
West Dorset District Local Plan Adopted Plan 2006

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Written Statement

The West Dorset District Local Plan has been prepared by West Dorset District Council. It was adopted on 14 July 2006 and replaces the 1998 Adopted Plan. It forms part of the statutory development plan for the District.

This document contains the Written Statement of the Local Plan. A range of policies with supporting text are included against which planning applications are considered. A separate folder contains the maps which show the designations and allocations to which the policies apply.

The maps are based on Ordnance Survey Maps with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and Crown Copyright is reserved in these cases.

Prices:

Local Plan Written Statement: £15 (+£5 p&p)

Local Plan Maps Folder (including all Proposals Maps, Inset Maps, and Diagrams): £50 (+£5 p&p)

Maps can also be bought individually:

- Proposals Maps (east, west north): £6 each
- Inset Maps for Bridport, Chickerell, Dorchester, Lyme Regis, Sherborne: £5 each
- All other Inset Maps, Diagram 1, Diagram 2: £2 each

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 The Role of the Development Plan

- 1.1.1 The West Dorset District Local Plan provides a land use policy framework that covers the whole of the District's area, including the six towns of Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne, Lyme Regis, Beaminster, Chickerell and the surrounding rural Parishes. It contains policies and proposals for the development and use of land that will help the local community thrive socially and economically, whilst ensuring that development does not harm the environment, or threaten the special characteristics of West Dorset. It takes into account a wide remit of local issues, as well as European and national law, and national, regional and strategic planning guidance¹.
- 1.1.2 The Adopted Local Plan, together with the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10)², the Structure Plan³, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan⁴, and Waste Local Plan⁵ form the **development plan** for the area. The development plan is paramount in determining applications for planning permission, and provides a consistent basis for assessing the suitability of proposals submitted to the District Council. **All development proposals will be judged against the relevant policies of the development plan.** Where there are obvious links between policies they are cross-referenced, but it should not be assumed that because a proposal satisfies the requirements of one policy, it satisfies all the Plan's policies.
- 1.1.3 It is accepted that the determination of planning applications may at times require the weighing up of conflicting objectives, and the degree of harm and benefits involved under the relevant policies. It is a matter for the Council to make a judgement of the relative importance of particular policies taking into account the material planning considerations relevant in each case. The plan-led system requires that *“where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”*⁶.
- 1.1.4 An adopted Local Plan provides certainty for developers, service providers and members of the public interested in what development is likely to take place. It also provides a framework for promoting and co-ordinating investment by the private sector, as local authorities increasingly take on an enabling role.
- 1.1.5 Since preparation of this Local Plan commenced, the planning system has been reviewed by the Government and Regional Planning Guidance, Structure Plans and Local Plans have been replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The new system has commenced but transitional arrangements were published, under which the District Council progressed the Local Plan through to adoption under the former system, taking on the style of the new system as far as possible.

¹ European Law generally takes the form of Directives that are translated into national law by Government in the form of Acts and Statutory Instruments, with guidance also incorporated in the European Spatial Development Perspective. National guidance is provided by Government in the form of Circulars (now largely superseded), Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Minerals Planning Guidance notes (MPGs). Regional planning bodies working with the Government Offices and regional stakeholders, produce draft Regional Planning Guidance which is amended as necessary and issued by the Secretary of State. Strategic planning guidance is provided by the Structure Plan.

² RPG10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West, 2001, GOSW. RPG10 represents the Regional Spatial Strategy for South West of England.

³ Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan, (CSP28), 2001.

⁴ The Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Plan, 1999, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole

⁵ Waste Local Plan, 2006, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole

⁶ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 1.1.6 The Local Plan period is to the year 2016, which relates to the timescale of Regional Planning Guidance⁷. The adopted Structure Plan, however, has a horizon date to 2011 and makes provision for District housing and employment needs to that date. Preparation of the first Regional Spatial Strategy, which will replace both Regional Planning Guidance and the Structure Plan, is now well advanced with the 'submission draft' agreed in March 2006 by the Regional Assembly for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This sets out strategic development requirements for the District to 2026 and as the most up to date source of strategic guidance was taken into account in modifying the Local Plan following the public local inquiry.

