

5.	Settlement Strategy: The Pattern of Development: Towns, Villages and Countryside	67
5.1	Introduction	67
5.2	Spatial Strategy	68
	Government, Regional and County Structure Plan Guidance	68
	The District Council's Approach	69
	Figure 5.1: Major Constraints in West Dorset – location	71
	Table 5.2: Major Constraints in West Dorset – area coverage	72
	Proposed Development in West Dorset	72
	Major Land Use Allocations	73
5.3	Defining Towns, Villages and Development Boundaries	73
5.4	Development within Defined Development Boundaries	74
	Table 5.3: Key design and infrastructure policies to be considered	75
5.5	Development outside Defined Development Boundaries	76
	The re-use, adaptation and replacement of rural buildings	78

5. SETTLEMENT STRATEGY: THE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT: TOWNS, VILLAGES AND COUNTRYSIDE

LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES:

- a) Direct new development to the larger settlements with facilities in order to support the role of the District's coast and market towns and minimise the development of greenfield sites.
- b) Allow for the regeneration of rural communities and their economies whilst respecting their landscape setting and heritage.

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The settlement strategy of the Local Plan will have a significant impact on the sustainable development of the District in the future. Aspects of sustainability that can be addressed through the settlement strategy include: minimising the need to travel, especially by private car; minimising the development of greenfield land beyond urban areas (which constitutes the countryside in planning terms); and allowing for the regeneration of rural communities and their economies.
- 5.1.2 As more people have become car owners, the need for people to live near to where they work and to facilities has decreased; and villages have become less self-contained with a decline in local facilities. Most villages now have relatively little employment, and most of the residents who work commute to the urban areas. In addition, the District is increasingly seen as an attractive location for retirement.
- 5.1.3 As the facilities in the smaller settlements have declined, urban centres have expanded to service larger populations. This change in the pattern of development has reinforced the use of cars as the main mode of transport. Most people, especially those who live in the villages, now find they need to travel, usually by car, to work, to shops, and for recreational and other facilities.
- 5.1.4 Car use, with its consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels, is one of the main causes of pollution of the atmosphere. The government is committed to a reduction in this pollution. Although the car has an important role in transportation in a rural District, the increasing reliance on it is not sustainable.
- 5.1.5 Influencing the pattern of development is a crucial element in seeking to achieve development that is more sustainable. Whilst individuals retain freedom of choice, a sustainable framework for development is one in which new development patterns are shaped in a way which gives opportunities through personal choice to minimise the need to travel, and those areas which are already developed are used in the most efficient way.¹ Of key importance is the concentration of development in the larger settlements with facilities and ensuring a mix of uses within those settlements.

¹ Para 23, PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005, ODPM

- 5.1.6 The concentration of development at the larger settlements, particularly at the existing towns, enables development to take place where there are already existing facilities, such as shops, schools and other community facilities, and transport infrastructure that can best cater for such growth. The clustering of residential development, employment opportunities and community facilities provides the basis for a sustainable pattern of development, particularly where these are well serviced by public transport – rail and bus networks.
- 5.1.7 The concentration of development at the towns and larger villages also helps to reduce the impact of development on the environment and landscape. Such concentration allows the best use to be made of previously developed land within the built up areas, reduces the amount of greenfield land needed for development, and minimises scattered development in the countryside, which can have a significant impact on its character and appearance. Development at the towns and larger villages can also help to enable and support the regeneration of rural communities and their economies, as these settlements are where the majority of economic activity is currently concentrated.

5.2 Spatial Strategy

Government, Regional and County Structure Plan Guidance

- 5.2.1 The amount of new housing and employment development to be provided in the District in future is set through strategic guidance in the form of Regional Planning Guidance and the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan. These will both be replaced by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West, which identifies a rate of housing development for West Dorset to 2026, and indicates the number of new jobs sought in the Weymouth and Dorchester area during that period.
- 5.2.2 The Government advises that local authorities should guide new development to previously-developed sites within urban areas² and to locations highly accessible by means of transport other than the private car, and should strengthen existing local centres which offer a range of everyday community, shopping and employment opportunities^{3 4}. The urban environment should be improved to make it a more attractive place in which people can live and work⁵. The Government has set a national target of building 60% of new homes on land that has previously been built upon⁶. The target for the South West Region as a whole is 50%⁷. Government guidance favours mixed use developments in order to increase vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel, provided that neighbouring uses are generally compatible and the new uses do not detract from the character of established areas⁸.
- 5.2.3 In identifying new, and potentially new, sites for housing, local authorities should follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas, then urban extensions, and then new development around points on corridors with good public transport access. Accessibility is a key consideration, with the aim to reduce the dependency on travel by car⁹.

² PPG3: Housing, 2000, excludes land in built-up areas such as parks, recreation grounds and allotments, from its definition of previously-used land.

³ PPG13: Transport, 2001, DETR.

⁴ Para 3, PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004

⁵ Para. 2., PPG3: Housing, 2000, DETR

⁶ Part 4, Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, 2003, ODPM

⁷ Policy HO5, Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, RPG10, 2001, DTLR.

⁸ Para 27 (ii), PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005

⁹ PPG3 : Housing, 2000, DETR and PPG13 : Transport, 2001, DETR.

