



Annual Report

2017-2018



Contents

	Page
Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Local Government Re-organisation	4
Local Area Partnership Annual Reports and Key Projects	5 - 6
• Beaminster and Villages Local Area Partnership	6 - 7
• Bridport Local Area Partnership	7 - 8
• Dorchester Community Forum	8 - 9
• LymeForward	9 - 10
• Sherborne Community Focus	11 - 12
Social Welfare Workshop, 10 February 2017	12 - 14
Lyme Regis Community Land Trust	14 - 15
Neighbourhood Planning	15
Coastal Communities Teams	16 - 17
Dorset Climate Change Strategy Steering Group	17 - 18
Citizens Advice in West Dorset	18 - 20
Alternative formats for this report & West Dorset Local Area Partnership Contact Details	21

Foreword



Once again I am pleased to write a few words about the work done by the West Dorset Partnerships and the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) in the District. In the six years I have had this role I have become very impressed by the work being done, and the vital role these organisations play in informing and co-ordinating activities.

There is no doubt we live in challenging times. As the funding available to local authorities has dropped over the years, communities in West Dorset have had to try and become increasingly resilient. We have greatly appreciated the support given by West Dorset District Council, and with the setting up of the new unitary council for rural Dorset in April 2019 we hope that they will continue to support community planning.

As the report notes, we have structured our meetings around specific themes such as housing and transport. A particular concern this year has been the growth in demand for food banks, partly allied to the introduction of universal credit. As the report of the special meeting we held on this shows, as well as the statistics provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau, there is real concern about its impact in West Dorset, and I hope the Government will make changes which will help people manage better.

Unless policy changes, March 2019 will see us leave the European Community. Whether you believe this is a good or bad thing, it is certain that there will be significant impact on all our lives. There may be an even greater need for effective community planning, and I hope that those of us involved in this activity in West Dorset can continue to play a part.

I commend this report to you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul F. Everall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Paul Everall CBE, West Dorset Partnership Chairman

Introduction

This annual report covers the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and highlights some projects and initiatives delivered by the Local Area Partnerships and partner organisations of the West Dorset Partnership.

In 2016-7, West Dorset Partnership made a decision to change the format and frequency of its meetings and to adopt a thematic approach based on areas of work most relevant to the identified needs of the West Dorset area. The Partnership met three times in 2017-18 addressing the themes of rural transport, housing developments in West Dorset, affordable housing and local government re-organisation. The Partnership also held a successful Social Welfare Workshop in February 2018, attended by Sir Oliver Letwin, M.P.. (See the summary report on Pages 12-14).

Minutes of these meetings can be accessed via:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/your-council/about-your-council/partnerships/west-dorset-partnership-agendas-reports-and-minutes.aspx>

The Local Area Partnership (LAP) reports are detailed in this report.

Local Government Re-organisation in Dorset

The past year has also seen a significant shift in the local government landscape as local government re-organisation (LGR) in Dorset has progressed at pace. A Future Dorset, public consultation took place to assess residents' views on the concept of two new unitary councils for Dorset:

The Dorset Area (2019 estimated population of 376,000)

Covering towns and villages, countryside and coast and currently served by Dorset County, East Dorset, North Dorset, West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland councils.

