



# Dorset Council Local Plan



## Settlement Hierarchy

Background Paper



Dorset  
Council

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The draft Dorset Council Local Plan includes a spatial strategy for the distribution of future growth, a key element of which is the distribution of housing development.
- 1.2 The spatial strategy has been developed having regard to a number of factors, one of which is the role played by existing settlements. The role of each settlement reflects:
  - its influence on housing and economic markets;
  - its place in the settlement hierarchy within each housing and economic market;
  - its function (for example, as a market town or a seaside resort); and
  - any associated economic / social issues, such as an imbalance between housing and jobs or a lack of affordable housing.
- 1.3 The settlement hierarchy for Dorset has been developed in the context of the four functional economic and housing market areas identified in the Background Paper: Functional Economic and Housing Market Areas in Dorset, which are:
  - South Eastern Dorset, which forms part of the wider functional area centred on the Bournemouth / Christchurch / Poole conurbation;
  - Central Dorset, centred on the towns of Dorchester and Weymouth;
  - Northern Dorset, which forms part of the wider A303 Corridor extending into Somerset and Wiltshire; and
  - Western Dorset, centred on the town of Bridport.
- 1.4 This background paper explains how the settlement hierarchy in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan has been developed. It sets out the hierarchy by defining the different 'tiers' of settlements in each of the four functional economic and housing market areas in Dorset.
- 1.5 In relation to the larger settlements, this paper looks at the settlement hierarchies in the currently adopted local plans for the former Boroughs and Districts and explains how these were reviewed and brought together to give a consistent approach across the Dorset Council area. In South Eastern Dorset, the analysis focused on settlements with a population of 2,000+. However, elsewhere in Dorset where some of the towns are very small the analysis focused on settlements with a population of 1,000+. Stalbridge (in the former North Dorset area) has a population of 2,492 within the main built-up area and Beaminster (in the former West Dorset area) has a population of 2,890).
- 1.6 In relation to the smaller settlements, this paper also explains the more detailed work undertaken, including consultation with local communities, to establish a consistent approach to villages and hamlets across the Dorset Council area.

## 2. [South Eastern Dorset Functional Area: defining a settlement hierarchy](#)

### 2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. Before Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council were formed on 01 April 2019, there were nine councils in the area divided between two Housing Market Areas (HMAs), identified in the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>1</sup> produced by GL Hearn in October 2015.
- 2.1.2. The assessment put the areas covered by the former district / boroughs of Purbeck, East Dorset, North Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole in the Eastern Dorset HMA and put West Dorset district and Weymouth & Portland borough in the Western Dorset HMA.
- 2.1.3. This section of the background paper examines the upper levels of the settlement hierarchies set out in the adopted local plans for local authorities within the Eastern Dorset HMA, which now lie within the newly defined South Eastern Dorset Functional Area (see background paper on the definition of the four Functional Economic and Housing Market Areas in Dorset). These hierarchies are examined firstly within the South East Dorset Green Belt, and subsequently beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt.
- 2.1.4. Subsequent sections of the background paper examine the upper levels of the settlement hierarchies set out in the adopted local plans across the rest of Dorset, which lie within the other three newly defined Functional Economic and Housing Market Areas in Dorset.

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2015, GL Hearn Limited

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/joint-planning-policy-work/pdfs/shma/2015/eastern-dorset-hma-2015-strategic-housing-market-assessment.pdf>

## 2.2. South Eastern Dorset - settlements within the Green Belt

2.2.1. Each adopted local plan in the Eastern Dorset HMA set out its own settlement hierarchy and each hierarchy described the settlements at different tiers differently. A more consistent approach is needed for the new Dorset Council Local Plan.

Figure 2.1: South Eastern Dorset Functional Area - larger settlements within the Green Belt as defined in former district local plans

Settlement	Former district	Status in local plan settlement hierarchy
Parts of the main built-up area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole		
Corfe Mullen	East Dorset	Main settlement
Upton	Purbeck	Town
Towns / main Settlements		
Ferndown & West Parley	East Dorset	Main settlement
Verwood	East Dorset	Main settlement
Wareham	Purbeck	Town
Wimborne Minster	East Dorset	Main settlement
Suburban and district centres		
Colehill	East Dorset	Suburban centre
St Leonards & St Ives	East Dorset	Suburban centre
West Moors	East Dorset	District centre
Key service villages and rural service centres		
Lytchett Matravers	Purbeck	Key service village
Sandford	Purbeck	Key service village
Sturminster Marshall	East Dorset	Rural service centre
Three Legged Cross	East Dorset	Rural service centre

- 2.2.2. Figure 2.1 compares how the larger settlements (generally 2,000+ population) within (but excluded from) the South East Dorset Green Belt are described in settlement hierarchies in current local plans. A similar analysis for the larger settlements beyond the Green Belt is set out later in this paper.
- 2.2.3. Corfe Mullen and Upton are the only parts of the main built-up area of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation located within the Dorset Council area. Within the Green Belt there are four towns (or main settlements), namely: Ferndown and West Parley (which forms a single urban area); Verwood, Wareham (which is largely within the Green Belt); and Wimborne Minster. The Green Belt surrounds Northern Wareham and adjoins the northern and eastern sides of the main town of Wareham. Land beyond the southern and western edges of the main town fall outside the Green Belt, but within the Dorset AONB. All of these settlements have a range of facilities to serve the local population.
- 2.2.4. In the East Dorset Local Plan, two 'suburban centres' have been identified, namely: Colehill and St Leonard's and St Ives; with a single 'district centre', namely West Moors. No such centres are identified in the Purbeck Local Plan. The larger villages in the Purbeck Local Plan are identified as 'key service villages' and those in the East Dorset Local Plan as 'rural service centres'.
- 2.2.5. These different approaches were rationalised to create a simpler hierarchy for the larger settlements in the Green Belt, drawing on how larger settlements within (but excluded from) Green Belts are characterised in national planning policy. The five purposes of Green Belts are set out in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The first purpose is to check the unrestricted sprawl of 'large built-up areas' and the second is to prevent neighbouring 'towns' from merging into one another. On that basis, the larger settlements within the South East Dorset Green Belt were characterised as part of the 'large built-up area' and / or 'towns' (or other 'main settlements'). Defining larger settlements in the Green Belt in this way helps to provide a framework for undertaking a strategic review of the contribution that the Green Belt makes to its purposes and the harm arising from release of Green Belt and changes to Green Belt boundaries, as set out in paragraphs 136 and 138 of the NPPF.
- 2.2.6. In any review of the South East Dorset Green Belt, the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation (or any part of it) would be considered to be a 'large built-up area' (or part of it). The performance of a parcel of land adjacent to this area would be assessed against each of the purposes, but would be likely to rate highly for purpose (a) in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, which aims to 'check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'. Similarly, the 'towns and other main settlements' would be considered to be 'towns' for the purposes of applying purpose (b) in paragraph 134, which aims to 'prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'. The Green Belt land around historic towns (Wareham and Wimborne Minster), considered as 'towns and other main settlements', may also make a contribution to the towns' special character and setting for the purposes of (d) in paragraph 134. The strategic review of the Green Belt's contribution to meeting the purposes in national policy; the assessments of harm

relating to the release of Green Belt; and justifications for the release of Green Belt, have been undertaken and are discussed in more detail in the Strategic Green Belt Review and in a separate background paper.

