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Representation # _____	



North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

Pre-submission Consultation 29 November 2013 to 24 January 2014

Regulation 19 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012)

Response Form

For each representation you wish to make a separate response form will need to be completed.

This is a formal consultation on the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an Inspector. For advice on how to respond to the consultation and fill in this form please see the 'Guidance Notes for Making Representations' that can be found on the Council's website at www.dorsetforyou.com/planning/north-dorset/planning-policy

Please return completed forms to:

Email: planningpolicy@north-dorset.gov.uk

Post: Planning Policy, North Dorset District Council, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7LL

Alternatively you can submit your comments online at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/NorthDorsetLocalPlan

Deadline: 5pm on 24 January 2014. Representations received after this time may not be accepted.

Part A – Personal details

This part of the form must be completed by all people making representations as **anonymous comments cannot be accepted**. Representations cannot be treated in confidence as Regulation 22 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires copies of all representations to be made publically available. By submitting this response form on the pre-submission North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 you consent to your information being disclosed to third parties for this purpose, but signatures, private telephone numbers and e-mail addresses or private addresses will not be visible on our web site, although they will be shown on paper copies that will be sent to the Inspector and available for inspection.

*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes to the personal details but complete the full contact details of the agent. All correspondence will be sent to the agent.

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Statement of Representation

North Dorset Local Plan (2011 to 2026)

Pre-Submission Consultation

JANUARY 2014

lightwoodSTRATEGIC

1.0 The Soundness of the Plan

1.1 These representations do not challenge the legal compliance of the plan, but do challenge its soundness, on the following grounds:

1.2 The plan has not been positively prepared as it fails to meet objectively assessed needs for housing in the District overall or in specific settlements including Stalbridge;

1.3 The plan is not adequately justified because of shortcomings in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and in the settlement strategy;

1.4 The effectiveness of the Plan is undermined by its relatively short timescale (to 2026, which means that it will not have a 15-year time horizon at adoption); its settlement strategy, which places significant settlements such as Stalbridge within the countryside where various restrictive development management policies apply, with no settlement boundaries; and its reliance on neighbourhood plans and local communities to 'sign up' to provide new housing development through Part 2 of the Local Plan (a site allocations document);

1.5 The plan does not comply with national policy (the NPPF) because of these shortcomings. In particular, it fails to comply with the following paragraphs of the NPPF:

- 14: seeking opportunities to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the area with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change;

- 17: supporting thriving rural communities;

- 47: boosting significantly the supply of housing and ensuring that the Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, consistent with other policies;

- 55: promoting sustainable development in rural areas, with housing located to enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities;

- 151 consistency of Local Plans with the objective of contributing to sustainable development and other policies of the Framework;

- 153 relying on additional development plan documents only where clearly justified;

- 157 drawing up plans for an appropriate timescale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, and taking account of longer term requirements; and

- 158/9 having an adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence base, including a Strategic Housing Market Assessment that assesses the full housing needs of the area.

2.0 Overall Housing Provision

2.1 Objective 5 (Meeting the District’s Housing Needs) aims *‘to deliver more housing, including more affordable housing that better meets the needs of the District...’* with the *‘vast majority of needs’* met in the District’s four main towns and provision elsewhere focused on meeting local housing needs.

2.2 This objective does not commit the Council *‘to boost significantly the supply of housing’* (and *‘to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area’*, which is the requirement of national policy (NPPF paragraph 47).

2.3 Policy 6 proposes the provision of 4,200 homes over the 15 years 2011 to 2025; a rate of 280 per annum, which is based on the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (SHMA) of 2008, updated in 2012. The SHMA advised that *‘trend-based data suggests household growth of around 273 per annum for the period from 2011 to 2031 and so a housing delivery figure (on the basis of this figure) might be around 280 per annum (to take account of a small vacancy rate).’*

2.4 As the SHMA looked ahead to 2031, it is not clear why the Local Plan only looks forward to 2026, especially as paragraph 157 of the NPPF calls for local plans to be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, and to take account of longer-term requirements. The Council does not expect adoption of the plan before winter 2014; by which time the plan’s time horizon will be only just over 11 years and it will be more than 11 years since the previous Local Plan was adopted. A longer time horizon is necessary to give a

more strategic perspective for development proposals and infrastructure requirements, and to allow time for the Council to undertake a review before the plan’s time horizon has expired.

2.5 The target housing completion rate of 280 p.a. is compared with past completions and the Council’s forecast 5-year housing supply trajectory in Figure 1.

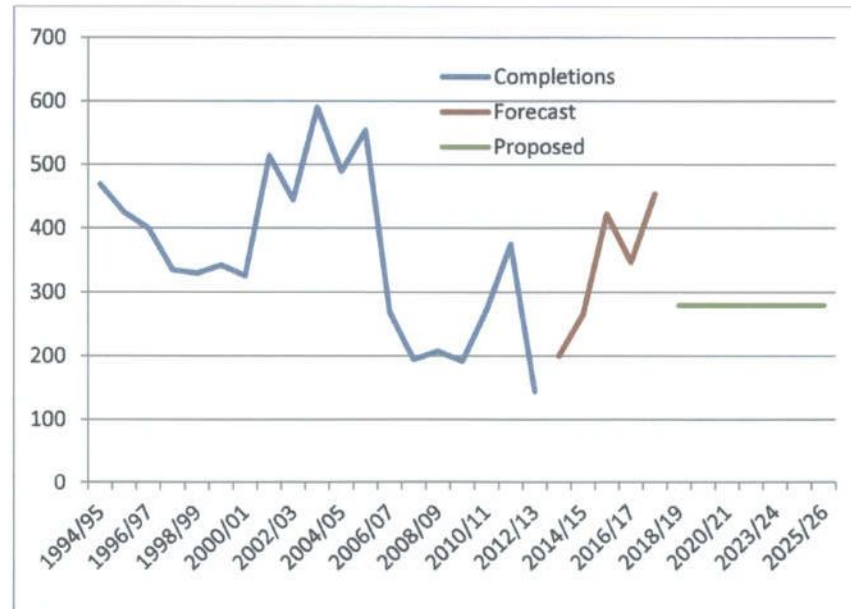


Figure 1:
Housing Completions; Actual, Forecast and Proposed
(Sources: AMR 2009 and 2011)

