

Cabinet

3 October 2023

Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Review

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr D Walsh, Planning

Local Councillor(s): Cllr B Quayle, Cllr N Lacey-Clarke, Cllr A Kerby and Cllr S Jespersen

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: The neighbourhood plan review has been subject to independent examination and the examiner has recommended that the Council should make (adopt) the plan with the modifications specified in his report (Appendix B). (The examiner has concluded that there is no statutory requirement for a referendum in this instance given the limited nature of the changes proposed to the plan). The purpose of this report is to formally make the modified plan part of the development plan for use in planning decisions in the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area.

Recommendations: The following recommendations are made:

- a) That the Council makes the Modified Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2033 (as set out in Appendix A) part of the statutory development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area.
- b) That the Council offers its congratulations to Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council, Bryanston Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan review.

Reason for Recommendations: To formally make the modified neighbourhood plan part of the statutory development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area. In addition, to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by the

Town and Parish Councils and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in preparing the plan review and to congratulate the Councils and the Group on their success.

1. Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Review

- 1.1 The neighbourhood plan area for Blandford + was designated by North Dorset District Council in February 2014. Following significant amounts of consultation, research and the withdrawal of an earlier version of the plan Blandford Forum Town Council (the Qualifying Body) submitted the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2033, and associated documents, to North Dorset District Council in January 2019. The submitted plan was subject to consultation, independent examination and then a referendum. The referendum was held on 6 May 2021 and a majority of those who voted in the referendum voted in favour of the plan. Consequently, the neighbourhood plan was formally made by Dorset Council¹ on 22 June 2021.
- 1.2 In March 2022, the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Group decided to review the made plan. A consultation exercise determined that local residents felt that there was no obvious need to amend the plan significantly. The headline findings were that residents favoured the approach of the modifications in terms of health provision, with suggestions being submitted to aid the assessment of locally listed building candidates and the preparation of the design code. For further details regarding the changes proposed please see the Modification Proposal Statement which is available via the link set out at the end of this report.
- 1.3 The modified plan, and its associated documents, were subject to formal consultation from 14 April 2023 to 26 May 2023. Dorset Council subsequently made arrangements for an independent examination of the plan review as required by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.4 The examination was conducted by David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT and his report on the plan was published on 1 August 2023. The Examiner's Report concludes that subject to three modifications, and other minor non-material updates or clarifications, the modified plan should proceed to be made (adopted) by Dorset Council. (The examiner has concluded that there is no statutory requirement for a referendum in this instance given the limited nature of the changes proposed to the plan). The modified plan, once made, will replace the existing Blandford +

¹ On 1 April 2019 the county's nine councils were replaced by two new organisations. Dorset Council became the local authority for the area previously covered by North Dorset District Council.

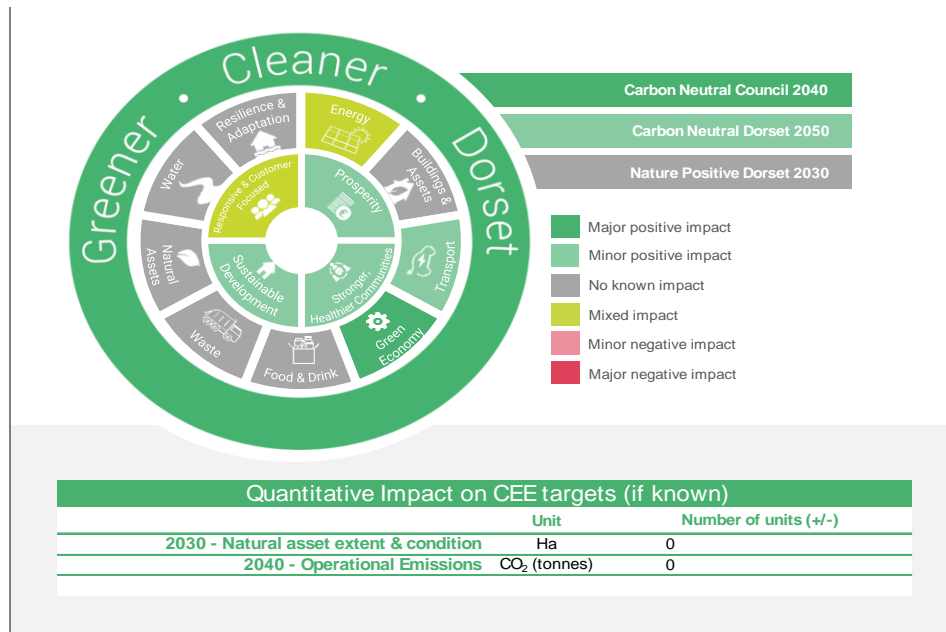
Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 2033, which was made in June 2021, as part of the development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Dorset Council is eligible to claim a grant of £10,000 after the revised plan comes into force following examination. This grant is intended to cover the costs associated with the Council’s input into the production of the modified neighbourhood plan including the costs associated with the examination.

3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

- 3.1 The modified plan has been prepared in accordance with national planning policy and guidance which seeks to deliver sustainable development through planning decisions including by improving biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change. The independent examiner who conducted the examination of the modified plan considers that the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 3.2 The Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological Decision Wheel has been completed and is included below.



4. Well-being and Health Implications

- 4.1 The modified plan has been prepared in accordance with national planning policy and guidance which seeks to deliver healthy, inclusive and safe places.

5. Other Implications

- 5.1 The modified neighbourhood plan will form part of the development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area alongside other current adopted plans including the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016). Planning applications, which will be considered by Dorset Council, will be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with the decisions, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

- 6.1 A legal challenge could be made against the decision to make the modified Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan. Such a challenge could be made on the basis that the modified neighbourhood plan does not meet the basic conditions, is not compatible with the Convention rights or because it does not comply with the definition of a neighbourhood development plan. However, the independent examiner who examined the modified plan has considered these matters in light of the consultation responses that have been made to the plan. The Council has also considered these matters and is of the view that there is no basis for reaching a different view to the examiner.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Part of the independent examiner's role was to consider whether the modified neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with any of the Convention rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998. No issues were raised by the examiner in this regard.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Modified Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 - 2033

Appendix B: Examiner's Report

Appendix C: Accessible Table of Impacts and Table of Recommendations

9. Background Papers

Documents relating to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Review can be accessed via the following webpage: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/blandford-neighbourhood-plan>