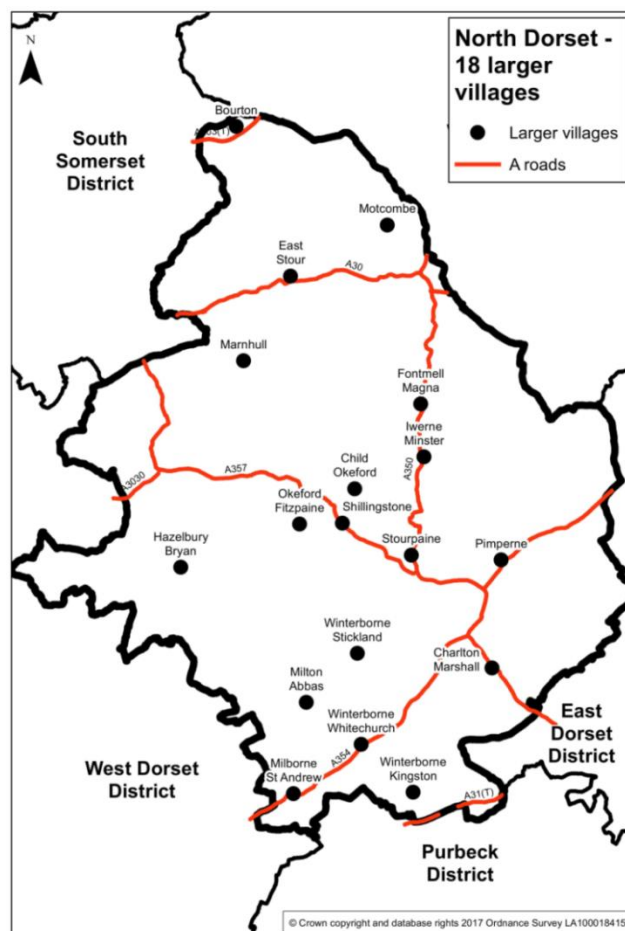
Q19. Are there any further issues relating to the areas of search that you think should have been considered as part of the assessment process?

Q20. What are the most important infrastructure requirements that are likely to result from potential future development at Stalbridge?

11. The Villages

Introduction

- 11.1 North Dorset is largely rural in character. One of the national core planning principles, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the need to support thriving rural communities within it. There are a substantial number of villages located within North Dorset. Eighteen of these are defined as larger villages in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1).
- 11.2 The larger villages, shown on the map below, are: Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch.



Map 11.1: The eighteen larger villages in North Dorset

Current Policy Approach

- 11.3 Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) in LPP1 outlines the existing spatial strategy for North Dorset. As set out in Chapter 5 (Spatial Strategy), Policy 2 details that the four main towns (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) will function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development.
- 11.4 The policy also outlines that Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns. With regards to the countryside, Policy 2 details that outside the defined settlement boundaries of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages, the remainder of the District will be subject to countryside policies where development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met. It also states that the focus at all the District's villages will be on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs.
- 11.5 Policy 9 (Rural Exception Affordable Housing) in LPP1 outlines the Council's current policy approach in relation to proposals for rural exception affordable housing. Policy 29 (The Re-Use of Existing Buildings in the Countryside) and Policy 30 (Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside) are of relevance in relation to proposals for employment uses in the countryside.

Proposed Approach

- 11.6 As referred to in Chapter 5 (Spatial Strategy), the Council is seeking views on Stalbridge's position in the settlement hierarchy and whether Stalbridge should possibly meet, in a limited way, some of the strategic development needs of the District. With regards to the eighteen larger villages located in the District it is not currently proposed to change the existing spatial strategy approach.
- 11.7 On this basis it is envisaged that new development at the eighteen larger villages will continue to meet local (rather than strategic) needs. In terms of residential development, the intention is that local needs will be met primarily through rural exception affordable housing schemes coming forward over the plan period. Employment needs will be addressed through the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside or the small-scale expansion of existing employment sites in the countryside.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 11.8 A large number of neighbourhood plans are being progressed across the District and some of these neighbourhoods plans relate to larger villages with the District. For example neighbourhood plans are being advanced

in respect of Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine and Pimperne. These neighbourhood plans provide an opportunity to identify sites that could meet development needs at these villages within the District. The Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2031, the first neighbourhood plan to be made (adopted) in North Dorset, allocates a number of sites for residential development. The Bourton - Dorset Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031, for which the examiner has recently published his report, does not allocate sites for residential development. For those larger villages that are not covered by a neighbourhood plan area designation, and Bourton, NDDC will liaise closely with the respective Parish Councils in terms of any specific development needs at those villages.