- 2.2.7. The simplified settlement hierarchy derived from the analysis above is set out in Figure 2.2. This figure also includes estimates of population for each settlement.

Figure 2.2: South Eastern Dorset Functional Area: Larger Settlements within the Green Belt – Simplified Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement	Former district	Population <sup>2</sup>
Large built-up area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole		
Corfe Mullen	East Dorset	10,175
Upton	Purbeck	8,392 <sup>3</sup>
Towns and other main settlements		
Ferndown (inc. West Parley)	East Dorset	20,561 <sup>4</sup>
Wimborne Minster / Colehill	East Dorset	16,181
Verwood	East Dorset	14,110
West Moors	East Dorset	7,635
St Leonards and St Ives	East Dorset	7,085
Wareham	Purbeck	6,025
Larger villages		
Lytchett Matravers	Purbeck	3,163
Sandford	Purbeck	2,201 <sup>5</sup>
Three Legged Cross	East Dorset	1,896

<sup>2</sup> Estimates of the population within currently defined settlements or Green Belt boundaries, unless stated

<sup>3</sup> Estimate for the parish of Lytchett Minster and Upton

<sup>4</sup> Combined population of Ferndown Town (17,024) and West Parley (3,537) parishes

<sup>5</sup> Village population estimate. Part of Wareham St Martin Parish

Sturminster Marshall	East Dorset	1,567
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- 2.2.8. Taking a more strategic view, the 'large built-up area' of BCP would be the settlement at the top of the settlement hierarchy. The 'towns' and 'main settlements' would form the next tier of the settlement hierarchy, together with the two 'suburban centres' and the 'district centre' in the East Dorset Local Plan. Colehill is contiguous with Wimborne Minster and so together and for the purposes of the local plan settlement hierarchy they should be considered to be one settlement<sup>6</sup>. St Leonards and St Ives and West Moors merit inclusion in this category on the basis of their population size, which is greater than that of the 'town' of Wareham in the former Purbeck area.
- 2.2.9. Below the 'towns and other main settlements', Figure 2.2 identifies four 'larger villages', which have been defined in adopted local plans as either 'key service villages' or 'rural service centres'. The place of these settlements (and other settlements inset from or washed over by the Green Belt) in the new hierarchy is discussed in more detail when villages are considered later in this paper.

## 2.3. South Eastern Dorset - settlements beyond the Green Belt

- 2.3.1. A similar approach was applied to the larger settlements beyond the Green Belt within the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area. This analysis also considered settlements which generally had a population of 2000+. In terms of adopted local plans the analysis included:
- in the East Dorset Local Plan – 'rural service centres' (there are no 'main settlements', 'district centres' or 'suburban centres' beyond the Green Belt);
  - in the Purbeck Local Plan – 'towns' and 'key / local service villages'; and
  - in the North Dorset Local Plan – 'main towns' and 'larger villages'. In North Dorset there are no villages (in the Functional Area) with a population of 2,000+.

Figure 2.3: South Eastern Dorset Functional Area: Larger Settlements beyond the Green Belt – Simplified Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement	Former district	Population <sup>7</sup>
Towns and other main settlements		
Blandford	North Dorset	11,013

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of the Strategic Green Belt Review Wimborne and Colehill, although to an extent contiguous, have been treated as separate towns for the purposes of paragraph 134 (b) as they originated as distinct settlements and still have areas that retain some Green Belt separation between them.

<sup>7</sup> Estimates of the population within currently defined settlements, unless stated



Swanage	Purbeck	9,798
Larger villages		
Alderholt	East Dorset	3,004
Wool (inc. East Burton)	Purbeck	2,653
Bovington	Purbeck	1,602

- 2.3.2. Beyond the Green Belt there are no 'large built-up areas' which would fall within the top tier of the settlement hierarchy. However, there are two 'towns' or 'main settlements' which would fall within the second tier of the settlement hierarchy, namely Blandford and Swanage.
- 2.3.3. Two other settlements beyond the Green Belt have populations of more than 2,000 (namely Alderholt and Wool). Bovington, which is defined as a 'key service village', also has a population within the main developed area of more than 1,500. All these settlements are considered to be 'villages', rather than 'main settlements', in terms of their current position in the settlement hierarchy. The place of these villages (and other villages beyond the Green Belt) in the settlement hierarchy is discussed in more detail later in this paper.

### 3. Central Dorset Functional Area: defining a settlement hierarchy

- 3.1.1. This functional area is centred on Weymouth, which is the largest town in the Dorset Council area, and Dorchester, the county town. The whole of the functional area is covered by the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan. In the adopted local plan Weymouth (including the outlying areas of Littlemoor and Chickerell) and Dorchester are defined as 'main towns'.
- 3.1.2. In the adopted local plan, 'Littlemoor Urban Extension' was discussed in a separate chapter. The allocation was located partly within the former Weymouth and Portland borough and partly in the former West Dorset district. In the new Dorset Council Local Plan, it falls within one local authority area and is treated simply as an urban extension to Weymouth (i.e. part of that 'main built-up area').
- 3.1.3. Similarly, all built-up areas within Chickerell parish in the former West Dorset district were treated in a separate Chickerell chapter within the adopted local plan, even though some of them (including the Granby Industrial Estate) formed part of the built-up area of the 'main town' of Weymouth. In the new Dorset Council Local Plan, the physically separate settlement of Chickerell is identified as a 'town' or 'other main settlement' in the settlement hierarchy, whereas the other built-up areas within Chickerell parish that are contiguous with the urban area of Weymouth (including the Granby Industrial Estate), are treated as part of that 'main built-up area'.
- 3.1.4. In the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan, 'Portland' is treated as a single settlement in the hierarchy, but the Review of that plan recognised that on Portland there are 8 separate settlements set within areas of 'countryside' namely:
  - Castletown;
  - Chiswell;
  - Easton;
  - Fortuneswell;
  - Grove;
  - Southwell;
  - Wakeham; and
  - Weston.
- 3.1.5. The Review proposed the use of the term 'settlements on Portland', as a collective term in the settlement hierarchy to reflect the way these settlements support services on Portland as a whole in line with paragraph 78 of the NPPF. This approach is also used in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan.
- 3.1.6. A simplified hierarchy for the Central Dorset Functional Area is set out in Figure 3.1. Although they are separated by countryside, there is considerable interaction between Weymouth and Dorchester, which together have a combined population of more than

70,000. Both are considered to be the 'main built-up areas' in this functional area at the top tier of the settlement hierarchy.

