

Cabinet

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	16/01/2019
<u>Cabinet Member</u> Daryl Turner - Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment <u>Local Members</u> ALL <u>Lead Director</u> Mike Harries – Environment and Economy	
Subject of Report	Dorset Statement of Common Ground on Strategic Planning Matters
Executive Summary	<p>The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in July 2018, expects local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) to document the cross-boundary matters being addressed in emerging local plans and set out any progress in cooperating to address these. Such statements are intended to enhance the statutory duty to co-operate and will be important in assisting planning authorities when defining strategic matters in their local plans.</p> <p>For local authorities in Dorset that are currently reviewing local plans for their areas it will be important to demonstrate that they have agreed a statement of common ground with neighbouring authorities that share cross-boundary issues. This would also be the case for the new Dorset Council in preparing or reviewing local plans.</p> <p>A draft Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly by local authorities in Dorset and presented to the pan-Dorset Strategic Planning Forum (SPF), which comprises elected councillors from all nine authorities in Dorset, as well as (non-voting) attendance by Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnership. The SPF has agreed the draft Statement of Common Ground and has commended it to each sovereign authority for</p>

	<p>agreement. It has also been considered and agreed by the Shadow Dorset Council Executive Committee.</p>
Impact Assessment:	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>This report concerns a statement of common ground which is intended to support local authorities in demonstrating how they are meeting the statutory duty to co-operate when preparing local plans. It will be a responsibility of those plans to carry out equalities impact assessments.</p>
	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>This report has been prepared having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018).</p>
	<p>Budget:</p> <p>This report does not raise any budgetary implications.</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>This report seeks Cabinet endorsement of the appended SoCG which will assist all authorities, including Dorset County Council, in meeting the statutory duty to co-operate. It is a requirement to prepare a SoCG and not to do so would present a risk to local authorities in trying to progress local plans.</p>
	<p>Outcomes:</p> <p>Corporate Plan Objectives Framework: Dorset's economy is prosperous.</p> <p>The recommendations set out in this report recognise the important role of planning in managing the environmental consequences of development and are consistent with the Corporate Plan's outcomes-based accountability.</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p> <p>The recommendations presented in this report promote the role of planning in balancing economic, social and economic aspirations and delivering sustainable development.</p>
Recommendation	<p>That Cabinet approves the draft Statement of Common Ground (attached at Appendix B).</p>

Reason for Recommendation	To comply with the requirements of the NPPF in demonstrating that the duty to co-operate is being met.
Appendices	<p>Appendix A: Summary of themes identified in the Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>Appendix B: Statement of Common Ground between local planning authorities in Dorset (DRAFT 3 October 2018)</p>
Background Papers	National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018 (click here for link)
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a duty to co-operate for local planning authorities when preparing local plans. This duty applies to strategic (cross-boundary) matters and was intended to overcome the absence of regional and structure plans which were revoked around the time of the Localism Act coming into force. It is fair to say that there has been growing concern nationally that the duty to co-operate has not been as effective as intended and, to address this, the Government strengthened its policy on strategic policy matters.
- 1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in July 2018, now requires local plans to set out strategic policies. It also sets out an expectation for local planning authorities to prepare **Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)**. These should document the cross-boundary matters being addressed in emerging local plans and set out any progress in cooperating to address these. A SoCG is not a statutory part of the development plan and so the responsibility for preparing local plans will remain a matter for each sovereign authority (and the new Dorset Council as from 1 April 2019).

2. The Need for a Statement of Common Ground

- 2.1. Those local authorities whose local plans are at an advanced stage will need to demonstrate that they have agreed a statement of common ground with neighbouring authorities that share cross-boundary issues. **Appendix A** (taken from the SoCG) itself provides a useful summary of the key issues and the potential scope for joint working.
- 2.2. Minerals and waste local plans are also bound by the duty to co-operate and so the SoCG will be relevant to these. Having said this, the minerals and waste planning policy framework has been prepared at a strategic level from the outset in that it covers the administrative areas of Bournemouth, DCC Dorset, and Poole. Furthermore, the most recent plans were submitted prior to the new NPPF taking effect so the immediate need for the SoCG falls upon those councils currently reviewing their local plans.
- 2.3. Nevertheless, Dorset County Council has an interest in ensuring local plans for each district, borough and unitary area identify relevant strategic issues as these have a bearing upon DCC responsibilities, including infrastructure provision (including transport, education and waste facilities) and mineral safeguarding. Consequently, it is important that DCC is also a signatory to the SoCG in the interests of supporting districts in achieving the delivery of a sound policy framework across Dorset.

