

Appendix 1: Proposed response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Implementation of plan-making reforms consultation.

October 2023

The consultation is seeking views on proposals for the implementation of plan-making reforms that are being proposed through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The consultation runs until 18-October-2023.

The material for the consultation includes proposal to simplify and speed up the plan-making system. It is formed from a number of questions relating to different elements of the proposals. Responses have been prepared to these questions and are included in the table below.

The consultation details can be viewed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making-reforms-consultation-on-implementation/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-consultation-on-implementation-of-plan-making-reforms>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
Chapter 1: Plan content		
1	<p><u>Core content</u></p> <p>Do you agree with the core principles for plan content? Do you think there are other principles that could be included?</p>	<p><u>Proposed response Q1:</u> The proposal to focus the content of local plans to that necessary to deliver the vision for the area is broadly supported. However, there will be a need to understand how this will relate to the proposed National Development Management policies and how the local plan and these National Development Management policies are considered in decision making. Plans should also take into account other strategies that are being prepared at the local level for example how the local plan aligns with the local transport plan is an essential element of a local strategy for managing growth.</p> <p>There are concerns about how certain aspects of the requirements are kept up to date. For example, a policies map will only change when policies are amended through the adoption of the local plan and therefore it could only be updated every five years.</p>
2	<p><u>Plan visions</u></p> <p>Do you agree that plans should contain a vision, and with our proposed principles preparing the vision? Do you</p>	<p><u>Proposed response Q2:</u> The proposed central role of the local plan vision and the proposed approach to developing a vision are broadly supported. However the use of a template for a vision is not supported as it will not enable the creation of locally specific visions that reflect the characteristics and aspirations of places.</p>

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	<p>think there are other principles that could be included?</p>	<p>There is lots of variations across a plan area that would need to be reflected in a vision and this is unlikely to lead to a concise statement especially in large local authorities. As the proposed visioning exercise includes an element of public engagement, there will be difficulty in reconciling the differing and often competing views from the many different stakeholders and communities.</p> <p>The need for a vision to be measurable will also create challenges as many elements of a vision are aspirational, showing a direction of travel rather than a destination. It is unlikely that a vision that is truly shaped by the views of communities will be concise.</p>
3	<p><u>Local development management policies</u></p> <p>Do you agree with the proposed framework for local development management policies?</p>	<p><u>Proposed response Q3:</u> The proposal to simplify the content of local plans through the introduction of National Development Management policies is supported. The approach for allowing Local Development Management policies is also supported however there will need to be clear guidance on when a Local Development Management policy is acceptable and what justification and evidence would be necessary to support the approach.</p>
4	<p><u>Templating and digital efficiencies</u></p> <p>Would templates make it easier for local planning authorities to prepare local</p>	<p><u>Proposed response Q4:</u> Templates could assist in ensuring local plan policies are thorough covering all of the relevant issues but it is essential that such templates are not rigid allowing for local flexibility. Overly rigid templates will make it difficult to prepare a local plan, removing the LPAs ability to pull together policies that truly reflect</p>

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	<p>plans? Which parts of the local plan would benefit from consistency?</p>	<p>local circumstances. Policies for development sites within an area need to differ to reflect site specific issues.</p> <p>There is a concern that if an element of a template is not covered in a local policy, this will be seen as though the issue is not relevant locally. This must not be the case and clarification would be necessary to ensure that the interpretation does not make this presumption. Issues can often be identified at later stages of the planning process (including cumulative considerations). It may also be that some issue can be considered through the application of national rather than local policy and therefore local policy is not needed.</p> <p>A Vision – needs to be locally specific to avoid generic approach</p> <p>Objectives and priorities – need to reflect the council’s priorities and therefore should not be generic and controlled by a template</p> <p>Local Development Management policies – by their very nature are needed to reflect local circumstances and therefore need to be locally specific and flexible</p> <p>Site policies – need to have flexibility to respond to site issues and aspirations for a site’s development</p> <p>Monitoring – nationally set indicators would be helpful to enable comparisons to be drawn across local authority areas and to produce national datasets.</p>

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5	Do you think templates for new style minerals and waste plans would need to differ from local plans? If so, how?	<u>Proposed response Q5:</u> Templates for minerals and waste plans are potentially a good idea, depending on what they will cover and how flexible they will be. For minerals and waste, it may be useful to have templates for site nominations to standardise the information that is provided.