Q21. Do you agree with the Council’s proposed approach in relation to future development at the eighteen larger villages within the District or do you think that the Council should consider an alternative approach?

12. Affordable Housing

Introduction

11.1 Affordable housing refers to certain types of housing (e.g. social rented and intermediate housing) that are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Exception sites are sites for affordable housing which would not normally be granted planning consent for open market housing. This allows sites with relatively low land values to provide for 100% affordable housing without a fundamental policy objection.

Current Policy Approach

11.2 Policy 8 (Affordable Housing) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) outlines the Council's current policy approach in respect of affordable housing. It details, amongst other things, that development which delivers eleven or more net additional dwellings and which has a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 square metres will contribute to the provision of affordable housing. Additionally, it also outlines that on schemes of six to ten dwellings in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty financial contributions to the provision of affordable housing will be sought. This policy approach is in line with a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) dated 28 November 2014.²⁴

11.3 During the examination of the LPP1 the WMS had been successfully challenged in the High Court.²⁵ The consequence of the judgement was that policies in the WMS must not be treated as a national consideration in development management and development plan procedures and decisions. The Council considered the implications of the judgement but wished to proceed on the basis of Policy 8 in the plan. The Council was of the view, which it expressed to the Inspector, that the matter of affordable housing thresholds could be dealt with through the Local Plan Review (LPR). Consequently, in his report the Inspector makes several references to the affordable housing thresholds being considered as part of the review of the plan.

11.4 The Government decided to appeal the decision made in the High Court on four different grounds. All four grounds of appeal were successful and

²⁴ Written Statement made by: The Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis) titled 'Support for small scale developers, custom and self-builders'.

²⁵ West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

the appeal was allowed. On the 13 May 2016 an order of the Court of Appeal gave legal effect to the policy set out in the WMS of 28 October 2014 and stated it should be taken into account. Given this situation the Council considers that its approach to setting thresholds in Policy 8 of the LPP1 is consistent with national policy and as a result there is currently no need to revise the thresholds detailed in the policy as part of the LPR. However, the Council does consider that Policy 9 (Rural Exception Affordable Housing) could potentially benefit from some amendments.

- 11.5 Policy 9 in the LPP1 details the Council's current policy approach in respect of exception sites for affordable housing. It sets out that rural exception affordable housing schemes will only be permitted within or adjoining the built-up area of the District's smaller villages. The policy also states that at Stalbridge and the larger villages, rural exception sites will be permitted adjoining the settlement boundaries. The existing policy does not allow for rural exception affordable housing within or adjoining the settlements of Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury or Sturminster Newton.
- 11.6 Further to the above, Policy 9 states that 'when searching for a rural exception site at a settlement, a rural exception affordable housing site should be sought, in the first instance, on a site with a capacity for no more than nine dwellings in total (including both affordable and market elements)'. In addition, at the Council's discretion, the policy allows for a small number of market homes, which should not exceed one third of the total number of homes being proposed, on a rural exception site as part of a rural exception affordable housing scheme.

Reason for Change

- 11.7 Whilst the existing policy in LPP1 is in conformity with current national planning policy and guidance, in order to maximise the delivery of affordable housing in the District it is considered that a more flexible stance could be taken in terms of the Council's policy approach to exception sites for affordable housing. A more flexible approach could increase the amount of affordable housing that is developed in the District and thus allow for additional affordable housing to be provided for local people.
- 11.8 It is of note that the Government's Housing White Paper, published in February 2017, sets out a range of proposals to amend national policy relating to affordable housing. This includes revising the definition of affordable housing to include a wider range of affordable housing products including starter homes. The Council will be mindful of these proposals as the LPR progresses and future iterations of the plan will take into account changes to national policy regarding affordable housing.

Proposed Approach

- 11.9 In terms of enabling a more flexible approach it is considered that two specific changes could be made to the existing policy context as set out in Policy 9 of LPP1. One of these changes would be to remove the requirement that the capacity of rural exception sites should allow for no more than nine dwellings in total. This would allow for potentially larger exception schemes to come forward in instances where it could be demonstrated that the local need exceeded that which could be met by the provision of nine dwellings.

Q22. Do you consider that the existing reference to nine dwellings in Policy 9 of LPP1 should be removed from the policy to allow larger schemes to come forward where there is evidence of local need in excess of that which could be met by the provision of nine dwellings?

