

# Public Document Pack



## DORSET COUNCIL - CABINET

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020

**Present:** Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Ray Bryan, Graham Carr-Jones, Tony Ferrari, Laura Miller, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle, Jill Haynes and David Walsh

**Apologies:** no apologies

**Also present:** Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Andy Canning, Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Robin Cook, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Daryl Turner, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Stella Jones, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Maria Roe, Cllr David Shortell, Cllr Andrew Starr, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Gill Taylor, Cllr David Tooke, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Kate Wheller, Cllr Paul Kimber and Cllr John Worth

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Jon Bird (European Policy and Funding Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Bridget Downton (Head of Business Insight and Corporate Communications), Andrew Galpin (Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager), Mike Garrity (Head of Planning), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), David McIntosh (Corporate Director (HR & OD)), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure), Karyn Punchard (Corporate Director for Place Services), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships), Deborah Smart (Corporate Director – Digital & Change) and Terry Sneller (Local Plan Team Leader)

**56. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a date in the future.

**57. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declaration of interest to report.

**58. Public Participation**

There were seven questions/statement received from the public. These were read out by Matt Prosser, Chief Executive and Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and responded to by the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

A copy of the full questions and the detailed responses are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes

59. **Questions from Members**

There were two questions from Cllr N Ireland, this along with the responses were set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

60. **Forward Plan**

The Cabinet Forward Plan was received and noted.

61. **Dorset Council Plan: Quarter 2 Performance Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change set out the Quarter 2 performance report against the Council Plan. This included the headline commentary that had been provided against the five key priorities to complement the data provided.

Decision

That the progress against the Council Plan priorities be received and noted.

**Reason for Recommendation**

To ensure progress towards the Council Plan is measured and monitored.

62. **Transformation of Planning Services: PAS Peer Review Findings and Actions**

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) was invited to carry out a peer review of Dorset Council's planning service prior to its restructure. The report set out the summary of the PAS findings which included ten key recommendations. He further proposed that going forward the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee be invited to monitor the implementation of the action plan.

Decision

- (a) That the Planning Advisory Service Peer Review of Dorset Council's Planning Service be noted;
- (b) That the recommendations and action plan as set out in the report be agreed;

- (c) That Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee receive biannual (or more frequent as necessary) progress reports on the implementation of the action plan.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

The visit of the PAS peer review team took place at a formative time in the unitary council's development and the work it carried out has informed the Local Planning Authority in shaping its transformation programme. The final report contains practical and constructive recommendations and an action plan which are intended to assist Dorset Council in progressing the work needed to deliver a high-quality and customer-focused planning service.

**63. Dorset Council Local Plan: Consultation**

Cabinet considered a report on the Dorset Local Plan Options Consultation document and the changes to the Statement of Community Involvement. Cabinet have previously agreed the programme for preparing a Dorset Council Local Plan that would on adoption replace the current district local plans.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning highlighted that public consultation was a vital part of the process, and this consultation would enable a wide range of views to be taken into account in moving the plan forward to its next stage.

**Decision**

- (a) That the Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation document, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved for the purpose of public consultation, to take place for eight weeks from mid-January 2021;
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Service Manager for Spatial Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to make any minor changes necessary prior to publication;
- (c) That changes to the Statement of Community Involvement included as Appendix B to the report be agreed to reflect the practicalities of consulting during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

Having an up to date local plan in place is critical in order to shape the future of the Dorset Council area, provide for development to meet the area's needs, and manage decisions on planning applications. Cabinet have previously agreed the programme for preparing a Dorset Council Local Plan that would on adoption replace the current district local plans. Public consultation is a vital part of the process, and this consultation will enable a wide range of views to be taken into account in moving the plan forwards.