Figure 3.1: Larger settlements in the Central Dorset Functional Area – simplified settlement hierarchy

Settlement	Former district	Population <sup>8</sup>
<b>Main built-up areas</b>		
Weymouth (including Littlemoor)	Weymouth & Portland	53,030
Dorchester	West Dorset	20,633
<b>Towns and other main settlements</b>		
Settlements on Portland	Weymouth & Portland	12,721
Chickerell	West Dorset	5,839
<b>Larger villages (1,000+ population)</b>		
Crossways / Moreton Station	West Dorset	2,451
Charminster	West Dorset	1,519
Broadmayne / West Knighton	West Dorset	1,517
Charlton Down	West Dorset	1,472
Puddletown	West Dorset	1,239
Maiden Newton & Higher Frome Vauchurch	West Dorset	1,158
Milborne St Andrew	North Dorset	1,031

3.1.7. The eight 'settlements on Portland' and the separate settlement of Chickerell are considered to be 'towns' or 'other main settlements'. Although there are seven other settlements with a population of more than 1,000, these are all considered to be villages. The population of Charminster parish is 2,979, but this includes both the main village and Charlton Down, which is a separate settlement developed on the site of the former HERRISON Hospital. Both settlements have a population of about 1,500.

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<sup>8</sup> Estimates of the population within currently defined settlements, unless stated

## 4. Northern Dorset Functional Area: defining a settlement hierarchy

- 4.1.1. The Northern Dorset Functional Area looks towards Yeovil (in the west) and Salisbury (in the east). It also falls under the economic influence of the wider A303 Corridor. The functional area primarily covers the area to the north of the Dorset AONB in the former North Dorset and West Dorset districts. In addition to the A303, important east-west links include the A30 and the London to Exeter railway line, where there are stations at Gillingham and Sherborne.
- 4.1.2. The main settlements in this corridor, and their descriptions in settlement hierarchies in adopted local plans, are set out in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Larger settlements in Northern Dorset Functional Area as described in adopted local plans

Settlement	Former district	Status
Gillingham	North Dorset	Main town
Shaftesbury	North Dorset	Main town
Sherborne	West Dorset	Market town
Sturminster Newton	North Dorset	Main town
Stalbridge	North Dorset	Local service centre

- 4.1.3. None of these settlements is of sufficient size to be considered a 'main built-up area' in a settlement hierarchy for Dorset. However, they could all be regarded as 'towns' or 'other main settlements', as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Larger Settlements in the Northern Dorset Functional Area – Simplified Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement	Former district	Population <sup>9</sup>
Towns and other main settlements		
Gillingham	North Dorset	11,875

<sup>9</sup> Estimates of the population within currently defined settlements, unless stated

Sherborne	West Dorset	9,815
Shaftesbury	North Dorset	8,726
Sturminster Newton	North Dorset	4,495
Stalbridge	North Dorset	2,492
Larger villages (1,000+ population)		
Marnhull	North Dorset	1,889
Shillingstone	North Dorset	1,186
Child Okeford	North Dorset	1,119
Yetminster	West Dorset	1,093
Motcombe	North Dorset	1,077
Hazelbury Bryan	North Dorset	1,025

4.1.4. There are six other settlements in this functional area with a population of 1,000+, namely Child Okeford, Hazelbury Bryan, Marnhull, Motcombe, Shillingstone and Yetminster. These settlements are all considered to be villages.

## 5. Western Dorset Functional Area: defining a settlement hierarchy

- 5.1.1. This small functional area is centred on the town of Bridport, which is the largest settlement in the former West Dorset district outside Dorchester.
- 5.1.2. The whole of the functional area is covered by the adopted West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan. In the adopted local plan, Bridport, Lyme Regis and Beaminster are all identified as 'market or coastal towns' in the settlement hierarchy. None of these settlements is of sufficient size to be considered a 'main built-up area' in a settlement hierarchy for Dorset. However, they could all be regarded as 'towns' or 'other main settlements', as shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Larger settlements in the Western Dorset Functional Area – simplified settlement hierarchy

Settlement	Former district	Population <sup>10</sup>
Towns and other main settlements		
Bridport	West Dorset	14,175
Lyme Regis	West Dorset	3,612
Beaminster	West Dorset	2,890
Larger villages (1,000+ population)		
Charmouth	West Dorset	1,371

- 5.1.3. There is only one other settlement in this functional area with a population of 1,000+, namely Charmouth, which is considered to be a village. Although the parish of Broadwindsor has a population of over 1,000, the population of the village itself is estimated to be considerably less than this.

<sup>10</sup> Estimates of the population within currently defined settlements, unless stated

## 6. A settlement hierarchy for Dorset: the top two tiers

6.1.1. The review of the existing adopted local plans shows that a wide range of different terms is used for settlements at different tiers within the settlement hierarchies defined for the former boroughs and districts. A comparison of the different terms used is set out in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Comparison of settlement hierarchies in adopted local plans

Former East Dorset area	Former North Dorset area	Former Purbeck area	Former West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland areas
Main settlements	Main towns	Towns	Main towns
			Market and coastal towns
District centres	Local service centres	n/a	n/a
Suburban centres	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rural service centres	Larger villages	Key service villages	Settlements with defined development boundaries
Villages		Local service villages	
		Other villages with a settlement boundary	
Hamlets	Other villages subject to countryside policies	Other villages without a settlement boundary	Settlements without defined development boundaries
		Villages / hamlets within open countryside	

6.1.2. The analysis in previous sections shows how these different terms can be rationalised to group settlements of a similar size and function within the top two tiers of a simplified settlement hierarchy across the Dorset Council Local Plan area. These two tiers replace seven different categories from the former district / borough local plans.

6.1.3. The top two tiers in the settlement hierarchy for Dorset are set out in Figure 6.2, with the settlements grouped according to the functional areas within which they are located.