- 11.10 In addition to the possible change suggested above, a further change that could be made to the policy to make it more flexible would be to allow exception sites to come forward adjacent to the four main towns within the District. The way that the policy is currently worded only allows for exception sites to come forward adjacent to the existing settlement boundaries at Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages or within or adjacent to the built-up areas of the smaller villages. It is considered that allowing exception sites to come forward adjacent to the four main towns would possibly allow for a greater level of affordable housing to come forward within the District. Nevertheless, any such proposals would have to be considered carefully to ensure that any potential exception sites do not compromise comprehensive development coming forward at the four main towns in the future.

Q23. Do you consider that the existing policy approach, which seeks to prevent exception sites coming forward adjacent to the four main towns within the District, should be amended?

- 11.11 In addition to the potential changes set out above, it is considered that the policy could possibly benefit from one further additional change. This relates to the existing policy approach which allows for a small number of market homes on a rural exception site, as part of a rural exception affordable housing scheme. This approach allows for cross-subsidy from market housing, and it is in conformity with national planning policy and guidance. However, in order to try and maximise the

delivery of affordable housing in the District it is considered that a different policy approach could be taken which would not allow for the cross-subsidy of affordable housing from market housing. The existing policy approach reduces the likelihood of 100% affordable housing schemes being delivered.

Q24. Do you consider that the Council should continue with its existing policy approach, which allows for a small number of market homes on rural exception sites?

13. Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

Introduction

- 12.1 'Self-build' is defined by the National Custom and Self-Build Association as a project where someone directly organises the design and construction of their own dwelling. In 2011 the Government introduced the term 'custom-build housing' in its Housing Strategy for England;²⁶ this is generally taken to be where someone works with a specialist developer who deals with construction and design matters.
- 12.2 Local planning authorities are required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to:
- 'plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);...'²⁷
- 12.3 Most recently, the Government's Housing White Paper²⁸ maintains that there is significant demand for land for self-build dwellings and seeks to support custom and self-build housing. The White Paper states that:
- 'Policies in plans should allow a good mix of sites to come forward for development, so that there is choice for consumers, places can grow in ways that are sustainable, and there are opportunities for a diverse construction sector. Small sites create particular opportunities for custom builders and smaller developers.'

Current Approach

- 12.4 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) was adopted in January 2016. Towards the end of its preparation, self-build and custom-build housing²⁹ was increasingly being seen as means of delivering housing alongside 'mainstream' development. However, LPP1 does not include policies

²⁶ Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England - DCLG, November 2011,

²⁷ Para 50, National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012, DCLG.

²⁸ Fixing Our Broken Housing Market - February 2017, DCLG.

²⁹ For convenience, reference in this document is to 'self-build housing' but encompasses custom-build housing.

directed at self-build housing provision. The Local Plan Review (LPR) offers the opportunity to address this.

Reason for Change

- 12.5 The LPP1 does not make specific policy provision for self-build housing, either as part of a larger development, in respect of small sites or as an exception to the overall policies of the plan. To that extent, the LPP1 is not fully in harmony with government policy and guidance which seeks to promote self-build housing.
- 12.6 In North Dorset the main indication of demand for self-build housing comes from the Council's register of self-build interest.³⁰ At the time of writing, eighteen people have registered interest in North Dorset alone while thirty-seven have registered interest in North Dorset as well as West Dorset and Weymouth. Some of these will also be registered with other local authorities. All expressions of interest in North Dorset relate to single plots.

Proposed Approach

- 12.7 There are a number of different ways in which the Council could promote the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build housing in order to meet the need evidenced by the Self-Build Register. In summary, the main options are set out below.
- Allowing serviced plots to come forward under the current development plan policies. This would result in an uncertain supply of sites in terms of plot size, timing and numbers. The provision of serviced self-build plots would largely be at the discretion of developers.
 - Updating Policy 7 (Delivering Homes) in the LPP1 to promote the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build housing. Depending on the exact nature of the policy change, this could offer a more certain supply of serviced plots for self-build housing.
 - Requiring, on sites above a certain size, that serviced self-build plots should be made available as a proportion of the total

³⁰ Relevant authorities, of which North Dorset District Council is one, are required (under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015) to keep a public register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area. Local planning authorities must have regard to the register when carrying out their functions related to planning, housing, the disposal of any of their land, or regeneration.

number of dwellings permitted (with or without a minimum number being specified) on-site. Greater certainty of supply would come from a clear requirement that self-build plots must be made available on larger housing sites. This would be expressed through policy and implemented through planning permissions.