**64. Recommendations for the allocation of developer contributions for enhancement of recreation and community infrastructure provision in**

## **Dorchester**

The Portfolio Holder presented a report on the Developer contributions that had been collected by Dorset Council and its predecessor councils for the area of Dorchester. A reformed officer/member panel recommended the Great Field project should continue to be funded. It was further proposed that the council support the Arts in Dorchester/Thomas Hardy School joint venture to receive the £1m funding that had previously been committed to the Maltings Arts project.

Dorchester local members spoke in support of the recommendation.

### **Decision**

- (a) Great Field Poundbury – new recreation facilities, £455,786.00
- (b) Arts in Dorchester Project – improvements to Municipal Buildings and Thomas Hardy School Theatre to provide enhanced performance space and associated facilities, £1million. Payment subject to the submission of a comprehensive business case to be approved by the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Planning.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

To enable the award of developer contributions in Dorchester to local projects for the enhancement of community infrastructure.

## **65. Parking Services Phase 1 Project Report**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented a report that set proposed changes to parking charges across the Dorset area. The Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at their meeting on 1 December 2020. In light of their comments the Portfolio Holder proposed the following amendment to the reports recommendation:-

- (a) That the all-day charge in Lyme Regis and West Bay be increased from £2 to £8 (instead of £4) which was inline with other car parks in the Dorset Area.
- (b) extending morning charges in Purbeck to begin from 8:00am
- (c) implementation of Sunday charging except that at the request of the relevant Town or Parish Council, Dorset Council would consider the case for suspending car park charging on a Sunday to enable a local event to be held. In such cases agreement to suspend would be at the sole discretion of Dorset Council and each individual case would be considered on its merits. These provisions would apply only in exceptional cases and on a limited number of occasions in a year.
- (d) That extending evening charges as set out in (d) of the reports recommendation, be deferred to Phase 2 of the transformation project.

The Chairman of the Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee advised that members had considered the report in detail and the amendments put forward by the Portfolio Holder were largely in accordance with the committee's comments.

In respect of the Dorchester Market and the Sunday Car Boot sales, it was confirmed that further discussions would take place with the appropriate portfolio holder(s), officers of the Council, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel outside of this meeting.

Before taking the vote, the Corporate Director for Legal and Democratic advised that any changes to parking charges needed to be grounded in traffic management principles and therefore suggested that the amendment be prefaced with "That as part of managing traffic effectively the Cabinet supported the following changes to parking charges/charging hours:" This addition was accepted.

The amendment was seconded by Cllr T Ferrari and on being put to the vote the motion was carried.

#### Decision

- (a) That as part of managing traffic effectively the Cabinet supported the following changes to parking charges/charging hours:
  - (i) increasing the all day charge from £2 to £8 in Lyme Regis and West Bay
  - (ii) extending morning charges in Purbeck to begin from 8:00am
  - (iii) implementation of Sunday charging except that at the request of the relevant Town or Parish Council, Dorset Council would consider the case for suspending car park charging on a Sunday to enable a local event to be held. In such cases agreement to suspend would be at the sole discretion of Dorset Council and each individual case would be considered on its merits. These provisions would apply only in exceptional cases and on a limited number of occasions in a year.
- (b) That changes are introduced at the earliest opportunity and
- (c) That the Portfolio holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, after consultation with the Director of Place, be given delegated authority to decide on the further process to be followed and be given authority to take any and all further decisions and steps necessary to introduce the parking changes supported by the Cabinet.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

- A. The current charge has not been reviewed since 2014; hence the charge has not risen with inflation and does not meet the current costs. The areas are tourist destinations; therefore, the impact of the charge will primarily be on tourists and not on Dorset Council residents. There are car parks in the area that charge per hour, thus parking can be achieved locally at a lower cost for those not wanting to pay an all-day rate.

- B. Purbeck is the only part of Dorset Council that parking charges current start at 10am, this is inequitable and there is no indication of a need for charges to start later in this area. The 10am charging period appears to be the legacy of an assumption that locals in Purbeck shop early in the morning before tourists arrive, but this could be true of other popular tourist destination areas and therefore now needs to align with all car parking in Dorset area.
- C. Introducing Sunday charging across the Dorset Council area brings parity and consistency. Further research and impact analysis will be undertaken in phase 2 of the transformation project.