Chapter 2: The new 30 month plan timeframe

6	Do you agree with the proposal to set out in policy that planning authorities should adopt their plan, at the latest, 30 months after the plan preparation process begins?	<p><u>Proposed response to Q6:</u> Dorset Council agree that the current process is overly complicated and lengthy and attempts to reduce this complexity are welcome. However Dorset Council are of the view that a 30 month period as currently set out, including a minimum of two periods of consultation, is not achievable.</p> <p>Plans have significant evidence requirements and it is not always possible to fully understand the need for evidence at an early stage in the process. Often, upon completion of one piece of evidence, there is a need for further evidence to be gathered to fully understand the implications for development proposals.</p> <p>Undertaking and processing a meaningful consultation can take a significant amount of time. A recent consultation undertaken locally resulted in responses from around 6,000 individuals and organisations often with comments raising multiple issues, many of which were of a technical nature. All of these responses need to be read to enable the messages from the consultation to be given consideration. If this distilling of all of the</p>
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		<p>comments was not undertaken, the consultation would not be truly meaningful and would not add to the plan preparation process. Consultations that have a high response rate can take 12 to 18 months to analyse fully, significantly delaying the plan production timetable. Consultation responses are often made in varying formats – digitally via an online database, via email, via an attachment to an email, via a typed letter, via a hand written letter. Requiring consultation responses to be made digitally would risk excluding those who don't have access to or are not able to use a computer.</p> <p>It is also not clear what the 'invite participation' requirement in the scoping stage involves. Some organisations and individuals will opt for setting out all of their 'requirements' for development in their area effectively making this another round of consultation.</p> <p>The process for formally engaging with councillors can take more than a month as committee papers need to be prepared and circulated three weeks prior to a committee. This again can add to the plan preparation timeline.</p> <p>The Gateway Assessments and the Examination of the plan are out of the control of the Local Authority. At these key stages, the timetable for plan preparation should be paused and then restarted once the assessment is complete.</p> <p>During the plan making process, there is often a need for input from an external stakeholder. This can take time and can delay the progression of the local plan. Unless external stakeholders are required to respond within a specific amount of time and</p>

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		<p>have adequate resources to enable them to do so, the process will take longer than anticipated.</p> <p>No two plan areas are the same – for example, a London borough produces its plan within the framework of the London Plan. A district Council has to fit with strategies produced by the upper tier authority. A unitary council needs to ensure all its departmental strategies are coordinated and aligned with the local plan. A national park authority needs to produce a plan in a very different context to other local planning authorities. A standard template that fits all of these different arrangements will be almost impossible to achieve. Similarly, the issues in one plan area will be very different to the issues in another. Within a large unitary authority area the issues can vary significantly.</p>
7	<p><u>The scoping and early participation stage</u></p> <p>Do you agree that a Project Initiation Document will help define the scope of the plan and be a useful tool throughout the plan making process?</p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 7:</u> The Project Initiation Document will be a useful tool for setting out the process for producing the local plan however, the practicalities of producing one that is effective and meaningful will be lengthy and 4 months is unlikely to be sufficient. The notify and invite stages are likely to create a significant amount of work to distil out the key messages.</p> <p>Difficulties can often arise during the production of a local plan including the identification of issues that need to be addressed. The requirement for a Project Initiation Document must therefore build in a mechanism for review and amendment and for the 30 month 'clock' to be reset or adjusted.</p>

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Chapter 3: Digital plans		
8	<p><u>Chapter 3: Digital plans</u> <u>What information produced during plan-making do you think would most benefit from data standardisation, and/or being openly published?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 8:</u> For open data and standard approaches to improve the efficiency of the plan making process, it should be focused to add value and to help unblock the key areas of challenge and delay.</p> <p>The main areas where delay happens within the current plan preparation process is the processing of consultation responses. A standard template for consultation responses would help in processing the large volumes of responses that are often received. This would need to be established through a national approach otherwise local authorities are criticised for not enabling all to respond to a consultation. It would also need to be accepted nationally that some respondents would be marginalised through this approach.</p> <p>Using standard templates for the policies map may give clarity to users of the plan.</p> <p>Certain evidence requirements for plan making cause confusion and add little to the plan making process and therefore a full review of the evidence requirements should be undertaken. An example would be the requirement for Land Availability Assessments to be undertaken as each local authority has a different approach and each of these are open to interpretation by developers/communities.</p> <p>The continued use of standard datasets for calculating housing requirements is helpful but the latest data needs to be used and flexibility built in to allow deviation from the</p>