- 5.2.4 In smaller settlements, development should be strictly controlled¹⁰. Such settlements often have only a limited range of community facilities, and may be located in relatively inaccessible areas which are poorly served by the public transport network. In general, residential development within settlements which have few facilities is considered unsustainable, particularly if it would be liable to increase journeys made by car. Local needs can, however, be met through infill development within those villages that have some facilities and public transport, or through the use of the rural exceptions policy for affordable housing¹¹.
- 5.2.5 The Government recognises the growing pressures for development in the countryside, and its overall aim is “to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all”¹². Building in the countryside is considered to be generally unsustainable, and should be strictly controlled^{13 14}.
- 5.2.6 The vision of the Regional Guidance for the South West, in line with Government guidance, promotes a sustainable development pattern and the setting out of a sequential approach to the location of development, minimising the need to develop on greenfield sites and to travel. Dorchester and Weymouth/Portland are locations identified as potential candidates for sustainable, self-contained growth¹⁵. Market towns are seen as the “drivers” of the rural economy and should be the focal points for new development and service provision in rural areas, and this role should be supported and enhanced through balanced development which is appropriate in terms of scale and location. Outside these towns, development should be small scale and take place primarily within or adjacent to existing settlements, avoiding scattered forms of development¹⁶.
- 5.2.7 The Structure Plan¹⁷ also identifies the towns as the focus for additional development. It identifies the Weymouth/Dorchester area as a key area for growth, and the towns of Beaminster, Bridport, Lyme Regis and Sherborne as local service centres in which employment, shopping, education, recreation and community facilities should be concentrated. All these lie on the ‘A’ road network, and Dorchester and Sherborne are also served by rail. Development in the villages will be related to their range of existing infrastructure and community facilities, and their character. Development in the countryside should be permitted only where such a location is essential.

The District Council's Approach

- 5.2.8 The Strategy of the Local Plan is to guide development towards the most sustainable locations – those locations which offer the best opportunity to cater for the needs of the local community and economy without reliance on the private car or detriment to the wider environment. It reflects the VISION and OBJECTIVES contained in Chapter 2.

10 Para. 4.1.3, Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice, 1998, DETR and para 1 (iv), PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004

11 Paras 69 and 70, PPG3: Housing, 2000, ODPM

12 Para 1 (iv), PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, 2004, ODPM

13 Para 1 (iv), PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, 2004, ODPM

14 Para. 4.1.3, Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice, 1998, DETR

15 Para 3.14, RPG 10, Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, 2001, GOSW.

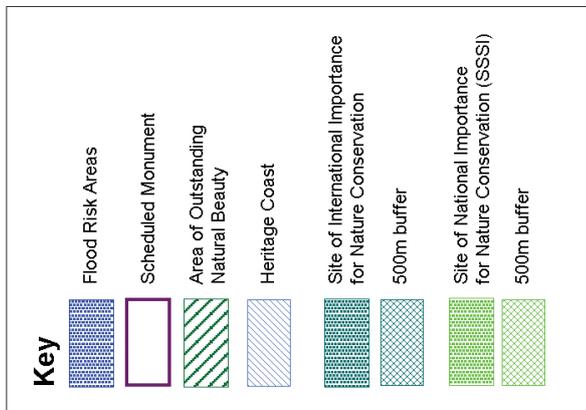
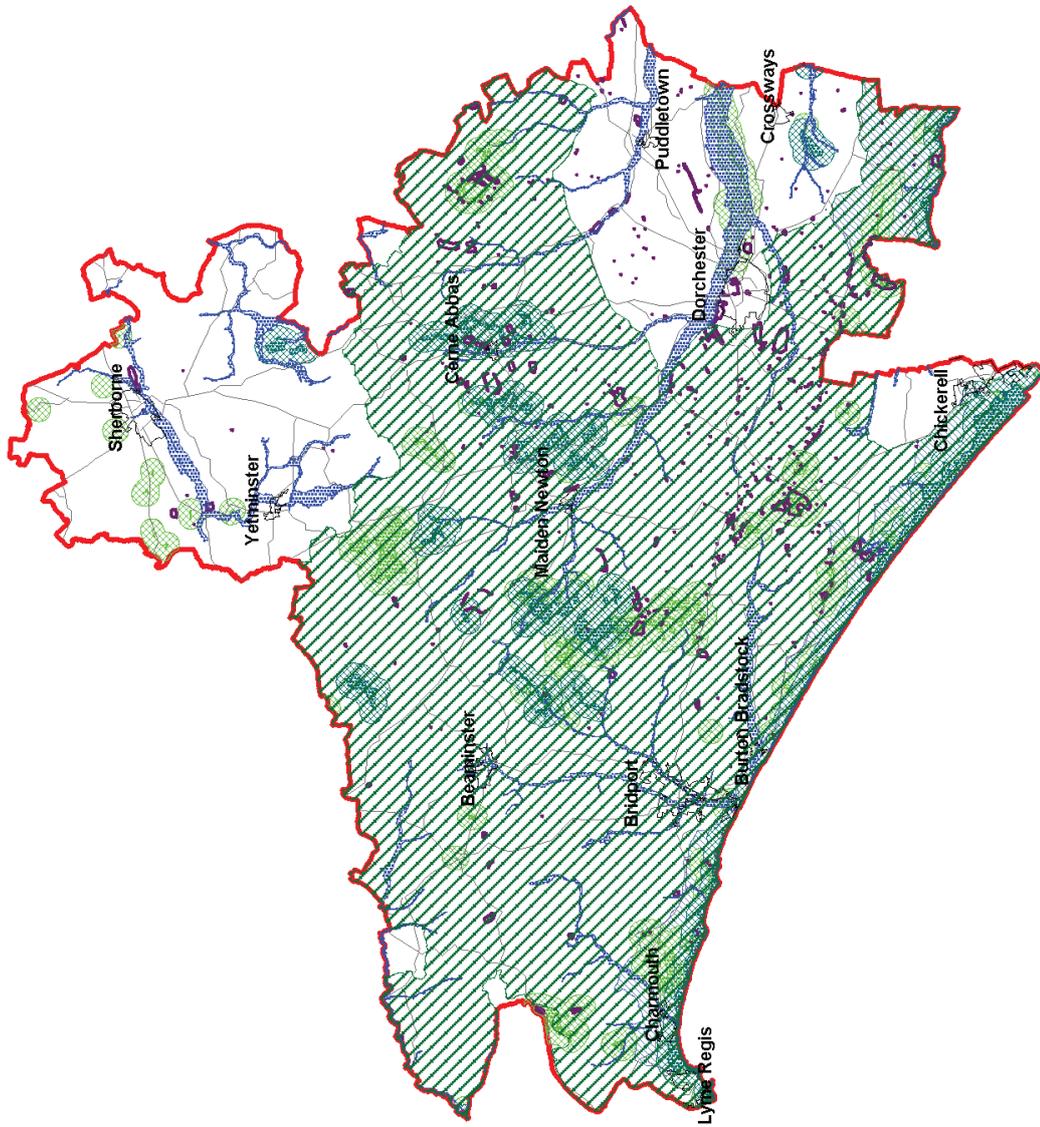
16 Policy SS19, RPG 10, Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, 2001, GOSW.