**66. Permission to procure and award Healthy Homes Dorset 2020 contract**

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property presented the report regarding round 1a of the Governments Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery initiative. He confirmed that if there was likely to be any further rounds of funding, discussions would take place with scrutiny on how that might be dealt with. The report and its recommendations was welcomed by Cabinet.

Decision

- (a) That the procurement of the Healthy Homes Dorset 2020 contract, value up to £1.5 million, be approved;
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Economic Growth, Assets and Property to award the contract.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

The Council has recently been awarded £859,400 from round 1a of the Government Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery initiative and is planning further bids to the fund. Meeting the tight delivery deadlines attached to the grants will be challenging if procurement is not completed swiftly. Procuring a contract with a value of up to £1.5 million allows headroom for current and future grants in addition to the original Dorset Councils budget for this project.

**67. Annual Safeguarding Report**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Skills and Early Years set out the Annual Safeguarding Report which was a one Dorset approach to safeguarding.

Anthony Douglas, Independent Chair and Scrutineer of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership confirmed that the present safeguarding arrangements were working well, focusing on system leadership and set out the activities taken place to bring services together.

Going forward into the future the partnership would need to continue to establish strong communication and networks that make up a successful child safeguarding pan-Dorset.

Decision

That the Annual Report of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership be received and noted.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

Safeguarding partnerships are required to publish and share Annual Reports widely. Dorset Council is a statutory safeguarding partner in the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership.

**68. Annual Self Evaluation of Children's Services**

Cabinet considered the production of an Annual Self Evaluation as part of the Ofsted Inspection Framework of Children's Services. The Portfolio Holder for Children, Skills and Early Years advised that the report was a comprehensive self-evaluation of children's services to support preparation for the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

Decision

That the Annual Self-Evaluation of Children's Services be received and noted.

**Reason for Recommendation**

The production of an Annual Self Evaluation as part of the Ofsted Inspection Framework of Children's Services. This report is intended to enable political leaders to understand areas of strength and areas for development.

**69. Cabinet member update on policy development matters referred to an Overview Committee(s) for consideration**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety referred to the Homelessness Strategy that had been considered by members of the People & Health Overview Committee at a workshop on 2 December 2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health advised that a report on the Current & Future Changes to the Financial Assessment and Care Contributions Policy would be considered by People and Health Overview Committee on 14 December 2020.

**70. Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and the Environment gave a brief update on the consultation of the Climate & Ecological Emergency Plan which had been extended until 20 January 2020.

71. **Urgent items**

The Leader of the Council reported that there was one urgent item of business to be considered. This matter was considered urgent as it could no longer be dealt with under delegate powers: **Purbeck Heath Grazing Unit**

72. **Purbeck Heath Large Grazing Unit**

The Executive Director for Place reported that an urgent decision was sought in order to secure the grant offer of £549,900 for a fully funded programme of high environmental value. Alongside the creation of the grazing unit, the project included an engagement programme, co-creation of a Sustainable Tourism Plan with local stakeholders and visitor management infrastructure.

Members were advised that the original application was for funding that could have been dealt with under delegated powers, however the final offer was above the delegation threshold and therefore required a member decision.

The Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder and Chairman of Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee confirmed that they were content with the proposals as set out by the Executive Director.

Decision

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place to sign the grant declaration on behalf of Dorset Council.

73. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr Peter Wharf

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

74. **Provision for Dorset Children (meeting adjourned at 14.52pm on 8 December 2020)**

Cabinet received a presentation on the proposals and had an opportunity to ask detailed questions. Following much discussion it was decided to adjourn the meeting for further details and information.

The meeting was adjourned until Monday 14 December 2020 at 2pm, which would continue in exempt business.