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		<p>end results when local circumstances suggest it is necessary or desirable. A similar approach needs to be taken for employment land requirements.</p> <p>Open data should be provided at the smallest geographical unit as possible and at least at parish level. The following data would be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from utilities companies identifying where there are capacity issues within the infrastructure network and where infrastructure shortfalls may hold up development. This data should be mapped and produced to a standard format across the country and a strategy for addressing the infrastructure deficiency should be prepared by each utilities company. • Standard data for viability assessments should be made available from national datasets but reflecting the local situation • Information on installed renewable energy capacity • For minerals plans, British Geological Survey data would be essential and should be provided free of charge
9	<p><u>Do you recognise and agree that these are some of the challenges faced as part of plan preparation which could benefit from digitalisation? Are there any others you</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 9:</u> Dorset Council agree that the list below are some of the issues that delay the production of a local plan but there will be others that are not listed. Each area, each local plan and each consultation throw up different challenges and it is difficult to identify all of these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of clear guidance on how to make plans results in inconsistency and delays

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	<p><u>would like to add and tell us about?</u></p>	<p>Ambiguity in policy and guidance will cause delay and therefore guidance and policy should only be used where absolutely necessary to remove this ambiguity and enable local decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of standard formats and terminology makes plans inconsistent, time consuming to develop and hard to use <p>There is no need for plans to be consistent across an area. Local plans should be enabled to reflect the local situation and local preferences and not have to conform to a standard template. Requiring a standard template to be used would reduce opportunities for innovation and for local priorities to be realised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncertainty about evidence requirements and fear of challenge at examination drives over production of evidence which is resource intensive and leads to delays <p>All policies need to be justified by evidence and polices in local plans should not be different to this. A policy positions need to be robust to reduce the likelihood of challenge and this requires evidence to be produced to a high standard. Unless clear guidance on the approach to evidence are published, the opportunity for challenge will remain as will the desire to produce additional justification for the preferred policy approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of clear communicable timelines and updates prevents users from understanding and getting involved

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		<p>Although stakeholders prefer to know when consultation is taking place, the lack of a detailed timeline does not seem to be a barrier to participation. A clear timetable may be preferable but there should be flexibility for this to be kept up to date to reflect local circumstances and for an extension beyond the 30 month period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans are static and PDF-based meaning they go out of date quickly <p>Agree that local plans can be static and that more digital plans would help. However for a local plan to be adopted, an examination is necessary. The proposals suggest that a review is needed every five years and there is at least a 30 month process to getting a plan amended. The updating of a local plan therefore would need to pass through this process before any digital content could be updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor monitoring and feedback loops make it difficult to understand if the plan and its policies are working well <p>A clear plan – monitor – review approach would be helpful especially if consistent datasets were used. Good practice enables the incorporation of housing and employment statistics into a review but little other thematic data is used at present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the majority of people do not engage in plans, or know why and how they can be involved <p>Majority of people are not interested in local plans until they are directly affected (i.e. development adjacent to their property or when they wish to try to gain consent for a</p>

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		<p>development). This will always be the case unless implications of planning can be raised further up the public agenda in a positive way that encourages people to get involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans often involve making difficult local decisions but the political nature of local decision making and how it shapes plan content is often not understood <p>See above – need to make sure relevance of planning and how decisions are made is clearly articulated by government.</p> <p>Plans, by their broad nature are complicated and difficult to understand. Professional planners train for many years to understand the often complex and interrelated issues and it should not be expected that everyone has the same level of knowledge and understanding. The public perception of planning needs to change and the constant references to planning being a barrier to progress doesn't help with this.</p> <p>A well resources planning process is essential to enabling the aspirations of government to be realised.</p> <p>Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the role of planning in achieving the objectives of local councils. Guidance and direction from central government to local authority leaders could help in achieving this.</p> <p>Planning is not about stopping development but about focusing development to the right locations and addressing the negative impacts of that development – a public interest test which needs to be given greater weight and publicised.</p>

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10	<p><u>Do you agree with the opportunities identified? Can you tell us about other examples of digital innovation or best practice that should also be considered?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 10:</u> Approaches that seek to streamline the planning process are welcomed however flexibility needs to be retained to allow local authorities to respond to local circumstances and to encourage innovation.</p> <p>It is agreed that the use of spatial data and policy visualisation can help to make plans more accessible. The use of GIS is becoming more and more acceptable to people in everyday life and therefore mapped policies and data should be used wherever possible.</p> <p>There is variation across an area and therefore templates need to be sufficiently flexible to enable local issues to be addressed. We use a site allocation checklist which helps to ensure all relevant issues are covered within a site allocation policy and that where there is not a site-specific issue, the policy does not need to include a clause.</p> <p>If there is to be a standardisation of data for local plan production and for local plan monitoring, there is a need for this data to be produced consistently on a regular basis across all areas. Ideally this would be provided at the smallest geography possible and ideally at parish level. For data that is to be provided by local planning authorities, there will be a need for the details of the data requirements to be set out early and for the requirements to remain fixed.</p> <p>Capturing and reporting on all of the issues raised in a consultation is difficult and time consuming. Often the same issue is not expressed in the same way or slightly different emphasis is placed on different aspects of a response. Similarly, site promoters tend to submit detailed assessments of their site proposals which contain significant amounts</p>