- Allowing a proportion (up to 100%) of self-build plots on exception sites (with controls over the resale value of the properties). Allowing self-build development on exception sites might mean that more local demand could be met and that additional plots might be made available than if self-build were not allowed on exception sites.
- Working with public sector partners to identify land which could be made available for self-build and identified as such through the LPR. North Dorset District Council owns a limited amount of land which is currently available and suitable for development. Consequently, this option is likely to involve working with other public sector organisations with landholdings such as Dorset County Council.
- The use of Local Development Orders (LDOs) to facilitate self-build development. LDOs would be most helpful in the context of self-build by providing a means to speed up the granting of planning permissions. Self-builders would thus avoid the uncertainties of obtaining planning permission and, by being able to start building sooner, would benefit financially.

- Q25.** Do you consider that the Council should facilitate the provision of self-build housing by any, some, or all of the following options?
- a.** Allowing serviced plots to come forward under the current development plan policies.
 - b.** Updating Policy 7 (Delivering Homes) in the Local Plan Part 1 to promote the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build housing.
 - c.** Requiring on sites above a certain size that serviced self-build plots should be made available as a proportion of the total number of dwellings permitted (with or without a minimum number being specified) on-site.
 - d.** Allowing a proportion (up to 100%) of self-build plots on exception sites (with controls over the resale value of the properties).
 - e.** Identifying land in public ownership which would be sold only for self-build development.
 - f.** The use of Local Development Orders to facilitate self-build development.

- Q26.** Are there any other approaches that could be used to meet the demand for self-build housing?

14. Ensuring the Vitality and Viability of Town Centres

Introduction

- 13.1 Town centres are at the heart of communities, providing access to shops, services, employment and leisure facilities. Vital and viable town centres not only provide economic and social benefits, but also help to foster civic pride, promote local identity and contribute towards the aims of sustainable development. Town centres, however, are facing significant challenges to their current and future vitality and viability, including from:
- the longstanding impact of the economic downturn on market demand and investment;
 - the continued pressure for new retail floorspace outside of town centres;
 - the rise in vacancy levels in poor performing centres; and
 - the growth in internet/multi-channel retailing and its impact on the way people shop.
- 13.2 Paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies to be positive, promote competitive town centre environments, and set out policies for the management and growth of centres. In doing so it sets out actions to ensure the vitality of town centres when local plans are drawn up. These include both defining a network and hierarchy of centres and the extent of town centres, primary shopping areas, and primary and secondary shopping frontages.
- 13.3 Under paragraph 24 of the NPPF, a sequential test is applied to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date local plan.³¹ Under paragraph 26, an impact assessment is required when assessing applications for retail, leisure or office development which meet these circumstances and which are above a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. Where

³¹ Main town centre uses (as defined in the Glossary to the NPPF) are: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

no locally set threshold is set, the NPPF identifies 2,500 square metres as the default threshold over which an impact assessment is required.

Current Approach

13.4 Policy 12 (Retail, Leisure and Other Commercial Developments) in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) outlines the current approach to enhancing and maintaining the vitality of the District's town centres, identified as Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. Policy 12 details that their town centre and primary shopping area boundaries will be defined as part of Local Plan Part 2 (this now forms part of the Local Plan Review), unless previously defined in a neighbourhood plan. In the interim, as set out in paragraph 6.48 of LPP1, the Council is using available evidence to make judgements about whether a particular site falls within a town centre, including, for town centre boundaries:

- draft town centre boundaries identified in the Council's 2005 Annual Monitoring Report;
- locally produced evidence base studies, such as the Gillingham and Sturminster Newton Town Design Statements; and
- evidence in planning applications for main town centre uses where the sequential test in national policy has been applied;

and for primary shopping areas:

- recommended primary shopping areas identified in the 2008 Joint Retail Study.³²

13.5 Policy 12 outlines that the primary and secondary shopping frontages defined for the town centres in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan 2003 (NDDWLP) will continue to be used for development management purposes until they are reviewed through Local Plan Part 2 (as already stated this now forms part of the Local Plan Review), or a neighbourhood plan. In the interim, however, and as set out in paragraph 6.50 of LPP1, the Council will also have regard to:

- the recommended primary and secondary shopping frontages identified in the 2008 Joint Retail Study.

³² Recommended Primary Shopping Areas for the four main towns in North Dorset are shown in Appendix C of the Joint Retail Assessment: Christchurch Borough Council, East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council and Purbeck District Councils: Volume 1 Capacity Analysis, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (March 2008).