2.6 The target rate is low compared with past rates between 1994/5 and 2005/06 and compared with the Council's forecast recovery in housing completions from a low point of 144 completions in 2012/13. It implies a 40% drop in completions from the 2017/18 peak of 454.

2.7 Population and household projections on which the SHMA is based were undertaken by the County Council, 'linked to the 2008-based ONS/CLG population/ household projections', and 'updated to a mid-2011 base'. It is beyond the scope of these representations to review the SHMA in detail, but updating to a mid-2011 base may raise some issues that are also apparent in CLG's Interim 2011-based Household Projections, which project household growth in North Dorset of only 175 p.a. between 2011 and 2021, compared with 252 p.a. for the same period in the 2008-based projections.

2.8 Household formation from 2001 to 2011 was much lower than previously projected and it is generally agreed that the reasons include economic constraints on household formation and lower rates of household formation among migrants than among the indigenous population. In North Dorset, the steep fall in housing completions after 2005/6

will also have affected the migration trends that underlie the population projections.

2.9 It is interesting to note that the Inspector who is examining the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan has raised questions about the household projections in that case, which come from the same sources as the North Dorset SHMA. (Note of Inspector's Concerns dated 10 December 2013.) He has noted reasons for the recent downward trend in household formation, has asked for an explanation of why housing numbers have changed since studies for the draft Regional Strategy and has asked for an explanation of the components

of household change in the Dorset districts. The Regional Strategy housing target for North Dorset was 350 dpa.

2.10 Similar doubts about the robustness of the SHMA apply in relation to North Dorset. As the SHMA for North Dorset was prepared as part of the SHMA for the Bournemouth/Poole Housing Market Area, there are also questions about whether it adequately reflects functional linkages with South Somerset and Wiltshire. There should be opportunities to update the SHMA, in the light of the 2011-based household projections and the release of further 2011 Census data, later this year.

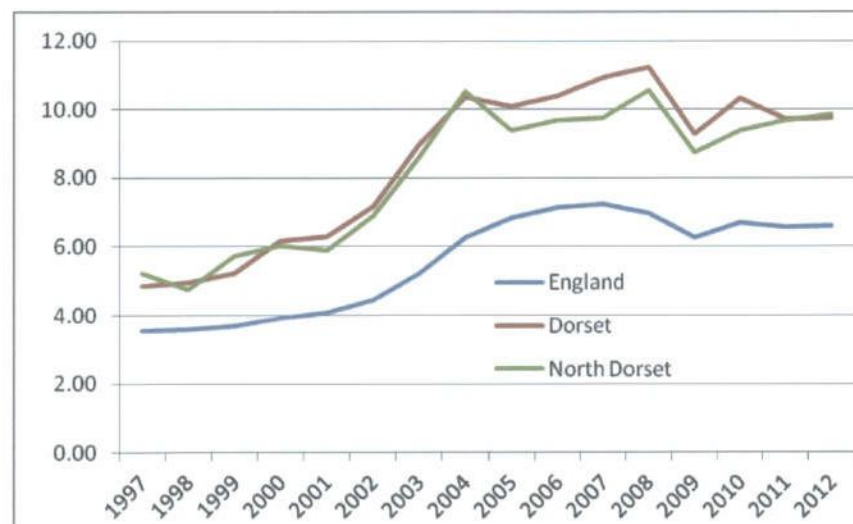


Figure 2:
Housing Affordability
Ratio of Lower Quartile House
Prices to Lower Quartile Incomes
 (Source: CLG Live Table 576)

2.11 The Housing Background Paper and the SHMA identified the affordability of housing as an important issue in North Dorset, where house price to income ratios are among the highest in the country. Figure 2 shows the upward trend in the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings from 1997: outpacing the national trend and rising above the Dorset County average in the past couple of years.

2.12 Between 1998 and 2008 only 12% of the 4,000 homes completed were affordable housing, compared with the planning target of 35%. In these circumstances, the SHMA and the Local Plan should address the scale of provision that is needed to improve both the overall affordability of market housing and the provision of 'affordable housing'. The reduction in supply that is represented by a target housing completion rate of 280 dpa will not be sufficient to have the required impact on affordability and access to housing.

2.13 In these circumstances, the planning strategy needs to take advantage of all sustainable opportunities for housing development without arbitrary restrictions on housing development in sustainable settlements.

3.0 The Settlement Strategy

3.1 The settlement strategy is included primarily in Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy) and Policy 6 (Housing Distribution). It comprises a concentration on the 'main towns' of Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the main focus for growth. Outside the four 'main towns', the remainder of the District, including Stalbridge and all the District's villages, will be subject to countryside policies where *'development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met'*. This strategy is a radical change of approach from the 2003 Local Plan and the 2010 Core Strategy consultation on the New Plan for North Dorset and is not a sound approach; especially in relation to Stalbridge.