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		<p>of detailed information whilst individuals often submit hand written notes. This needs to be processed and captured and the use of AI will not address all these approaches thoroughly and reliably.</p> <p>Best practice is often used and adapted to reflect local circumstances and local planning authorities already share best practice through various networks, both digital and face to face.</p>
11	<p><u>What innovations or changes would you like to see prioritised to deliver efficiencies in how plans are prepared and used, both now and in the future?</u></p>	<p>Proposed response to question 11: Visualisation of plan policies and spatial data would go a long way to making the planning system more accessible. Templates and checklists are best developed locally to reflect local issues and priorities but could be 'captured' in a database of best practice for others to consider using.</p> <p>Any approach to speed up the consultation process would be welcomed. The use of closed questions would speed up the processing of consultation responses however such questions do not enable an inclusive and meaningful consultation. The processing of the wide range of issues and comments received in a range of different formats is what takes a significant amount of time in the plan making process.</p>

Chapter 4: The local plan timetable

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
12	<u>Do you agree with our proposals on the milestones to be reported on in the local plan timetable and minerals and waste timetable, and our proposals surrounding when timetables must be updated?</u>	Proposed response to question 12: Agree with the proposals for maintaining a useful local plan timetable but the requirement should be light touch and not involve the production of additional evidence or description as this would draw resources away from the plan making process.
13	<u>Are there any key milestones that you think should automatically trigger a review of the local plan timetable and/or minerals and waste plan timetable?</u>	Proposed response to question 13: A review of local plan timetable should be undertaken to respond to the outcomes of each of the Gateway Assessments. This would enable the timetable to react to issues raised at earlier stages and to reflect the findings of the Gateway Assessments.

Chapter 5: Evidence and the tests of soundness

14	<u>Do you think this direction of travel for national policy and guidance set out in this</u>	Proposed response to question 14: Agree and yes it does provide a good direction of travel however there will remain scope for challenge at examination. The local plan
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	<p><u>chapter would provide more clarity on what evidence is expected? Are there other changes you would like to see?</u></p>	<p>Inspector needs to give clear guidelines about what is being considered at examination and what is not.</p> <p>The examination of local plans should move towards an approach which considers the reasonableness of decisions based on the available evidence. If decisions are considered reasonable, then they should be considered sound and conversely, if decisions are considered unreasonable, they should not be considered sound. This places the responsibility on local authorities to make appropriate decisions and a requirement on local communities and other stakeholders to make relevant evidence available early in the plan making process.</p>
15	<p><u>Do you support the standardisation of evidence requirements for certain topics? What evidence topics do you think would be particularly important or beneficial to standardise and/or have more readily available baseline data?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 15:</u> Principle of standardisation of data is supported but there is a need for up to date and robust data to be used. The method for establishing a requirement or for using a particular approach should however also include clear reasons why it is appropriate or necessary to depart from the standard approach. For example where there are strategies or objectives that the local authority has in place or is looking to establish, to deliver higher levels of growth and similarly where a lower level of growth is proposed, and justified by evidence, this should be accepted. An approach that is too formulaic would prevent innovation and would prevent local circumstances to be reflected in local plans.</p>

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		Establishing the broad parameters for a local plan would be supported however more detailed site based identification and selection approaches would not be supported as it would not enable local issues (such as a locally valued site) to be considered.
16	<u>Do you support the freezing of data or evidence at certain points of the process? If so which approach(es) do you favour?</u>	<p>Proposed response to question 15: Freezing of data is essential to enable a plan to proceed once it has reached a certain point in the plan making process. The most appropriate approach will depend upon the data itself, the frequency of updates to the data, when the data is updated relative to the various stages of the plan's production and the evidence topic. For example, if data is updated regularly (e.g. monthly), an approach of freezing the inputs at the publication stage may be appropriate however, if data is produced annually, there may not be a need for the data to be frozen. Similarly, where data can be updated but there is little change in the outcomes of the evidence study (e.g. flood risk), there may not be a need to update the evidence and therefore no need to freeze the data.</p> <p>There may be instances where it would be necessary to 'unfreeze' the data to enable a local plan to respond to important updates in information.</p>
17	<u>Do you support this proposal to require local planning authorities to submit only supporting documents that</u>	Proposed response to question 17: Dorset Council support the aim of reducing the evidential burden on local plan production however practically, there will remain a need to produce evidence to support decision making both during plan making and when considering planning applications. To address the amended tests of soundness, evidence will need to be provided to demonstrate that the need for development in an

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	<u>are related to the soundness of the plan?</u>	area are being met, that the proposals have a reasonable degree of certainty around delivery and therefore evidence of any potential barriers to delivery of a site would be necessary, and need to demonstrate that national policy has been effectively addressed including therefore evidence that potential conflicts with national policy have been addressed will be needed.