- 13.6 Policy 12 sets out the Council's approach to meeting identified needs for main town centre uses as:
- working to reduce vacancy rates in town centre shops;
 - encouraging the implementation of existing planning permissions for additional retail floorspace;
 - permitting retail and other main town centre uses in town centres and on sites identified for mixed-use regeneration on the edge of Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton town centres, as identified in Policy 11 – the Economy and set out in more detail in Policies 16 to 19; and
 - working with local communities to take forward proposals for town centre enhancement and growth through neighbourhood planning or other local, community-based initiatives.
- 13.7 The Council has not set a locally derived floorspace threshold but instead, as referred to in paragraph 6.82 of LPP1, applies the NPPF default threshold of 2,500 square metres to determine the need for an impact assessment to accompany planning applications for retail, leisure or office developments that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date local plan.

Neighbourhood Planning in North Dorset

- 13.8 Neighbourhood plans are currently being prepared for each of the four main towns. Whilst that for Shaftesbury is still in its early stages, the other three are well progressed. The neighbourhood plan relating to Blandford Forum (Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015–2031) has been examined, and both Gillingham's and Sturminster Newton's plans have been submitted for examination. All three of these neighbourhood plans include policies in respect of their town centres, and so have been taken into account in the production of this chapter. As referred to in Chapter 1 (Introduction), the Local Plan Review is not seeking to undermine those neighbourhood plans that are being progressed. Rather it is hoped that through a collaborative approach, NDDC and town and parish councils/neighbourhood plan groups will be able to work together to ensure that there are no conformity issues between the Local Plan Review and neighbourhood plans that are being progressed.

Reason for Change

- 13.9 As identified above, the Council's current approach relies on a number of sources, including the 2008 Joint Retail Assessment, in order to fulfil certain requirements of the NPPF relating to ensuring the vitality of town centres, namely the identification of:

- town centre boundaries
- primary shopping areas
- primary and secondary shopping frontages
- locally-set impact assessment threshold(s)

13.10 It is now ten years since the 2008 Joint Retail Assessment was researched and so a new study has been commissioned, in conjunction with West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Councils. This will provide up-to-date evidence in respect of retailing, commercial and leisure uses and town centres to inform the Local Plan Review and, where relevant, the preparation of neighbourhood plans. From this study the Council will have the following outputs as evidence to consider in devising local plan policy:

- the need/capacity for new retail, leisure and town centre floorspace/uses;
- the most appropriate mix of uses needed to enhance overall vitality and viability within the town centres;
- recommendations for locations for new uses, where appropriate;
- recommendations for the hierarchy and network of centres;
- recommended town centre boundaries, primary shopping areas and primary and secondary shopping frontages.
- recommended floorspace thresholds appropriate to North Dorset for impact assessments of proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres.

Proposed Approach

13.11 The new retail and town centres study will provide a range of evidence to be considered in terms of informing the Council's proposed approach. Prior to the completion of the study, one matter that the Council is considering is the role of Stalbridge. Currently the hierarchy and network of centres comprises the four main towns of Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton. As outlined in Chapter 5 (Spatial Strategy), the Council is considering whether to amend the spatial strategy to allow for some limited growth at Stalbridge beyond just meeting local needs. To reflect this potential new status, the Council also wishes consideration to be given to including Stalbridge in North Dorset's hierarchy and network of centres. Given the size of Stalbridge town centre and its retail offer and range of services compared to the four main towns, the Council considers that its position in the hierarchy should be that of a 'local centre', i.e. one level lower than a 'town centre'.

Q27. Do you consider that the existing hierarchy and network of centres, as set out in LPP1, should be amended to include Stalbridge as a 'local centre'?

15. Important Open or Wooded Areas

Introduction

- 14.1 Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWAs) is a policy designation retained from the 2003 North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (NDDWLP). It therefore continues to form part of the development plan.

Current Policy Approach

- 14.2 The NDDWLP introduces the IOWA policy by stating: ‘The character of many settlements is derived from the relationship between built form and open spaces. It is important that open and wooded areas within settlement boundaries are protected from development, especially as there is generally a stronger presumption in favour of granting planning permission for development within a settlement boundary.’ This is followed by Policy 1.9 (Important Open or Wooded Areas) which states: ‘Designated Important Open or Wooded Areas will be protected from development.’
- 14.3 The IOWAs are not individually listed in the NDDWLP but they are identified on the Proposals Map. There are approximately 350 IOWAs across the District covering about 264 hectares of land. They include both public and privately owned areas of land.
- 14.4 In terms of the rationale for designating land as an IOWA, paragraph 1.54 of NDDWLP outlines ‘The most important criterion used for selection is the overall contribution that the IOWA gives in visual or amenity terms to public areas within the town or village.’ Furthermore, paragraph 1.57 details that ‘School Playing Fields and Recreation Grounds have been included within Settlement Boundaries and designated as IOWAs in view of their amenity value in both visual and recreational terms.’
- 14.5 The Inspector who examined the NDDWLP recommended a review of the IOWA sites in order to delete those areas which do not need to be completely protected from development, or alternatively, could be placed into the countryside area beyond the Settlement Boundaries. This review did not take place prior to adoption of the NDDWLP in 2003.
- 14.6 Turning to the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1), paragraph 7.135 of LPP1 notes that Policy 1.9 of the NDDWLP is still part of the development plan and that the policy protects land from development. However, it also outlines that at the examination of the NDDWLP the Inspector recommended a review of the IOWA designations and that the review will be undertaken as part of Local Plan Part 2 (this now forms part of the Local Plan Review) or through neighbourhood plans.