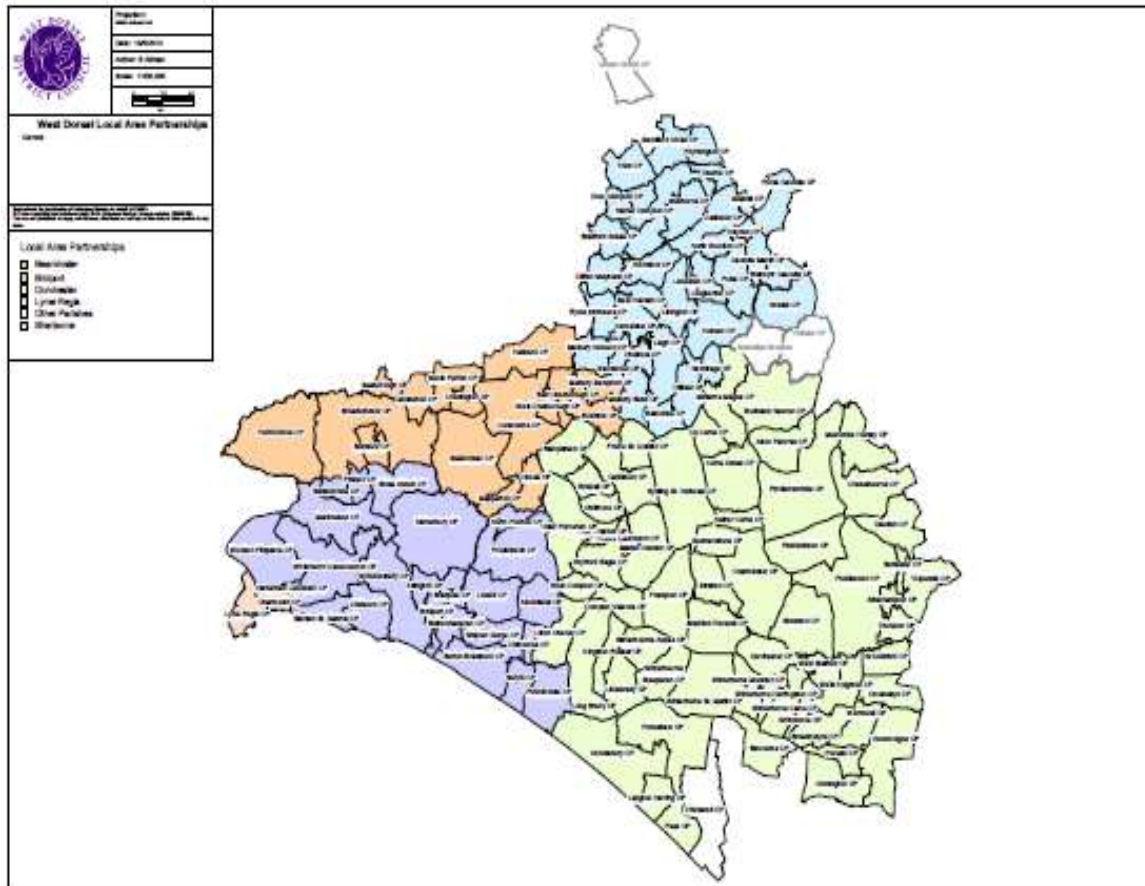
The Conurbation (2019 estimated population 410,300)

Covering the urban areas served currently by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole councils.

Under this proposal the current nine councils would cease to exist on 31 March 2019, with the two new councils coming into effect on 1 April 2019. An initial phase Boundary review resulted in a Dorset Area – Council Size Submission which was submitted on 31 January 2018 and a Structural Change Order submitted for parliamentary approval, the result of which had been expected before the end of the 2017-18 year but was not approved until May 2018.

A Dorset Area Joint Committee of 16 councillors from across the Dorset area was formed and met from 20 September 2017 addressing matters such as legal, financial, workforce, customer service, ICT, information governance, communications council disaggregation and de-commissioning of services. 7 councillor-led task and finish groups were also set up. In January 2018, Keith Cheesman was appointed as LGR Programme Director and established a Programme Team from existing staff across the Dorset Area.

Local Area Partnerships Annual Reports and Key Projects



The Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) were formed to provide a local basis for community planning in West Dorset. These are based around the market towns and their surrounding parishes in Beaminster, Bridport, Dorchester, Lyme Regis and Sherborne.

These partnerships meet locally and consult with the local community to produce an action plan to address local needs. Most action plans cover a three year period and include local needs and aspirations. Copies of their current plans can be viewed on dorsetforyou at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/your-council/about-your-council/partnerships/local-area-partnerships-in-west-dorset.aspx>

A copy of the Community Plan for West Dorset 2010-26 is also on dorsetforyou at: https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/157836/West-Dorset-Community-Plan-2010-26/pdf/Community_plan_2010-26.pdf

Each LAP has a representative on the West Dorset Partnership and their issues are fed into the West Dorset Partnership's Board meetings and are incorporated into the district-wide Community Plan and action plans. The membership of the

LAPs membership varies but usually includes community representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, particularly local forums such as older people's and young people's forums, disability, economy, and environment groups. The council is represented on each LAP through a nominated councillor and a link officer.

The Link Officers and Councillors for each Local Area Partnership are as follows:

Local Area Partnership	Councillor	Officer
Beaminster & Villages	Cllr Jacqui Sewell	Kathy Boston-Mammah
Bridport	Cllr Dave Rickard	Fiona Thomas
Dorchester	Cllr Gerald Duke	Kathy Boston-Mammah
Lyme Regis	Cllr Cheryl Reynolds	Jane Nicklen
Sherborne	Cllr Terry Farmer	Kathy Boston-Mammah

The LAP annual reports for 2017-18 follow below and over.

**Beaminster and Villages
Local Area Partnership**

BAVLAP has continued to support and assist a range of services and activities in the BAVLAP area. Work included progressing the plans for

the proposed play area and skate park in Beaminster (Beaminster Activity Area Development), the Beaminster Food Bank, Bridport CAB Outreach Service for Beaminster, Beaminster Youth Club and sitting on the advisory board of the Beaminster Foodbank.

