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## CABINET

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 JULY 2022

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

**Apologies:** Cllrs

**Also present:** Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Molly Rennie and Cllr Bill Trite

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director of Housing, Dorset Council), Anna Eastgate (Corporate Director - Place Services), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Jonathan Price (Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning), Deborah Smart (Corporate Director – Transformation, Innovation and Digital), Steve Veevers (Corporate Director Operations, Adult Care) and Vik Verma (Interim Director of Education and Learning)

29. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

31. **Public Participation**

The Chairman advised that there had been 1 public question from the Head teacher at The Swanage School. Unfortunately, the Head teacher was unable to attend but the Portfolio Holder confirmed that a written response would be sent to the school and a copy would be attached in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

32. **Questions from Councillors**

There were 2 questions received from Councillor B Heatley; these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

In response to a supplementary question, the Executive Director for Corporate Development advised that the agreement with the Department of Education (DfE) on the safety valve, had a target overspend for this financial year of 10.4 million pounds and it was expected that this would be exceeded.

The DfE monitors the agreement on a quarterly bases and releases the funds accordingly. However, several Councils, including Dorset were reporting their concerns, due to inflation pressures and that the number of children with special educational needs was increasing. This was an ongoing conversation with the DfE to continue the negotiations in these areas.

### 33. **Forward Plan**

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for September was received and noted. The Chairman advised that the SEND Capital Strategy Implementation Plan would be coming forward to the next Cabinet meeting in September.

### 34. **Quarter 1 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Capital and Commercial Strategy set out the report with the information about the Council's projected financial performance for the full 2022/2023 financial year, as at the end of quarter 1. As part of his presentation the Portfolio Holder proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Cllr R Bryan seconded the motion.

In response to questions regarding re-budgeting and the potential need to address the deficit issue mid-budget, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that if this were required, these discussions and decisions would need to take place after quarter 2.

In respect of the Environment and Wellbeing budgets that have a forecast adverse variance of almost £700k, the Executive Director for Corporate Development confirmed that even with moving budgets around, the financial pressure would remain in these areas.

The Executive Director for Corporate Development also responded to questions regarding the financial arrangements of the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE), its Business Plan and working capital loan.

#### **Decision**

- (a) That the Senior Leadership Team's forecast of the full year's outturn for the Council, made at the end of Quarter 1, including progress of the transformational and tactical savings incorporated into the budget, be noted.
- (b) That the capital programme for 2022/23 including the slippage from previous years, and the work taking place to review this before the capital strategy for 2023/24 is developed, be noted.

- (c) That the opening position for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) refresh and the budget timetable headlines be noted.
- (d) That the budget movements (virements) set out in the report to Cabinet of 26 July 2022, be agreed.

### **Reason for the decision**

The Council has responsibilities to deliver within its corporate plan and it must do this within the resources made available through the revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23. The report summarised the Council's forecast financial performance for the year at the end of the first quarter.

## **35. Council Plan Refresh 2022-24**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation presented the refreshed Council Plan for 2022 – 2024 and proposed the report's recommendations. Members were advised that the draft plan had been considered and supported by both the council's Overview Committee's.

The Portfolio Holder further advised that the delivery plan was still a work in progress and Key Performance Indicators were also being reviewed to ensure they were outcome focused. Cllr L Beddow seconded the motion.

### **Recommendation to Full Council**

That the refreshed Council Plan 2022 – 2024 and the new strategic delivery plan be approved.

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

The review and refresh of the Dorset Council Plan should be approved by all Dorset Councillors at a full council meeting.

## **36. Establishment of a Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset**

The Leader of the Council presented the report and proposed the recommendations, these were seconded by Cllr P Wharf.

In response to a question regarding the membership of the committee, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health indicated that as the Council was the shareholder of the Company and Shareholding was an Executive function of the Council, it was necessary to set up the committee as an executive committee in accordance with the procedure rules. However, he further advised that as the Chairman of Overview Committee, Cllr Parkes had been asked to monitor progress of the company and involve other members who may be interested.

### **Decision**

- (a) That an Executive Committee be established, to be known as 'The Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Limited'.
- (b) That 5 members of the Executive be appointed to the Shareholder Committee.
- (c) That the Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Committee be approved.
- (d) That delegated authority be given to the Shareholder Committee within the scope of its terms of reference, including strategic oversight and Reserved Matter decisions.

### **Reason for the decision**

To establish formal governance arrangements for the performance of the Council's shareholder function for Care Dorset Holdings Limited.

