

19 November 2025

|                                |                                                                                                                                            |                                 |                                     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Number:</b>     | P/FUL/2025/05198                                                                                                                           |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Webpage:</b>                | <a href="https://www.dorsetforyou.com/Planning-application/P/FUL/2025/05198">Planning application: P/FUL/2025/05198 - dorsetforyou.com</a> |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Site address:</b>           | The Focus Centre 107 High Street Swanage BH19 2NB                                                                                          |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Proposal:</b>               | Alterations to windows and external doors.                                                                                                 |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Applicant name:</b>         | Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust                                                                                                        |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>           | Victoria Chevis                                                                                                                            |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Ward Member(s):</b>         | Cllr Suttle and Cllr Tomes                                                                                                                 |                                 |                                     |
| <b>Publicity expiry date:</b>  | 07/10/2025                                                                                                                                 | <b>Officer site visit date:</b> | Desk top assessment                 |
| <b>Decision due date:</b>      | EOT 21/11/2025                                                                                                                             | <b>Ext(s) of time:</b>          | 21/11/2025 – To allow for committee |
| <b>No of Site Notices:</b>     | 1 – Junction of Chapel Lane with High Street<br>2 – In front of the site on High Street                                                    |                                 |                                     |
| <b>SN displayed reasoning:</b> | site notices have been displayed in 2 prominent positions in the interest of maximising awareness of the application.                      |                                 |                                     |

**1. Reason application is going to committee:**

The application site includes land owned by Dorset Council.

**2. Summary of recommendation:**

GRANT subject to conditions.

**3. Reason for the recommendation:** as set out in paragraph 15 at the end of the report

- The location is considered to be sustainable, and the proposal is acceptable in principle with regard to design, and general visual impact.
- There is considered to be no harm to nearby heritage assets or the Dorset National Landscape
- There is not considered to be any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity.
- The proposal will deliver community benefits by way of visual enhancement and improved accessibility.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application

**4. Key planning issues**

| Issue                                                                                                     | Conclusion                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Principle of development</b>                                                                           | Acceptable within the settlement boundary.                                     |
| <b>Scale, design, impact on character and appearance of the area and Dorset National Landscape (AONB)</b> | Acceptable within immediate context.                                           |
| <b>Impact on heritage assets</b>                                                                          | Acceptable impact on setting of heritage assets and Swanage Conservation Area. |
| <b>Impact on neighbouring amenity</b>                                                                     | Acceptable – No demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity.                     |
| <b>Impact on trees</b>                                                                                    | Acceptable subject to condition.                                               |
| <b>Biodiversity</b>                                                                                       | Acceptable subject to condition.                                               |

## 5. Description of site

The application site forms part of the Swanage 'Focus Centre' which is operated and delivered by the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust. Located to the south of Swanage High Street, the wider site includes a Day Centre, a Children's Centre and a further building known as 'The Centre'. The group of buildings and land surrounding them provide an inter-generational health and wellbeing complex for the local community via a community cafe and the delivery of children's and adults' services including drug and alcohol outreach programmes, toddler play and support groups, a community food bank, children's speech and language therapy and a drop in wellbeing welcome lounge.

There are a number of trees within the wider area of land forming part of the Focus Centre (within the blue line) and also areas of landscaping and open space. To the east is Chapel Lane, Swanage Methodist Church and Hall (Grade II Listed), and several cottages accessed via the land. To the south, the land rises steeply and the southern site boundary adjoins gardens serving bungalows on Queens Mead. To the north and west are residential properties on Queens Road and High Street. The entire site is located within Swanage Conservation Area and the Dorset National Landscape.

## 6. Description of development

The proposal is for minor changes to openings in the north elevation. The proposal includes the replacement of an internal door with a window on the north elevation and the replacement of two external windows on the north elevation with doors to facilitate improved access alongside internal alterations.