3.2 The North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan to 2011 (1st Revision), adopted on 31st January 2003, included in Policy 2.3 (Distribution of Development) a statement that the approximate scale and rate of development in Stalbridge should be 170 (10 dwellings per year), towards an overall Dorset Structure Plan allocation for North Dorset of about 5,900 for the 17-year period of 1994 to 2011. Policy ST 1 stated that *'In accordance with the*

overall Local Plan Strategy, Stalbridge will act as a local centre and will receive limited housing and employment growth together with the development of local community services.' Table 40.2 showed an estimate (in 2003) of 183 housing completions between 1994 and 2011.

3.3 The Draft Core Strategy and Draft Development Management Policies Consultation Document of March 2010 included Draft Core Policy 19 for Stalbridge and the larger villages:

'About 1,200 homes will be provided in the remaining RSS Development Policy C Settlements (excluding Sturminster Newton, but including Stalbridge and 18 of the larger villages in the District, as listed in draft Core Policy 3). About 600 homes will be built in the period up to 2016 with about 600 built thereafter.'

In the period up to 2026 the housing needs of these settlements will be met through:

- *infilling and redevelopment within defined settlement boundaries; and*
- *the development of additional housing sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD.'*

3.4 Following the Consultation on Key Issues from 29th October to 21st December 2012, the Council changed its approach to Stalbridge radically in the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation. The 2012 consultation included Stalbridge with the District's larger villages (Options 1 and 2) or with all the District's villages (Option 3) and did not offer an option in which Stalbridge was recognised as a higher order settlement.

3.5 Stalbridge, which is described as one of the 'market towns' in the north of the District (with Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) in paragraph 3.37 of the Pre Submission Local Plan, is now proposed to be included with the District's villages as 'countryside' without a settlement boundary and subject to countryside polices.

3.6 This downgrading of Stalbridge is not justified by the evidence base of the plan. Stalbridge had a population of 2,698 in 2011 which made it the fifth largest settlement in the District after the four 'main towns'; ahead of Marnhull with its population of 1,998 and nine other settlements with populations of more than 1,000. The Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper of November 2013 (paragraph 5.21) shows Stalbridge in the second category of settlement by size of population (2,000

to 3,500), with Sturminster Newton and Marnhull.

3.7 The Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper (paragraph 5.26, supported by Figure 3) also shows Stalbridge to have proximity to a relatively high level of services: *'relative proximity to services is high around the three main towns, but it is also high in the north-western part of the District where Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and Marnhull (the District's largest village) are clustered together.'*

3.8 Stalbridge is a small town with a supermarket a number of other shops and other services in its small High Street, including bank, post office, pharmacy, electrical goods retailer, butcher, convenience store, take-away meal outlets, two inns and professional services including dental surgery. The town has a 7-class primary school and separate pre-school facilities. There are local employment areas to the east of the town, which is also only 7 or 8 miles from Sturminster Newton, Sherborne and Wincanton, and 11 or 12 miles from Shaftesbury or Yeovil with their wider ranges of employment, shopping and other facilities. Railway services are three miles away at Templecombe. There are regular bus services to Sherborne and Yeovil with additional services to other towns in the area.

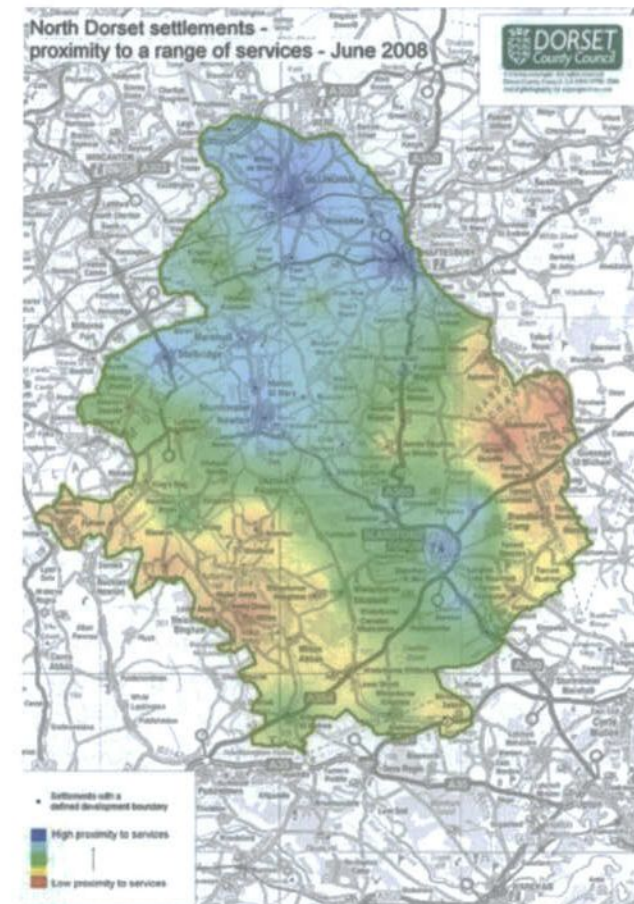


Figure 3: Proximity to Services
(Source: Figure 3 of the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper)

3.9 The effects of downgrading Stalbridge with all the District's villages to the status of 'countryside' are to reduce the scope for it to remain a sustainable settlement in the future by developing sufficient housing to maintain or expand its population and retain local services. The justification for this approach is explained in the Sustainable Development Strategy Background Paper in the following terms: *'the abolition of regional planning means that there is no longer a requirement for Stalbridge and the District' villages to be categorised according to RSS Development Policies B and C, as the draft Core Strategy attempted to do.'*

3.10 The new approach relies on neighbourhood plans or on local communities 'opting-in' to Part 2 of the Local Plan. This approach is not consistent with paragraph 55 of the NPPF, which states: *'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.'* It is not clear how the Council's proposed approach can account for the interdependence of settlements within the District – or across District boundaries.