Figure 6.2: New settlement hierarchy for Dorset: the top two tiers

Tier 1: Large built-up areas	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole <sup>11</sup>	South Eastern Dorset FA
Dorchester	Central Dorset FA
Weymouth (including Littlemoor)	
Tier 2: Towns and other main settlements	
Blandford	South Eastern Dorset FA
Ferndown and West Parley	
St Leonards and St Ives	
Swanage	
Verwood	
Wareham	
West Moors	
Wimborne Minster / Colehill	
Chickerell (town)	Central Dorset FA
Portland Settlements: Castletown; Chiswell; Easton; Fortuneswell; Grove; Southwell; Wakeham; and Weston	
Gillingham	Northern Dorset FA
Shaftesbury	
Sherborne	
Stalbridge	
Sturminster Newton	

<sup>11</sup> The only parts of this large built-up area in the Dorset Council area are Corfe Mullen and Upton



Beaminster	Western Dorset FA
Bridport	
Lyme Regis	

6.1.4. In the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, a strategy has been developed for each of these functional areas, which focuses on opportunities for growth at the settlements at the top two levels of the hierarchy.

## 7. [Lower tiers in a new settlement hierarchy](#)

### 7.1. Settlement hierarchies for villages and hamlets and approaches to growth

- 7.1.1. The adopted local plans covering the former boroughs and districts take different approaches to defining settlement hierarchies for smaller settlements, including villages and hamlets. In Purbeck five separate tiers are identified, with three in the former East Dorset and two in the former North Dorset and former West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland areas. In total twelve different terms are used to characterise villages and hamlets across Dorset as a whole (as detailed in Figure 8). These different approaches require rationalisation for the draft Dorset Council Local Plan and consideration in the wider spatial contexts of both the Dorset Council area as a whole and the newly defined housing / economic functional areas.
- 7.1.2. Currently adopted local plans define 'boundaries' around some of their smaller settlements, although the terminology varies in the different former council areas. Despite these differences, the purpose of drawing such boundaries remains broadly the same, which is to allow different policy approaches to be applied within and outside the boundaries. Typically, development is supported within identified boundaries, but outside 'countryside' (and where relevant Green Belt) policies are more restrictive.
- 7.1.3. Different former councils also took different approaches when deciding which villages should have settlement boundaries and which should not. In some areas, particularly Purbeck, boundaries have been identified around much smaller villages than elsewhere in Dorset. The different approaches to the application of settlement boundaries also requires rationalisation for the draft Dorset Council Local Plan and consideration in the wider spatial contexts of both the Dorset Council area as a whole and the newly defined housing / economic functional areas.
- 7.1.4. In the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, the Council has sought to create a simplified settlement hierarchy for villages and hamlets and to distinguish between 'larger, more sustainable villages' (Tier 3 settlements), which would have a settlement boundary within which development, including infilling, would generally be permitted and smaller, less sustainable villages (Tier 4 settlements), which would not have a settlement boundary and which would be subject to more restrictive countryside (and where relevant Green Belt) policies. In developing this approach, Dorset Council has also had regard to existing Green Belt boundaries and the need (in national planning policy) for exceptional circumstances to be fully evidenced and justified, if they are to be changed.
- 7.1.5. Some currently adopted local plans propose strategic levels of growth at some of their more sustainable villages, especially where it is difficult to accommodate the overall

level of growth required in Dorset at settlements in the higher tiers of the settlement hierarchy, including towns and other main settlements. Such proposed growth generally takes the form of 'allocations' of land for housing, employment or a mix of uses. The draft Dorset Council Local Plan reflects this approach and considers some of the 'larger, more sustainable villages' as possible locations for strategic levels of growth.

- 7.1.6. All currently adopted local plans also have some villages and hamlets without settlement boundaries. These settlements are 'washed over' by 'countryside' and, where relevant, the Green Belt where policies which generally seek to restrict development apply. Typically, there are no proposals for strategic levels of growth at such settlements in currently adopted local plans and this approach is reflected in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan.

## 7.2. Settlement boundaries, Green Belt boundaries and village infilling policy areas

- 7.2.1. In the former West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland areas, the 'boundaries' identified around settlements are called 'defined development boundaries' and in the former North Dorset and Purbeck areas they are called 'settlement boundaries'. Settlement boundaries are identified across the whole of the former Purbeck area, including the parts covered by Green Belt where they are co-terminus with the Green Belt boundaries defined around settlements.
- 7.2.2. In the parts of the former East Dorset area covered by Green Belt, the larger built-up areas (and the larger villages of Sturminster Marshall and Three-legged Cross) are excluded from the Green Belt with the edges of these settlements being defined by the Green Belt boundary (i.e. there is no separately defined settlement boundary).
- 7.2.3. Within the Green Belt in the former East Dorset area, a number of 'Village Infilling Policy Areas' have been identified. However, these villages are not inset from the Green Belt, but are 'washed over' by it. The purpose of this approach is to identify those areas where 'limited infilling in villages' will be permitted as an exception to national Green Belt policy in accordance with paragraph 145 (e) of the NPPF. In the former Purbeck area, no 'Village Infilling Policy Areas' washed over by the Green Belt have been identified, although 'limited infilling in villages' may still be permitted in accordance with the NPPF.
- 7.2.4. There are no towns or other main settlements beyond the Green Belt in the former East Dorset area, only villages, some of which have Village Infilling Policy Areas. Beyond the Green Belt, these 'policy areas' effectively act as settlement boundaries, with development being supported on sites within the defined policy areas, but discouraged outside.
- 7.2.5. The approach and the terminology discussed above needs to be rationalised for the draft Dorset Council Local Plan. The approach taken is to identify a 'settlement

boundary' around each of the settlements included in Tiers 1, 2 and 3 of the settlement hierarchy. This includes any Tier 1, 2 or 3 settlement within (but inset from the Green Belt), where any such boundary will be co-terminus with the Green Belt boundary. These boundaries will be taken from currently adopted local plans, but may be changed to accommodate new allocations and / or changes to the Green Belt.

- 7.2.6. In the draft local plan, the settlement boundaries around Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements are referred to as 'Local Plan Development Boundaries'. As they have an important role in delivering a sustainable pattern of development, it is strategically important that they are retained. However, beyond the outer Green Belt boundary, when preparing neighbourhood plans, local communities can propose non-strategic amendments to the boundaries of Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements to meet 'local needs', provided that the proposed amendments taken together would not promote less development than is set out in the draft local plan.
- 7.2.7. Beyond the outer Green Belt boundary, local communities may also introduce new settlement boundaries around smaller villages (i.e. Tier 4 settlements) as a means of meeting 'local needs'. Where such boundaries are introduced, they may permit infilling or include an area of land allocated for a particular use, such as housing. The draft local plan refers to these as 'Neighbourhood Plan Development Boundaries'. As such boundaries do not have a strategic role in delivering a sustainable pattern of development, villages which have them will not be considered as potential options for strategic levels of growth in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan.