Meeting closed at 14.52pm



**DORSET COUNCIL CABINET - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020 (RECONVENED ON MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2020 AT 2.00PM)**

**Present:** Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Ray Bryan, Graham Carr-Jones, Tony Ferrari, Laura Miller, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle, Jill Haynes and David Walsh

**Apologies:** no apologies

**Also Present:** Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Andy Canning, Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Robin Cook, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Daryl Turner, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Stella Jones, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Maria Roe, Cllr David Shortell, Cllr Andrew Starr, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Gill Taylor, Cllr David Tooke, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Kate Wheller, Cllr Paul Kimber and Cllr John Worth

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn ( Executive Director – Corporate Development S151), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director – People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People – Children), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director – Legal & Democratic Services Monitoring Officer), David McIntosh (Corporate Director (HR&OD), Mark Blackman (Corporate Director – Education & Learning) and Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**75. Provision for Dorset Children (reconvened 14 December 2020 at 2pm)**

**Provision for Dorset Children (SEND)**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Skills and Early Help presented the first part of the report in respect of the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Capital Strategy for 2020 to 2025 and its recommendation.

Decision

That the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Capital Strategy for 2020 to 2025, be accepted.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

This strategy provides the council with a clear understanding of the current sufficiency of places for children and young people with SEND, that are supported by an Education, Health and Care Plan. Approval will allow for future operational and strategic planning to meet demand.

**Provision for Dorset Children (Business Case)**

Cabinet received a presentation from the Executive Director – People Children on the business case. Members also had an opportunity to consider the supplementary information provided. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy put forward an amendment to the reports recommendation, this was seconded by Cllr P Wharf and on being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Decision

- (a) That a final bid to acquire land property and assets as set out in the report be approved;
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer to seek the appropriate funding required.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help, in consultation with the Executive Director People – Children to prepare a detailed business case and consult on a range of options.
- (d) That a cross-party, politically balanced Steering Group be formed with a membership of 10 members, to be nominated by group leaders.

**Reason for recommendation:**

The council has a need to deliver service provision for children in a more economically efficient mechanism.

**Appendix 1 - Public Q&A's**

**Appendix 2 Cllr Q&A's**

**Duration of meeting:** 10:00 – 14:52 and (14 December 2020 in exempt business: 14:00 – 14:40)

**Chairman**

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**Cabinet 8 December 2020**

## **Public Questions and Statements**

### **1. Question from Andy Matthews**

#### **Re Agenda Item 9 - Local Plan Consultation Documents Central Functional Area – Portland**

Section 26 of the document which deals with the Central Functional Area sets out a narrative around the future development for Portland. It is welcomed that a number of proposals support the Neighbourhood Plan but some, as currently described, are at odds with the Local Planning Authorities position which was agreed earlier this year with the Neighbourhood Plan's Examiner. Specific examples are in regard to Key Employment sites and some aspects of the Development boundaries scheduled particularly the exclusion of the Albion Stone employment policy area as well as Southwell Business Park area. Providing certainty and flexibility to these employment areas at a time of change is an important element to the Economic Vision which runs in tandem with the Neighbourhood Plan.

As you are aware the Neighbourhood Plan is currently held because of the COVID pandemic and the earliest the referendum can be held is May 2021. It is intended that the Local Plan consultation will commence during the early part of 2021. Meanwhile policies in the Neighbourhood Plan can carry material weight in planning decisions.

There is a risk that unless the base data is aligned that this could undermine the basis to any referendum.

Would Cabinet please clarify the position?

#### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will continue to carry weight. There is a difference between what constitutes a Key employment site when considering all sites across Dorset and what constitutes a Key site in a more local context. Where sites are important to the local economy they can be protected through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The draft local plan is proposed for consultation and feedback on issues such as this are welcomed as the starting point for further discussion on these issues.

