

Supplement to the Sustainability Appraisal

incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

Pre-submission Document

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1. Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1 This document updates the previously produced report that recorded the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1. More detail on the context, method and results of the Sustainability Appraisal work can be found in the previous documents produced throughout the process. These are the Scoping Report produced in 2007; the updated Scoping Report produced in 2009; the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report produced in 2010; the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report produced in 2012 and the Pre-submission Sustainability Appraisal Report produced in 2013.
- 1.2 The Local Plan sets out the planning policies to guide development across the district over the period 2011 to 2026. Part 1 of this Local Plan sets out the spatial approach to development and establishes a strategic set of policies to guide development. Local Plan Part 2 will subsequently allocate a number of sites for housing and employment uses as well as making changes to the proposals map, showing policy designations, for the district.
- 1.3 This supplement updates the Pre-submission Sustainability Appraisal Report to reflect new information that has become available to the Council on heritage impacts associated with development in the Blandford area.
- 1.4 Having considered the options for development around the town, the Local Plan proposed development sites at Blandford included the development of land to the west of Blandford Forum for approximately 150 dwellings. During consultation on the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan, concern was raised about the impact of this proposal on the listed buildings, conservation areas and other important historical features in the near vicinity of the site.
- 1.5 Working closely with English Heritage, the Council has investigated the heritage impact of the proposed greenfield development sites at west of Blandford Forum and south of the A350/A354 roundabout.
- 1.6 The assessment of the impacts on the heritage assets in the vicinity of the west Blandford Forum site concluded that the impact was so significant that development should not take place and due to the severity of the impact, it was unlikely that it could be successfully mitigated. These conclusions necessitated a review of the options for accommodating the growth of the town.
- 1.7 In addition to the new information for the west Blandford site, further information has been submitted for the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout. This has been submitted as part of the pre-application process associated with a pending planning application. Analysis of this information has concluded that the impact of the site will be less than previously thought.

Consideration of options

- 1.8 Previous Sustainability Appraisal work concluded that the site to the north east of the town was not suitable for development due to landscape impact, flooding and access issues. These findings are still considered valid and hence the site to the north east of the town has not been reconsidered as an option for development at this stage.
- 1.9 Three options were considered taking on board the new information about the site at west Blandford Forum and the site south of the A350/A354 roundabout. These options were:
- Option 1: Continue to promote the site at west Blandford Forum alongside the sites to the west of Blandford St Mary despite the substantial harm to heritage assets that would result;
 - Option 2: Remove the site at west Blandford Forum but continue with the development of site west of Blandford St Mary. No additional sites included to meet the shortfall in housing numbers in Blandford that would result;
 - Option 3: Remove the site at west Blandford Forum substituting it with the site south of the A350/A354 roundabout alongside the development of the site west of Blandford St Mary, maintaining overall housing numbers at a reasonable level to meet need.
- 1.10 The results of the appraisal concluded that Option 3 was the most sustainable option as it not only enabled the housing needs of the town to be met, but it also substantially reduced the impact on heritage assets as a result of development. There were however some issues raised in the appraisal of the sites that need to be adequately addressed either through the policy or through development proposals.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1.11 The appraisal of sites has made several recommendations to reduce the impact of development at Blandford. These are:
- Recommendation 1: Remove the west Blandford Forum site due to significant heritage impact and insert the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site to maintain housing numbers at an appropriate level.
 - Recommendation 2: Incorporate effective mitigation of the landscape impact of the future Charlton Marshall/Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall bypass into the development of the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site.
 - Recommendation 3: Secure the provision of a safe route across the Blandford bypass from the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site. This should be as a continuation of the Trailway, linking the established section to the south of the site to the route as it runs through Blandford town centre.
 - Recommendation 4: Ensure effective biodiversity enhancement measures are incorporated into proposals for the A350/A354 roundabout site.

- Recommendation 5: Ensure good design on the site to mitigate the impact on the landscape and on the heritage assets in the vicinity of the site especially those in Lower Blandford St Mary. This should include suitable landscape planting.