## 7.3. Defining larger, more sustainable villages

- 7.3.1. To help develop a consistent approach across Dorset and to determine which settlements should be placed in Tier 3, consideration has been given to:
  - The population of settlements;
  - The existing facilities in settlements; and
  - The relative accessibility to 'higher order' settlements (i.e. large built-up areas, towns and other main settlements).
- 7.3.2. When considering population, the Council has sought to estimate the population within villages as defined by settlement boundaries as currently drawn. For some settlements where there are two developed areas in close proximity to each other (such as: Crossways and Moreton Station; Wool and East Burton; Broadmayne and West Knighton; and Maiden Newton and Frome Vauchurch), an estimate of the combined population has been used. A few parishes have two distinctly separate developed areas (such as Wool / East Burton and Bovington in Wool parish and Charminster and Charlton Down in Charminster parish). In such cases, estimates of the population of each developed area have been used.
- 7.3.3. For villages in the Green Belt, regard has also been had to national policy on changing Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that "once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully

evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans.” The review of the Green Belt in South Eastern Dorset and the proposed changes to Green Belt boundaries are discussed in more detail in a separate background paper.

## 7.4. Scenarios considered

- 7.4.1. In determining which villages should have settlement boundaries and should be placed in Tier 3, four scenarios were considered:
- Retaining all the settlement boundaries as defined in currently adopted local plans;
  - Removing settlement boundaries from all villages of less than 1,000 population;
  - Removing settlement boundaries from all villages of less than 500 population; and
  - Removing settlement boundaries from all villages of less than (or around) 500 population, whilst also having regard to: the provision of facilities within each village; and travel time by car / public transport to the nearest town or other main settlement.

## 7.5. Scenario 1: retaining current settlement boundaries

- 7.5.1. In the event that all the settlement boundaries currently defined in the adopted local plans for the former boroughs and districts were retained in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, it would result in a very inconsistent approach to the characterisation of villages. Some currently adopted local plans considered a range of factors when deciding whether to give a village a settlement boundary, including population size, the number of facilities in the village and its function, perhaps as a service centre for meeting day-to-day needs. However, other local plans did not undertake such an analysis and in some cases simply took forward settlement boundaries from previous local plans.
- 7.5.2. The result is that across Dorset as a whole some very small settlements have settlement boundaries which permit infilling and redevelopment, whereas other significantly larger settlements, often with at least some facilities, do not have a settlement boundary and infilling is not permitted. The smallest village with a settlement boundary in a currently adopted local plan is Kimmeridge, in the former Purbeck District. It is estimated that the village has a population of just 73. In contrast, the village of Spetisbury, in the former North Dorset District, with an estimated population of 543, does not have a settlement boundary and is ‘washed over’ by the countryside in the currently adopted local plan.
- 7.5.3. There is also a huge range in size between the smallest village with a settlement boundary (i.e. Kimmeridge: estimated population 73) and the largest, which is Lytchett Matravers, with an estimated population of 3,163.
- 7.5.4. Smaller villages often have very few facilities and many lack a school, a shop, employment space, a community meeting place (or village hall) or a doctor’s surgery. Residents may be unable to meet their basic day-to-day needs in a small village and

may have to rely on car travel to meet those needs. Whilst the potential for additional infill development in any single small village may be limited, collectively such development would result in a more dispersed pattern of growth across Dorset as a whole, which may not be considered to be sustainable.

- 7.5.5. Larger villages typically have a better range of facilities enabling residents to meet at least some of their day-to-day needs locally with less reliance on car travel. Additional infill development in larger villages is more likely to contribute to a more sustainable pattern of growth across Dorset as a whole.
- 7.5.6. In order to achieve a more sustainable pattern of future growth across Dorset, there is clearly a case for a strategic approach in the Dorset Council Local Plan, which seeks to focus growth on the larger, more sustainable villages. In the event that an existing settlement boundary is removed from a smaller village, the community in that village would still be able to meet its own local needs through the preparation of a neighbourhood plan, by forming a community land trust or by seeking to identify an exception site for 100% affordable housing.

## 7.6. Scenario 2: retaining boundaries around settlements with a population of 1,000+

- 7.6.1. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the starting point for the review of settlements in the top two tiers of the settlement hierarchy outside South Eastern Dorset was to look at settlements with a population of 1,000+. In South Eastern Dorset, the starting point was settlements with a population of 2,000+. The next scenario to be considered was to examine whether just villages with a population of more than 1,000 should be considered as 'larger, more sustainable villages'.
- 7.6.2. Figure 7.1 below lists all the villages in Dorset with a population of more than 1,000. This shows that there are only 25 villages of this size within the draft local plan area comprising:
  - 11 in the South Eastern Dorset Functional Area (made up of the 7 villages already considered in the review of higher level settlements, together with a further 4 villages with populations between 1,500 and 1,000, namely Bere Regis, Charlton Marshall, Corfe Castle and Stoborough);
  - 7 in the Central Dorset Functional Area;
  - 6 in the Northern Dorset Functional Area; and
  - 1 in the Western Dorset Functional Area.

Figure 7.1: Villages in Dorset with a population of more than 1,000 ranked by population

Village	Former district	Population
South Eastern Dorset Functional Area		

Lytchett Matravers	Purbeck	3,163
Alderholt	East Dorset	3,004
Wool / East Burton	Purbeck	2,653
Sandford	Purbeck	2,201
Three Legged Cross	East Dorset	1,896
Bovington	Purbeck	1,602
Sturminster Marshall	East Dorset	1,567
Bere Regis	Purbeck	1,508
Stoborough	Purbeck	1,128
Charlton Marshall	North Dorset	1,081
Corfe Castle	Purbeck	1,020
Central Dorset Functional Area		
Crossways / Moreton Station	West Dorset / Purbeck	2,451
Charminster	West Dorset	1,519
Broadmayne / West Knighton	West Dorset	1,517
Charlton Down	West Dorset	1,472
Puddletown	West Dorset	1,239
Maiden Newton & Higher Frome Vauchurch	West Dorset	1,158
Milborne St Andrew	North Dorset	1,031
Northern Dorset Functional Area		
Marnhull	North Dorset	1,889
Shillingstone	North Dorset	1,186
Child Okeford	North Dorset	1,119

Yetminster	West Dorset	1,093
Motcombe	North Dorset	1,077
Hazelbury Bryan	North Dorset	1,025
Western Dorset Functional Area		
Charmouth	West Dorset	1,371

- 7.6.3. This scenario is considered to be too restrictive as it would not enable some villages, which are below the 1,000 population threshold, but which have some facilities and / or reasonable accessibility to larger settlements, to take advantage of opportunities for infilling and redevelopment to support their community.
- 7.6.4. One example is the village of Pimperne, which is located very close to the town of Blandford Forum, with an estimated population of 936. The village has a range of community facilities including a school, a meeting hall and two public houses, as well as an area of employment land. It is also linked to nearby Blandford Forum by a bus service and a cycleway.
- 7.6.5. Other more isolated villages with populations of less than 1,000 act as service centres for the surrounding rural area. For example, Sixpenny Handley has a school, a doctor's surgery and a number of shops, including a small independent supermarket, post office and butchers.
- 7.6.6. Taking a restrictive approach to future infilling and redevelopment in such villages is likely to be inconsistent with national planning policy relating to rural housing. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF says "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."