17 Adopted Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (CSP28), 2001.

- 5.2.9 The District Council is taking a sequential search approach in the identification of land for new development (see paragraph 5.2.3). It seeks to guide development towards the larger settlements that have a range of facilities and access to employment in order to increase the opportunities for people to live, work and enjoy community life without the need to travel by car. However, it recognises that other factors must also be taken into account. Figure 5.1 and Table 5.2 show that 71.3% of the District is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and 4.3% is covered by other major constraints to development (Heritage Coast, nationally or internationally important nature conservation areas, including a 500m protective buffer zone, Scheduled Monuments or floodplain¹⁸).
- 5.2.10 All these constraints limit the potential of some areas. For example, most of the settlements are located on or close to a main river and its floodplain. Some lie close to sites of national or international importance for nature conservation. The towns of Beaminster, Bridport and Lyme Regis all lie within the AONB, the primary objective of designation of which is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Under the spatial strategy of the Local Plan there are no extensions to the 1998 adopted Defined Development Boundaries (DDBs) solely for open market housing within the AONB (with the exception of Poundbury where, during the consultation on development options for Dorchester in 1987, the Countryside Agency, formerly the Countryside Commission, accepted that the Dorchester bypass would have been a more appropriate boundary for the AONB).

¹⁸ Indicated in Environment Agency floodplain maps. Section 105, Water Resources Act.

Figure 5.1 Major Constraints in West Dorset - location



Not to scale

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey Material with the Permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or Civil Proceedings. West Dorset District Council, Licence Number 1000024307 2006

Table 5.2: Major Constraints in West Dorset – area coverage

Constraint	Area (ha)	% District¹⁹
AONB	77,110	71.3%
Heritage Coast	7,945	7.4%
Internationally Important Nature Conservation Areas ²⁰ (including 500m buffer)	2,060 (10,318)	1.9% (9.5%)
SSSI (nature conservation areas of at least national importance) (including 500m buffer)	3,558 (20,340)	3.3% (18.8%)
Scheduled Monuments	732	0.7%
S105 floodplain (fluvial and tidal)	5,515	5.1%
COMBINED TOTAL²¹ (including “buffers”)	82,490	76.3%

5.2.11 The towns in West Dorset are: Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Beaminster and Chickerell. Dorchester is the County town; it has the largest population and range of facilities in the District and is the most sustainable location for future growth. It is identified as a strategically significant town in both the Structure Plan and emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. Sherborne and Bridport also have a wide range of facilities and rank second to Dorchester in the settlement hierarchy. Below these are Beaminster, Lyme Regis and Chickerell. Beaminster and Lyme Regis are smaller centres. Chickerell gained town status in 2001. Some of the built up parts of the parish adjoin the town of Weymouth (which like Dorchester is identified as strategically important in both the Structure Plan and emerging Regional Spatial Strategy): the free-standing part of Chickerell has the characteristics of a small dormitory town. Future growth should reflect the town’s position within the hierarchy and be influenced by its economic strengths and weaknesses.

Proposed Development in West Dorset

5.2.12 The District Council’s policies, therefore, allow for additional housing and employment within the defined development boundaries (DDBs) of the towns, encouraging an appropriate mix of uses. Allocations of land have been identified, including sites for which development briefs will be prepared, and there is a range of policies allowing infill development and also the conversion of appropriate buildings, subject to criteria.