Chapter 6: Gateway assessments during plan-making

18	<u>Do you agree that these should be the overarching purposes of gateway assessments? Are there other purposes we should consider alongside those set out above?</u>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 18:</u> The gateway assessments should be a constructive and supportive assessment to aid in plan making – a critical friend review of progress so far. There will also be a need to recognise that there is more than one way to prepare a local plan and therefore an overly formulaic and rigid assessment criteria will not make the gateway assessments useful. The assessments should therefore focus on the tests of soundness, providing feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify where there are deficiencies in evidence • Where the strategy may not be in accordance with national policy • Where issues around delivery may exist • Where legal compliance issues may exist <p>Feedback on the proposals for consultation and engagement would also be helpful.</p>
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19	<p><u>Do you agree with these proposals around the frequency and timing of gateways and who is responsible?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 19:</u> Broadly agree with the proposals. There is however a need for the Local Plan timetable to be paused when the gateway assessments take place and an opportunity to re-evaluate the timetable to reflect the results of the gateway assessment. The third gateway assessment should not prescribe timeframes for submission as this will depend on a number of factors including the work needed to get the plan to a point where it can be examined, the local authority's committee cycle, other local factors such as the availability of key staff and the availability of other essential resources.</p>
20	<p><u>Do you agree with our proposals for the gateway assessment process, and the scope of the key topics? Are there any other topics we should consider?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 20:</u> Documents needed to support gateway assessments are additional to the current process and therefore time and resource will need to be put in place to deliver these and to manage/respond to gateway assessment outcomes.</p> <p>The proposed requirement to involve third parties in resolving issues identified in the third gateway assessment raises concern. There may be other approaches to resolving issues and matters of contention should be addressed in the open public forum of the Examination in Public rather than in discussions behind closed doors. It is likely that any discussions that are required as a result of the third gateway assessment would delay progress with the local plan and there will be no guarantee that issues will be resolved.</p>
21	<p><u>Do you agree with our proposal to charge planning</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 21:</u> These assessments are an additional requirement beyond what a Local Planning Authority is currently required to undertake. Funding</p>

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	<u>authorities for gateway assessments?</u>	should be put in place to enable councils to respond to these additional assessments. Not only are there three additional assessments required through the plan making process, the need for examination of the local plan remains at the end of the process.

Chapter 7: Plan examination

22	<u>Do you agree with our proposals to speed up plan examinations? Are there additional changes that we should be considering to enable faster examinations?</u>	<p>Retain 'right to be heard' – but examinations take too long</p> <p>Examination should take 6 months</p> <p>Modifications consultation should add no more than 3 months</p> <p>Proposals through changes at Inspectorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third gateway assessment inspector retained for examination • Two inspectors working in parallel • LPA only responds to matters, issues and questions • Shortening notification timeframes • Reducing scope and shortening timeframe for modifications consultation <p><u>Proposed response to question 22:</u> The measures to make the examination stage more efficient are supported. Many of the proposals relate to changes at the Planning Inspectorate which are supported.</p>
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		There is currently no proposal to consider the need for consultation on modifications where the cumulative nature of the necessary modifications may create impacts. A period of consultation at the end of the examination period is considered essential to identify any unidentified issues including potential cumulative impacts.
23	<u>Do you agree that six months is an adequate time for the pause period, and with the government's expectations around how this would operate?</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 23:</u> In many circumstance, a 6 month period would be sufficient to address the necessary issues however where further evidence is necessary that is season dependent (e.g. ecological surveys or landscape assessments) or where consultation is needed, 6 months may be insufficient. The timetable for undertaking the work should be 6 months minimum but allow additional time as needed at the discretion of the Inspector. This timetable should be agreed with the local authority reflecting consideration of resources and the practicalities of undertaking the work.