### **2. Question from David Moss**

#### **Re Agenda item 9 - Dorset Council Local Plan, Consultations**

1. In 2008 a financial appraisal of possible development north of Dorchester was undertaken by the Halcrow Group on behalf of WDDC. It found that after a notional development period of fourteen years it would have a negative value of - £174 million. It also concluded that the necessary road works to serve such a development would cost £113 million. The only upto date information on the viability of development North of Dorchester on the Council's website are two

paragraphs which refer to the Council's recent experience of the Gillingham Extension highlighting the need to understand the cost implications of the infrastructure requirements on large scale schemes.

In May 2020 a Planning Inspectors report into the North Essex Authorities Shared Strategy (Section 1) Plan found in respect of three proposed 'garden communities', that two of the three proposed 'garden communities' were financially unsound and therefore not deliverable. Therefore, the draft plan failed the key test of whether it was sound or not. What is of particular importance in the Inspector's analysis of the financial viability of the proposals is his criticism of the unrealistic assumptions being made on behalf of both the Councils involved and the promoters of the 'garden communities'. In particular he specifically refers to unrealistic assumptions regarding build-out rates and the need to account for 'optimism bias' in considering the cost of the infrastructure requirements.

In the absence of an upto date financial appraisal which both takes into account the Halcrow Group conclusion of 2008 and the Inspectors Report of May 2020 is it appropriate to submit to the public for public consultation a major development proposal North of Dorchester when its financial viability and therefore deliverability is at the very least in grave doubt?

2. Given all that is known about the 'Climate Emergency' and the need for sustainability is it appropriate that North of Dorchester can only be built if a new link road between the A35 and A37 is built? The route of such a link road because of topography and cost will of necessity be driven through the middle of what is supposed to be a 'garden community'.

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The 2008 Halcrow report was produced under a very different economic context and further work is needed to assess current viability.

Early work to start a more detailed viability assessment for the whole local plan is being undertaken. More detailed viability work will take place over coming months to fully understand the viability implications of the policies within the local plan for development across Dorset.

The Garden Community programme includes a range of support for local authorities to evaluate proposals for large scale developments. This includes support for evidence studies to evaluate a site's deliverability including viability through to support across government bodies to help unblock issues that arise.

The movement strategy proposed within the plan seeks to maximise walking and cycling opportunities alongside the provision of facilities within the development. This will help to minimise the reliance on car travel and make everyday trips shorter and more sustainable. It should also be noted that the road link now proposed is not the full bypass being considered in the Halcrow report, but a link road of an appropriate scale to run through a residential area.

### **3. Question from John Calvert**

#### **Re Item 9 Local Plan, Section 23.3.8 and Section 23.3.9 in Dorchester Town Centre Strategy**

As a Dorchester resident I would like reassurance that any plan involving changes to Trinity Street would not just look at the public car parks as an easy place to put retail enterprises but also look at the public transport issues relating to the lack of room for queues at the various bus stops and at the overall look of Trinity Street.

It needs major strategic changes rather than simply putting shops on the two car parks to the West of Trinity Street.

#### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

Any changes to the Trinity Street area in Dorchester would need to include improvements to the built environment. Increasing footfall within the area would aid in creating a more vibrant and attractive area of the town.

The council will be looking in detail at how it can work alongside town councils across Dorset to help deliver regeneration including improved public realm.

### **4. Question from Peter Bowyer Chair of Dorset CPRE**

#### **Re item 9 Local Plan**

1. Dorset Local Plan. Can the Council outline how it plans to incorporate the recommendations from the research report commissioned by Dorset CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) on Dorset Housing Evidence Needs into the emerging Dorset Local Plan? This report was sent to every member of Dorset Council and to its key officers. To date Dorset CPRE has received no comments or feedback from members and officials of the Council. This is particularly disappointing when considering the requests made at the September and October 2020 meetings of the Cabinet to have community input and engagement into a shared vision for the Dorset Local Plan. The report is particularly relevant to agenda item 9-Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation. The research findings and the substance of the report do not appear to feature at all in the Consultation planned for January 2021 and the associated information.