5.2.13 Only limited development is anticipated within the villages of West Dorset with DDBs. No new housing allocations are proposed, although additional housing within the DDBs is allowed in principle, subject to proposals meeting the requirements of other policies. Local needs affordable housing to meet an identified local need is allowed, subject to criteria, as an exception to normal policy outside the DDBs, including through the conversion of appropriate buildings, where local facilities can be safely accessed other than by the private car. Employment allocations have been made in the larger villages of Puddletown, Charmouth and Crossways and also at Charlton Down. Additional employment is allowed within and outside the DDBs, as well as at the villages listed at paragraph 5.5.6, subject to criteria.

¹⁹ District area = 108,148 ha

²⁰ SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, including proposed / candidate sites

²¹ Some of the areas of the designations overlap.

- 5.2.14 In the countryside, where there is a presumption against new development, in addition to development to assist in meeting the need for local housing and the rural economy in close proximity to the towns and villages (see above), employment as part of farm diversification, or within or adjoining an existing employment site will be allowed, subject to meeting locational and other criteria.

Major Land Use Allocations

- 5.2.15 Chapters 13 -15 give the details of the allocations of land for development and areas for mixed uses, which are in line with the sequential search approach. In all cases, the potential for development has been assessed against the site selection criteria in Government guidance²² and all the relevant policies contained within the development plan.
- 5.2.16 The Plan allocates areas for mixed use development within the towns at: Charles Street, Weymouth Avenue and Trinity Street within Dorchester (see Policies EA14, EA15, EA16); at Sherborne House, Newland at Sherborne (Policy NA4); and at the South West Quadrant, Bridport (Policies WA3, WA4, WA6). There are allocations for housing development at: St Georges Road, Dorchester (Policy EA20); and south of Priory Mills, St Swithin's Road and New Zealand Works, Bridport (Policies WA9, WA15, WA16). Extensions to the towns are allocated at: Poundbury, Dorchester; Barton Farm, Sherborne; and at Putton Lane and Floods Yard, Chickerell (Policies EA17, EA18, NA1, EA6 and EA6b). These sites will be able to accommodate the majority of new housing development identified in the Structure Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy to meet the needs of the District in the Plan period. The extensions to these DDBs are at the towns which lie outside the AONB. (NB Para 5.2.10 notes that the Poundbury development extends into AONB; the Countryside Agency accepted in 1987 that the Dorchester bypass would be a more appropriate AONB boundary.)
- 5.2.17 Land north of Court Orchard, Bridport is allocated for affordable housing to meet local needs (Policy WA16a). Land at Woodberry Down, Lyme Regis is allocated for mixed use development of housing and employment (Policy WA24). Land to the west of Beaminster is allocated for employment use (Policy WA1). The reason for these within the AONB is to ensure that these market and coastal towns continue to maintain employment opportunities to safeguard their role as sustainable and economically vital communities. In addition, the allocations at Lyme Regis and north of Court Orchard, Bridport will create the opportunity to provide affordable housing in towns which are tightly constrained.

5.3 Defining Towns, Villages and Development Boundaries

- 5.3.1 The Defined Development Boundaries (DDBs) identify the areas within which, and outside which, relevant Local Plan policies apply. They are not “settlement envelopes” encompassing all development and facilities at the villages. In some villages peripheral playing fields, school sites and farm complexes are excluded from the DDBs as, if they were included and became surplus to requirements, they could result in large, inappropriate housing development on the edge of villages. In some instances the boundaries seek to preserve open views or prevent coalescence of adjacent settlements or pockets of development.

²² Para 32, PPG 3 : Housing, 2000, DETR

5.3.2 The District Council has reviewed locations which are considered to be appropriate for additional development and has revised the DDBs in the 1998 Adopted Plan for some of the towns and the villages, taking into account their facilities, their relationship to the road network and to larger settlements with additional facilities, their size, character, form and historic development. In order for a DDB to be retained at a settlement in this Plan, the minimum requirement relating to community facilities is that the settlement must have a school²³. The presence of a school is considered to be of particular significance as this provides opportunity for the children to walk or cycle to school, and enables the village to act as a centre for surrounding rural areas. The extent to which a settlement has other community facilities²⁴ is also a major factor. In addition, accessibility from the villages to a town where there is a greater range of facilities is a consideration. This includes the distance to the town, the quality of the road access, the frequency of public transport and whether there is a rail link. Other physical factors: the extent of liability to flood, settlement form and whether the village is within the AONB have been taken into account.

5.3.5 The settlements where DDBs are delineated are :

- (i) The towns: Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Beaminster and Chickerell and the built-up areas adjoining Weymouth²⁵.
- (ii) The villages: Bishops Caundle, Bradford Abbas, Broadmayne/ West Knighton, Broadwindsor, Buckland Newton, Burton Bradstock, Cerne Abbas, Charlton Down, Charminster, Charmouth, Crossways, Evershot, Mosterton, Maiden Newton/ Higher Frome Vauchurch, Piddletrenthide, Portesham, Puddletown, Salwayash, Thornford, Trent, Winterbourne Abbas/ Winterbourne Steepleton and Yetminster.