3.11 The Background Paper notes that *'Local communities also require sufficient strategic direction to guide future development.'* The proposed inclusion of Stalbridge in the draft Local Plan with all the District's village and open 'countryside' does not provide sufficient strategic direction for the future of Stalbridge as a small market town, especially as the objective (described in Objective 4, paragraph 2.52) is *'focusing on local (rather than strategic needs) in Stalbridge...'*

3.12 The Background paper also says that local communities are concerned that if housing is allocated on the basis of existing local facilities, the proposed housing may no longer be justified if facilities close. There is no mention of the increased risk of facilities closing with declining population as a result of falling household sizes and ageing populations, when there is no new housebuilding in a settlement.

3.13 It is not appropriate to make a settlement as significant as Stalbridge subject to countryside policies, as proposed in Policy 2 (Core Spatial Strategy), based on 'essential rural need' and 'local needs', subject to neighbourhood planning or 'opting in' to site allocations in Part 2 of the Local Plan. Nor is it appropriate for there to be no

settlement boundary, as is also proposed in Policy 2, so that countryside policies apply within the built-up area of the town.

3.14 Policy 6 (Housing Distribution) is also inappropriate. Stalbridge should be identified in the policy as a fifth 'main town' with its own allocation of housing, rather than treated as part of the countryside and sharing an allocation of 230 dwellings for 2011 to 2026 (about 15 per year) as one of 50 or more settlements.

3.15 By comparison with Sturminster Newton, which had a population of 4,292 in 2011 and where Policy 6 proposed an allocation of 380 homes, an allocation for Stalbridge of 240 homes would be proportionate, in conjunction with new and improved community facilities. The allocation would entail defining a new settlement boundary for the town to allow its expansion, whilst allowing for infill development on appropriate sites within the town. The new settlement boundary may also involve amending the Conservation Area boundary.

3.16 A new policy and inset diagram should be included for Stalbridge as a 'main town': similar to Policies 16 to 19 for the other four 'main towns'.

3.17 The new policy should state (inter alia) that:

‘Stalbridge will continue to function as an important service centre, in conjunction with other settlements in the north west of the District through:

- a. development and redevelopment within the existing built-up area;**
- b. greenfield extensions to the south and west of the town as defined in Part 2 of the Local Plan; and**
- c. other opportunities identified by neighbourhood planning**

About 240 new homes will be provided at Stalbridge during the period 2011-2026. Housing needs will be met through... (the above locations).

Employment needs will be met at the Station Road employment area and the Gibbs Marsh Trading Estate.

The vitality and viability of Stalbridge as a local shopping centre will be maintained and promoted. Additional retail and service uses (A1, A2 and A3) will be permitted and changes of use of existing

retail and service uses will not be permitted unless there is evidence that the existing uses are no longer viable.

3.18 Consequential modifications should also be made to Policies 2 and 6 and other related text in the draft Local Plan; including commitments to define a new settlement boundary for Stalbridge in Part 2 of the Local Plan and to review the Conservation Area boundary.

4.0 Development Opportunities at Stalbridge

4.1 Figure 4 identifies potential ‘areas for expansion’ are identified to the south and west of Stalbridge. Both areas are subject to further investigations, consultations and community engagement (including neighbourhood planning) to define sites and development opportunities more precisely. Both areas are identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) of March 2012.

4.2 The southern area is within SHLAA Site 2/49/0004: Land off Thornhill Road. It is outside the settlement boundary of the current local plan

and is appraised as suitable and available but not achievable because of local plan policies.

4.3 The western areas are within SHLAA Site 2/49/0008: Land off Grosvenor Road. They are outside the settlement boundary of the current local plan. The northern area is within part of the Stalbridge Conservation Area that is associated with the setting of the town, although it is contained within existing buildings on the corner of Barrow Hill and Wood Lane. The southern part, adjoining Waterlake and Thornhill Road, is outside the Conservation Area.

4.4 These areas could accommodate up to 200 homes (Appendix 1): most of the housing allocation that we believe is appropriate for Stalbridge, whilst allowing for continuing infill development on appropriate sites within the town and other opportunities identified by neighbourhood planning.



Figure 4:
Potential areas for expansion in Stalbridge

5.0 Changes Sought to the Plan

5.1 To make the plan sound, the following modifications are proposed:

- Modifications to Policy 2 to include Stalbridge as a fifth 'main town' and one of the District's service centres; to delete Stalbridge from references that include it with the District's villages and countryside in policy terms; and to include a commitment to define a revised settlement boundary in Part 2 of the Local Plan.
- Modifications to Policy 6 to include Stalbridge with an allocation for about 240 homes.
- Modifications to Policy 20 to exclude Stalbridge from the countryside and to include reference to a defined settlement boundary for Stalbridge.
- A new policy and inset diagram for Stalbridge, as outlined in paragraph 18 above; similar in form to Policies 16 to 19 including policy commitments to define a revised settlement boundary in Part 2 of the Local Plan and to review the Conservation Area boundary (under Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).
- Consequential modifications to Policies 2, 6, 9, 20 and other text in the Plan to add references to Stalbridge as a settlement with a defined boundary and to delete references that associate Stalbridge in policy terms with the District's villages and countryside.
- Overall housing requirements should be re-assessed with the aim of improving access to housing and affordability.
- The plan period should be extended to 2031.