1.12 If all of these recommendations are delivered through policy and carried forward into the development, the overall impact of development around Blandford will be minimised.

2. Introduction

2.1 A full Sustainability Appraisal of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document has been undertaken alongside its preparation. The key stages of the production of the Local Plan and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal reports are:

- The Scoping Report produced in 2007 and updated in 2009 to set the context for the Sustainability Appraisal work and establish the Sustainability Appraisal objectives;
- The draft New Plan produced for consultation in 2010 accompanied by the Initial Sustainability Appraisal report. This Initial Sustainability Report considered options for fulfilling the Local Plan objectives;
- The Key Issues for the Revision of the draft New Plan which underwent consultation in 2012. This consultation included the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report which reported on the appraisal of the new sites in Gillingham and Blandford and also on the appraisal of the development management policies.
- The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Pre-submission Document and the Pre-submission Document Sustainability Appraisal Report which accompanied it.

2.2 Since this Sustainability Appraisal work was undertaken, new information has come to light on the proposed development site in Blandford which necessitates a review of the proposals. The new information and any changes that result from its consideration also need to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. This document reports on that further work and the implications of the new information.

2.3 As with all appraisals, the following six categories were used to predict the impacts of the Local Plan implementation. These predictions were made having regard to the most up to date information and using professional judgement against each of the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives established through the Scoping exercise.

Key to appraisal results

++	Strong positive impact
+	Positive impact
0	Neutral or no impact
-	Negative impact
--	Strong negative impact
?	Unknown or uncertain impact

2.4 The Sustainability Appraisal Objectives established through the Scoping stage of the Appraisal formed part of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and are shown in Figure 2.1. This Framework gave a consistent approach to appraising options and policies throughout the Local Plan production process.

Figure 2.1: Sustainability Appraisal Framework

SA Objectives		
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the production of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, a full Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared. This Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken in an iterative way looking at options for meeting the housing requirements at each of the four main towns in the district. This appraisal included an assessment of the options for growth at Blandford with three options being considered. These options were:
- Land to the west of Blandford Forum and to the West of Blandford St Mary, estimated to be capable of delivering up to 400 dwellings
 - Land to the north east of Blandford Forum estimated to be capable of delivering up to 800 dwellings
 - Land to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout estimated to be capable of delivering up to 350 dwellings
- 3.2 The outcomes of the early Sustainability Appraisal work considered that, with all available information the most sustainable and therefore preferred option was to develop the areas to the west of Blandford Forum and to the west of Blandford St Mary. The Local Plan therefore proposed development sites at Blandford including the development of land to the west of Blandford Forum initially for approximately 200 dwellings. In addition to this site, two smaller sites to the west of Blandford St Mary were proposed.
- 3.3 The site to the north east of Blandford Forum was discounted at an early stage due to landscape impact and the potential for it to increase flooding along the Pimperne Brook. In addition it was considered to be the least accessible to local facilities.
- 3.4 To help inform the Local Plan production and to reflect changes in the status of a proposed bypass for the villages of Charlton Marshall, Spetisbury and Sturminster Marshall, a Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken on a further option for meeting the housing needs of the town, the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout. This appraisal considered all of the information that was available at the time and was reported on in the Addendum to the Initial Sustainability Appraisal.
- 3.5 The Addendum discounted the site south of the A350/A354 roundabout due to the landscape impact and the difficulty in achieving satisfactory pedestrian and cycle routes across the bypass. On this basis, the land to the west of Blandford Forum along with the sites to the west of Blandford St Mary, was still considered the most sustainable option.

Heritage Impacts

- 3.6 The Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report recommended that further work was required to fully assess the impacts of the preferred sites particularly in relation to

landscape and biodiversity. This position was reinforced through consultation on the proposals within the draft New Plan in 2010.