BAVLAP Dementia Friendly Group has been set up with help from Alzheimer's Society and 3 Dementia Friendly Champions have been trained. Three dementia friendly events have been held in the past year. A Movieola Film night screening The King and I attended by 40 people, a Raucous Chorus sing along involving 100 people and a tea dance at Beaminster School celebrated by over 30 people.

Key priorities in 2017-18 were continuing to help:

- Secure the long term future of Wyvern Savings & Loan in Beaminster
- Support the outreach services of the CAB to service users in Beaminster area
- Support the development of the Beaminster Activity Area (play area & skate park)
- Raise awareness following an action plan for Dementia Friendly Beaminster
- Involvement with Yarn Barton Community Centre

BAVLAP will continue to play a key role in the local planning, design & delivery of key public/statutory services and infrastructure with our partners, informed by and based upon local knowledge, expertise and specific needs, characteristics and requirements. This includes health and wellbeing, affordable housing, transport, social inclusion, local economy and services (banks, post offices, shops).

BAVLAP Headline Information

3 LAP meetings and an Annual Assembly

16 Steering group members

Wider membership 20

2 sub groups – BAVLAP Dementia Friendly Group and Funding sub Group

84 people on mailing list

3 parishes active on the steering group

7 parishes on the membership list,

780 hours per year of volunteer time

3 consultations responded to

2 Beaminster Area Community Lunches took place

Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP)

BLAP has continued to provide facilitation/ liaison between groups, organisations and individuals in the BLAP area. It circulates a wide range of information to BLAP members, such as funding and training opportunities, community group meetings and events and consultations.

BLAP prioritised the following areas of work for 2016-17:

Priority 1: BLAP's role as a consultation facilitator

Target: To be the conduit for local consultation on at least 4 key local projects, resulting in the sharing of information, collating and submitting local feedback.

Progress: BLAP was heavily involved in discussions about the care hub, "Bridport Connect" and public consultation on alternative options. BLAP has also involved in the review of mental health provision in Bridport and discussions around a "Community Front Room", other work on homelessness and local government re-organisation.

Priority 2: Provision for homelessness

Target: Looking at what local action the partnership can undertake to improve the support offered to local homeless/rough sleepers.

Progress: A Working Group of representatives from key organisations that provide homelessness support & related services has been established to look at gaps in provision and/or additional resources required. Work includes provision of premises to support the Cupboard Love foodbank and additional services such as hot meals and laundry facilities. .

Priority 3: Preparing for Local Government re-organisation at parish level

Target: The move to a Unitary council raises potential impacts and opportunities at parish level to deliver more effective delivery & ensure rural communities continue to receive needed services.

Progress: Well-supported by local councils and has included discussions on devolution of services from District to Town Councils, LGR implications for parish councils & opportunities to work together in support of local service delivery.

BLAP Headline Information

- 29 members on BLAP Steering Group
- 122 “signed up” members including 90 community organisations in and around the Bridport area, 21 individuals, 11 parish councils and one town council
- Involved in 14 consultation
- Contact database of 218 contacts including the above
- 500 direct volunteer hours delivered
- BLAP has not directly brought additional funding into the area, but has been an active supporter (including support with funding bids themselves) of several local schemes, including Coastal Communities Fund – West Bay Chapel and Bridport Bus Feasibility.

BLAP has a page on the Bridport and West Bay website at:

<http://bridportandwestbay.co.uk/community/bridport-local-area-partnership/>

Dorchester Community Forum (DCF)



Dorchester Area Community Partnership was dissolved in 2016 and a new partnership focused on the town was formed and is supported by Dorchester Town Council.

DCF has, with the help of Dorchester Town Council’s Community Development Worker, Emma Scott, created a Directory of Community Aims and Aspirations 2017-2020 with seven themed headings:

1. Culture, Heritage, Tourism & Leisure
2. Transport and Accessibility
3. Community
4. Health, Wellbeing and Safety
5. Housing
6. Economy, Training & Volunteering
7. Environment

The targets under each of these headings can be found on Dorchester Town Council’s website at:

<http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/docs/downloads/Dorchester-Community-Directory-2017-2020.pdf>

Activities headed up by DCF:

- Lobbying DCC for dropped kerbs and other access improvements
- Development of an Access Guide for Dorchester
- Development of new website for Try This Dorchester

- Hosting/supporting range of events including Anonymous, Open Air Cinema, Interfaith event, Community Lunches x 2, Mayors Funday, Democracy Day & Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Development of Mental Health project – including helping to set up a Mental Health Alliance, a peer support group and an initiative at Thomas Hardy School
- Helping to develop projects to commemorate end of First World War – including developing a Poppy Trail and supporting St Osmund’s School with a Community Play.
- Regular dissemination of community information to up to 300 partners

DCF Headline Information

- 286 affiliated organisations, 3 sub-groups – Dorchester Youth Extra, Try This Dorchester and Dorchester Access Group
- 8 consultations responded to
- 2 community lunches held on the themes of Small local grants and how to apply for them and The Value of Networking
- 450 volunteer hours spent on partnership planning and project delivery
- £10,500 funding raised directly, supported funding bids of additional £5,000



Dorchester Open Air Cinema, 2017



LymeForward is the community planning partnership for Lyme Regis and became a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee in September 2016. LymeForward has continued to be active in Lyme Regis area over the past year.