3. Statement of Common Ground – Scope and Purpose

- 3.1. The draft SoCG (**Appendix B**) is currently in the process of being considered by each authority and, once agreed, it will provide a meaningful basis for ongoing engagement on cross-boundary matters. Importantly, it will also enable those authorities looking to submit local plans to proceed in compliance with the revised NPPF. Without this it is unlikely that a planning

inspector would be in a position to proceed with an examination into a plan's soundness.

- 3.2. The SoCG provides a documentation of strategic planning issues that have cross-boundary implications, including housing, employment, environmental assets, the Green Belt and infrastructure. It complements local plans by explaining how cross-boundary issues are to be addressed. The SoCG is likely to evolve as these plans progress so that it can provide the necessary clarity about how the area's needs are being met.
- 3.3. The NPPF confirms that the strategic policies required for the area of each local planning authority should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:
 - housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
 - conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscape and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 3.4. The SoCG provides an overview of the current and emerging situation across Dorset in relation to these issues.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. All authorities in Dorset have been invited to endorse the SoCG. It is also relevant to note that the SoCG will provide a helpful basis for Dorset Council to consider its strategic planning priorities when it comes into effect (without prejudice to any decisions the new authority chooses to take). The Shadow Dorset Council Executive Committee was therefore asked to consider the SOCG. I can confirm that the Shadow Executive approved the statement at its meeting on 17 December.
- 4.2. Having an agreed SoCG will be an important step in considering strategic cross-boundary issues which is a requirement under national planning policy. By agreeing the SoCG Dorset County Council will be supporting the continued joint working on cross-boundary matters which is overseen by the Strategic Planning Forum, and will assist those districts whose local plans are at an advanced stage by enabling them to progress these in a manner that complies with national policy.

Mike Harries
Corporate Director for Environment and the Economy
January 2019

APPENDIX A: Summary of themes identified in the Statement of Common Ground

Theme	Potential scope for joint working
Overall strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the most sustainable pattern of growth to meet future needs, taking account of objectively assessed needs, environmental and other constraints including Green Belt
Homes and jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting out a positive planning strategy to provide for additional growth in Dorset, including additional homes. • Setting out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Eastern Dorset, to meet objectively assessed needs. This strategy will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth, taking account of issues such as housing mix, land availability, infrastructure capacity, and development constraints. It will need to include consideration of all options including urban potential, urban extensions and new settlements. • A Strategic Green Belt Review to help inform the strategy. • Identifying and addressing any issues of ‘unmet’ housing need arising from areas adjoining Dorset. • Providing an overview of the broad mix of housing types needed • Addressing any cross-boundary issues relating to employment land provision identified through the Workspace Strategy. • Addressing any strategic issues relating to education and skills.
Retail, leisure and other commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying key relationships between town centres, both within Dorset and in neighbouring areas. • Emphasising the importance of a ‘town centre’ first approach to new retail development. • Considering any implications of the location of additional housing for the retail hierarchies identified in the current and emerging local plans. • Addressing any cross-boundary issues that may be identified through updates to existing retail studies. • Highlighting the importance of planning for sustainable tourism across Dorset.
Infrastructure and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the importance of improving infrastructure, including improvements to transport, telecommunications, water supply and wastewater infrastructure. • Ensuring effective integration of minerals planning with growth and infrastructure needs in Dorset.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring sustainable planning for waste to maximise its value as a resource and as a key supporting element for economic competitiveness. • Ensuring the restoration of quarries has regard to economic, social and environmental opportunities that support sustainable economic growth, where appropriate. • Highlighting the importance of avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. • Exploring opportunities for strategic scale flood attenuation and mitigation infrastructure. • Developing a consistent approach to Coastal Change Management Areas, to be applied along the full length of the Dorset coastline. • Ensuring a consistent approach to renewable energy provision, including wind energy, across Dorset. • Exploring the potential for cross boundary district heating.
<p>Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting the importance of promoting healthy communities through planning. • Encouraging a consistent approach across Dorset to the new national standards for space, water efficiency and accessibility. • Considering whether any update is needed to the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, and whether there could be merit in preparing a single joint Green Infrastructure Strategy to cover Dorset.
<p>Climate change and historic and natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasising the role of planning in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation. • Highlighting the importance of nature conservation issues across the county, and ensuring that these are given full consideration when appraising options for future growth. • Securing renewed commitment to the existing joint approaches to address heathlands and nitrates mitigation. • Identifying broad locations for strategic SANGs (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces), to link in with the preferred strategy for additional housing, once this is identified. • Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) to demonstrate that any proposed development will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the European designations. • Reinforcing the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment through planning policy, and developing a positive strategy for conservation of the historic environment across Dorset as a whole.