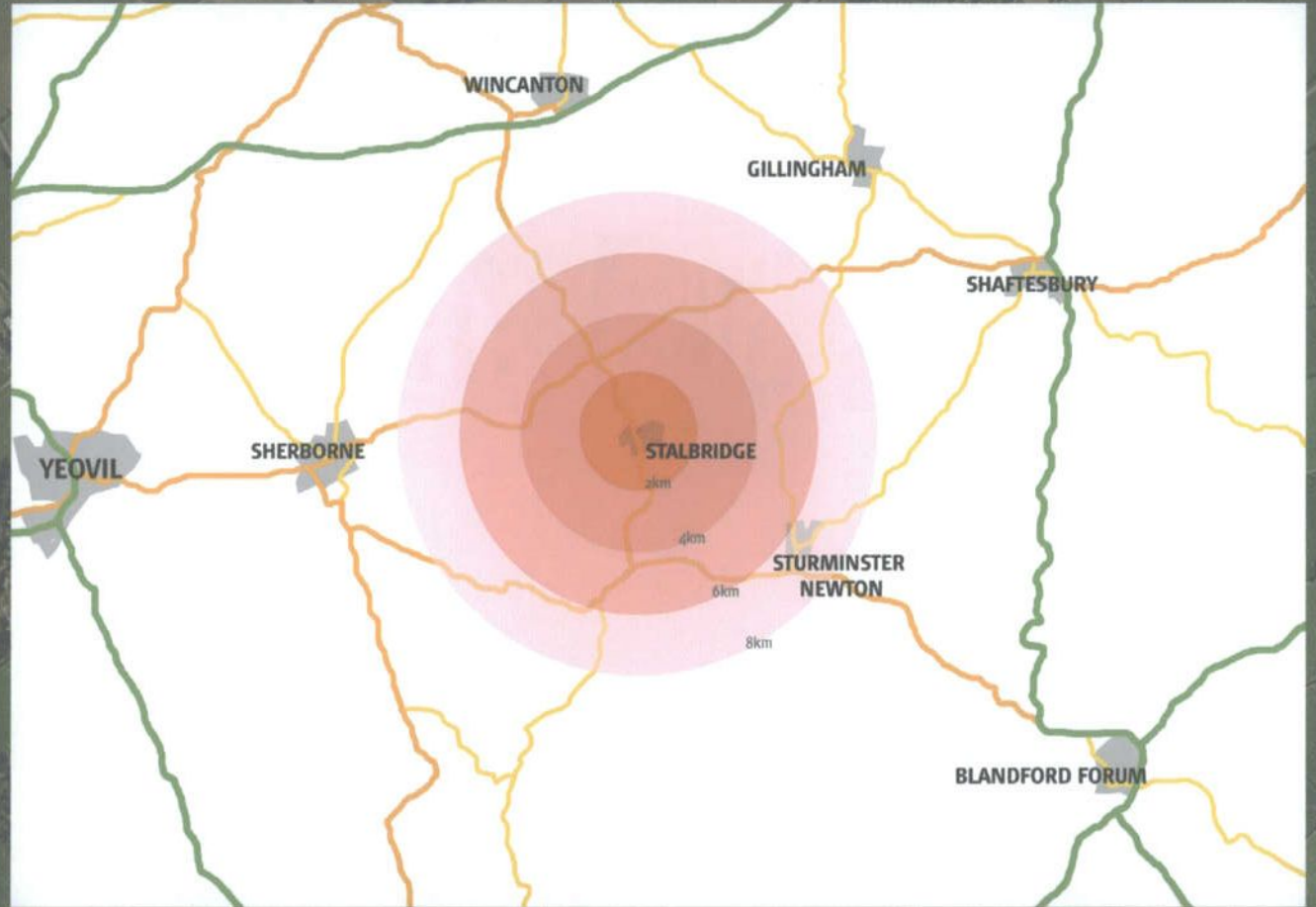
APPENDIX 1: STALBRIDGE

Proposed New Allocation Site

Conceptual Development Proposal

JANUARY 2014

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Site location in context
to neighbouring towns