## 7. Background and relevant planning history

6/1976/0634 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 30/11/1976  
Erect a wooden hut for use as storage shed.

19 November 2025

6/1981/0963 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 08/02/1982

Erect wooden hut for use as storage shed (renewal).

6/1996/0537 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 25/10/1996

Erect extensions to improve existing Day Centre facilities and covered set down area

6/2005/0902 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 21/11/2005

To extend existing road access and create a new entrance to the centre to facilitate a one way traffic system through the site.

6/2005/0902\_1 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 21/11/2005

To extend the existing road access and create a new entrance to the centre to facilitate a one way traffic system through the site.

6/2008/0768 - Decision: NOB - Decision Date: 12/01/2009

The erection of a small timber framed building with some works to the landscape immediately adjacent to provide a Sure Start Centre.

6/2008/0768\_1 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 04/02/2009

The erection of a small timber framed building with some works to the landscape immediately adjacent to provide a Sure Start Centre

P/FUL/2024/07033 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 27/02/2025

Erect new store extension, canopy, porch, bin store, new ramp and associated landscaping.

## 8. List of constraints

### Heritage Assets

- Grade II Listed Buildings (LB) - Clarence Cottage and east boundary walls to garden (Historic England (HE) list entry ref: 1152179) and The Methodist Church and hall immediately east and boundary walls to west and north (HE list entry ref: 1152670.0)
- Application is within Swanage Conservation Area

There is a (statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990)

Scheduled Monument: The old prison and pump (List Entry: 1002727.0) - Distance: 146.05m Application is within Swanage Statutory Settlement Boundary

Article 4 Direction – Swanage Conservation Area – restricts satellite antenna on dwelling houses

Wessex Water (WWA) Treatment Works Catchment

19 November 2025

Poole Harbour Recreation Zone

Dorset Council Land Freehold: Swanage Connect, High Street, and Swanage Children's Centre, High Street, Swanage

Dorset National Landscape (formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) (statutory protection Local Planning Authorities to seek further the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 & Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000)

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) impact risk zone – requirement to consult Natural England

Dorset Heathlands – 400m- 5km Heathland Buffer

Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 100 plus 20% allowance and 1 in 1000 plus 40% allowance

Radon: Class: Class 1: Less than 1% - Low Risk, fewer than 1% of homes expected to exceed the radon action level – no protective measures required.

Natural England Designation - RAMSAR: Dorset Heathlands (UK11021); - Distance: 3472.16m

## 9. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

### Consultees

#### 1. Dorset Council (DC)- Conservation Officers

- The proposals would have no additional impact on the settings of the Grade II listed cottages opposite (88, 90 & 92 High Street), setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Methodist Church and hall and boundary walls.
- The proposal would have no additional impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- As such there is no objection from a heritage perspective.

#### 2. DC - Asset & Property

No comments received.

#### 3. Swanage Town Council

Support - The Town Council has no objection to the proposal.

#### 4. DC Ward Councillors - Swanage Ward

No comments received.

**Representations received**

No comments received.

**10. Duties**

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, there is a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Clause 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires Local Planning Authorities to seek to further the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) when making any decision which affects such land.

**11. Relevant policies**

**Development plan**

In this case the development plan comprises The Purbeck Local Plan 2018-34 and the Swanage Local Plan 2017-27:

**Local Plan Adopted Purbeck Local Plan:**

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

V1: Spatial strategy for sustainable communities

E1: Landscape

E2: Historic environment

E12: Design

I2: Improving accessibility and transport

**Adopted Swanage Local Plan:**

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

STCD: Swanage townscape character and development

**Material considerations**

**Emerging local plans:**

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

19 November 2025

- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

### **The Dorset Council Local Plan**

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021, with further consultation between 18 Aug – 13 October 2025. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

### **Emerging neighbourhood plans**

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan- In preparation – limited weight applied to decision making

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)**

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless specific NPPF policies protecting areas or assets provide a strong reason for refusal and/or any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, with particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4 'Decision making': Para 39 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 11 'Making effective use of land'
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places' This indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 131 – 141 advise that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

19 November 2025

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'
- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- In National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), paragraph 189 requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty. Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation (para 191). Paragraphs 192-195 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- Paragraph 212 says that when considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 216).