5.3.6 In line with this approach, the DDBs in the 1998 Adopted Plan have been deleted at many settlements. The number of settlements at which infill development for open market housing will be permitted has, therefore, been restricted in order to encourage a more sustainable pattern of development. At the same time, the policy framework allows the provision of development that will provide affordable housing to meet local needs, provide local community facilities, or support the local economy, within or adjoining a wider range of settlements. This will allow local needs to be met while restricting open market housing in less sustainable locations.

5.4 Development within Defined Development Boundaries

5.4.1 The District Council will permit, subject to detailed considerations, development within the Defined Development Boundaries. Local Plan Policies HS2 and HS3 in the housing chapter give details of the open-market and local needs housing which can be permitted within the Defined Development Boundaries, subject to criteria. Policies ET3, ET7 and ET9 in the employment and tourism chapter relate to employment development, tourist attractions and new-build holiday accommodation. Details of allocations of land for site-specific proposals are in chapters 13 –15.

²³ The exception is Charlton Down where there is a significant commitment to further growth which has not all been implemented.

²⁴ The main community facilities are considered to be a shop, village hall (or similar community building performing a social role) and public house.

²⁵ The Granby/Lynch Lane/Littlesea/Charlestown areas and Littlemoor adjoin Weymouth.

- 5.4.2 It should be noted that not all undeveloped sites within the DDBs are appropriate for development. Chapter 3, Safeguarding Assets, gives details of designations relating to the built and natural environment and the policies which seek to protect them from inappropriate development and to enhance them where appropriate. Chapter 4 contains policies relating to potential hazards that need to be avoided when proposals for development are being considered. Policies relating to transportation by car, public transport, cycling and walking are within Chapter 9. Chapter 10 gives details of infrastructure requirements, including access for people with disabilities. Chapter 11 contains the policies relating to design and amenity considerations, and Chapter 12 relates to sustainable construction.
- 5.4.3 Government guidance states that local planning authorities should avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net) particularly in places with good public transport accessibility²⁶. The District Council will, therefore, encourage the more efficient use of land. (Cross refer to Section 11.4, the Pattern of Uses and Density of Development). However, development will not be allowed in gaps where these allow important public views into, within or out of a settlement or involve the loss of an important open space or feature which is an essential part of the character of a settlement. Trees are particularly important features which contribute to the character and appearance of an area. The effect of any proposed development on trees will need to be carefully considered.
- 5.4.4 The scale, nature and design of the development will need to be in character with the settlement and its surroundings, and the amenities of the surrounding areas must be safeguarded. The variety of size of gardens in parts of some villages is an essential part of their character and appearance. The contribution which the larger gardens make to a settlement's character and appearance must be taken into account when planning applications for intensification of development are considered.
- 5.4.5 In addition, other Local Plan policies need to be taken into account in the consideration of proposals. For example, the development should not lead to the loss of employment uses (Policy ET1); not lead to the loss of land and premises used for recreation (Policies C7a and C7b); and not harm the vitality and viability of town or local centres (Policies C0, C1 and C3).
- 5.4.6 Taking all the above policies into account, development that will be allowed within a village will be appropriate in scale for that village. Factors taken into account will include the size and character of the village, its landscape setting, the ability of the community to absorb population increase and the availability of existing or potential jobs and community facilities and services.

Table 5.3 Key design and infrastructure policies to be considered

1. The scale and nature and design of the development must be in character with the settlement and its surroundings. (see Policies DA3, DA5 and DA7)
2. The amenities of the surrounding areas must be safeguarded (see Policy DA6).
3. The development must not be in gaps where these allow important public views into, within or out of a settlement or involve the loss of an important area of open space or feature which is an essential part of the character of the settlement. (see Policies DA1 and DA3)
4. Adequate highway access, parking and utility services must be provided. (see Policies AH14, TRAN5, TRAN11, IN1)

²⁶ Para. 58, PPG3: Housing, 2000, DETR

POLICY SSI DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

Development will be permitted within the towns of Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne, Beaminster, Chickerell and Lyme Regis.

Within the villages listed at paragraph 5.3.5 (ii), development appropriate in scale for the particular village for housing, employment purposes and the provision of new community facilities and services will be permitted.

Development should take place within the defined development boundaries of towns and villages as shown on the Proposals Map.

There is no Policy SS2.

5.5 Development outside Defined Development Boundaries

- 5.5.1 Development outside the Defined Development Boundaries of settlements is considered to be generally unsustainable. The Structure Plan strategy embodies a firm intention to resist new development outside defined settlements, and only permits development where such a location is essential²⁷. Policy SS3, therefore, seeks to control new development strictly in such locations.
- 5.5.2 The small villages, hamlets and those parts of villages excluded from Defined Development Boundaries have few opportunities for satisfactory development without harming their character and appearance. In addition, some of the smaller settlements lack community facilities, are loose-knit in character, and have narrow and tortuous approach roads, such that they are not suitable locations for further development. For these reasons, and in order to reduce additional dispersed development in rural areas, such settlements are regarded as locations where new development should not generally be permitted and, therefore, Defined Development Boundaries have not been delineated. Open-market housing will rarely be permitted outside Defined Development Boundaries; such development is considered to be unsustainable, leading to an increase in journeys made by car and is contrary to government and regional guidance and adopted Structure Plan policies.
- 5.5.3 The District Council seeks to protect the land outside Defined Development Boundaries from development, limiting development to that which requires such a location or which is necessary to meet identified local needs of overriding importance. New development should not be in isolated locations, and the majority of development should be concentrated at the towns and larger villages. A range of policies, however, allow for local needs to be met, and the rural economy supported, at the smaller settlements. Policy HS4 allows for local need affordable housing within or adjoining established villages as an exception to policy. Policy C5 allows for new local community facilities in such locations. Policies ET4 and ET9 allow for employment development and holiday accommodation at the villages listed at paragraph 5.5.6. Policy SS4 gives details of types of uses and locations where conversions of buildings may be permitted, subject to criteria. This includes farm buildings on the edge of settlements. Policy SS5 allows for the replacement of some buildings.