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- 1.2 Site Location

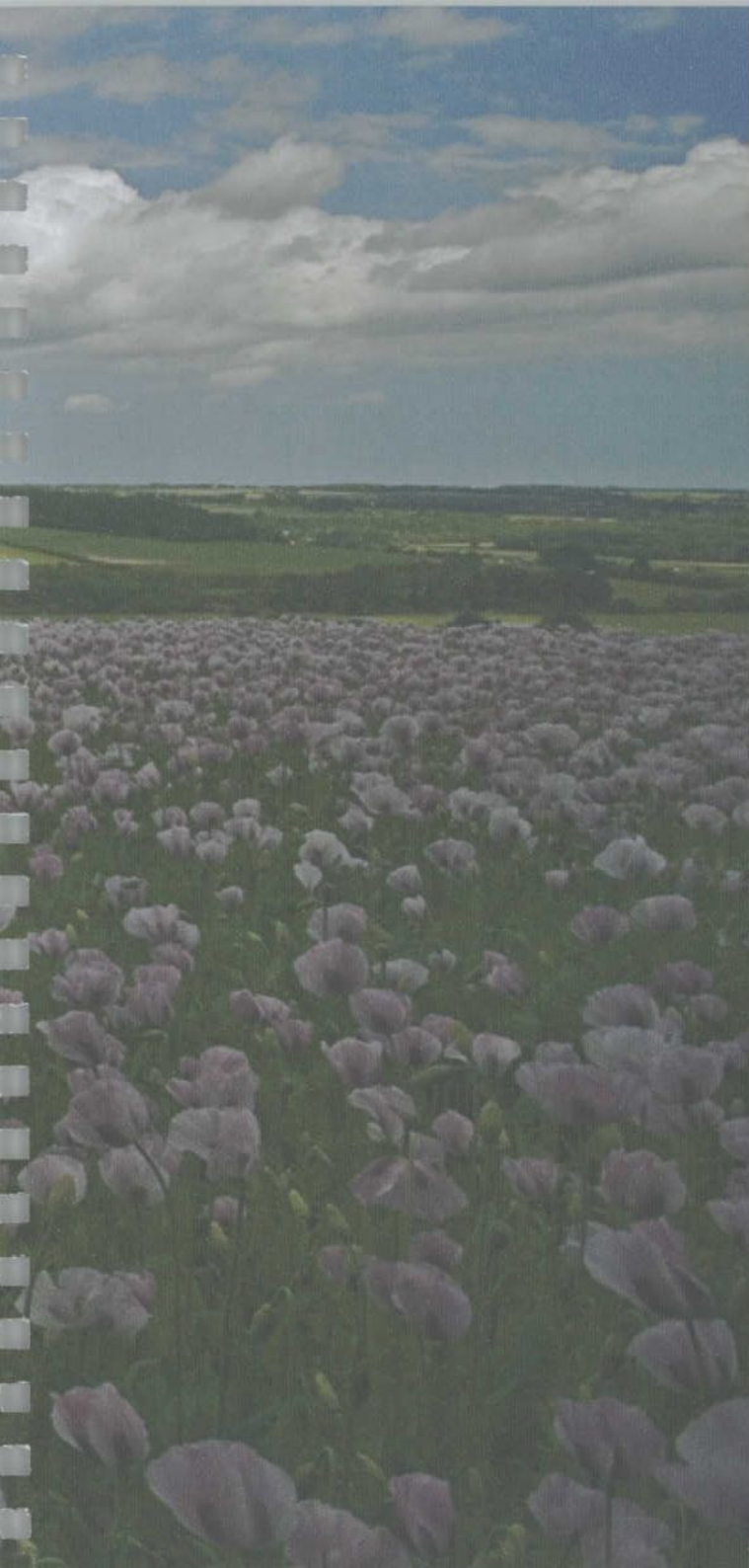
2.0 Context

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- 2.2 Landscape Context
- 2.3 Transport Links
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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

This document forms a preliminary supplement to the Design and Access Statements for land at Barrow Hill and also land at Thornhill Road. It will be developed to support an outline planning application for residential development up to 95 and 64 new dwellings respectively.

The emerging schemes are focused on providing an exemplar infill development that accords with national and local planning policy and which provides high standards of design and sustainable construction, whilst protecting and enhancing the landscape and biodiversity assets through carefully located soft landscape and design. The vision is to provide a residential housing scheme that will help meet the future needs of North Dorset and enhance and sustain Stalbridge as a high quality place to live.

With increasing planning powers being handed to local communities, the proposed development seeks to offset the impact of development through significant environmental and social benefits. Through the initial design process opportunities have been identified, however it is the intention that local consultation will guide the process.

The approach to development will be as a critical friend to the parish council, delivering the required housing and addressing the infrastructure issues identified in CP19. The community benefits need to outweigh the impact of development.



1.2 Site Location

The proposed development sites sit on the edge of the settlement to the South West of Stalbridge. Stalbridge is a small town and civil parish in Dorset, situated in the Blackmore Vale area of North Dorset district, near the border with Somerset. It is approximately 5.8 kilometres North West of Sturminster Newton and approximately 9.5 kilometres to the East of Sherborne.

Both Gillingham and Shaftesbury are located approximately 12 kilometres to the North East. The nearest railway station is located just over 5 kilometres away in Abbas Combe to the North, which sits between London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids on the West of England Main Line operated by South West Trains.

- The site is located in North Dorset District, 10 kilometres South East of the border with Somerset
- The site lies 10.5 kilometres south of the A303, the main trunk road between Basingstoke in Hampshire and Honiton in Devon
- The only school within the town is Stalbridge Church of England Primary School. The main secondary school for the area is Sturminster Newton

High School located just over 6 kilometres to the South East

- The River Stour runs to the east of the site, after which Sturminster Newton is named. Sturminster Newton is famous for its water mill and town bridge, which still bears the notice warning potential vandals that damaging the bridge is punishable by penal transportation



Town's End

Prior's Down

Stalbridge Park

Park Wood

St Mary's Church

Stalbridge

Ten Acre Plantation

Common Plantation

Stalbridge Weston

Poolestown

Stalbridge Common





Context

Conservation Area

LISTED BUILDING:
Cheriton Greenwoods

LISTED BUILDING:
The Thatched Cottage

LISTED BUILDING:
Anglesey Cottages

Sub
Conservation Area

LISTED BUILDING:
The Stalbridge Arms



2.1 Archaeological & Historical Site Context

Within the Local Plan much of the town is covered by a Conservation Area Policy, with parts being covered by Sub Conservation Areas. As a result there are a number of listed buildings situated near the sites.

A large part of the Barrow Hill site falls within the Conservation Area, however given that the existing use is as arable farmland, with no trees coupled with the proposed design of the development being low density and sympathetic to its location it is believed that the proposal would not affect the character and appearance of the Area and would not have any impact on the listed buildings.

A desk based search has identified no areas of high archaeological importance (AHAP) in or around the site.





2.2 Landscape Context

The sites are located to the South West of Stalbridge on the edge of settlement. Both sites comprise a mix of grassland and agricultural land used primarily as arable land.