In the interests of public engagement and public confidence in the exercise of the planning function in Dorset, it would be helpful to know how Dorset Council intend to make use of this important report in the development of the Dorset Local Plan and what others form of engagement than the January 2021 Consultation the Council will be developing for the Dorset Local Plan.

2. Can the Council please explain why it has not included the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ) in the background papers to agenda item 9-Dorset Council Local Plan? The SHLAA is an important document for residents .The provisional sites proposed by developers do not clearly show policy changes as expected. This is somewhat unusual and unexpected.

## **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

National policy states that the Government's standard methodology should be used to calculate housing needs, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. It is important to make sure that our plan is likely to be found sound at examination, and to have an up to date plan in place as soon as possible, and this means that it needs to follow national policy.

The standard methodology is being revised, as proposed through recent government consultations, and so the numbers for our area will change during the course of plan preparation. The consultation draft of the local plan seeks to make provision for the housing required under the current standard methodology whilst also giving some flexibility to respond to changes in this methodology, to respond to the consultation and to respond to the delivery of sites over the plan period.

The SHLAA is evidence that supports the local plan consultation document, and is available online on the Dorset Council website.

### **5. Question from Sally Cooke Re Item 9 Local Plan**

The development envisaged in policy DOR13 of the draft Local Plan (the Garden Community proposal) will, if approved, greatly increase the number of people wanting outdoor recreation in the Dorchester area.

The Garden Community proposal intends to improve public access and nature conservation in the river valley. This habitat, however, is not the most robust to cope with large numbers of extra visitors.

The nearby public Local Nature Reserve at Thorncombe Woods is thought by local residents to be already at full stretch, and unable to cope with a big upsurge in visitor numbers. (This is an opinion which has been voiced during recent consultation on Stinsford's draft Neighbourhood Plan.)

**What ideas does Dorset Council have, in the context of policy DOR13, for creating new robust outdoor amenity space, such as extensive community woodland (larger in scale than the copses referred to in point VIII of policy DOR13), so that all residents close to Dorchester can continue to enjoy the same or better opportunities for countryside recreation as we enjoy now?**

## **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The draft proposal for policy DOR13 does not currently refer to extensive community woodland, but such suggestions can be made as responses to the consultation. Opportunities exist within the area to deliver substantial areas of open space, some of which will be appropriate for informal recreation with linkages being made to the wider countryside. Other opportunities could involve community orchards or making greater use of Puddletown Forest for informal recreation. All proposals within the

proposed site boundary would need to be considered within the more detailed masterplanning for the development, taking account of the advice from biodiversity, landscape and heritage consultees.

## **6. Question from Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan group c/o Stinsford Parish Council**

Draft Local Plan Policy DOR13 proposes that “Land to the north of Dorchester will be developed in accordance with a masterplan produced for the site, which will reflect garden community principles.”

In paragraph 12 of the government’s Garden Communities Prospectus, 2018, we read that *“Proposals should set out how the local community is being, or will be, engaged and involved at an early stage, and strategies for continued community engagement and involvement. We are clear that local communities – both current and future residents – must have a meaningful say in developing the proposal from design to delivery.”*

If the development proposed in DOR13 goes ahead, what mechanism will Dorset Council put in place to ensure that this principle of Garden Communities is followed?

## **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The original West Dorset District Council submission to the Garden Communities programme made a commitment to involving key stakeholders from the local community in the production of a masterplan for the site, with this masterplan being adopted as a supplementary planning document.

The council is currently considering formal governance arrangements and which approach would be most effective in steering the masterplan. The formation of a steering group with community, council and developer representation is likely to be the favoured approach. There would also be wider public consultation on the masterplan.

## **7. Questions from Roy Phillips MBE**

Question one for Cllr Ray Bryan " At the cabinet meeting on 6th October it was minuted that Cllr Bryan would respond to all statements and questions submitted in relation to proposed major road works in Dinah's Hollow, Melbury Abbas. After 2 months no response has been received by stakeholders, Melbury Abbas & Cann Parish Council or residents. When will this be actioned ?"