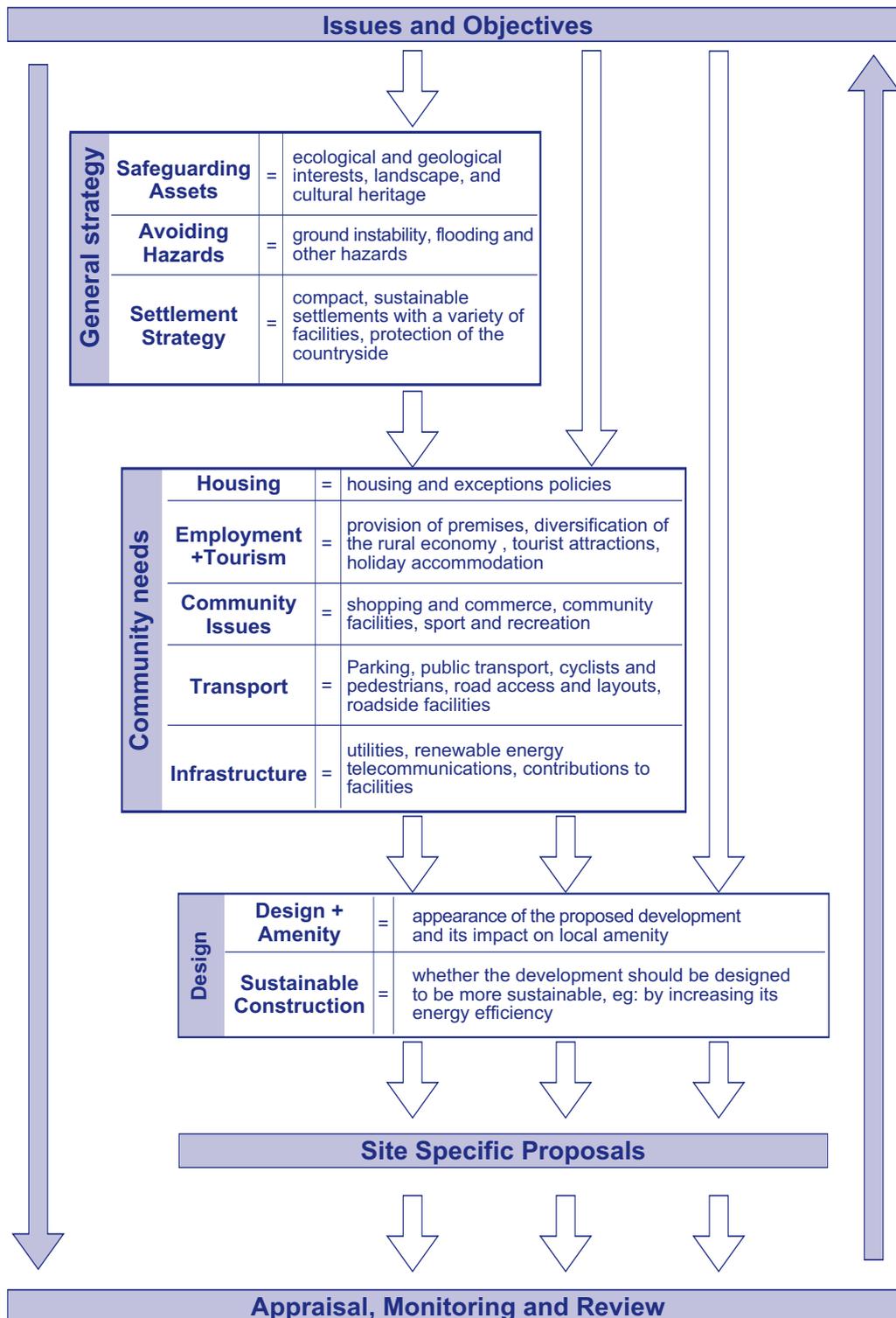
1.2 Plan Structure

- 1.2.1 The Local Plan consists of a Written Statement and a Proposals Map. The Written Statement contains policies and site specific proposals, with reasoned justification. The Proposals Map is drawn on an Ordnance Survey base, and shows the main land use proposals and policies cross-referenced to the Written Statement by the appropriate policy numbers. Towns and the larger villages (those with defined development boundaries) are shown individually on Inset Maps at a larger scale. Inset maps are also included for other settlements where there are allocations or local designations that need to be shown at a larger scale.
- 1.2.2 The Plan is divided into a number of chapters that include policies and proposals to guide development control decisions (see Table 1.1). Following the introductory chapter and the chapter on Vision and Objectives, the Plan is divided into 3 broad sections that cover general planning policy for the area:
- General strategy towards the location of new development;
 - Community needs - the needs of the local community for housing, employment, community services / facilities, transport and infrastructure;
 - Design - detailed design and layout requirements.
- 1.2.3 The section on **general strategy towards the location of new development** consists of three chapters: Safeguarding Assets, Avoiding Hazards and Settlement Strategy. The Safeguarding Assets chapter sets out the constraints to development - the features that are valued in the wider environment and which should be protected from development. Policies cover the need to safeguard the District's assets (in terms of its ecological and geological interests, its outstanding landscapes, and its cultural heritage). The following chapter (Avoiding Hazards) takes into account the impact that the wider environment can have on development (in terms of ground instability, flooding and other hazards) and seeks to steer development away from potentially hazardous environments. This information informs the chapter on Settlement Strategy, which considers the general sustainability of locations, the need to concentrate development in existing settlements that are accessible and to protect the countryside for its own sake.

⁷ Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10), 2001, DTLR.

- 1.2.4 The section on **community needs** establishes criteria specific to certain types of development, and where exceptions to general policy need to be made to allow for local needs or circumstances. It is split into five “topic” chapters: Housing (general housing and exceptions policies); Employment and Tourism (considering economic and business needs, including tourist attractions and holiday accommodation); Community Issues (shopping and commerce, community facilities, sport and recreation); Transport (general principles relating to new transport provision); and Infrastructure (utilities provision, including renewable energy and telecommunications).