## 7.7. Scenarios 3 and 4: retaining boundaries around settlements with a population of 500+ - basic (scenario 3) and 'refined' (scenario 4)

- 7.7.1. The assessment of villages previously undertaken to determine what might be considered to be 'larger, more sustainable villages' in the former North Dorset area took account of population and looked at villages with a population of 500 or more as a starting point. This was also taken as the starting point for engagement with Town and Parish Councils across Dorset as a whole in early 2020, alongside a more 'refined' scenario, which looked at removing settlement boundaries from all villages of less than



(or around) 500 population, whilst also having regard to: the provision of facilities within each village; and travel time by car / public transport to the nearest town or other main settlement. More on the Town and Parish Council engagement events (including analysis on Town / Parish views on Dorset Council's proposed approach) can be found online here - <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/dorset-local-plan-consultations.aspx>.

- 7.7.2. Whilst parish councils broadly agreed with the approach for identifying settlements for inclusion within the settlement hierarchy, some expressed concern about using an arbitrary 'cut-off point' of a population of 500. Whilst such an approach would be easy to understand, it paid little regard to the characteristics of particular villages, especially those with populations slightly above or below 500. To overcome this, closer scrutiny of the sustainability of villages with populations in the range 600 to 400 was undertaken when selecting Tier 3 settlements.
- 7.7.3. In order to assess the provision of facilities in villages, Dorset Council sought to identify the facilities which would be most important to a community and suggested that in order to be included in Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy (i.e. to be identified as a 'larger, more sustainable village'), a village should have at least three or more from the following list:
- School;
  - Shop;
  - Meeting place (e.g. village hall);
  - Employment space;
  - Children's play area or recreation ground; or
  - Doctor's surgery.
- 7.7.4. There was broad recognition of the importance of all six facilities by the Parish Councils, with a school and a shop being considered the most important. Although there was some recognition of the importance of other facilities, such as a public house or a church, these were not considered as important as the six facilities initially suggested by Dorset Council.
- 7.7.5. When considering accessibility to nearby towns, Dorset Council suggested that a village should be within 30 minutes travel time by public transport or within 15 minutes travel time by car to be considered for inclusion in Tier 3. Whilst the majority of Parish Councils responding supported this approach, the overwhelming concern was with the frequency and availability of public transport. A couple of respondents highlighted the need for public transport to be available at peak times, so that it was convenient to use for work or to take advantage of facilities in towns. Dorset Council agreed to take this into account when selecting Tier 3 settlements.
- 7.7.6. Parish Councils were also asked if they would consider using other routes (other than development within a settlement boundary) to deliver community aspirations. The most popular routes were neighbourhood plans and community land trusts, with some interest also shown for rural exception sites.

- 7.7.7. On the basis of this analysis, all 25 villages with a population of more than 1,000 also had three or more important facilities and reasonable accessibility to a nearby town. All these villages are identified as 'larger, more sustainable villages' and are included in Tier 3.
- 7.7.8. Figure 7.2 below shows all villages with a population of less than 1,000, but greater than 500. The third column indicates whether each village meets the criteria of: having a population of more than 500; having at least three important village facilities; and having reasonable accessibility to nearby towns.
- 7.7.9. The analysis shows that all but 5 of the 27 villages meet the criteria. Those that don't are: Holt; Winterborne St Martin; Spetisbury; Stratton and East Stour.

Figure 7.2: Villages in Dorset with a population of between 999 and 500 ranked by population

Village	Population	500+ with 3 facilities and accessible	Tier in hierarchy
Pimperne	936	Yes	Tier 3
Sixpenny Handley	930	Yes	Tier 3
Iwerne Minster	911	Yes	Tier 3
Burton Bradstock	880	Yes	Tier 3
Thornford	854	Yes	Tier 3
Bourton	844	Yes	Tier 3
Langton Matravers	814	Yes	Tier 3
Bradford Abbas	812	Yes	Tier 3
Okeford Fitzpaine	805	Yes	Tier 3
Milton Abbas	722	Yes	Tier 3
Cerne Abbas	695	Yes	Tier 3
Winterborne Whitechurch	686	Yes	Tier 3
Mosterton	615	Yes	Tier 3
Cranborne	606	Yes	Tier 3
Winterbourne Abbas /	604	Yes	Tier 3

Steepleton			
Holt	600	No	Tier 4
Winterborne Kingston	590	Yes	Tier 3
Portesham	581	Yes	Tier 3
Winterborne St Martin	576	No	Tier 4
Stourpaine	558	Yes	Tier 3
Broadwindsor	554	Yes	Tier 3
Spetisbury	543	No	Tier 4
Winterborne Stickland	535	Yes	Tier 3
Piddletrenthide	535	Yes	Tier 3
West Lulworth	530	Yes	Tier 3
Stratton	515	No	Tier 4
East Stour	510	No	Tier 4

- 7.7.10. The parish of Holt, in the former East Dorset district has a population of over 1,200, but this is spread across a number of scattered settlements, including Holt itself. Given the very scattered nature of development, it is difficult to define or to estimate the population of Holt village, but it is estimated to be about 600.
- 7.7.11. In the currently adopted local plan, Holt and nearby Pond Head are defined by Village Infilling Policy Areas, but are washed over by the Green Belt. Of the six key village facilities, Holt only has a village hall, but it does also have a public house and a church.
- 7.7.12. Consideration was given to whether changes to the Green Belt boundary were merited for Holt in Stage 1 of the Green Belt Review. Table 5.3 in that document described Holt as “a sprawling, linear settlement with low development density. There are a number of open gaps between the original village core and clusters of houses that have spread in a linear fashion from outlying farmsteads. There are no significant urbanising characteristics.” The review concluded that the “settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status.”
- 7.7.13. Given the lack of key facilities and the lack of exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of Holt from the Green Belt, Holt (and Pond Head) have not been identified as Tier 3 settlements.