Chapter 8: Community engagement and consultation

24	<u>Do you agree with our proposal that planning authorities should set out their overall approach to engagement as part of their</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 24:</u> A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) details the approaches to consultation as part of the plan making process as well as for planning applications. The replacement of the SCI with the Local Plan Project Initiation Document is supported but it would not then detail the approach to consultation on planning application.
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	<p><u>Project Initiation Document? What should this contain?</u></p>	<p>If the Project Initiation Document is intended to be used to hold the council to account, there will be an inclination to commit to the bare minimum to meet the regulatory requirements within the document. If it is intended to set out in broad terms, the aspirations and approaches to consultation and engagement, the requirement may be helpful. The risk of challenge may however be too great if there are regulatory requirements associated with this part of the Project Initiation Document.</p>
25	<p><u>Do you support our proposal to require planning authorities to notify relevant persons and/or bodies and invite participation, prior to commencement of the 30 month process?</u></p>	<p>Proposed response to question 25: Any pre plan preparation engagement should take place outside of the 30 month period. The proposed 30 month period will be challenging with the suggested two rounds of consultation and therefore including this initial, scoping consultation is likely to add a significant amount of time to the process.</p>
26	<p><u>Should early participation inform the Project Initiation Document? What sorts of approaches might help to facilitate positive early participation in plan-preparation?</u></p>	<p>Proposed response to question 26: Consultation prior to the preparation of the Project Initiation Document should enable meaningful results to be achieved. If the intention of this consultation is purely to scope the content of the local plan, then a short, targeted consultation with key stakeholders should be sufficient however if detailed visioning work with the local community is the aim, then a longer process of engagement would be more productive. If the visioning work is not undertaken to</p>

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		<p>inform the Project Initiation Document, then this work will be needed later on the process which would therefore involve significant resources and slow plan production.</p> <p>The preferred approach would be for the plan scoping work to involve a short, targeted consultation with statutory bodies, neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations to inform the Project Initiation Document. Separate from this, and later in the plan production process, a detailed engagement program with the local community should be undertaken to establish the plan’s vision and key objectives.</p>
27	<p><u>Do you agree with our proposal to define more clearly what the role and purpose of the two mandatory consultation windows should be?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 27:</u> Setting out more detail on the purpose of each consultation will help local authorities in structuring their consultation arrangements. This will also enable those who respond to consultation to focus their responses to the scope of the consultation.</p> <p>However, there may be a need for additional consultation on specific issues or sites where unforeseen issues arise through a consultation stage. Flexibility therefore needs to be built in to any requirements to enable further rounds of consultation or for unforeseen issues to be addressed in other ways.</p> <p>Similarly, it is unclear in the current proposals when the plan visioning should take place. The Local Plan Vision is a central structuring element of the new local plan and therefore time and resources need to be devoted to getting this right at the outset. There will need to be engagement on this vision to ensure it is supported by key stakeholders as well as local communities.</p>

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28	<u>Do you agree with our proposal to use templates to guide the form in which representations are submitted?</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 28:</u> Templates will only help in processing consultation responses if they are used by those who respond. There is a broad range of respondents to a consultation, from statutory consultees to agents, to those with disabilities and those who don't have access to a computer. It is not likely to be possible to enable all of those who wish to respond to a consultation, to be able to do so on a single template. Similarly, even though a template will help to 'categorise' the content of submissions, this only works if the rules around submissions are followed – our experience is that this often does not happen.

Chapter 9: Requirement to assist with certain plan-making

29	<u>Do you have any comments on the proposed list of prescribed public bodies?</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 29:</u> The list appears to cover all of the main organisations who should be involved in the local plan making process due to a function which will directly impact upon or be directly impacted upon the proposals within a local plan. Neighbouring authorities should also be listed as prescribed bodies. These organisations should be required to engage early with the plan making process and should do so in a standard format with compatible and comparable data. This is especially the case with utilities providers who manage their data in different ways.
30	<u>Do you agree with the proposed approach? If not,</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 30:</u> If the requirement to assist was written into legislation, it would seem appropriate for those bodies mentioned to publish the

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	<p><u>please comment on whether the alternative approach or another approach is preferable and why.</u></p>	<p>relevant data in an open format and therefore local planning authorities (and others) would be able to access the data when they require it. If the data was not published and maintained, then the organisation could be 'reported' to the secretary of state who could intervene on behalf of local planning authorities rather than for each local planning authority to make individual requests.</p> <p>Where further assistance is necessary, the legal requirement to assist would be requested on an ad-hoc basis. The parameters about what is 'reasonable' for the organisation to be required to do will need to be established and be consistent across all local authorities.</p>