- 3.7 The detail of the site was discussed with Natural England and appropriate biodiversity mitigation measures were suggested. In addition, a landscape assessment of the proposed housing sites around Blandford and Shaftesbury was undertaken. This work recommended scaling back the development to reduce the impact. Subsequent proposals in later versions of the Local Plan scaled back the development of the west of Blandford Forum site to 150 dwellings.
- 3.8 During consultation on the pre-submission version of the Local Plan, concern was raised about the impact of the proposals for the land west of Blandford Forum site on the designated heritage assets in the immediate vicinity.
- 3.9 These heritage assets include the grade II listed buildings of Bryanston Cottage and Bethune on Bryanston Street, the World War II Anti-Tank Defences which border the site and also the Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area. In addition, there are a number of non-designated heritage assets which add to the setting of the designated heritage assets and to Blandford town centre. The Anti-Tank Defences were first listed in January 2012 whilst the Local Plan was being prepared and after the site had previously been selected.
- 3.10 Working closely with English Heritage, a Heritage Assessment has been undertaken to consider the impact of the proposed development on the designated, newly designated and non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity. This concluded that there was likely to be substantial harm to the heritage assets if development was to go ahead. This further information concluded that development of the site to the west of Blandford Forum would be inappropriate because of the degree of harm to the significance of a number of heritage assets.

Appraisal review results

- 3.11 The implications of the new information for the assessment of the west Blandford site are shown in Figure 3.1. This shows the results of the previous Sustainability Appraisal as reported in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report and the reassessment of the site in the light of the new heritage assessment that has been prepared.
- 3.12 In addition to the new information that has become available for the west Blandford site, new information has been submitted for the south of the A350/A350 roundabout site. This information has been submitted as part of the pre-application work prior to a planning application being submitted. This information specifically looks at the issues of landscape, biodiversity and transport and Figure 3.1 also includes the consideration of this information.

Figure 3.1: Review of the appraisal of Blandford sites

Policy 16 – Blandford sites						
SA Objectives			Land at West Blandford		Land south of the A350/A354 roundabout	
			Original	Revised	Original	Revised
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	++	++	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	+	-	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	+	+	?
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	+	-	-
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	0	-	0	0
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	-	-	0	0
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	--	--	?	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	-	--	-	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	-	--	--	-

Policy 16 – Blandford sites (cont)						
SA Objectives			Land at West Blandford		Land south of the A350/A354 roundabout	
			Original	Revised	Original	Revised
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	-	-	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	-	-	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+	+	+
Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	0	0	0	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	+	+	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0	0	0	0
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	+	+	+

- 3.13 In relation to the smaller sites to the west of Blandford St Mary, no further information has been made available which would change the assessment of these sites. The sites to the west of Blandford St Mary are therefore still considered to be sustainable sites upon which the residential growth of Blandford can be accommodated.

Land west of Blandford Forum

- 3.14 The results of the review of the appraisal of the proposed development sites around Blandford show that the updated heritage information changes the outcome to make the site less favourable. In particular, the review indicates a strongly negative impact in relation to protection of heritage assets and in relation to the landscape.
- 3.15 The new heritage impact information suggests that the development of the site would have a significant impact on the listed buildings, tank defences, conservation area and on the unlisted Bryanston Deer Park. Due to this impact, Objective 8 has been assessed as having a strong negative impact and due to the nature, magnitude and permanency of this impact; it is thought that it would not be possible to satisfactorily mitigate it.
- 3.16 In addition to the strong negative impact on heritage assets as reflected in the assessment against Objective 8, there is now considered to be a strong negative impact on the landscape associated with the setting of the town. This is particularly important in relation to the setting of the western side of the town centre and the rural views towards it across the Bryanston Deer Park.
- 3.17 As the development of the site would have an impact on the heritage assets in the vicinity and that this impact cannot be satisfactorily mitigated, it is considered that the design of a scheme would harm the quality of life and hence has a negative impact on Objective 5. All other aspects of the appraisal are considered to be the same as the original assessment.