The sites are primarily open grassland with very limited vegetation and hedgerows, the majority of which borders the sites as opposed to forming part of the site.

The land at Barrow Hill flanks the medium density, residential, western edge of the settlement. The northern boundary fronts Barrow Hill allowing access to the site. To the South and West of lies more agricultural arable land.

The land at Thornhill Road sits to the south of the settlement boundary and borders medium density residential use defined by a mix of detached and semi detached houses. Further arable farm land extends to the South. The Eastern boundary borders the A357.



2.3 Transport Links

As the site is close to established residential and employment areas with a range of facilities and services within a short cycle or bus distance, it is considered to be a suitable location for new development.

Vehicle Links

The site would be integrated within the established highway network. Strategically the site is easily accessible from the A357 which runs to Wincanton and the A303 to the North and which links with the A30, the main road between Yeovil and Shaftesbury.

The sites abut Barrow Hill and the A357 respectively and access would be achieved directly from these junctions. Improvements would be required including traffic calming measures which would provide significant safety improvements for the local community.

Public Transport

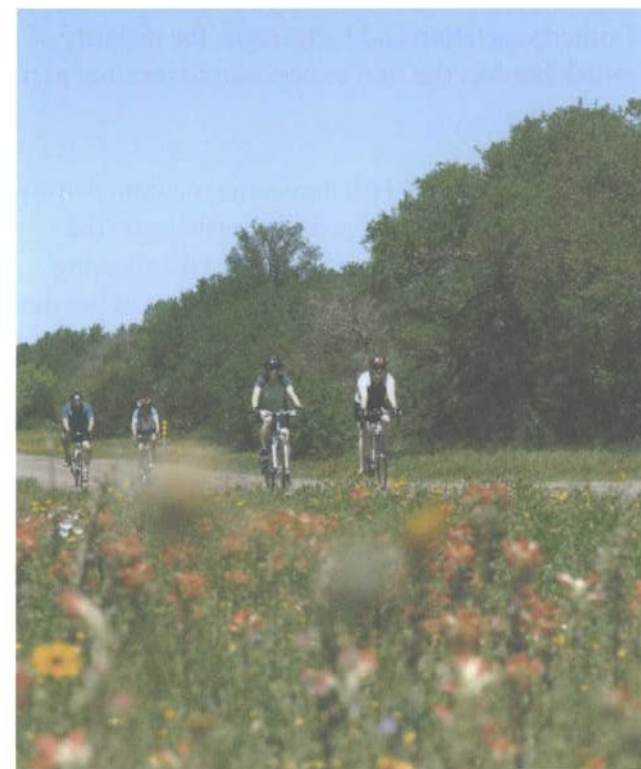
Abbas Combe railway station is situated a little over 5 kilometres to North of Stalbridge., with a further station located 9.5 kilometres away in Sherborne. The stations sit on the West of England Main Line

with regular services to London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids.

Stalbridge is served by a number of bus services which have regular services to Gillingham, Wincanton, Yeovil, Blandford Forum and Sturminster Newton, providing links to the main secondary school.

Foot & Cycle Links

As part of the proposed development significant improvements, including a cycle path, would be completed.





Abbas Combe

B3145

A357

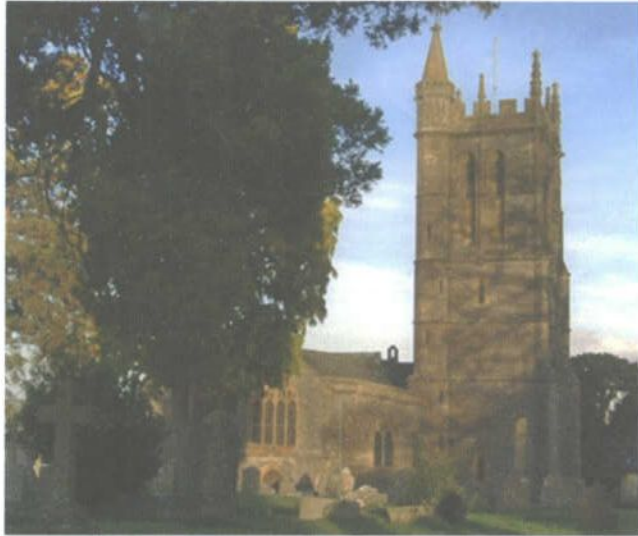
Henstridge

Milborne Port

A23

Stalbridge

Sherborne



2.4 Local Facilities

Development of the site will provide highly sustainable housing for local people with specific landscape and ecological benefits.

Stalbridge, despite its size, has a number of key facilities within close proximity to the site including a library, doctors surgery, pharmacy, primary school and supermarket. Other key facilities are located approximately 5 kilometres away at Sturminster Newton or further afield at Sherborne.

Stalbridge Primary School is within 400 metres of the Barrow Hill site and within 900 metres of the Thornhill Road site. The nearest High School is a short bus journey away at Sturminster Newton.

- A local primary school within 500 metres and secondary school within 5 kilometres
- Direct access to countryside and public open space



The diagram opposite shows the site and the surrounding environs. Strategically the sites' location offers numerous benefits including;

- Within 6 kilometres of main line rail with frequent service to London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids
- Less than 5 kilometres away from the centre of Sturminster Newton, accessible by car, cycle and bus
- Excellent bus and road links to larger neighbouring towns



Stalbridge
Primary School

Stalbridge
Surgery

Stalbridge
Pharmacy

Stalbridge
Library

Station Road
Business Park

Stalbridge
Congregational Church

Dike & Sons
Supermarket

Public Park

Petrol Station





Policy & Sites

3.1 Policy

The following emerging policy of the New Plan for North Dorset (Consultation 2012) is relevant to the design of this proposal and fundamental to our strategic approach:

Draft Core Policy 19: Stalbridge & The Larger Villages

Housing

About 1,200 homes will be provided in the remaining RSS Development Policy C Settlements (excluding Sturminster Newton, but including Stalbridge and 18 of the larger villages in the District, as listed in draft Core Policy 3).