Chapter 10: Monitoring of plans

31	<p><u>Do you agree with the proposed requirements for monitoring?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 31:</u> The approach seems sensible and removes some of the overly onerous reporting regimes that have been put in place previously. The nationally prescribed metrics will however need to be kept focused, based on easily obtainable data and data that is within the influence of local authorities for them to be truly meaningful.</p> <p>A template and web-based approach to data collection would help in the publication of the data.</p>
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Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
		<p>Collection date needs to align with when data is collected rather than an arbitrary date set by the adoption of the local plan. Data on housing completions for example has been collected on a consistent basis for a number of years with a base date of 1 April each year. To adjust this date would undermine the relevance of the new data relative to the historic data series.</p> <p>A local plan Vision is an aspirational long term aim/direction of travel. It can therefore be difficult to measure and difficult to report on every four years.</p>
32	<p><u>Do you agree with the proposed metrics? Do you think there are any other metrics which planning authorities should be required to report on?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 32:</u> Clear definition of terms is essential to enable consistent monitoring and reporting across the country. Clear and precise monitoring indicators are needed which set out the detail of what should be recorded, what the starting point for annual data collection should be, on what frequency it should be collected and what area the data should be collected over.</p> <p>Comments on the proposed indicators are included below but omissions from the proposed list include heritage and conservation of the historic environment, indicators on the loss of economic uses to other forms of development and indicators to consider the installed renewable energy capacity in an area.</p> <p><u>Housing:</u></p> <p>Net additional dwellings completed (including conversions):</p>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
		<p>The indicator needs to encompass all routes to delivering new homes including new build, sub division, conversion, permitted development, change of use etc.</p> <p>Net affordable units completed:</p> <p>A clear definition of an affordable home is needed that does not change over time</p> <p>Proportion of new homes permitted on brownfield land:</p> <p>As with the proposed "Net affordable units completed" indicator, why not collect information on the number of homes delivered on brownfield land rather than the proportion delivered.</p> <p>Net additional pitches & plots for gypsies and travellers:</p> <p>No comment</p> <p><u>Economy:</u></p> <p>Net change in employment floorspace:</p> <p>This can be difficult to establish as not all of a new building would necessarily fall within a single employment use classification. Often the split is not something known at the point of a planning decision or is established later once the building is in use. Changes that do not require planning consent can also take place in the proportion of each employment use within a building.</p> <p><u>Environment and Open space</u></p>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
		<p>Net change in designated open space: This is too ambiguous – what designations would qualify?</p> <p>Net change in designated habitats due to development: Again, the current proposal is too ambiguous. What level of designation would it apply to – local, national or international?</p> <p>Delivery of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain: No comment</p> <p>Progress toward net zero emissions from buildings (to be developed): If net zero buildings are an aspiration of Government, the requirement should be written into national policy. This would then enable an appropriate indicator to be developed.</p> <p><u>Minerals:</u></p> <p>Aggregate landbank: No comment</p> <p>Amount (ha) of non-mineral development granted permission in a Mineral Safeguarding Area despite a Mineral Planning Authority objection: No comment</p>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
		<p><u>Waste:</u></p> <p>Waste generated (split by waste stream)</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>Waste management methods (% recycled, recovered and disposed)</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>Capacity at waste management facilities (split by management method)</p> <p>No comment</p> <p><u>Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs):</u></p> <p>Assessment of the contribution to meeting Environmental Outcomes and identification of any remedial action that needs to be undertaken</p> <p>No comment</p>

Chapter 11: Supplementary plans

33	<p><u>Do you agree with the suggested factors which could be taken into</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 33:</u> Site specific Supplementary Plans should not be restricted to considering more than one site on the basis of them being 'nearby' to each other. The proximity of sites, their interrelationship and the consideration of sites of a</p>
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Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
	<p><u>consideration when assessing whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other? Are there any other factors that would indicate whether two or more sites are 'nearby' to each other?</u></p>	<p>similar type over a broader area (e.g. sites where the same mitigation requirements apply and a generic approach to mitigation is needed covering all sites) should all be factors that are taken into account. Supplementary Plans for certain site specific requirements (such as habitats mitigation) should permanently retained until revoked as this allows for the policy framework to be more reactive to reflect changes in circumstances.</p>
34	<p><u>What preparation procedures would be helpful, or unhelpful, to prescribe for supplementary plans? e.g. Design: design review and engagement event; large sites: masterplan engagement, etc.</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 34:</u> As long as the minimum requirements for the stages necessary for preparing and adopting supplementary plans are clearly set out, further guidance would be unhelpful as it offers a route for challenge. The detail of how a supplementary plan is prepared should be left to local authorities.</p>
35	<p><u>Do you agree that a single formal stage of consultation is considered sufficient for a supplementary plan? If not,</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 35:</u> Dorset Council agree that a single stage of consultation would be appropriate but with flexibility to undertake additional consultation – either targeted to specific groups or specific topics, or wide ranging</p>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
	<u>in what circumstances would more formal consultation stages be required?</u>	should also be permitted but not a regulatory requirement. Regulations around supplementary plans should be kept to a minimum.
36	<u>Should government set thresholds to guide the decision that authorities make about the choice of supplementary plan examination routes? If so, what thresholds would be most helpful? For example, minimum size of development planned for, which could be quantitative both in terms of land use and spatial coverage; level of interaction of proposal with sensitive designations, such as environmental or heritage.</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 36:</u> Some supplemental plans that cover a large area may not be contentious and conversely, proposals relating to small sites could be more contentious therefore setting a threshold based on site size or a specific topic is unlikely to be appropriate. The contentious nature of a supplemental plan should be the determining factor and this is something that should be determined locally. A referral process to the planning inspectorate could be a way of including their input as and when necessary.