### **37. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman - Investigation into a complaint in connection with Special Education Needs Provision**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help presented a formal report by the Monitoring Officer that was issued under Section 5A of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman that Dorset Council was at fault by not adequately meeting a child's educational and special educational needs from 2020 until it identified and placed that child at a special needs school the following year (2021). It was also found that there had been issues in relation to maintaining good communication and dealing properly with complaints that had been made.

Those failings had been found by the Ombudsman to amount to fault which caused injustice and therefore the Ombudsman had made recommendations for the Council to specifically address the injustice suffered by the child and their family, and to ensure that similar faults did not occur in the future.

The Portfolio Holder proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. The motion was seconded by Cllr T Ferrari and unanimously agreed.

### **Decision**

- (a) That the eight recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, as set out below in Section 3.1 of the report to Cabinet of 26 July 2022, be accepted.
- (b) Adopt as actions to be taken by the Council the further recommendations made by the Ombudsman, as set out and commented upon in Section 3.3 of the report.

- (c) The action taken since receipt of the Ombudsman's report be noted, and agree that the Children's Services Strengthening Services Board (Chaired by the Chief Executive) should:
- (i) Oversee implementation of the actions referred to in the second recommendation; and,
  - (ii) Review the Ombudsman's focus report "Out of school, out of sight" and implement any necessary learning from that report.
- (d) That People and Health Scrutiny Committee be invited to:
- (i) add the Council's ongoing performance in addressing the Ombudsman's criticisms and concerns to the Committee's forward work programme, and
  - (ii) commission the South West Audit Partnership to undertake focused work to provide assurance that the actions being taken in response to the Ombudsman's report are embedded in procedure and in practice.
- (e) Send the minutes of this meeting to all Councillors as the Cabinet's response to the Monitoring Officer's report.

#### **Reason for the decision**

The purpose of a section 5A Monitoring Officer report was to ensure that the findings of the Ombudsman were brought to the attention of Cabinet and acted upon. There were also legal requirements that the report be sent to all other Dorset Council councillors and that notices of the Ombudsman's findings be published in a local newspaper.

These transparency requirements reflect the seriousness of a formal finding of maladministration and injustice and are to ensure that the Cabinet and the

Council as whole is satisfied that an appropriate action plan is put in place so that:

- Wider systemic issues identified by the Ombudsman are addressed and
- There is no repetition of the failings identified by the Ombudsman.

#### **38. Modern Slavery Transparency Statement**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation presented the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. This had also been considered by Place and Resources Overview Committee on 7 June 2022.

In proposing the Statement, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that once approved it would be published and there after a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement would be published on an annual basis. The motion was seconded by Cllr D Walsh.

## **Decision**

That the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for the financial year 2021-22 be published.

## **Reason for the decision**

A forthcoming legislative change to the Modern Slavery Act, section 54, will result in a mandatory requirement for any local authority with a budget of £36m, and above, to publish a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement on an annual basis.

### **39. Dorset Council School Transport Policies 2022-2023**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help presented the report and the recommendation from the People & Health Overview Committee of 28 June 2022. The motion was seconded by Cllr R Bryan.

## **Decision**

- (a) The Home to School Transport Assistance Eligibility Policy for Children and Young People attending School 2022-2023 be approved and adopted, which includes a rise in the surplus seat price from £800 to £825.
- (b) The Dorset Post 16 Transport Support Policy for 2022-2023 which includes a rise in the surplus seat price from £800 to £825 be approved and adopted.
- (c) A schedule of increase of the Surplus Seat Cost in line with the prevailing Retail Price Index is implemented each year without the need to reconsult.
- (d) The Home to School Transport Assistance Eligibility Policy for Children and Young People attending School and Post 16 Transport Support Policy are re-consulted on only either when there is a significant change to the eligibility criteria; or where there are changes to the statutory guidance that would require significant change to either policy; or in October 2026 for the 2027-2028 policy – whichever is the earliest.
- (e) The Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policies be rewritten in plain English.

## **Reason for the decision**

Dorset Council has a duty to provide Home to School Transport services to eligible pupils and to assist in supporting pupils attending Post 16 provision.

40. **Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Local Plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning gave a progress report on the preparations for a new local plan for Dorset. A copy of the detailed report is set out in Appendix 3 of the minutes.

41. **Portfolio Holder /Lead Member(s) Update including any Policy referrals to report**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services presented the report on her portfolio area including: -

- Work with cultural partners, including the Arts Development Company
- B-side festival
- Weymouth's Sculpture Trail and Pop-up Museum
- Welcomed the embedding of Culture in the refreshed Council Plan
- Waste and recycling services
- Attended Scout, Rainbow, and Brownie groups to discuss recycling
- Attended Annual Community – Managed Libraries meeting.

42. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

43. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr G Carr-Jones and agreed

**Decision**

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

44. **Adult Social Care - Future Services**

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health presented the confidential report and proposed the recommendations, Cllr T Ferrari seconded the motion.

**Decision**

That the detailed recommendations set out within the exempt report, and as amended by Cabinet of 26 July 2022, be approved.

**Reason for the decision**

To approve a delivery approach for this project.

**Appendix 1 - Public Participation Q&A**  
**Appendix 2 Councillor Q&A's**  
**Appendix 3 Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Local Plan**

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.43 am

**Chairman**

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## Question to Cabinet 26 July 2022

### 1. Question from Jenny Maraspin – Head teacher at The Swanage School

#### Home to School Policy 2022-23

The Swanage School is an excellent example of how the free school programme has been exceptionally successful. The school is truly an asset for the children and parents of Swanage and rural Dorset. It is therefore puzzling that the Dorset Council Home to School Transport policy continues to discriminate against it.

In summary - The key points we are raising are as follows:

- **Climate Change** - Every year, Dorset Council spends a significant amount of money transporting students who live in Swanage, which has its own established and successful secondary school, to a school which is not their nearest secondary school. Contrary to all established national practice and policy. This has a huge detrimental impact on the environment and is an unnecessary, unethical financial burden on the local transport budget, which is only going to get more costly given the huge inflation in fuel costs.
- **Parent Concern** - Parents who live outside Swanage whose children attend The Swanage School are not given the same deal and have to pay for their transport. They correctly argue this is discriminatory. Some have appealed and have been awarded bus passes on these grounds. This is the biggest concern raised in the School's parent survey each year.
- **Discriminates** - The proposed Dorset transport policy has a 'special clause', 1.1.3 which explicitly discriminates against The Swanage School, disregards its catchment area and is completely contrary to national and local school transport policy. The council explained it was implemented to give Swanage parents a choice, a commitment dating back to 2011. Surely 10 years is long enough!
- **Treating All Equally & Fair** – Dorset Council abide by this phrase, yet in this case fail to do so!

Just before the pandemic broke I had a meeting with Mark Blackman who assured her that moving forward Dorset Council would be addressing this issue on the principle that Dorset Council should only be providing free transport to the nearest school and recognised that the current practice was a very costly luxury that they could no longer afford to fund or continue to try and justify. But then the pandemic broke out and we all had bigger things to worry about.

The current transport policy consultation has brought this issue to the forefront again.

The Swanage School asks for a common-sense approach to this longstanding issue, but also feels the time has come to take legal action if the matter is not resolved in the current policy review process.

Question:

**Given the above facts, how can the chamber reconcile the hypocrisy?**

**Response from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help**

Dorset Council maintains its position that the Swanage School was set up to give the families of Swanage a choice of provision once the 3 tier system was abolished. It was designed to provide a local secondary school to families who did not wish to travel to the larger Purbeck School in Wareham.

On this basis, the Council continues to use the Purbeck catchment area for transport entitlement purposes to that school, while at the same time acknowledging a transport entitlement area for The Swanage School, assisting those families to access that school.

The unilateral extension of The Swanage School catchment area does not require an extension of eligibility to all families in Purbeck to transport to the Swanage School – the free school was set up for Swanage residents as an alternative to the Purbeck School. The Swanage School has raised expectations of families by this action, as well as through their website, suggesting to parents that they should be entitled to transport as the schools 'catchment area' extends across the Purbeck Area.

A removal of transport eligibility would disadvantage families on FSM/PP. They are unlikely to be able to access their own means to transport to Purbeck, and those who can, would make individual car journeys in order to access their preferred school.

## Councillor Questions for Cabinet 26 July 2022

### Question 1 from Cllr B Heatley

The forecast overspend for the current year, excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant, is £6.6m (para 18.1, Quarter 1 Financial Management Report 2022/23). Para 9.3 reports that CPI inflation has now reached 9.1% as the report was written (but now 9.4%). What assumptions about monthly inflation for the rest of the year and the local government pay settlement underlie the £6.6m forecast?

### Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy

The Council has already done a significant amount of work with its supply chain to mitigate the impacts of inflation. This includes re-establishing the Commercial Board which reviews specific areas of the business where inflation is putting pressure on budgets and which makes recommendations to SLT about use of the £8.7m contingency budget.