Land south of the A350/A354 roundabout

- 3.18 In relation to the land south of the A350/A354 roundabout, the new information submitted as part of the planning application process for the site has enabled a review of its appraisal.
- 3.19 Information supplied in relation to transport has identified a number of issues that need further work. The main issue relates to the accommodation of a revised route for the Charlton Marshall/Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall bypass. It has identified a route further south from the existing roundabout towards the crest of the hill. This is likely to have a greater landscape impact and hence will require mitigation.
- 3.20 There is also an issue about the severance created by the Blandford bypass (the A354). This road creates a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists to obtain safe access to the facilities (schools, shops etc) within the town. Pedestrian and cycle routes

across the bypass currently cross adjacent to the roundabout and, with the speed of the traffic at this point, safety is a concern. An alternative safe route such as a bridge, needs to be provided to enable pedestrians and cyclists to gain access to the facilities in the town and this has not yet been adequately addressed in the transport proposals for the site. This route could easily provide a link in the Trailway, creating a safe route through part of Blandford.

- 3.21 Although these negative impacts will require more work, there are areas where the new information has adequately demonstrated that mitigation can be secured to reduce the impact and offer some benefits. The main area where benefits can be realised is in relation to the ecology of the site. Currently the site is intensively farmed. Intensively farmed land is generally not rich in biodiversity and assessments of the site to date confirm this. If development takes place, biodiversity features, such as open space, hedgerows, trees and ponds can be incorporated into the development to enhance the value of the site. A comprehensive biodiversity enhancement scheme will need to be secured with the site to achieve this.
- 3.22 The initial assessment of the site indicated that there would be a significant landscape impact arising from the development of the site. Since this initial assessment was undertaken, a more detailed landscape appraisal has been undertaken which indicates that the development can be adequately incorporated into the landscape. There are areas where the impact on the landscape will exist however the impact is not considered to be as significant as previously thought. Mitigation will however need to be put in place to minimise the impact.
- 3.23 In the light of the new information that has been made available to the Council, it is possible to conclude that the development of the site to the West of Blandford Forum would be more harmful due to the heritage impact than the development of the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout.

4. Local Plan Part 1 2013 Amendments

- 4.1 As a result of the new information that has been made available to the Council and the review of the Sustainability Appraisal results in the light of this new information, a re-evaluation of the preferred site for development has been undertaken. This re-evaluation included the consideration of three options for accommodating residential growth around Blandford. These options are:
- Option 1: Continue to promote the site to the west of Blandford Forum alongside the sites to the west of Blandford St Mary despite the substantial harm to heritage assets that would result;
 - Option 2: Remove the site to the west of Blandford Forum but continue with the development of site west of Blandford St Mary. No additional sites included to meet the shortfall in housing numbers in Blandford that would result;
 - Option 3: Remove the site to the west of Blandford Forum substituting it with the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout alongside the development of the site west of Blandford St Mary, maintaining overall housing numbers at a reasonable level to meet need.
- 4.2 The result of the assessment of these options is shown in Figure 4.1. It indicates that in considering all the available information, the most sustainable approach to meeting the housing needs of Blandford would be to remove the site to the west of Blandford Forum and replace it with the site at the A350/A354 roundabout. The sites to the west of Blandford St Mary should continue to be included.
- 4.3 As the heritage impacts of continuing to promote the west of Blandford Forum site for residential development are considered to be significant, the option of including this site is not considered to be appropriate for the reasons detailed in the previous section of this report. However, removal of this site will remove the provision of public open space proposed alongside the development. For comparison, the appraisal of this option has been included in Figure 4.1.
- 4.4 If the west of Blandford Forum site is removed with no further provision for housing in the town being made (Option 2), the housing needs of Blandford are unlikely to be met. This lack of provision of housing clearly has a negative impact on the results of the Sustainability Appraisal. Inclusion of the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site will help to meet the need for housing through increased provision.
- 4.5 Through the insufficient provision of housing, Option 2 fails to help create balanced communities. Similarly Option 3 doesn't perform particularly well due to the severance created by the town's bypass, leading to reliance on the car and poor accessibility to schools, shops, GPs etc. In addition, due to the inadequate provision of housing Option 2 creates barriers to individuals participating in their community as it is likely that some people will not be able to live within the town that would otherwise wish to do so, for example, to be near their family.