- 7.7.14. Winterborne St Martin (also known as Martinstown), in the former West Dorset area, has an estimated population of 576 in the village. The village is located relatively close to Dorchester, but only has only two of the six key village facilities: a shop / post office and a village hall, although it also has a public house and a church. Also the village does not have a 'defined development boundary' in the currently adopted local plan. For these reasons, Winterborne St Martin has not been identified as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 7.7.15. Spetisbury, in the former North Dorset area, has an estimated population of 543 in the village. It is located on the A350 between Blandford and Poole, but has only two of the six key village facilities: a school and a village hall, although it also has a church, a (closed) public house and a farm shop and café nearby. Also the village does not have a settlement boundary in the currently adopted local plan. For these reasons, Spetisbury has not been identified as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 7.7.16. Stratton, in the former West Dorset area, has an estimated population of 515 in the village. The village is located relatively close to Dorchester on the A37, but is poorly served by buses. It has only two of the six key village facilities: a village hall and a playing field, although it also has a public house and a church. Also the village does not have a 'defined development boundary' in the currently adopted local plan. For these reasons, Stratton has not been identified as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 7.7.17. East Stour, in the former North Dorset area, has an estimated population of 510 in the village. It is located just off the A30 to the west of Shaftesbury, but has only two of the six key village facilities: a village hall and a playing field, although it also has a public house and a church. For these reasons, East Stour has not been identified as a Tier 3 settlement.

## 7.8. Villages with a population of between 499 and 400

- 7.8.1. As part of the analysis, the sustainability of villages with a population of between 499 and 400 was also examined. This allowed the sustainability of villages that have a population of up to 20% less than 500 to be tested and potentially included in Tier 3 if they have a good range of facilities and / or if they form part of a group of villages that support each other. There are only 5 villages in this category, as shown in Table 7.3 below.

Figure 7.3: Villages in Dorset with a population of between 499 and 400 ranked by population

Village	Population	400+ with 3 facilities and accessible	Tier in hierarchy
Woodlands	483	No	Tier 4
Fontmell Magna	483	Yes	Tier 3
Salway Ash	464	Yes	Tier 3

Harman's Cross	420	Yes	Tier 3
Winfrith Newburgh	409	No	Tier 4

- 7.8.2. The parish of Woodlands is located in the former East Dorset district. In the currently adopted local plan, Woodlands and nearby Whitmore are defined by Village Infilling Policy Areas, but are washed over by the Green Belt. Of the six key village facilities, Woodlands only has a village hall and a recreation ground, but it does also have a church. Consideration was given to whether changes to the Green Belt boundary were merited for Woodlands and Whitmore in Stage 1 of the Green Belt Review.
- 7.8.3. Table 5.3 in that document described Woodlands as "a small linear settlement, with housing mostly on the north side of Verwood Road and the church, vicarage, farm and principal house set in open surroundings to the south. Modern expansion to the east but the village core retains a strong rural character and there are no significant urbanising characteristics." The review concluded that the "settlement is sufficiently open to justify washed-over status."
- 7.8.4. In relation to Whitmore, Table 5.3 said "Whitmore has a housing estate, to either side of New Road, that has a suburban form and character, but the rest of the settlement is more dispersed and low in density. The settlement to the north of Verwood Road does not have the form of a traditional rural village, but Whitmore Lane and adjacent closes are unmade roads, and the houses are widely spaced." The settlement as a whole is sufficiently open to justify its washed-over status. The New Road housing estate is not in itself large enough to significantly compromise openness."
- 7.8.5. Given the population of less than 500, the lack of key facilities and the lack of exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of Woodlands and Whitmore from the Green Belt, they have not been identified as Tier 3 settlements.
- 7.8.6. Fontmell Magna (estimated population 483) is located in the former North Dorset area on the A350 between Blandford and Shaftesbury. The parish (population 673) includes the hamlet of Bedchester and the village in the neighbouring parish of Sutton Waldron (population 229) is less than a kilometre away. Fontmell Magna has five of the six key facilities, which are: a primary school; a shop (with post office and tea rooms); a village hall with a children's play area and tennis court; and a branch surgery of the Abbey View Medical Centre, which is based in Shaftesbury. It also has a public house and a church. Given that Fontmell Magna has a population of nearly 500 (with additional population in other nearby settlements), is located on the main road (and bus route) between Blandford and Shaftesbury and has a good range of key facilities, it has been identified as a Tier 3 village.
- 7.8.7. Salway Ash (estimated population 464) is located in the parish of Netherbury, just north of the town of Bridport in the former West Dorset area. Netherbury is a large rural parish, which includes two other villages (Netherbury and Melplash). The parish has a population of 1,324. The village has four of the six key facilities, which are: a primary school; a village hall; a recreation ground; and an employment site at nearby Pineapple

Farm, which also houses a village shop. The village also has a public house and a church. Also the village already has a 'defined development boundary' in the currently adopted local plan. For these reasons, Salway Ash has been identified as a Tier 3 village.

- 7.8.8. Harman's Cross, with an estimated population of 420, lies at the northern edge of Worth Matravers parish in the former Purbeck area, close to the town of Swanage and to the larger, more sustainable villages of Corfe Castle and Langton Matravers. The A351 between Swanage and Corfe Castle passes through the village, which also has a station on the Swanage Railway. The village has three of the six key facilities, which are: a shop at a filling station in the village (with another shop at another filling station just east of the village); a village hall, which also offers a post office service one day a week; and a children's playground. Also the village already has a defined 'settlement boundary' in the currently adopted local plan. For these reasons, Harman's Cross has been identified as a Tier 3 village.
- 7.8.9. Winfrith Newburgh is located in the former Purbeck area, just off the A352 road between Wareham and Dorchester. The village has an estimated population of just over 400 (409), but despite the small population, it has four of the six key facilities, which are: a shop, which also offers post office services; a primary school (jointly with Lulworth); a village hall; and a recreation ground. It also has a public house (on the A352) and a church in the village. However, the village is poorly served by public transport, having a very limited bus service. Also it is not located on the railway, unlike the nearby larger, more sustainable villages of Wool and Crossways / Moreton Station. For these reasons, Winfrith Newburgh has not been identified as a Tier 3 settlement.