Priority areas of work for 2017-18 were to improve:

1. Economic: to deliver a year round, sustainable economy

- Headed up Coastal Communities Team & delivery of Coastal Communities Fund Round 4 projects and preparation for Round 5 funding. (See report on Pages 17 & 18)

- Handover of Arts Sculpture Trail as a tourist attraction to Dorset Arts Development Company
- Progressed seafront WiFi project for town council
- Engagement with local businesses (dropped due to poor trader support)

2. Health and wellbeing: to provide support based in Lyme Regis

- Working with existing mutual support groups to ensure sustainability and improve volunteer base
- Bringing in external agencies to deliver services e.g. REACH
- Running Lyme Regis foodbank on demand
- Assisting individuals with complex needs that fall between the cracks
- Undertook extensive baseline data analysis of current medical, community and associated welfare support services to influence future service delivery when the contract held by Virgin is re-tendered. This included sharing the report with CCG, managers and budget providers and around 75 service providers and clinicians on both sides of the border, establishing the health & wellbeing group as a quality assurance check.

3. Traffic & Transport

- Brokered a cross-interest meeting about transport in Lyme Regis with a focus on the future of the 71 bus service, resulted in Lyme Regis Town Council funding the service

4. Other LAP supported projects included:

- Police Community Support Officer induction
- Lyme Regis Development Trust management of activities for young people at The Hub
- Delivery of 15 affordable homes by Lyme Regis Community Land Trust – See Pages 12 & 13)

LymeForward Headline Information

- 11 Director's Meetings
- 3 LAP steering group meetings held & 2 Partnership meetings
- 126 members, 20 more than last year
- 22 partners attending LF meetings and further 17 involved in project delivery
- Both neighbouring parishes, Charmouth and Uplyme actively engaged
- 2 sub groups: Coastal Community Team & Health & Wellbeing
- 6 major public consultations responded involving approximately 500 people
- £262,318 of funding levered to deliver projects in the Lyme Regis area
- 2,541.5 volunteer hours
- Developed Lyme Forward Website

Sherborne Community Focus

Sherborne Area Partnership dissolved in July 2017. Successes included a Sherborne community organisation directory, a tourism forum, Dementia Friendly Committee and Sherborne Matters.

In February 2018 a community event was held in collaboration with members of the local community, voluntary organisations, businesses and statutory providers working in Sherborne and outlying villages and those that work to support the voluntary sector.

The purpose of this event was to revisit Sherborne to see how the local community feels about life today. The first activity was to look at the priorities that had been focused on when the Local Area Partnership was set up as a baseline.

These priorities were:

1. Health, wellbeing and safety

Access to mental health facilities for young people and mental health support for all, local intervention services, co-joined health and social care, retention of community hospitals, self responsibility for health.

2. Transport and accessibility

Public transport is essential and impacts on rural isolation, access to facilities. More volunteer drivers needed for the voluntary bus service.

3. Housing

Need for more social & affordable housing, especially for young people, attention required to empty accommodation, Citizens Advice provide vital housing support, Sherborne Refugee Support need accommodation for refugee families.

4. Economy, training, volunteers and environment

Volunteering opportunities for young and older people, environmental volunteering, advice available on governance and setting up charities, need to support volunteering and share good practice, opportunities to support Syrian refugees, lack of adult education/evening classes.

5. Community involvement

Need to protect well-developed community spirit, volunteering opportunities in Citizens Advice & Neighbourhood Watch, raise dementia awareness amongst traders, use Sherborne Town FC, involve young people, use social media, bridge inequality, community participation important for wellbeing.

6. Culture, heritage, tourism and leisure

Shortage of tourist accommodation, tourism needs more support, town has strong cultural heritage, older people need leisure opportunities to socialise.

The event also focussed on whether or not there should be a community-focussed group and, if so, what form it should take and who should be involved. Sherborne has an active and well developed voluntary/community sector with a wide range of community organisations, public and private stakeholders. The

demise of the Local area Partnership has created a gap and an opportunity for a collaboration between all those groups/organisations/businesses/statutory delivering services across the key priority areas to work together and share information and best practice through networking and partnership working. Ensuring that those delivering support at the grassroots level and those at a more strategic level are better informed on who is doing what, where and how and that this new forum is not just a talking shop but a co-ordinated, efficient and effective tool to advocate and mobilise across areas of need.