²⁷ Settlement Policy I and para. 3.23, Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (CSP 28), 2001.

5.5.4 The types of development which will, in principle, be considered for approval outside the Defined Development Boundaries are listed below. The reference to facilities in the list does not include accommodation linked with those facilities.

- i) dwellings for which there is a proven local need, in accordance with Policies HS4 (local needs affordable housing) and HS6 (essential rural workers' dwellings);
- ii) the on site replacement of dwellings, in accordance with Policy HS7;
- iii) alterations and extensions to existing dwellings, in accordance with Policy DA5;
- iv) the extension of residential curtilages, in accordance with Policy HS8;
- v) conversions of buildings, in accordance with Policy SS4;
- vi) replacement of buildings in accordance with Policy SS5;
- vii) employment development, in accordance with Policy ET4;
- viii) built holiday accommodation, in accordance with Policy ET9;
- ix) farm diversification proposals, in accordance with Policy ET5;
- x) new agricultural buildings, in accordance with Policy ET6;
- xi) tourist, recreation or local facilities appropriate to a rural area, in accordance with Policies ET8, ET10, ET11, ET12, C5 and C8;
- xii) transportation and infrastructure proposals in accordance with Local Plan Policies;
- xiii) specific allocations in the Local Plan;
- xiv) equestrian development in accordance with Policy C9.

5.5.5 It is essential that any development that is permitted outside Development Boundaries should respect its countryside location and be designed in such a way as to be in harmony with the surrounding area and any adjoining buildings (see Policy DA7- Detailed Design and Materials and SA3 – Landscape Character Areas). It must not harm the amenity of neighbouring uses (see Policy DA6 – Privacy, Daylight and General Amenity) or cause a detrimental effect on road safety (see Policy AH14 – Road Safety). Other policies, where relevant, must also be taken into account. The chapters and policies referred to in the previous section, Development within Defined Development Boundaries, also apply to development outside DDBs.

5.5.6 Development outside the DDBs will be encouraged to locate within or adjoining the following villages, which are larger and have more facilities than some of the remaining hamlets, though are not as sustainable locations for development as those with DDBs. Certain types of development will only be permitted where they are within or adjoining these villages (or adjoining those with DDBs):

Abbotsbury, Bradford Peverell, Cattistock, Cheselbourne, Chetnole, Chideock, Corscombe, Dewlish, Drimpton, Frampton, Halstock, Langton Herring, Leigh, Litton Cheney, Loders, Longburton, Melcombe Bingham, Netherbury, Nether Compton, Osmington, Owermoigne, Piddlehinton, Puncknowle, Shipton Gorge, Stratton, Sydling St Nicholas, Symondsburry, Thorncombe, Toller Porcorum, Tolpuddle, Uploders, West Stafford, White Lackington and Winterborne St Martin.

POLICY SS3 DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE DEFINED DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

Development outside the defined development boundaries shown on the Proposals Map and sites allocated in the plan will be strictly controlled, having regard to policies in the local plan for the protection of the countryside, the sustainable location of new development and the reuse of land and buildings.

The re-use, adaptation and replacement of rural buildings

- 5.5.7 The reuse and/or adaptation of some existing buildings may be considered acceptable outside Defined Development Boundaries, even though a new building in such locations would not normally be permitted. Government policy supports the reuse of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives²⁸. Such development may help sustain and enable the diversification of the rural economy and reduce the development of greenfield sites. In addition, reuse will assist in enabling some traditional good-quality buildings which are no longer needed for their original use from becoming vacant and possibly falling into disrepair.
- 5.5.8 This policy (SS4) does not apply where buildings require substantial reconstruction, or where the District Council has reason to believe that permitted development rights have been used to secure development that would not normally have been allowed. The Council will require the submission of a structural survey that demonstrates that the building is capable of conversion without substantial reconstruction.
- 5.5.9 It is likely that, in order to accommodate a new use or maintain an existing use in a building, some adaptations may be necessary. In considering the reuse or adaptation of buildings outside Defined Development Boundaries, the District Council will take into account potential accessibility issues and the impact of such developments on the wider landscape. Any development should not detract from the appearance or character of the area, or adversely affect the character of the existing building or its setting (cross-refer Policy DA5). Any change should be undertaken without damaging the fabric or appearance of traditional good-quality buildings, and should not generate unacceptable levels of traffic (cross-refer Policy AH14 Road Safety), noise (cross-refer Policy AH8a), or other impacts considered to be detrimental to the rural setting. Where appropriate, the right to make further extensions or alterations under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order will be removed by condition where justified on amenity and/or environmental grounds.