14.7 Paragraph 7.135 goes on to detail that prior to the review being completed, and as an interim measure, ‘where a robust review of the contribution of a designated site is undertaken to support a planning application, this will be taken into account in the decision making process.’ This approach has the consequence of potentially limiting the weight that can be attributed to Policy 1.9 when determining a planning application relating to an area of land that is designated as an IOWA. It is also time consuming for both the Council and applicants, and provides less certainty of communities.

Neighbourhood Plans

14.8 As described in Chapter 1 (Introduction), there are currently fourteen designated neighbourhood areas in North Dorset. Neighbourhood plans for these areas are being progressed by neighbourhood plan groups in conjunction with town and parish councils (the qualifying bodies). The neighbourhood plan groups have been encouraged to review IOWAs in their plan area and consider using the nationally recognised Local Green Space (LGS) designation.³³ LGS designation allows communities to identify green areas of particular importance to them and rule out new development on them other than in very special circumstances. However, LGS designation is not always appropriate and should only be used where:

- the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

14.9 The Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan 2016–2031 (the first neighbourhood plan to be ‘made’ in North Dorset) identifies a number of LGSs. That plan, and other neighbourhood plans that are being progressed, will be taken into account by NDDC as it progresses with work reviewing IOWAs within the District.

Reasons for Change

14.10 As mentioned above, the need to carry out a review of the existing IOWAs in the District is a matter that has been identified by the

³³ National Planning Policy Framework, paras 76–77.

Inspectors who examined the 2003 NDDWLP 2003 and the 2016 LPP1. Since the IOWA designation became part of the development plan in 2003, there have been considerable changes to national policy, especially with the introduction of the Local Green Space designation in the NPPF.

Proposed Approach

- 14.11 NDDC is currently conducting a comprehensive review of all those areas of land within the District that are designated an IOWA. This will assist in establishing whether these areas of land still need to be designated as an IOWA in order to protect them from development.
- 14.12 An early finding of the review work is that as a result of the settlement boundaries at the smaller villages being deleted as part of the LPP1, in planning policy terms over a third of the IOWAs are now located within the countryside. Consequently, there is an argument that there is no need to carry these IOWAs forward as they are protected from development by other policies including Policy 20 (The Countryside) in LPP1. Policy 20 in LPP1 seeks to restrict development in the countryside (i.e. land outside of the defined settlement boundaries) except in particular circumstances. This tends to be when there is an 'overriding need' for a particular development to be located in the countryside.
- 14.13 In terms of the IOWAs that are located within the settlement boundaries of one of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the eighteen larger villages, NDDC is in the process of surveying them to determine whether they continue to merit policy protection from development. Initial findings suggest that a significant number of these IOWAs are protected from development by other policies.
- 14.14 For example, a number of the IOWAs are located within a conservation area or are situated within the setting of a listed building and therefore are afforded policy protection by Policy 5 (The Historic Environment) in LPP1, and other legislation, that aims to protect heritage assets from inappropriate development. In addition, some IOWAs are subject to a nature conservation designation and, therefore, Policy 4 (The Natural Environment) in LPP1 offers some protection against development. In instances where other planning policies protect an area of land from development it is considered unlikely that it will be necessary to maintain the IOWA designation.

Q28. Do you agree that those IOWAs, which are protected from development by other planning policies or legislation, should be deleted?