West Dorset Partnership Social Welfare Event, 9 February 2018

A full copy of the report of this event is at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/your-council/about-your-council/partnerships/partnership-pdfs/wdp-9218-social-welfare-report.pdf>

The event was attended by 53 people from across Dorset with representatives from the community & voluntary sector, churches, food banks, Local Area Partnerships, Citizens Advice and local councils. The Right Reverend Karen Goreham, Bishop of Sherborne attended the event and Sir Oliver Letwin, MP was present for part of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Increase understanding of The Homelessness Reduction Act, 2017 and support provided to homeless people
- Highlight the impact of Universal Credit in West Dorset from the perspective of Citizens Advice, the Westwey Partnership Benefits Service and the Government
- Hear about the work of Christians against Poverty (CAP) and the foodbanks across West Dorset
- Share best practice and hear about new initiatives to support vulnerable people
- Debate opportunities for joint working.

The Homelessness Reduction Act, 2017

Delegates heard a comprehensive presentation on this new act and the changes it is introducing in relation to homelessness reduction. Improvements include:

- A longer period (56 days) in which homelessness support can be provided
- A statutory duty to provide real help to prevent or resolve homelessness regardless of need or intentional homelessness
- A requirement for the applicant to co-operate with those helping.
- A strengthened general duty on the local authority to provide specific advisory services
- A duty to assess all eligible applicants cases and agree a Personalised Plan
- A public body duty to refer cases to the authority of the person's choice

Impact of Universal Credits

The meeting heard presentations from Citizens Advice, the Benefits Service from WestWey Partnership, Christians against Poverty and an interactive session with Sir Oliver Letwin, MP. Westwey Partnership has funding two income maximisation workers in Citizens Advice to support clients referred from the Job Centre and other agencies, assisting with UC claims and problems.

Key concerns about Universal Credits

- lengthy waiting period together with delays and other problems are causing hardship for many claimants and potentially increasing referrals to food banks and other agencies.
- the limited continuing eligibility for Housing Benefit and the circumstances in which clients would move to Universal Credits (UC)
- poor advice which delays the submission of the UC claim and customers being sent back and forth between Job Centre Plus and Universal Credit staff
- Particular problems with customers with fluctuating income which may lead to them having a revised amount each month and a subsequent requirement for recalculation of their Local Council Tax Support.
- Digital Access is a real issue in relation to Universal Credit claims with applicants being required to set up an online account and onus is on applicants to deal with all aspects of their claim online. Very little interaction with the Job Centre Plus is face to face. This causes significant problems for some applicants, especially those who are more vulnerable.

Christians against Poverty – CAP

CAP has operated in Weymouth and Portland for four years through the Weymouth and Portland Debt Centre. It is run by The Church in Weymouth and Portland and provides free debt advice and is specially tailored to help financially and socially disadvantaged people out of debt through a combination of face to face home visits, a Befriending Service and in-depth debt counselling which empowers individuals who are struggling or have complex needs to work themselves out of debt.

Questions and Answers with Sir Oliver Letwin

Sir Oliver fronted a short but lively questions and answers session with a number of challenging concerns about issues around the operability of Universal Credits as outlined in the presentations and the question and answer opportunities after each one. Sir Oliver asked for specific examples of some of these problems discussed and undertook to take some of the key messages back.

The meeting received feedback on activity from Dorset Foodbanks and the Friendly Food Club and heard about Christchurch Youth & Community Centre Pantry Project.

Key Outcomes from the Event

1. Similar events requested for North Dorset and Weymouth & Portland
2. Quarterly reporting of food bank referrals and Universal Credit issues not being resolved.
3. Exploration of potential for a common referral system for food banks in Dorset
4. Examine potential for social supermarkets to fill gaps in client provision outside the current remit of food banks

Lyme Regis Community Land Trust

Lyme Regis CLT is pleased to report the success of its affordable housing scheme at Garmans Field, Timber Hill, Lyme Regis. All 15 units of housing have now been allocated to individuals or families with a connection to Lyme Regis.

The need for something to be done was discussed at a Town Council meeting in 2012. Two members of the public, Denis Yell and Keith Jenkin, responding to an appeal by LymeForward, advocated setting up a Community Land Trust.

The CLT was subsequently set up and began the search for a suitable site. The members of the Board were Denis Yell as Chairman, Keith Jenkin, Brian Rattenbury and Rob McLaughlin; Lorna Jenkin was the treasurer and secretary. A possible site was identified, and with the help of WDDC Housing Enabling team, Wessex CLT Project and the Homes and Communities Agency, Lyme Regis CLT was able to appoint architects and a partner housing association, and push forward the project at Timber Hill to completion.