²⁸ Paragraph 17, PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, 2004

- 5.5.10 In order that development under this policy does not conflict with government guidance and the local plan objective to seek a pattern of development that is sustainable, it is important that buildings considered under this policy are not in an isolated location. New development is guided to the larger settlements where there are facilities and where there are opportunities for access by means other than the private car. Policy SS4, therefore, requires that all proposals, other than local need affordable housing and farm diversification, must be either on the edge of a town or village with a Defined Development Boundary or within or on the edge of a village as listed at 5.5.6. The list contains those villages which do not meet the sustainability criteria to have a DDB but are considered appropriate settlements for modest development that would assist the local economy and local community needs.
- 5.5.11 No new development under this policy, including local needs affordable housing, essential rural workers' dwellings and farm diversification projects, must be in an isolated location: it must have good access to the local highway network and relate well to other buildings and the landscape as referred to in paragraph 5.5.10 above. All development proposals must demonstrate safe and convenient access to local facilities, as far as practicable by means other than the private car.
- 5.5.12 Where the proposals satisfy paragraphs 1, 4, and 5 of Policy SS4, favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the re-use and adaptation of buildings for employment uses including tourism, and for affordable local need or essential rural workers' housing or community facilities/services to meet demonstrable local needs. These uses are likely to be of greatest benefit to the rural economy and assist with improving the quality of community facilities.
- 5.5.13 Policy ET4 in the Employment and Tourism Chapter relates to employment uses outside Defined Development Boundaries. Conversion of buildings to a business use has the ability to contribute to the rural economy, and the policy therefore encourages the conversion of rural buildings for employment uses, subject to criteria. Policy ET5 sets out in what circumstances planning applications for low impact farm diversification projects will be allowed. The District Council will consider reuse for holiday accommodation (Policy ET9) as this could have a positive impact on the rural economy and reduce the pressure on other housing in rural areas. The use may need to be controlled through holiday occupation or seasonal occupation conditions where appropriate.
- 5.5.14 Regarding the re-use for community facilities, English Heritage advises that the characteristics of historic farm buildings are less likely to be lost if they are converted to uses such as workshops or meeting halls which, like the original agricultural use, demand large open plan spaces²⁹. The District Council will allow the conversion of suitable rural buildings to community facilities and/or recreational uses in accordance with policies C5 (New Local Community Facilities) and C8 (Countryside Recreational Proposals) and SS4 in order to provide additional opportunities for these uses.
- 5.5.15 Policy HS4 (Local Needs Affordable Housing) and Policy HS6 (Essential Rural Workers' Dwellings) and supporting text give the details under which such housing can be considered as an exception to normal planning policy. There may be opportunities for the conversion of buildings to housing, subject to the proposals meeting the requirements of these policies plus those of Policy SS4.

²⁹ The Conversion of Historic Farm Buildings, English Heritage, 1990.

Chapter 5 – Settlement Strategy

- 5.5.16 Where it can be shown that the buildings or sites are unsuitable for any of these purposes, second preference will be given to schemes to provide live/work units or to provide residential uses as a subordinate part of a scheme for employment, tourism or community uses. Applicants proposing live/work units or residential uses as a subordinate part of a scheme will be expected to demonstrate why the building is not considered suitable for employment, tourism or community uses. Applicants will need to submit a thorough viability and/or feasibility assessment of each of the uses that they consider unsuitable, demonstrating why they are not viable or practicable. As part of such an analysis, details of the marketing exercise that has been undertaken should be included, stating how the building was marketed for each of the uses, where it was marketed, for how long and at what price. It is expected that the building will have been advertised at a reasonable price for a minimum of 12 months and applicants will have to demonstrate that during that time no reasonable offer was refused.
- 5.5.17 Where live/work units are considered acceptable the District Council when granting planning permission will apply conditions which seek to secure a continuing ratio between workspace and living space. Such a condition will usually ensure that the designated workspace of the live/work unit is at no time less than 40% of the total floor area and its area of residential floorspace at no time exceeds 60%. The purpose of such a condition is to ensure that the unit does not become purely residential in the future. Conditions may also be imposed to restrict sub-division, the nature of the use of the workspace and residential occupation to those employed in the linked workspace.
- 5.5.18 PPS7 states that residential conversions may be more appropriate than re-use for employment purposes in some locations and for some types of buildings³⁰. Policy SS4 allows for conversions to holiday accommodation, local needs housing and essential rural workers' dwellings as these can contribute to the rural economy and meeting community needs. Local needs housing and essential rural workers' dwellings outside DDBs are allowed as exceptions to normal planning policy, subject to meeting criteria. The creation of a new open market dwelling outside the Defined Development Boundaries is contrary to the District Council's aim to achieve a more sustainable settlement pattern by permitting new open-market housing only within the larger and more self-contained settlements delineated on the Proposals Map with Defined Development Boundaries. (See section 5.2).
- 5.5.19 However, in the rare circumstance that conversion to employment uses (including tourism), affordable or essential rural workers' housing, community facilities/ services, live/work units or residential use as a subordinate part of a scheme for employment, tourism or community uses is not practicable or viable, proposals for the re-use and adaptation of a building for open market housing at the settlements listed at paragraph 5.3.5 and 5.5.6 can be considered in order to make good use of an existing building. In such a case the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that other uses are not viable or practicable by submitting thorough viability and/or feasibility assessments of each of the uses, demonstrating why they are not viable or practicable. As part of such an analysis, details of the marketing exercise that has been undertaken should be included, stating how the building was marketed for each of the uses, where it was marketed, for how long and at what price. It is expected that the building will have been advertised at a reasonable price for a minimum of 12 months and the applicant will have to demonstrate that during that time no reasonable offer was refused.