16. The A350 Corridor

Introduction

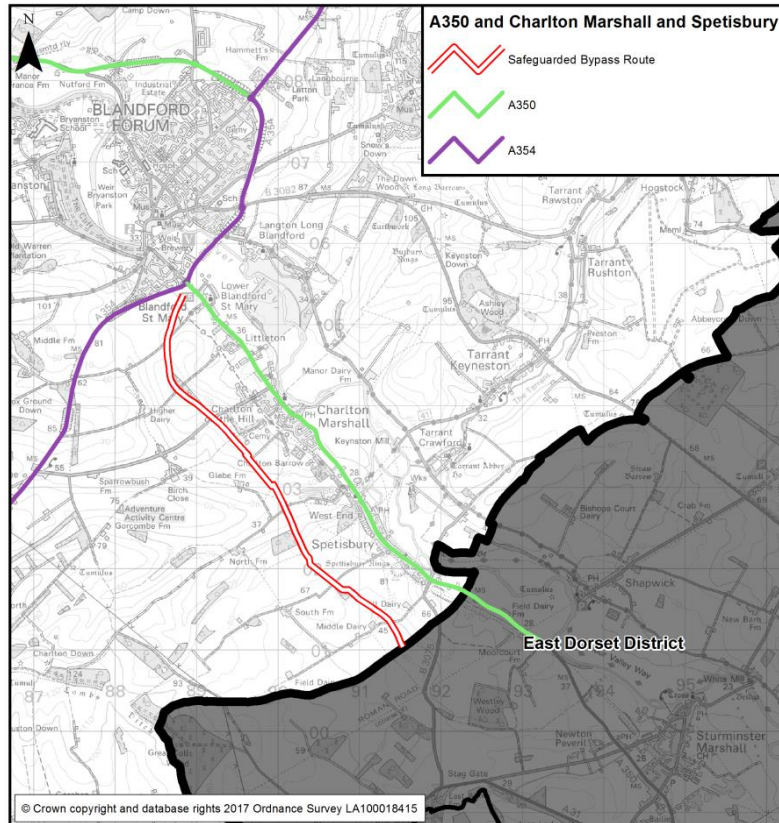
- 15.1 Appendix A of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) is a schedule of saved policies from the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (NDDWLP) 2003. It identifies which ones will be retained until reviewed in either the Local Plan Part 2 (which now forms part of the Local Plan Review) or through a neighbourhood plan. Contained within that schedule is Policy 5.21 Safeguarding of Land and Policy 5.22 The A350 Corridor.

Current Approach

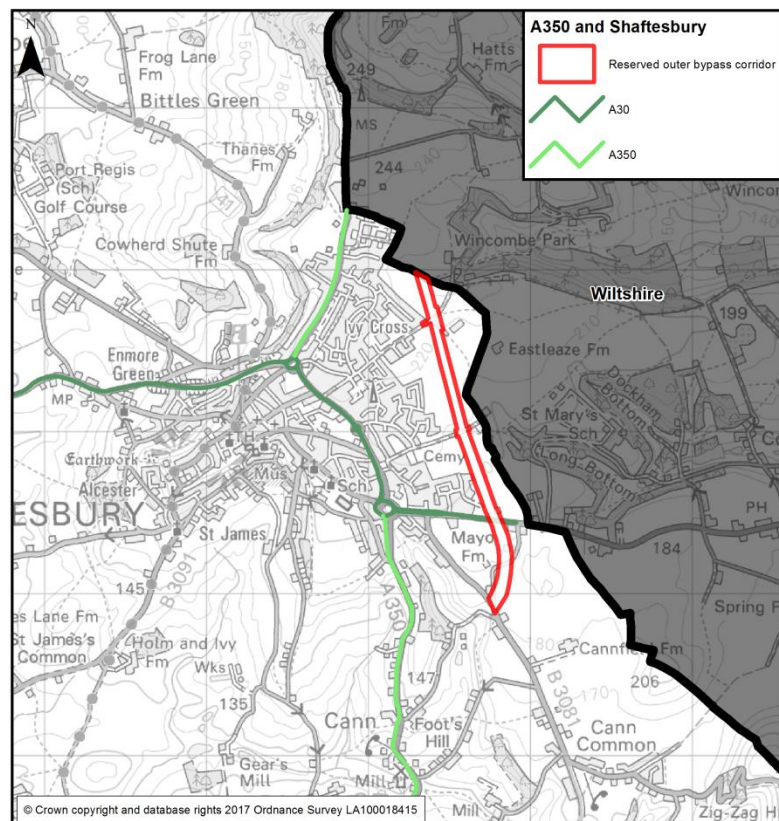
- 15.2 LPP1 sets out in Policy 16 (Blandford) that a route for the Spetisbury and Charlton Marshall Bypass is to be safeguarded within the proposed housing site to the south-east of Blandford St Mary. Policy 18 (Shaftesbury) indicates that the existing route of the Shaftesbury Outer Bypass will also be safeguarded. Therefore NDDWLP (2003) Policies 5.21 and 5.22 continue to be saved until the need for both schemes is reviewed. If the safeguarded routes are to be retained in the long term, their route will be shown in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 2 (which now forms part of the Local Plan Review).
- 15.3 Dorset County Council's (DCC) Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) 2011–2026 outlines in paragraph 12.4.8 that improvements to the A350 corridor are given a high level of importance by local businesses and remain an aspiration of North Dorset District Council (NDDC) and other bodies. The A350 remains a National Primary Route since it provides the main link to the north from the south-east Dorset conurbation (including use by Heavy Goods Vehicles), but the existing road is of poor quality and substantially impacts on the communities through which it passes. Attempts at environmental improvements undertaken during the period covered by Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) have had limited impact. Funding and environmental constraints mean that any major scheme is unlikely to progress during the period covered by LTP3 and the focus will need to continue to be on low cost traffic management measures.