Question two for Cllr Flower " Why were the stake holders and residents not given reasonable time between issue of the papers and reports and the closing date for submissions (in some cases only 2 days) to seek opinion on the reports and prepare

a detailed submission on Dinah's Hollow proposed works. Why was the substance of the submissions received after the closing date not made available to the cabinet as required by the 1974 Local Government Act. “

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment**

‘As promised at Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> October, we have read and considered all the views received both before and after the Cabinet deadline regarding the proposed slope stabilisation works at Dinah's Hollow.

The correspondence we have received regarding Dinah's Hollow is a reflection of the many demands we need to meet. The concerns highlight the impact the proposed slope stabilisation works might have on the vegetation, drainage, climate change, historic nature of the Hollow and the safe flow of traffic.

Dorset Council has a duty under the Highways Act to maintain safe passage as far as is reasonably practical. The proposed work at Dinah's Hollow is prompted by the safety concerns raised by bank instability and the risk of injury, possibly death, posed to users of the highway.

Let me once again reassure everyone that the environmental issues in the Hollow will guide our work here. Before any scheme proceeds, new ecological, tree and landscape surveys will be undertaken. The use of soil nails is currently seen as a measured and proportionate response to the threat posed, but of course geotechnical design will need to be reviewed against current best practice and site conditions that may have changed.

The current proposed design is the result of detailed appraisal of the ground conditions, the ecology and visual environment which minimises the extent of the soil nailing. We do not plan to remove all the trees from the hollow. A selection of mature trees will be retained and planting holes created for replacement trees on the slopes. This would allow more daylight into the hollow and the growth of new plants and saplings through the mesh to create a more varied habitat. Ecology will govern the time of year that construction and maintenance operations take place to minimise the impact.

Please be assured that there are no plans to change the traffic management within Melbury Abbas. If the proposals are adopted and funding is allocated, the traffic signals limiting traffic flow to a single lane at the lower end of the hollow will remain. The temporary concrete barriers will no longer be required. The advice given to HGV traffic will not change and retention of the signals will not make the route more attractive for traffic in general.

To conclude, Dorset Council has difficult decisions to make balancing conflicting demands of social health and well-being, the climate emergency, highway safety and ensuring a sustainable economy. Whatever the outcome, the decision will not be taken lightly and will be made in the best interest of Dorset as a whole.’



## Question from Cllr N Ireland

### 1. Agenda Item #7 – Q2 Performance Update

“I note with some concern that in the latest performance update against our council's plan there is a significant shortfall in the number of affordable homes delivered. Ignoring for now the fact that the 300 homes per annum is a wholly inadequate target given the housing list extends to something like 5000, the facts are that we've only achieved 75% in the first half-year, leaving another 186 before year end just to break even. As a member of one of this council's planning committees, I observe that most of our meetings have at least one item asking for a reduction or the complete removal of the provision for affordable housing in a development previously approved. What is this council going to do in the remaining 3+ years of its term to ensure that not only we meet the 300/year target of affordable homes, but significantly exceed it for the benefit of our residents?”

### Response from the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Housing

In the first two quarters of the year 114 new affordable homes were delivered.

As you will be aware all developments have suffered delays this year which has effected delivery.

Developers are working hard to catch up and it is also worth noting that this is the final year of the Homes England Affordable Housing Funding Programme for the five year period 2016 – 21. This means RPs will be keen to complete units that have grant attached to this programme.

There are a number of developments for affordable housing which plan to complete this year. We estimate that a further 200 affordable homes will be completed before the end of March 2021. This figure may change as there are a number of short term factors that could affect these homes being completed, such as Covid and Brexit.

Examples of developments that will deliver affordable homes this year include Poundbury in Dorchester, Cuthbury Close in Wimborne, Flaxfield Rise in Beaminster, Curtis Field in Weymouth, Lower Road in Stalbridge, Compass Point in Swanage and the Platinum Skies development for affordable home ownership for older people in Sherborne.

