

Cabinet – 1 March 2024

Question from Councillor P Kimber

Community Asset Transfer Policy Review –

Dorset Council Dorset Council cabinet have approved a revised Community Asset Transfer Policy and the processes for assessing and determining Community Asset Transfer applications. Dorset Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy seeks to recognise and maximise the benefit of devolution of assets to local communities, particularly to Town and Parish Councils. The policy supports the delivery of this devolution by providing clear guidance and support for applicants.

Dorset Council aims to increase local control over assets, enabling assets to further meet the **needs of local communities** and enhance local Neighbourhood plans.

This review of the Community Asset Transfer policy and processes was required to incorporate it into existing reporting and decision-making processes within the Dorset Council Assets and Regeneration. The revised Policy makes the process simpler for applicants and ensures the process is transparent. A copy of the Full Cabinet report is available on the Dorset Council website.

Question to Cabinet

Portland Town Council welcomes the decision of the Cabinet to adopt the new policy and would welcome further discussions on the transfer of Portland assets.

In the meantime, would Dorset Council be able to provide a detailed list of all Dorset Council Portland Assets to the Town Council?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Property

- In relation to the question on community asset transfers in Portland, A copy of the list of those completed and those pending transfer has been emailed to you.
- The list does not include every parcel of land that DC is responsible for in Portland and users of Dorset Explorer will see additional areas such as grass verges, small paths and highway verges which still rest with the Council.
- There are some parcels of land which may not be shown as they may be unregistered, and we are in the process of re-registering these.
- For safeguarding reasons we have removed specific reference to and house numbers of children's homes and simply referred to children's services.
- Dorset Explorer and the list of assets do not show some land the Council leases from the crown via old agreements e.g. Easton Gardens/Victoria Gardens – however these are in the process of being transferred to PTC anyway.

- Council officers are continuing to meet with the Portland Town Clerk to focus on the transfer of assets agreed at LGR.
- Please contact Carly Galloway or Jon Morgan should you have any specific queries.

Question from Cllr G Taylor

With reference to agenda item 10: Local Development Scheme Update

Speaking as a resident and Town Councillor for Weymouth I would like to thank Dorset Council for the update on the revised schedule and approach to producing a new Local Plan. In Weymouth we are eagerly awaiting the new plan as our existing Local Plan (from the Borough Council) is losing weight in planning terms due to its age. In Weymouth, a dedicated group including local residents are pressing forward with the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan with the goal that this should be 'made' via a referendum in 2024 – this plan proposes allocating sites to address the chronic shortage of affordable homes but can only go so far as it cannot address Strategic Sites. We look forward to active engagement with Dorset Council Planning Team to ensure alignment of the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan and Dorset Local Plan.

I have 2 Questions:

1. How will the revised LP address the chronic shortage of affordable homes for rent in Weymouth, identified in the Weymouth Housing Needs Analysis?
2. Is it Dorset Councils intention, as part of this process, to **update** the Weymouth Master Plan which is an extant Supplementary Planning Document?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Thank you for your questions on this important topic. In answer to your questions:

1. How will the revised LP address the chronic shortage of affordable homes for rent in Weymouth, identified in the Weymouth Housing Needs Analysis?

The proposed update to the Local Development Scheme is intended to align Dorset Council Local Plan with the new local plan system. This will strengthen the Council's commitment to a plan-led approach that is right for Dorset, based upon up-to-date evidence, including housing need. Having a new plan that is prepared under the provisions of the new system should also support faster delivery. In preparing the plan, it will be important to take account of the best and most up-to-date evidence available to us, which will help the Council in seeking affordable housing delivery where it is needed most.

2. Is it Dorset Councils intention, as part of this process, to **update** the Weymouth Master Plan which is an extant Supplementary Planning Document?

We will be reviewing the Weymouth Masterplan to ensure it is fully up to date and best placed to support the regeneration of Weymouth's waterfront following the Council's successful bid for £19.5 million of levelling up funding. In doing this it will be important to have regard to previous consultation findings for other relevant

strategies, including the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan, Weymouth's neighbourhood plan, and the Weymouth Seafront Strategy. In terms of its future planning status, the new planning system is proposing to replace Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) with Supplementary Plans, which will have the same weight as development plans. We will need to consider how best to progress a formal review of the SPD once more information is known, but in the meantime, work will continue on the masterplan itself.