

North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 Part 1: Pre-submission Focused Changes

Major (and Consequential) Changes to the Pre-submission Document and Further Proposed Changes to the Proposals Map

Comments:

Allocation for the first time of the land **southeast** of Blandford St Mary for substantial residential development prompts the need to look again at the retained allocation of land **west** of Blandford St Mary. Any development here will result in significant levels of traffic passing through the historic village of Lower Bryanston with consequent adverse impacts on highway and pedestrian safety and the character of the Conservation Area. The junction of New Road, Fairmile and the old Dorchester Hill is renowned for its confusing arrangement and “near misses”. There are inadequate pedestrian facilities and no room for improvement. There is a narrow footpath on only one side of the road past the cottages and Berkeley Lodge and the alignment of the road/parked cars affords poor forward visibility. The roundabout outside Bryanston School Gates is another source of confusion and regular incident and will require major remodelling if safety is to be improved. There is a narrow footpath on only one side of the old town bridge - not enough width for people to pass with pushchairs, pets etc, without stepping into the road. The narrow carriageway brings fast moving traffic including heavy lorries very close to the kerb. Any significant increase in vehicles passing through this area will undoubtedly harm the otherwise relatively quiet village atmosphere and character. In addition vehicles heading for the Blandford School, the employment areas to the north of the town and the A357 and A354 routes to Sturminster and Salisbury respectively are likely to take the shortest route – through the town centre rather than around the bypass adding to congestion.

The allocation of the land southeast of Blandford Mary is an appropriate alternative and provides an excellent opportunity to avoid the adverse impacts of development west of the village. There are very few constraints to extensive development to the southeast – with increased housing numbers possible without undue landscape harm or impact on amenity. There will be ready access to the bypass from which all parts of the town can be reached. The long-stay Stour Meadows car park, Tesco and the Brewery redevelopment are all accessible. Greater housing numbers could result in significant capital contributions to finance pedestrian/trailway and amenity improvements.

In conclusion, the revised strategy for long-term housing growth in Blandford fails to exploit the potential for the southeast allocation to offer an alternative to the development of land west of Blandford St Mary which will lead to demonstrable harm from additional traffic through the historic village of Lower Bryanston and into the town centre along inadequate roads with poor pedestrian facilities.

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