

Our ref: North Dorset LP
Your ref:

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Via email to planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

Dear Mr Warrick

North Dorset Local Plan 2011 To 2026 Part 1 - Pre-Submission Consultation

Thank you for providing the Highways Agency with the opportunity to comment on the latest stage of the above document. Where necessary we have reviewed our consultation response to the key issues and provide comments to elements of the local plan which have changed since our last formal response in December 2012.

The Agency is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the Strategic Road Network (SRN). Within your plan area this comprises short sections of the A303(T) at the north of your district and the A31(T) at the south. It is on the basis of these responsibilities that the comments that follow in this letter have been made.

It should be noted that the revised Circular 02/13 was published between the date of submission of our previous comments and this Pre-Submission plan. Some of the potential proposals have not been carried forward into this plan, and the Agency has not reviewed its previous comments in these cases.

The Agency also recognises that, in terms of the main towns, identification of site allocations for development will form part of the Local Plan Part 2 (not yet prepared) or through neighbourhood plans. The Agency looks forward to being involved in these processes in due course.

The Agency broadly supports the spatial strategy and the draft policies and has only minor comments to make. These have been set out in a table on the following pages for ease of reference to the relevant paragraph or draft policy number.

I trust that you are able to take these comments into account. Please get in touch should you wish to discuss matters further.

Your

Andy Roberts
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cc James Purkiss, Halcrow
Paul Willis, Dorset County Council



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Highways Agency's detailed comments

Paragraph or Policy	Commentary
Para 1.17	Mention is made of five designated neighbourhood areas within the District, but only four appear to be named.
Para 2.18	You discuss transport corridors in this paragraph and it may be useful to mention that the sections of the A31, A35 and A303 referred to are trunk roads maintained by the Highways Agency. Likewise it may be useful to differentiate between the trunk road network and other A roads on Figures 2.1 and 3.1.
Objectives for Local Plan Part 1	The Agency supports your vision and objectives, particularly the mention of making the four market towns the focus for housing (in Objectives 3 and 5) and provision of sufficient employment land (in Objective 3).
Policy 9 Rural Exception Affordable Housing	Previously the Agency objected to this proposal. However, the Agency does not think it is sustainable to maintain an objection. There is unlikely to be severe impact on the SRN. Whilst there is still a concern about the potential for unsustainable patterns of growth, we are sufficiently satisfied that the numbers are likely to be small on any individual site and the as the total numbers are also likely to be small, such that any effect will be very diluted. In addition these types of development are directed to places (villages) with some facilities which will offer some form of containment of trips and some opportunity for public transport (albeit limited). There is a need to balance the impacts of trips with the need for this form of development and the Agency is content to for the Inspector to consider the matters. The Agency would be concerned to see any significant development proposals of this sort in less sustainable places coming forward either individually or cumulatively and there will be a need to monitor this and for an effective development management framework.
Para 7.28	The explanatory text on making best use of the SRN is welcomed. The text currently goes on to say that the Agency looks to developers to 'manage down' the impact of development on strategic corridors. Government policy set out in the DfT Circular 02/2013 explains that ' <i>only after travel plan and demand management measures have been fully explored and applied will capacity enhancement measures be considered</i> ' for the SRN. As developers bring schemes forward they will need to demonstrate the impacts on the SRN and where appropriate provide mitigation to ensure safe and effective operation of the SRN. It may be useful to update the text to reflect this.
Para 7.31	The text currently states that the ' <i>Council also will work with the Highways Agency and Dorset County Council to reduce as far as possible the potential for increased trips from development at Gillingham onto the A303.</i> ' The Circular explains that the Agency should engage in the local plan process to reduce the potential for creating congestion on the SRN and

Paragraph or Policy	Commentary
	consider capacity enhancements after demand management measures have been fully applied.
Policy 13 Grey infrastructure	Clause a) of the draft policy states that measures to reduce the potential for increased trips on the A303 will be developed in connection with growth at Gillingham. It may be pertinent to add reference to capacity enhancement to A303 junctions, if identified as being necessary by Transport Assessment.
Para 8.11	Reference is made to accessibility to the strategic road network – is this a reference to the trunk road and motorway network (A31, A35, A303)?
Figure 9.3	The Agency welcomes the proposed broad indicative route of the principal street through the Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation (SSA), as this would allow good access for the majority of residents to any bus services provided on this route. The key linkages for pedestrians and cyclists indicated on the plan also appear sound and comprehensive.
Grey infrastructure Paras 9.59 – 9.74	The supporting text on 'grey infrastructure' for the SSA is broadly supported. The Agency will expect planning applicants for the SSA to submit evidence alongside their applications which enables it to understand the impact of the development on the operation of relevant junctions on the A303(T), in line with the methodology set out in GTA and the DfT Circular.