- 4.6 The areas to be developed are mainly intensively farmed agricultural land and therefore, there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity through the development. These opportunities should be capitalised upon.
- 4.7 The built environment and heritage assets could be harmed by the development of the land south of the A350/A354 roundabout due to the proximity to the conservation area and listed buildings in Lower Blandford St Mary, close to the site. This will be similar for the sites to the west of Blandford St Mary however the impact of these sites is not considered to be as significant as the development of the site at west Blandford Forum. It will be essential that development in these locations is appropriately designed to complement the heritage value in the local area and the setting of the heritage assets.
- 4.8 The impact of the site south of the A350/A354 roundabout on the landscape is primarily derived from the fact that the bypass will be “breached” by the development with the principal views being from the bypass especially when negotiating the roundabout. However the landscape impacts from the wider area are considered to be less significant than previously thought. One of the sites at west Blandford St Mary is within the Dorset AONB however, the impact of the development of this site is not considered significant as it sits within a dip and would be viewed against the existing built up edge of Blandford St Mary.
- 4.9 The site south of the A350/A354 roundabout is on grade 3a agricultural land and therefore a negative impact on important natural resources exists. However the economic benefits of the development of this site include that associated with the provision of additional housing and the workforce this will bring to the area; the protection of an area for the bypass to Charlton Marshall/Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall improving the local road network; and the provision of a link in the Trailway to provide a sustainable cycling and walking link into Blandford from the villages along the A350 towards Poole. This latter benefit requires a safe and secure link across the Blandford bypass to be created as part of the development.
- 4.10 Developing only the site west of Blandford St Mary would potentially harm the economy of the town and result in longer distance commuting due to insufficient employees to fill jobs in the town. These recruitment issues may cause businesses to move away from the town.

Figure 4.1: Appraisal of options for residential sites in Blandford

Policy 16 – Blandford sites			Option 1: West Blandford sites	Option 2: Removal of West Blandford Forum site	Option 3: Inclusion of land south A350/A354 roundabout and West Blandford St Mary sites
SA Objectives					
Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone	1	Provide housing including affordable housing that meets the needs of the community	++	-	++
	2	Create balanced communities where housing, employment and community facilities are delivered to meet needs, improving access to essential services	+	-	-
	3	Improve the health and wellbeing of the population through reducing poverty and encouraging healthy lifestyles	+	0	0
	4	Reduce barriers to individuals participating fully in their community promoting a strong, vibrant and inclusive way of life	+	-	0
	5	Improve quality of life through well designed inclusive developments	-	0	0
Effective protection of the environment	6	Reduce the impact of climate change, including flood risk and make best use of the opportunities that arise	-	0	?
	7	Protect and where opportunities arise, enhance habitats and biodiversity	--	+	+
	8	Improve the quality of the built environment, protecting the district's heritage assets and distinct townscapes and recognise opportunities that arise	--	-	-
	9	Recognise the importance of the district's distinct rural landscapes beyond just the aesthetic value	--	-	-

Policy 16 – Blandford sites (cont)					
SA Objectives			Option 1: West Blandford sites	Option 2: Removal of West Blandford Forum site	Option 3: Inclusion of land south A350/A354 roundabout and West Blandford St Mary sites
Prudent use of natural resources	10	Reduce impacts on the environment	-	-	-
	11	Reduce pressure on the district's natural resources, reducing waste and promoting the wise use, reuse and recycling of land and resources	-	0	-
	12	Promote energy and resource efficiency, encouraging clean energy production	+	+	+
+0Maintenance of Sustainable levels of Economic Growth and Employment	13	Improve the competitiveness of the district's economy through provision of the necessary infrastructure for a more sustainable economy	0	0	+
	14	Enable local needs to be met locally, encouraging more sustainable forms of travel	+	--	+
	15	Encourage innovation, improve productivity, regenerate towns and villages creating a business environment in which new businesses start and existing businesses grow	0	-	0
	16	Improve skills and incomes of the lowest paid and provide satisfying work opportunities for all so that people can realise their full potential	+	0	+

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 5.1 The review of development sites around Blandford has been undertaken to reflect the new information that has become available particularly in relation to the impact on heritage assets associated with the west of Blandford Forum site. The review builds on the work undertaken at the earlier stages of the Local Plan production and reported in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report and the associated Addendum.