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
37	<p><u>Do you agree that the approach set out above provides a proportionate basis for the independent examination of supplementary plans? If not, what policy or regulatory measures would ensure this?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 37:</u> The criteria seem appropriate however not all topics and/or site based supplemental plans would need to respond to climate change specifically where they were very narrow in focus, for example dealing only with matters related to habitats mitigation or other nature conservation issues.</p>

Chapter 12: Minerals and waste plans

38	<p><u>Are there any unique challenges facing the preparation of minerals and waste plans which we should consider in developing the approach to implement the new plan-making system?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 38:</u> Aside from the issues raised elsewhere in the response from Dorset Council, the unique factors that apply to minerals and waste plans relate to the fact that minerals must be worked where they are found. Although this can make things easier in some ways, it can also cause issues around continued long term mineral extraction in one area. This results in significant resentment from local people and more opposition which can make the plan making process more difficult and protracted. For this reason, a 30 month timetable will be challenging.</p>
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Chapter 13: Community Land Auctions

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
39	<p><u>Do you have any views on how we envisage the Community Land Auctions process would operate?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 39:</u> The proposed approach seems to consist of a land owner securing planning consent by setting the value of their land. The limits on other factors that can be taken into account would restrict this process. Unless two sites are identical in their impact, land value should not be given weight in planning decisions as it undermines the transparency of the site selection process.</p> <p>An alternative approach would be for the local planning authority to set out their requirements for development sites in a prospectus and to invite landowners and developers to submit proposals that deliver against these requirements. Sites could then be selected based on the merits of a proposals that meet the local authority's requirements rather than this being established at a later stage and being delivered separately from the development of a site.</p>
40	<p><u>To what extent should financial considerations be taken into account by local planning authorities in Community Land Auction pilots, when deciding to allocate sites in the local plan, and how should this be balanced against other factors?</u></p>	<p><u>Proposed response to question 40:</u> The financial contributions being made should be separated from other considerations and should not become part of the planning balance. There are already accusations of local authorities colluding with the development industry and the proposed approach will add to these suspicions.</p>

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
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Chapter 14: Approach to roll out and transition

41	<p><u>Which of these options should be implemented, and why? Are there any alternative options that we should be considering?</u></p>	<p>Proposed response to question 41: Local authorities should be enabled to commence plan making under the new arrangements as soon as they are able with a final backstop being put in place if considered necessary. This would enable plan making to be aligned with local circumstances (including other council actions such as the production of a Local Transport Plan or to avoid local elections) rather than dictated by central government. If there is an issue with the availability of resources to undertake examinations, then additional investment may be necessary.</p> <p>If flexibility is built in to the timeframe for the production of a local plan (i.e. pausing of the clock at each gateway assessment) as previously suggested, then the likelihood of 'bulges' in the process would be significantly reduced.</p> <p>Additional support to 10 front runner authorities is welcomed however aiming this support at those who've adopted plans recently will be counterproductive. These 'successful' local authorities are less in need of support than those who have previously struggled due to the complex nature of the local plan or due to reduced resources. Those local authorities that have out of date plans are those who need to get their new plan in place first and may need additional support to do so.</p>
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Chapter 15: Saving existing plans and planning documents

Question Number	Question Wording	Dorset Council response
42	<u>Do you agree with our proposals for saving existing plans and planning documents? If not, why?</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 42:</u> Dorset Council agree that existing plans and saved policies should remain in force until new style local plan is adopted.

Equalities impacts

43	<u>Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?</u>	<u>Proposed response to question 43:</u> Proposed digital approach may prevent engagement of those who do not have access to a computer or who are unable to use a computer. However digital approach does also open the plan making process up to a wider audience who would prefer to engage digitally. A balanced approach is necessary that enables engagement but that also enables responses to be processed rapidly as consultation processing is one of the main delays to local plan production.
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