- 1.2.5 The section on **design** looks at the detailed design and layout requirements that are necessary in order to ensure that new development integrates successfully with its surroundings. It is divided into two chapters. The first chapter (Design and Amenity) considers the appearance of the proposed development and its impact on people’s enjoyment of their surroundings. The second chapter (Sustainable Construction) considers how the development can be designed to be more sustainable, for example, by increasing its energy efficiency.
- 1.2.6 Following these general policy statements is the section on site specific proposals. This considers the economic and social needs of the local population, and how these can be met within the framework provided by the preceding chapters. The land allocations are, therefore, in line with the general policies contained within the Plan, although detailed design will need to be considered.
- 1.2.7 Finally, there is a section on appraisal, monitoring and review of the Plan, which sets out how the Plan meets its objectives, and how these objectives and the policies will be reviewed.

Table I.1: Plan Structure



I.3 Related Strategies and Documents

1.3.1 The Local Plan sets out land use matters that can be determined through planning controls. It does not form the Council's strategy for all activities in the District. It is complemented by a number of non-statutory strategy documents indicating the Council's other objectives relating to West Dorset. Other strategies prepared by the Council, and which are usefully read in conjunction with the Plan, include the following:

- West Dorset Community Plan;
- West Dorset 2000: Strategy for the Built and Natural Environment;
- Dorset Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy;
- Tourism Strategy;
- Sports Strategy;
- Housing Strategy;
- Economic Development Strategy;
- Shoreline Management Plans.

1.3.2 The Local Plan is also supported by more detailed Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for specific sites or issues. These include Conservation Area Appraisals, Village Design Statements (where adopted as SPG by the District Council), Development Briefs setting out the principles of development for major sites and additional guidance on specific topics, such as Planning Obligations. A number of documents prepared by other organisations have been adopted by the Council as non-statutory policy statements⁸. Such guidance is non-statutory, but will be a material consideration in development control decisions, particularly where it has undergone public consultation. An updated list of Supplementary Planning Guidance is available from the Council offices.

⁸ Any land use planning matters in, or arising from, these non-statutory documents are generally included within the Local Plan.