Reason for change

- 15.4 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 details specific matters to which a local planning authority must have regard when preparing a Local Plan and paragraph (i) requires the local authority to have regard to the resources likely to be available for implementing the proposals in the document.



Map 16.1: Safeguarded bypass route at Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury



Map 16.2: Reserved outer bypass corridor at Shaftesbury

- 15.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out in paragraph 17 the core principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking and this includes proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. The NPPF also requires, in paragraph 21, that Local Plans should identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement.
- 15.6 However, when promoting sustainable transport, the NPPF outlines in paragraph 31 that local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including large scale facilities, and transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of ports, airports or other major generators of travel demand in their areas. To achieve this, paragraph 41 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. Paragraph 173 sets out that plans should be deliverable and that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking.
- 15.7 Paragraph 017 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance further emphasises that a Local Plan is an opportunity for a local planning authority to set out a positive vision for an area, but the plan should also be realistic about what can be achieved and when (including in relation to infrastructure). This means paying careful attention to providing an adequate supply of land, identifying what infrastructure is required and how it can be funded and brought on stream at the appropriate time; and ensuring that the requirements of the plan as a whole will not prejudice the viability of development. The Local Plan should make clear, for at least the first 5 years, what infrastructure is required, who is going to fund and provide it, and how it relates to the anticipated rate and phasing of development. If it is known that a development is unlikely to come forward until after the plan period due to, for example, uncertainty over deliverability of key infrastructure, then this should be clearly stated in the draft plan. Where the deliverability of critical infrastructure is uncertain then the plan should address the consequences of this, including possible contingency arrangements and alternative strategies.
- 15.8 The A350 is strategic in nature and affects multiple local authorities. The local highways authority, DCC, has been in discussion with the other authorities that are affected by the widely recognised negative impacts and the brake on economic growth that poor connectivity of the north-south route brings. Highways England has formally recognised the issues in its South West Peninsula Route Strategy, and the Dorset, Swindon and

Wiltshire Strategic Economic Plans recognise that improvement to the A350 corridor is key to future economic growth.

- 15.9 Poor north–south connectivity between the M4 and the south coast ports is identified as an issue in Highways England’s South West Peninsula Route Strategy, particularly in relation to the A350 corridor. Local authorities in Dorset, Bath & North East Somerset Council (BANES) and Wiltshire Council are working with Highways England to make the case that a major route study should be undertaken in advance of the next Roads Investment Strategy period (RIS 2). Furthermore, the local authorities, together with the local economic partnerships, have recently published the South of England North-South Connectivity Prospectus. This supports the case for better transport links between the Port of Poole and the M4 Corridor.
- 15.10 A route study would provide evidence which would help in trying to secure funding for improvements on the route. However, given the scale and significant nature of the improvements that are required along the A350 corridor, funding to support delivery of the improvements is uncertain at this stage. Furthermore, it is of note that if a major route study was undertaken by Highways England it would need to consider the whole route and focus potential improvements on those parts of the route that are under the greatest pressure.

Proposed Approach

- 15.11 Existing evidence suggests that the delivery of the bypasses on the reserved corridors at Shaftesbury and Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury is uncertain. However, as set out above relevant local authorities and local economic partnerships are lobbying Government to improve the existing transport links between the Port of Poole and the M4 Corridor.
- 15.12 As detailed earlier within this chapter an important feature of national planning policy and guidance is that local planning authorities have to be able to demonstrate that proposals contained within Local Plans are deliverable. Therefore, as part of the LPR process NDDC will continue to assess the likelihood of either bypass being constructed during the period covered by the LPR.

Q29. Do you consider that the land which is identified and safeguarded for the Shaftesbury Outer Bypass and the Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury Bypass should continue to be identified and safeguarded for such purposes?

**Consultation on this document
will run from 27 November 2017
to 5pm on 22 January 2018.**

Supporting documents and response forms
are available online at:

dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy

Send any comments to:

Email: **planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk**

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