Conclusions

- 5.2 This earlier Sustainability Appraisal work concluded that the site to the north east of the town had several constraints associated with it which were difficult to resolve. The main issue related to the impact on the nationally designated AONB but with further constraints associated with flooding and accessibility. These constraints resulted in the site being discounted from further consideration and this position is still considered valid.
- 5.3 The review of the west Blandford Forum site concluded that the impact on heritage assets would be so significant that the site should not be developed. It also concluded that the impact could not be mitigated effectively. This conclusion led to the consideration of the next best alternative; land to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout, for which further information had become available.
- 5.4 Review of the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout in the light of the new information that has become available concluded that this site is likely to have less of an impact than previously assessed. The impact on landscape is considered less as is the impact on biodiversity. However there were a few areas where further work is required to resolve some issues, the major one being the provision of a safe and secure route across the Blandford bypass for pedestrians and cyclists. This should ideally be segregated from the bypass traffic to make the route as safe as possible but also to minimise impact on traffic flows on the highway.
- 5.5 Building on the review of these sites, three options were considered for the Blandford policy as ways of meeting the housing needs of the town. The first option was to continue with the west of Blandford Forum and west of Blandford St Mary sites however it was assessed that the impact on heritage assets of this approach were significant and therefore this was not a realistic option.
- 5.6 The second option was to remove the west of Blandford Forum site but to include only the west of Blandford St Mary site. However, although the environmental impact of this option was reduced, this option would fail to meet the housing needs of the town.
- 5.7 The third option was to remove the west of Blandford Forum site and replace it with the site to the south of the A350/A354 roundabout. This option was assessed

as being the most appropriate as it maintained a level of housing delivery that is considered to meet the needs of the town whilst minimising the adverse impacts. This is the approach recommended for inclusion in the Local Plan.

- 5.8 There are however some important considerations that need to be incorporated into any proposals for this site. The primary concern relates to the provision of safe cycling and walking links between the site and the town to enable sustainable travel into the town. The second is to minimise the landscape impact of the site, including any future Charlton Marshall/Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall bypass. Similarly the impact on nearby heritage assets at Lower Blandford St Mary need to be given careful consideration as does the potential for increased surface water run-off from the site.

Recommendations

- 5.9 The following recommendations are considered necessary to reduce the impact of the development of the land south of the A350/A354 roundabout.
- Recommendation 1: Remove the west Blandford Forum site due to significant heritage impact and insert the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site to maintain housing numbers at an appropriate level.
 - Recommendation 2: Incorporate effective mitigation of the landscape impact of the future Charlton Marshall/Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall bypass into the development of the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site.
 - Recommendation 3: Secure the provision of a safe route across the Blandford bypass from the south of the A350/A354 roundabout site. This should be as a continuation of the Trailway, linking the established section to the south of the site to the route as it runs through Blandford town centre.
 - Recommendation 4: Ensure effective biodiversity enhancement measures are incorporated into proposals for the A350/A354 roundabout site.
 - Recommendation 5: Ensure good design on the site to mitigate the impact on the landscape and on the heritage assets in the vicinity of the site especially those in Lower Blandford St Mary. This should include suitable landscape planting.

6. The next steps

- 6.1 The Local Plan will be amended to reflect the updated heritage impact assessment of the sites around Blandford Forum. The sections of the Local Plan relevant to this revised approach will then be consulted on for a six week period. This supplement to the Final Sustainability Appraisal Report will be consulted on alongside the revised sections of the Local Plan.
- 6.2 Once the consultation has taken place, the results will be taken on board and the Local Plan plus supporting information will be submitted to the secretary of state for examination and on to adoption.
- 6.3 Further Sustainability Appraisal work will be undertaken as and when necessary to support the adoption of the Local Plan and during its implementation, monitoring will take place to prompt action where adverse effects are identified.