³⁰ Paragraph 17, Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004

- 5.5.20 The suitability and design of residential conversions will need careful consideration, as they can be detrimental to the fabric and character of historic buildings. External changes, such as windows, dormers and chimneys may significantly detract from the character or architectural merit of the original building. The domesticity with garden layouts and structures such as garages and sheds may be inappropriate intrusions in the wider landscape in some locations. These factors will be taken into account in the consideration of the suitability of the proposals for the change of use to any dwellings under paragraph 4 of Policy SS4. Cross reference is made to Policy DA5 (Scale and Positioning of Buildings). Where housing developments exceed the thresholds set out in Policy HS3 they will be expected to include a proportion of affordable housing as set out in the criteria of that policy. Where appropriate, the council will also consider the size and type of general market dwelling(s) proposed, taking account of evidence of current need and the desirability of making efficient use of the site.
- 5.5.21 Policy ET1 regarding the retention of employment uses will take priority if the building is currently in employment use (or has become vacant or derelict where previously used for employment).

POLICY SS4 THE ADAPTATION AND CHANGE OF USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS

Proposals for the change of use or adaptation of buildings to other uses outside the Defined Development Boundaries of towns and villages will be permitted provided that:

1. the buildings are located on the edge of towns or villages with Defined Development Boundaries listed at paragraph 5.3.5 i) and ii), or they are located in or on the edge of the settlements listed in paragraph 5.5.6; or
2. in the case of farm diversification projects only, the buildings adjoin (an) existing building(s) or are close to the local highway network and the proposal meets the criteria in Policy ET5; or
3. in the case of local needs housing only, the site and the proposal meet the criteria in Policy HS4;

and in all cases

4. the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; are not in a derelict condition so that they would need to be substantially rebuilt or extended in order to be re-used; and their form, bulk and design, both as existing and proposed, are in general keeping with their surroundings; and
5. development proposals demonstrate safe and convenient access to local facilities, as far as is practicable by means other than by private car.

Where proposals satisfy paragraphs 1, 4 and 5 above the following three groups of uses will be acceptable, in decreasing order of preference:

- a) employment uses (including tourism); local needs housing that meets the criteria in Policy HS4; essential rural workers' dwellings that meet the criteria in Policy HS6; community facilities/services to meet demonstrable local needs; or a mixture of the above;
- b) live/work units or residential accommodation as a subordinate part of a scheme for employment, tourism or community uses;

c) general market housing, subject to the criteria of policy HS3 on affordable housing, the proposal making the most efficient use of land without compromising the environment (Policy HS1a), and providing types and sizes of housing that meet current needs.

Uses within paragraph b) will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that uses within paragraph a) are impracticable and/or unviable.

Uses within paragraph c) will only be permitted exceptionally where it has been demonstrated that uses within paragraphs a) and b) are impracticable and/or unviable.

5.5.22 In line with principles of sustainability, it is considered preferable to reuse existing buildings rather than replace them. However, there may be circumstances when it may be more appropriate to replace rather than convert a building. There may be instances where an existing building is unsuitable for conversion to a very specific end use and a replacement building would enable the end use to be accommodated and bring about a more acceptable form of development that has environmental benefits. Proposals will be considered, subject to the criteria of Policy SS5 and other relevant policies, for the replacement of buildings for employment uses including tourism or affordable or essential rural workers' housing or community services/facilities if it is clearly demonstrated how the replacement building would result in a more acceptable and sustainable development than might be achieved through conversion and how it would bring about an environmental improvement in terms of the impact of the development on its surroundings and the landscape.

5.5.23 As with Policy SS4, all proposals to which this policy applies, other than local need affordable housing and farm diversification, must be either on the edge of a town or village with a Defined Development Boundary or within or on the edge of a village as listed at 5.5.6.

POLICY SS5 REPLACEMENT OF RURAL BUILDINGS

The replacement of rural buildings will be permitted where it has been demonstrated that adaptation and change of use would be impracticable and/or unviable.

Where the buildings are located on the edge of towns or villages with Defined Development Boundaries listed at paragraph 5.3.5 i) and ii, or they are located in or on the edge of the settlements listed in paragraph 5.5.6, the following uses will be acceptable:

employment uses (including tourism); local needs housing that meets the criteria in Policy HS4; essential rural workers' dwellings that meet the criteria in Policy HS6; community facilities/services to meet demonstrable local needs; or a mixture of the above.

In other locations the following uses will be acceptable:

- farm diversification projects where the buildings adjoin (an) existing building(s) or are close to the local highway network and the proposal meets the criteria in Policy ET5;
- local needs housing where the site and the proposal meet the criteria in Policy HS4.

In all cases the following criteria will apply:

1. the buildings must be of permanent and substantial construction;
2. development proposals should demonstrate safe and convenient access to local facilities, as far as practicable by means other than the private car;
3. the replacement scheme should be no greater in footprint or mass than the buildings to be replaced;
4. the replacement scheme should be designed to be in keeping with the form and character of the surrounding area.