As contracts are renewed or renegotiated, we are building price increases into our forecasts. Finance Business Partners and their teams are also working continuously with managers across all services to model inflationary pressures as we become aware of them and again include them in forecasts – but this doesn't amount to a single inflation number across all the Council's spend, it is at a granular level. In total we have identified non-pay inflation pressures of £2.9m with a further £3m being earmarked in contingency against pay.

Beyond this, the Commercial and Procurement Team continues to provide support to managers to strengthen the commercial nature of contract negotiations with our suppliers. It is true that inflation is hitting businesses and residents across the Council area – and indeed nationally and globally – but it is also impacting on the Council itself, and it *is not* and *cannot* only be Dorset Council's problem to solve. Our budgets are effectively cash limited and suppliers who are in business with us know that there is risk involved in what is essentially a commercial relationship.

We are keen to work over the long-term with as many local businesses as possible, to deliver sustainable jobs, investment in high quality skills and training, secure employment and a vibrant and growing local economy, but this must be done alongside financial responsibility and the need to balance our budget as part of the Council's own affordability and sustainability agenda.

### Question 2 from Cllr B Heatley

A further £14.9m overspend is predicted for the Dedicated Schools Block (para 10.9, Quarter 1 Financial Management Report 2022/23). Where will this money come from?

## **Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy**

As part of the *safety valve* agreement signed with the DfE, Dorset Council will receive £42.5m of support towards what was estimated to be a total High Needs Block deficit of £79.5m. As part of this, the model estimated an overspend in 2022/23 of £10.4m. The Qtr1 forecast regrettably estimates that this will actually be nearer £14.9m.

Current Regulations mean that overspends against the Dedicated Schools Grant are ring-fenced and treated as negative reserves that are unusable by the Council. However, these Regulations are scheduled to fall away on 1 April 2023 at which point deficits are anticipated to fall to councils to fund.

This Council has demonstrated its commitment to increasing sufficiency of SEND provision and to recover the HNB financial position as part of this. A further paper on SEND capital spend is coming to Cabinet in September and a further update on the position on the HNB will be provided in the Qtr2 finance report in November. Between now and then, officers will continue to work towards delivering the provision that Dorset Children and their families need within the funding provided.

## Cabinet - 26 July 2022

### Dorset Local Plan:

### Update from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

#### Introduction

Dorset Council is one of the largest local planning authorities in the country, issuing over 500 planning decisions every month. This puts us in the top 2% of authorities in England. As Dorset is a young authority, the statutory planning context for decision-making is currently a complex one, with six 'legacy authority' adopted local plans covering the area, together with three minerals and waste local plans (nine in total), and adoption dates ranging from 2012 to 2019. For these reasons, preparation of a new Local Plan that is right for Dorset is a top priority for the Council.

#### Progress to date

Dorset Council is preparing a new local plan for Dorset to ensure we have an up-to-date plan which will provide a consistent basis for decision-making across the entire administrative area. Local Plan options consultation took place between January and March 2021. The draft plan has indicated a need for 30,500 dwellings (just under 1,800 dwellings per annum), based upon the current national housing methodology, and at least 131 hectares of employment land, between 2021 and 2038. The draft plan contains options which, if delivered, would ensure sufficient sites to deliver this whilst also allowing for some flexibility in case some sites fail to come forward, having regard to the current requirement to consider unmet needs from neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Co-operate. The draft plan also states that *'Dorset Council is working to examine the scope for new or significantly expanded settlements to help deliver the longer-term growth needs of Dorset having regard for the need to promote sustainable patterns of development'*.

Work has since been taking place to review all responses and refine/update the evidence base as necessary. The plan itself needs to be the subject of a public examination which will be conducted by an independent inspector.

## **Current Timeline for local plan preparation**

The Council's current Local Development Scheme indicates that submission of the plan to the Secretary of State (the point at which the independent examination process is triggered) will occur towards the end of 2022, with examination and adoption following in 2023. However, this needs to be revised to take account of specific evidence requirements that are required before the publication and submission of the plan can take place. This includes:

- Weymouth Town Centre flood risk assessment - a crucial piece of evidence that will not be finalised until the autumn
- Dorset is within 5 separate catchment areas for internationally protected wetland habitats, all of which have been the subject of recent advice on the need to achieve nutrient neutrality. This has potentially significant implications for housing development, and further work is needed to assess both the risk and scope for mitigation.