## 7.9. Villages with a population of less than 400

- 7.9.1. All villages with a population of less than 400 (with one exception) have been placed in Tier 4. They will not have a settlement boundary and will be washed over by the countryside and, where relevant, the Green Belt. For some villages, this will require the removal of the 'settlement boundaries', 'defined development boundaries' or 'village infilling policy areas' identified in currently adopted local plans.
- 7.9.2. The one exception is Lytchett Minster, which is a small village with an estimated population of 244. It is located just to the west of the town of Upton in the parish of Lytchett Minster and Upton in the former Purbeck area. Despite its small size, the main built-up area of the village is inset from the Green Belt in the currently adopted local plan.
- 7.9.3. The proximity of the village to Upton means that it is accessible to facilities in the town both by bus and car, but it only has two key facilities: a small hall (CJ's); and a large secondary school, just to the north of the village. The school has over 1,400 pupils and serves both parts of Purbeck and Poole. The village also has a public house, a church and a range of services at the nearby Courtyard Craft Centre, including shops and a café.

- 7.9.4. The village was assessed as an 'inset settlement' as part of Stage 1 of the Green Belt Review. Table 5.4 stated that the village is "a small settlement, but much of the development is on two cul-de-sacs, set back from through roads. This settlement form, and the density of housing here, have an urbanising influence." The review concluded that there was "no potential to designate as Green Belt."
- 7.9.5. Although the village does not meet the criteria for identification as a Tier 3 settlement in terms of population size, it has a very close association with the town of Upton and supports a 'higher order' facility, which is usually only found in towns (i.e. a secondary school). As there are no exceptional circumstances to justify including Lytchett Minster in the Green Belt, as required by national planning policy, it will remain inset from it and identified as a Tier 3 settlement. It should also be noted that the potential for growth at Lytchett Minster was considered during the preparation of the draft Dorset Council Local Plan, as was the case with several other Tier 3 settlements.
- 7.9.6. In the former East Dorset area, 'village infilling policy areas' will be removed from the following villages:
- Gaunt's Common;
  - Gussage All Saints;
  - Gussage St Michael;
  - Hinton Martell;
  - Holt (and Pond Head);
  - Horton;
  - Longham;
  - Shapwick;
  - Whitmore; and
  - Woodlands.
- 7.9.7. All these villages, with the exceptions of Gussage All Saints and Gussage St Michael, are located in (and are washed over by) the Green Belt. Any proposals for infilling in these villages (or any other villages in the former East Dorset area that are washed over by the Green Belt), will be considered against national Green Belt policy.
- 7.9.8. In the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy, the 'village infill policy area' around Furzehill is subject to a separate policy (Policy RA2: Furzehill Village Envelope). The 'village envelope' includes the former East Dorset District Council Offices and permits the redevelopment of the site (the Furzehill Policy Area) for "residential, offices, residential institutions, non-residential institutions, hotel and / or community uses", subject to certain criteria. The local plan inspector was "satisfied that the policy is justified and consistent with national policy", noting that it would provide "for changing circumstances and allows a strategy for planned and appropriate development to take place on the site". The future policy approach to Furzehill is still under consideration and one option could be to 'save' Policy RA2 from the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy.

- 7.9.9. Based on the conclusions of Stage 1 of the Green Belt Review, it is proposed to remove the 'village infill policy area' around Longham and for the settlement to continue to be 'washed over' by the Green Belt.
- 7.9.10. Table 5.3 in the review stated "Longham has a largely linear character but has seen significant growth in the 20th century, in particular residential development and a large garden centre at the northern end of the village. There are some gaps between development clusters, but pavements and street lighting, reflecting safety requirements associated with the location of the settlement along busy main roads, are an urbanising influence."
- 7.9.11. Table 5.3 in the review concluded that "the settlement has a sizeable area of development which makes no significant contribution to Green Belt openness, but where it is more linear there are open gaps which do contribute to the Green Belt purposes."
- 7.9.12. The draft local plan proposes: about 700 homes to the east of Longham at Dudsbury Golf Course (Policy Fern 6); about 400 homes to the north of Longham, north of Ham Lane (Policy Fern 7); and a new area of employment land to the west and south of the Longham Roundabouts (Policy Fern 10). In the event that one or more of these option sites is taken forward in the local plan, the implications for Longham (and its contribution to Green Belt openness) may need to be reassessed.
- 7.9.13. In the former North Dorset area, 'settlement boundaries' will be removed from the following villages:
- East Stour.
- 7.9.14. In the former Purbeck area, 'settlement boundaries' will be removed from the following villages, all of which are outside the Green Belt:
- Brianspuddle;
  - Chaldon Herring;
  - Church Knowle;
  - East Lulworth;
  - Kimmeridge;
  - Kingston;
  - Ridge;
  - Studland;
  - Winfrith Newburgh; and
  - Worth Matravers.
- 7.9.15. In the adopted local plan for Purbeck, Ridge (Tier 4) is considered to be separate from the larger, more sustainable (Tier 3) village of Stoborough, which includes Stoborough village and Stoborough Green.
- 7.9.16. In the former West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland areas, 'defined development boundaries' will be removed from the following villages:
- Bishop's Caundle;



- Buckland Newton;
- Evershot;
- Nottingham; and
- Trent.

## 7.10. Tier 3 settlements

7.10.1. Figure 7.4 below lists all the villages placed in Tier 3 as a result of the analysis discussed above. All of these villages will have a settlement boundary within which windfall and infilling development will be generally supported. Proposals for development outside the identified settlement boundaries will be assessed against countryside and, where relevant, Green Belt policy. Proposals for development at any village or hamlet not listed in Figure 7.4 (i.e. Tier 4 settlements) will also be assessed against countryside and, where relevant, Green Belt policy.

Figure 7.4: The larger, more sustainable villages arranged by functional area

South Eastern Dorset Functional Area	Central Dorset Functional Area	Northern Dorset Functional Area	Western Dorset Functional Area
Aldersholt	Broadmayne/ West Knighton	Bradford Abbas	Burton Bradstock
Bere Regis	Cerne Abbas	Bourton	Broadwindsor
Bovington	Charlton Down	Child Okeford	Charmouth
Charlton Marshall	Charminster	Fontmell Magna	Mosterton
Corfe Castle	Crossways / Moreton Station	Hazelbury Bryan	Salway Ash
Cranborne	Maiden Newton / Higher Frome	Iwerne Minster	
Harmans Cross	Vauchurch	Marnhull	
Langton Matravers	Milborne St Andrew	Motcombe	
Lytchett Matravers	Milton Abbas	Okeford Fitzpaine	
Lytchett Minster	Piddletrenthide	Shillingstone	
Pimperne	Portesham	Stourpaine	
Sandford	Puddletown	Thornford	
Sixpenny Handley	Winterborne Stickland	Yetminster	
Stoborough	Winterbourne Abbas / Winterbourne		
Sturminster Marshall			
Three Legged Cross			
West Lulworth			
Winterborne			

Kingston Winterborne Whitechurch Wool / East Burton	Steepleton		
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