## **National Planning Practice Guidance**

### Other material considerations

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

Dorset AONB Landscape Character Assessment

Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (extended to end of 2025 with the agreement of Dorset Council Cabinet 17/12/2024)

District Design Guide SPD

Swanage Conservation Area Appraisal

## **12. Human rights**

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

## **13. Public Sector Equalities Duty**

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

19 November 2025

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

The proposed alterations will improve the accessibility of the buildings through the introduction new doorways. The proposals will remove existing disadvantage and will support the provision of the inter-generational health and wellbeing complex for the local community.

#### **14. Public Benefits**

None relevant.

#### **15. Planning Assessment**

The main planning considerations for this application are:

- Principle of development
- Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area and the Dorset National Landscape (AONB)
- Impact on heritage assets
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Community benefits

##### Principle of development

The Focus Centre is located within Swanage settlement boundary and the principle of the development is acceptable in accordance with Policy V1: Spatial strategy for sustainable communities and the settlement hierarchy of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024.

##### Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area and the Dorset national Landscape

Although surrounded by houses and the adjacent Grade II Listed Chapel and Hall, the character of the Focus Centre site is that of an established community centre consisting of low-level buildings within areas of landscaping and open space. The buildings are set back from High Street and Chapel Lane with open areas of hard standing and car parking separated from enclosed areas to the rear by a mixture of boundary fencing and Purbeck Stone walling. The proposed alterations would be well contained within the grounds of the centre and would not appear out of character within the setting.

Given the siting of the proposal within the settlement boundary and the established community centre site, it is considered that the proposal will conserve the visual landscape character of the Dorset National Landscape and High Townscape Value Area. The proposal is not considered to enhance the visual landscape character but given the minor nature of the works proposed it would not be reasonable to refuse the application on these grounds. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy E1: Landscape and E12: Design of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024 and Policy STCD of the Swanage Local Plan 2017.

Impact on heritage assets

The site is located within Swanage Conservation Area and lies adjacent to the Grade II Listed Swanage Methodist Chapel and Hall to the east. The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the proposal noting in their response that the position of the proposed works within the site would have no harmful impacts on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the significance of the Grade II listed Methodist Church and its setting. The proposal is judged to comply with Policy E2: Historic environment of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The site forms an established community use within a town location. Although residential properties surround the community centre, the proposed alterations would not result in any additional overlooking or loss of privacy. As such, no harm to neighbouring amenity has been identified. The proposal is judged to comply with Policy E12: Design of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024.

Community benefits

The proposals will improve the access and flow of the building and ensure accessibility to all in the local community who will use the inter-generational wellbeing and health complex. This accords with paragraph 128 of the NPPF which advises that local planning authorities should support proposals that make more effective use of sites that provide community services. It also aligns with the objectives of Policy I7: Community facilities and services of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024 which seeks to support the growth of and retain community infrastructure.

**16. Environmental implications**

None relevant.

**17. Conclusion**

For the above reasons the proposal accords with the Purbeck Local Plan 2024 as a whole, there are no material considerations than indicate permission should be refused and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

**18. Recommendation: Grant subject to conditions:**

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

22125.31 A Location and block plan

22125.37 A Proposed site plan

22125.38 B Proposed floor plan

22125.39 B Proposed elevations (1 of 3)

22125.40 A Proposed elevations (2 of 3)

22125.41 A Proposed elevations (3 of 3)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

**Informative Notes:**

1. Please check that any plans approved under the building regulations match the plans approved in this planning permission or listed building consent. Do not start work until revisions are secured to either of the two approvals to ensure that the development has the required planning permission or listed building consent.

2. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.