This project was enabled because it was a CLT project, and the land was affordable as it was outside the development boundary; and the landowner was sympathetic to the CLT's aims, and willing to sell at a fraction of usual building land costs. It is in appreciation of his family's generosity that the site has been named Garmans Field.

The allocations and management of the housing is undertaken by Yarlinton Housing Group. The rents are affordable - i.e. not more than 80% of Average Local Rental, and not more than the Local Housing Allowance. Vacancies are advertised on Dorset Home Choice, and qualifying applications meeting the criteria are then processed by Yarlinton.

The Allocations Plan was designed to ensure that these homes were allocated to people with a significant local connection so as to protect community cohesion and the social viability of this small seaside town, where property prices are high and well paid employment scarce. Demand for these homes was considerable, and they attracted much interest on local social media. For 15 homes, there were about 125 initial applications, but when multiple applications and non qualifying ones were discounted, the vacancies were still about 300% oversubscribed.

The CLT is actively seeking suitable sites for further projects, but these are difficult to find in Lyme Regis. It believes that any opportunity should be investigated, and if anyone has any ideas, please contact any of the CLT Board members, or message us through the website: www.lrclt.btck.co.uk,



Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of new powers for communities. Neighbourhood planning enables local communities to help shape and promote development in their area. Once adopted a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the planning framework for that area.

The year 2017-18 has, again, been a busy one in West Dorset!

A Neighbourhood Plan Area has been designated for Stinsford Parish & Beaminster Town. Draft Plans have been prepared for Bridport Area (Bradpole, Symondsburry, Allington, Bothenhampton and Bridport parishes), Portland and Broadwindsor. A Neighbourhood Plan have been submitted for Holwell. The Neighbourhood Plan for Askerwell has passed examination with a Referendum due later in 2018.

Neighbourhood Plans for Buckland Newton and Piddle Valley have been completed.

Details of these plans are at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-preparation-west-dorset-weymouth-portland.aspx>

Coastal Communities Teams

In July 2015, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited application to establish Coastal Community Teams (CCT). Successful applicants got funding of £10,000 for a CCT to help bring jobs, growth and prosperity back to seaside towns and cities. In addition to this CCTs could also bid for up to a £50,000 share of a new £3 million Coastal Revival Fund to support or restore local heritage and facilities which benefit the wider community and the surrounding economy.

5 CCTs have been established in Dorset. These include Bridport & West Bay CCT and Lyme Regis, Charmouth and Uplyme CCT, both established in September 2015. BLAP is a key member of Bridport & West Bay CCT and Lyme Regis, Charmouth and Uplyme CCT is coordinated through LymeForward.

Businesses, councils and communities collaborated to create the future vision for their areas. Both CCTs met the main objective by writing and submitting an economic plan for their area to the DCLG by 31 January 2016.

Bridport & West Bay Economic Plan

The Bridport Coastal Communities Team is engaged in a number of projects:

- West Bay Discovery Centre – a former Methodist chapel, converted to a centre for visitors and residents to provide information about the history and environment of West Bay and the surrounding area. It is to be run by a team of volunteers under the management of the Bridport Area Development Trust.
- Public Wi-Fi – free Wi-Fi for use across West Bay, which will also provide data on user movements and opportunities for promotional advertising. Equipment is due to be installed and operational by the end of 2018. The installation will be part funded by Coastal Community Funding as part of the Dorset Coastal Connections portfolio.
- Cycle Path – runs from Bridport to West Bay along the length of the former railway line. The existing path is operational and the proposal is to widen it, improve the surface where required and carry out highway improvements along Burton Road.
- West Bay 'Hub' – enhancements to a seating area alongside West Bay Harbour.
- East Beach Access – improved access for people of all abilities, including a timber boardwalk.
- Bridport-West Bay Connectivity – a round 5 application has been submitted for support for improved bus services between Bridport and West Bay. The outcome is expected in October 2018.

Lyme Regis, Charmouth and Uplyme Economic Plan

Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) Round 4

The LymeForward Coastal Community Team gained significant funding from their bid as part of Dorset Coast Forum's portfolio Round 4 application to the CCF, most notably £246,000 for upgrading the River Lim Path linking Lyme Regis and Uplyme. The team project-managed the work which is now almost complete.

As well as channelling well over £200K into the local economy via the use of local contractors, this has resulted in a much-improved walking link between the two neighbouring communities to provide easier access of benefit to visitors and residents, potentially easing Lyme Regis parking problems and encouraging economic gains. It is already becoming very well-used, even before all the signage and accompanying leaflets are in place.