## **National changes to the planning system**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was published in May 2022 and this proposes some significant changes to the planning system. These include:

- A genuinely plan-led system, with a move away from the 5-year housing land delivery test for authorities with an up-to-date plan, changes to how housing need is calculated, and removal of the duty to co-operate;
- Creation of a national suite of generic development management policies which would remove the need for each local plan to duplicate national policies
- Creation of a new 'infrastructure levy';
- An intention to digitise and simplify the planning system to ensure it is consistent and transparent, with associated efficiency benefits.

## **A plan that is fit for the future**

There is an opportunity for Dorset's local plan to be at the forefront of expected changes to the planning system which have been set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. Having a plan that is embedded in the improved planning system can ensure Dorset is able to benefit from a genuinely plan-led system, new digital

powers, streamlined processes, and an expected national suite of development management policies. This will strengthen our ability to address some critical challenges for our area, including the following:

1. **Climate and ecological emergency:** we want to plan for future sustainable settlements at a scale that can deliver the dual commitments of net zero development and biodiversity net gain while also building in climate adaptation and resilience into our settlements.
2. **Sustainable Settlements and Infrastructure:** due to the large geographical area we cover, combined with the scattering of market towns and smaller settlements, a high proportion of our development has historically taken the form of smaller sites that are not always capable of being fully supported by an uplift in infrastructure provision. We have an opportunity to look at a strategy that identifies longer-term opportunities for strategic development options that can strike an optimum balance of scale and infrastructure provision and the creation of prosperous and inclusive communities.
3. **Environment:** Dorset is planning ambitious growth while also having to manage a unique combination of environmental responsibilities, including 5 catchment areas for protected wetlands where nutrient neutrality is required.

### **Implications for timescales**

Taking account of the evidence requirements, the need to test options, and the importance of building in effective community engagement, officers have estimated that adoption of the new local plan could be achieved by 2026, subject to consultation stages and examination timelines. This will allow us to develop a vision for Dorset that delivers sustainable growth in the longer term and secures the effective stewardship of our unique environment. The Local Development Scheme will need to be revised to reflect the additional work required.

Stage	Existing Milestones in adopted LDS	Proposed Milestones
Further evidence and review <sup>1</sup>	-	Through to Q2 2024
Cabinet	-	Q2 2024
Council	-	Q3 2024
Publication (pre-submission consultation) <sup>2</sup>	Q2 2022	Q4 2024
Submission to Secretary of State	Q4 2022	Q2 2025
Examination	Q2 2023	Q3 2025
Adoption	Q4 2023	Q2 2026

## Risks

At present, the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework facilitates ad hoc windfall housing development if local authorities have out-of-date local plans and are unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply of deliverable sites. This leaves Dorset exposed to the threat of unplanned development which, in the long term, is likely to undermine its vision for sustainable development. Whilst changes to the National Planning Policy Framework are anticipated, these may only offer relief from the 5-year housing land requirement for authorities with an up-to-date local plan, which will leave Dorset at threat of unplanned growth until its new plan is adopted in 2026.

## The Leader's ask from Government

Paragraph 223 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government will explore potential planning freedoms and flexibilities, for example *'where this would facilitate an increase in the amount of housing that can be delivered'*. Such freedoms and flexibilities would need to be considered by the

<sup>1</sup> Weymouth Town Centre Flood Risk Assessment; Nutrient Neutrality implications; Implications of Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (revised draft NPPD expected later this year)

<sup>2</sup> Milestones based upon no further round of pre-submission consultation. If we have to consult on significant changes, there is potential for the timetable to be extended.

Government on a case-by-case basis. Securing such flexibility around the housing 5-year housing delivery requirements will provide Dorset with some protection against unplanned growth that potentially could undermine the emerging plan, and would provide us with the assurances needed to deliver a fit-for-purpose plan by 2026. With this in mind, the Leader has written to Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing, requesting a reduction of the 5-year housing delivery requirement down to 3 years until the end of 2026, giving us the time needed to advance our local plan without fear of ad hoc development that is contrary to existing or emerging local plan policies.

## **Conclusion**

Dorset is ideally placed to be at the forefront of the new planning system once it becomes enshrined in a revised NPPF and supporting legislation. This will provide us with a great opportunity to take advantage of a genuinely plan-led system and put in place a strategy that provides a long-term framework for sustainable development in Dorset. It is anticipated that we should be able to get a plan in place by 2026, subject to progress on evidence gathering, community engagement stages and the smooth running of the examination process. However, it is recognised that, without the additional flexibilities that have been sought, there would be some risk in terms of unplanned housing growth if we are unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.

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