About 600 homes will be built in the period up to 2016 with about 600 built thereafter.

In the period up to 2026 the housing needs of these settlements will be met through:

- infilling and redevelopment within defined settlement boundaries; and
- the development of additional housing sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

Employment

Employment needs in these settlements for the period up to 2026 will be met through:

- the development of vacant sites and the redevelopment of occupied sites on existing industrial estates;
- the retention of existing employment sites; and
- the development of additional employment sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

Retail and Other uses in Stalbridge and Marnhull

New convenience and comparison shopping development will be permitted within Stalbridge District Centre provided that it is of a type and scale that supports the role and function of the town in meeting local needs in the western part of the District.

The range of community facilities at Marnhull should be retained and enhanced to support the role and function of the village in meeting local needs in the western part of the District.

Grey Infrastructure

In the period up to 2026, grey infrastructure to support Stalbridge and the larger villages will include:

- measures to improve road safety and reduce the environmental impact of traffic in villages particularly on main roads;
- measures to facilitate improved public transport services (including demand responsive services) from villages to the

District's main towns; and measures to facilitate walking and cycling both within Stalbridge and the larger villages and to neighbouring towns and villages.

Social Infrastructure

In the period up to 2026, social infrastructure to support Stalbridge and the larger villages will be provided on sites within existing settlement boundaries or on sites identified for community, leisure or cultural uses in the Site Allocations DPD.




Village facilities, particularly those that serve

elderly, young or disadvantaged members of the community, will be retained in accordance with draft Core Policy 12 and draft Development Management Policy 7.

Green Infrastructure

In the period up to 2026, green infrastructure at Stalbridge and the larger villages will be retained and enhanced in accordance with draft Core Policy 13.



-  Settlement Boundary
Policy Ref: 1.7
-  Conservation Area
Policy Ref: 1.24 - 1.27
-  Conservation Sub-Area
Policy Ref: ST2
-  Important Open or Wooded Area
Policy Ref: 1.9
-  Employment: Committed Site
Policy Ref: 3.2 - 3.3

3.2 Our Approach

Stalbridge is the largest settlement which is applicable to policy CP19, and as such it should accommodate the major growth. Having secured the two principle development sites along the settlement boundary, Lightwood can develop schemes which deliver the additional requirements set out in CP19.

The approach to development will be as an aid to the Parish Council, delivering the required housing and addressing the infrastructure issues identified in CP19.

Should the housing delivery issues in Gillingham, Sturminster Newton and Shaftesbury continue, and as the largest settlement outside the major towns, an application under the NPPF guidance could be possible in 2014. Over the next 6 months Lightwood will continue to work with Parish Council on the Neighbourhood Plan and seek to be allocated via the site allocations DPD due in winter 2014.

3.3 The Sites

There are two possible development opportunities at Stalbridge; firstly the parcel of land on the western edge of the settlement boundary frontin Barrow Hill (Site 1); and secondly to the South of the settlement boundary on the A357 at Thornhill Road (Site 2).

The emerging development proposal would represent an opportunity to allocate an innovative and carefully considered design response to the context of the sites and respond to national and local guidance and policies of the North District Council.

The schemes would be designed in accordance with the significant changes that have taken place in local and national planning policy including the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 which at paragraph 56 seeks - 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development and to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and building as well as taking account of the character of the different area' and the scheme would be drawn up to reflect the principles of a design-led approach to development.

The schemes would achieve high standards of design for both the buildings and the soft and hard

landscapes. They would be well related in terms of scale and design to the existing buildings adjacent and in the locality. The results would be an enhanced environment with no negative impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. They would be high quality developments which incorporate appropriate provision for access and amenity.

The qualities of the proposals can be summarised as follows:

- Adheres positively to National and Local Planning Guidance and Local Planning Policies and Guidance
- Responds positively and innovatively to the guidance set out in the emerging North Dorset Local Plan
- Responds to the quality and characteristics of its context
- Brings under-used land into more efficient use
- The building form responds to the constraints and opportunities of the site
- Is adequately serviced without harming the amenities of neighbours or creating highways hazards
- Provides high quality attractive accommodation, which takes advantage of the site setting

Site 1- Barrow Hill

The overall development area of Site 1 is 7ha. It is made up of a single land owner and comprises the land to the South of Barrow Hill.

The proposed scheme would comprise of 140 residential dwellings including 42 affordable houses and 1.5 hectares (3.8 acres) of open space to meet with policy requirements.

The range of dwelling sizes proposed includes 21No. 5-bed houses, 31No. 4-bed houses, 25No. 3-bed houses, and 21No. 2-beds with a proposed density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

The indicative site layout provides a comprehensive development, which would sympathetically extends the western edge of Stalbridge.



Site 2- Thornhill Road

The overall development area of Site 2 is 2ha. It is made up of a single land owner and comprises the land to the East of Thornhill Road.

The proposed scheme would comprise of 64 residential dwellings including 21 affordable houses to meet with policy requirements.

The indicative site layout provides a comprehensive development, which would present an ideal infill opportunity, 'rounding off' Stalbridge.





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