CCF Round 5

The LymeForward CCT spent some 9 months gathering and refining ideas for a Round 5 bid that would draw together Lyme Regis seafront ideas with the Charmouth Seafront Enhancement Project. Once the application process opened, they worked with Dorset Coastal Forum to develop a focus for a smaller portfolio bid which was submitted on time. Decisions on who proceeds to the second stage are pending at the time of this report.

Even if the bid is not successful, the process of identifying joint projects has in itself been cooperative as well as developing a "shopping list" for which further funding can be sought from other sources.

River Lim Path Before and after CCT improvements



West Dorset Climate Change Strategy Steering Group

The West Dorset Partnership's Climate Change Strategy Steering Group intends to help mitigate climate change by encouraging environmentally sustainable practices in West Dorset and prepare West Dorset for the inevitable future changes in climate. In 2017/18, the Steering Group focussed their attention on the following topics:

- Securing the legacy of the Communities Living Sustainably in Dorset project by supporting the continuation of those successful elements of the project, such as the local food and eco schools elements;
- Encouraging community renewable energy schemes in West Dorset, for example by taking advantage of RegenSW's the Peer Power networking project;
- Providing support to Sustainable Dorset in their report on climate change, which estimates the potential for Dorset to introduce renewable energy and achieve zero carbon in Dorset;
- Considering the Each Home Counts report, which provides an independent review of home energy efficiency and renewable energy measures which have been carried out since the demise of the Government's Green Deal, and provides a means of achieving the Government's carbon reduction targets; and
- Feeding into the Sustainable Dorset website which provides a useful local resource in terms of communications for climate change in West Dorset.

During the coming year, the group intend to consider projects relating to the use of solar energy in car parks in West Dorset, and ensure that West Dorset prepares for future climatic conditions given that the summer we have just experienced is the hottest on record in terms of average temperature.

Citizens Advice in West Dorset

During 2017-18, we assisted **8,035** clients in West Dorset.

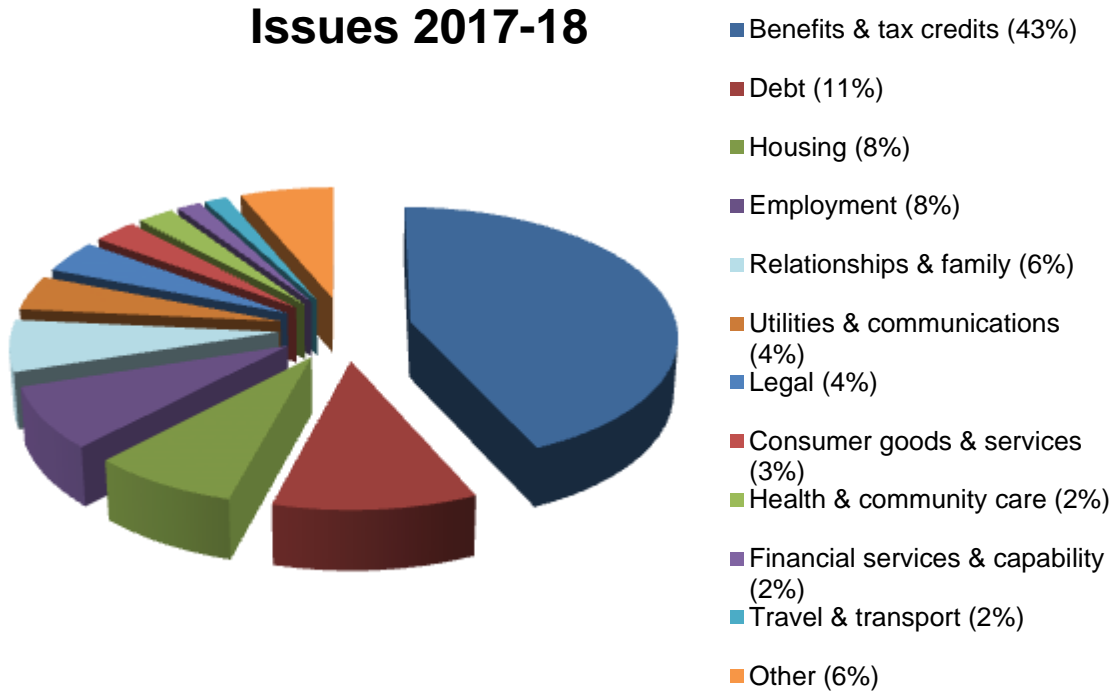
People we helped 2017-18	
Dorchester	3,537
Sherborne	1,930
Bridport	2,073
Total	7540

Clients who seek our help often have a number of different problems to resolve. In 2017-18, we dealt with a total number of **19,025** advice issues when assisting clients from the West Dorset area.