The Council is working hard with Registered Providers and Homes England to increase the supply of affordable housing in Dorset. Homes England recently published details of their 2021 – 2026 funding programme and we are supporting RPs in making funding bids.

There are a number of all affordable schemes that are being bought through which will use Homes England funding to develop a range of housing tenures. Recently completed all affordable schemes include 36 homes in Mosterton and 20 homes in Longburton. These developments have a planning policy compliant amount of

affordable included in the S106 and grant funding is used to deliver the rest of the site as affordable.

Examples of all affordable developments coming forward include sites in Beaminster, Stalbridge, Blandford, Gillingham, Okeford Fitzpaine, Sherborne and Weymouth. These developments usually include a mix of rented and shared ownership housing.

The Council will continue to work with RPs to increase the number of land led developments coming forward. These sites will combine with homes delivered through planning policy on open market developments, rural exception sites and community led housing schemes to ensure a positive pipeline of schemes.

The Council are working to increase the amount of temporary accommodation available. Examples include the acquisition of a 3 bedroom adapted bungalow in Wareham, previously a Travel Lodge had been used for households with disabilities, and four relocatable units also in Wareham.

The Housing Team are planning a number of acquisitions and leases to further increase the stock of temporary accommodation and have successfully bid for Government funding through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme.

All our current local plans include policies for the provision of affordable housing within general housing developments. The provision of affordable housing does however reduce the viability of development, and as market conditions vary over time, it is inevitable that in some cases it is not possible to secure policy-compliant levels of affordable housing. Viability is always thoroughly tested when this is the case, with developers asked to provide evidence which is then independently assessed on behalf of the council. Viability issues will also be tested through the process of preparing the new local plan, reducing the likelihood of viability arguments on applications being successful other than in exceptional cases.

## **2. Agenda Item #9 – Local Plan Consultation**

“The Ward I represent in Dorset Council is entirely rural, ranging from small settlements such as Upton and Ringstead to the largest village of Crossways. Apart from the latter, all the settlements I represent are regarded under the current Local Plan as unsustainable and recently, post Dorset Council’s emergence, these villages have been subject to a strict application of a sustainability rule and essentially denied any opportunity for new builds, unless perversely for ‘holiday accommodation’ when it’s apparently OK. In virtually all cases these proposed residential developments, many profoundly towards the “Eco” and affordable end of the spectrum, have been fully supported by the local parish councils and residents as they realise that without development of suitable housing, their communities will atrophy, their village shop close, their children leave. This council’s proposed Local Plan does not address these issues. It persists with notions of 15 miles sustainability when most people don’t work in their local town, it ignores the fact that rural bus services won’t suddenly emerge as a panacea for all when we have absolutely no policy to inject

the funds or subsidies necessary to sustain the service levels required (and whilst we also shamefully continue to pay the bare minimum possible for bus pass use), and it completely ignores the fact that ICE vehicles are banned from sale in 10 years' time - BEV journeys have zero emissions assuming the charging source is RE friendly i.e. distance doesn't matter. The proposed Local Plan places the communities I represent all in Tier 4 bar one i.e. no housing. A more suitable policy would be to allow development within or adjacent to such settlements if they meet a suitable standard, for example Passivhaus. Will the Cabinet endorse and enact this proposal?"

### **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning**

The strategy within the local plan is to focus development into locations where the distance people need to travel to meet their day to day needs is minimised and where sustainable travel options (walking, cycling and public transport) are available. This not only reduces the resources consumed whilst making journeys but also reduces reliance on car travel, thereby reducing congestion within towns. These active travel options help to create healthy communities where people are physically active.

The relative concentration of development also has benefits for service provision: more scattered development for example results in increased costs such as those for school transport.

Where smaller communities support additional development in their settlements however, it is still possible for them to propose this through neighbourhood plans.

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