Advice Issues 2017-18	
Dorchester	8,526
Sherborne	4,733
Bridport	5,766
Total	19,025

The majority of issues related to welfare benefits (**43%**) with debt being the second highest issue. The graph below shows the breakdown of areas of enquiry in 2017-18.

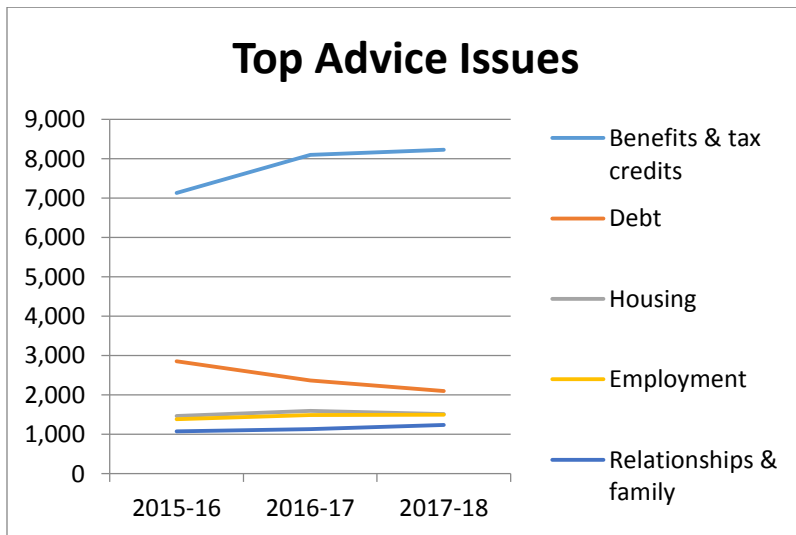
Issues 2017-18



Trends

Enquiries about benefits continue to increase, particularly as Universal Credit has been rolled out in the district. Universal Credit enquiries have seen a very significant rise over a short period; this has placed a substantial burden on our resources and our recently appointed Income Maximisation Workers are extremely busy dealing with these cases. Housing, employment and relationship issues remain steady.

Top Advice Issues



Financial Outcomes

In 2017-18, we gained an additional **£4,004,103** income for our clients, mostly by supporting them to claim welfare benefits to which they were entitled. This equates to **£19.10 per £1** funding from West Dorset District Council.

In addition, we helped clients to write off **£839,146** in debts enabling them to better manage their money.

2018-19 and beyond

As the Dorset councils move towards unitary status, we will continue to work together and with other local Citizens Advice offices in Dorset and with the Citizens Advice in Dorset consortium to look for opportunities to share resources and work together more efficiently.

We remain committed to retaining our strong local presence, with local volunteers supporting local people. We will continue to maintain our face to face services throughout West Dorset whilst broadening access to our advice through new technology such as Skype and webchat.

Our service depends on the commitment of our volunteers and we will continue to recruit and train volunteers across the area to expand capacity and increase our ability to help and support local residents.

Case Study - Benefits

Phil came to the bureau having lost his Employment Support Allowance after being found fit for work following a DWP medical. Phil has a severe, debilitating physical health condition requiring regular hospital treatment forcing him to give up employment and he has a learning disability.

We helped him prepare his appeal application and represented at Tribunal a year after his ESA had been stopped. The Tribunal allowed his appeal and recommended in their Tribunal Notice to the DWP that he should never be referred for a medical again. During the same period we helped Phil with a Personal Independence Payment application and he was subsequently awarded the enhanced rates of both the Daily Living and Mobility Components. We helped Phil secure benefits worth £250 per week.

Case Study – Employment

Julia had managed a small shop for over 20 years. When new owners bought the business they wanted to manage it themselves and told her she was now an assistant in the shop, reducing her hours and pay. She did not agree with this and finally walked out. We advised Julia that employees' rights are protected by TUPE regulations when businesses are transferred. Terms and conditions can only be changed by agreement or through a variation term in the contract. If the new owners want to remove the role they have to follow a fair redundancy process. We advised Julia on the complex rules concerning constructive unfair dismissal, how to calculate her redundancy pay and make a claim to the Employment Tribunal.

If you require:

- large print, audio, Braille
- translation into an alternative language
- an interpretation service
- more information on community planning

Please contact:

communityplanning@dorset.gov.uk

Contacts for West Dorset Local Area Partnerships are:

Beaminster and Villages	joanna.keats@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk
Bridport	Will.Austin@bridport-tc.gov.uk
Dorchester	E.Scott@dorchester-tc.gov.uk
Lyme Regis	manager@lymeforward.co.uk
Sherborne	joanna.keats@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Annual Report

Produced by

West Dorset District Council
Community Planning & Development Team
South Walks House
Dorchester
DT1 1UZ
communityplanning@dorset.gov.uk

