

A vision for West Dorset in 2026

Community Plan Summary



The West Dorset Community Plan was shaped by local people following consultation on parish plans, local area partnership action plans and consultation on a draft of this plan in early 2010. The community plan has been developed by the West Dorset Partnership – a partnership including the local councils, police, health and fire services, community organisations and businesses (see page 14).

This summary highlights the issues that really matter to local people and how the partnership aims to tackle those issues by working together. A full version of the community plan can be found at www.dorsetforyou.com/communityplan/west.

The role of the community plan is to improve the lives of people in the district. To achieve this three themes run throughout the community plan:

Sustainability: We need to ensure that any actions delivered as part of the community plan support sustainable communities (socially, economically and environmentally).

Equality and diversity: We need to reduce inequalities across the district as well as promoting the diversity and support groups who have specific needs, for example because of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief or sexual orientation, as well as economic disadvantage and rural isolation.

Climate change and peak oil: We need to tackle climate change and peak oil (oil reserves are likely to dwindle and become expensive and peak oil is the term used to explain this) and become more resilient within local communities, rethinking the way we live and work.

The plan is divided into eight further themes:

- Housing
- Transport and roads
- Economy
- Safety
- Health
- Culture and leisure
- Communities
- Environment

The community plan will be delivered by:

- Influencing individual partner organisation's own delivery plans and strategies
- An action plan developed every two years by the West Dorset Partnership to address aims as a partnership

This document is intended to be aspirational but public funding may not always be available or may become increasingly stretched to provide more services for a larger population. New ways of working will need to be developed to sustain local communities and this plan aims to support this process.

The following sections highlights the themed aims agreed by the partnership. The aims are not listed in priority order but are numbered for easy reference.



Decent, affordable and sustainable housing

We want to:

- 1 Increase the amount of affordable housing across a range of tenures (including social, rented, shared ownership), especially to support and encourage young people to live in the area
- 2 Ensure accommodation meets the requirement of everyone including those with specific needs, for example those who are homeless, Gypsies and Travellers, and people with learning or physical disabilities or mental health issues
- 3 Make sure the infrastructure needs and facilities from new housing are met through development, for example public transport, green spaces and IT, so that communities are sustainable
- 4 Help homes to become more environmentally sustainable – including improving energy efficiency and water conservation and using sustainable construction methods
- 5 Promote the building of new homes and adaptation of existing houses to the lifetime homes standards and to meet the decent homes standard
- 6 Provide enough supported, sheltered or extra care housing for local people. Provide support for older people and help them understand the options that are available
- 7 Direct new housing provision – affordable and market – to meet local need or where it can help provide a better balance of homes and jobs for all ages; and maximise the use of the existing housing stock
- 8 Ensure new housing maintains and enhances the local character and respects the high quality environment



Improved transport and access to services

We want to:

- ① Reduce the need to travel by providing jobs and services close to homes or to places which are accessible by other means of transport to the car. Look at innovative ways of working (for example using new technologies, developing joint deliveries and creating village hubs) to halt the decline in rural services and facilities
- ② Encourage people to change the way they travel to lower carbon emissions, improve air quality and reduce congestion – such as car sharing, walking, cycling, electric car charging points and providing park and ride facilities to good bus routes and around towns
- ③ Improve safety for walking, cycling and horse riding, in particular where there are not reasonably convenient and safe routes off road. Where possible make walking and cycling a priority on rural roads
- ④ Improve flexible, sufficiently frequent and affordable (such as concessionary) travel for young people and integrated alternatives to the private car for people of all ages and abilities – including community transport, public transport (road and rail). Bus and train services should also consistently cater for cyclists, pushchairs / buggies and wheelchairs
- ⑤ Support improved rail services through the district, for example a more frequent service between Dorchester and Bristol
- ⑥ Reduce the number of casualties caused by excessive traffic speeds on rural roads
- ⑦ Promote greater respect between users of roads and pavements – such as not blocking drop kerbs or pavements
- ⑧ Maintain the character of the rural road and pavement network and ensure these are maintained while reflecting the area's special qualities
- ⑨ Improve freight control to take the heaviest traffic off the roads least suited to it

Economic wellbeing

We want to:

- 1 Support new and existing local businesses including social enterprises and local services, such as pubs, shops and schools, to act as centres/hubs for the community
- 2 Support a broad range of business types though by retaining and developing business parks and industrial estates, mixed use development and other opportunities for employment
- 3 Improve the skills base with better local training/retraining opportunities, including further and higher education, and vulnerable groups such as NEETs¹
- 4 Support people who are financially excluded, for example with access to banking facilities, rural banking services, supporting credit unions, financial education and access to information, advice and guidance
- 5 Work with providers to ensure there is high-speed broadband and mobile phone (including mobile internet) coverage across the district without compromising the area's special quality
- 6 Encourage year round employment opportunities
- 7 Benefit from the wider economic opportunities from Dorset's hosting of the sailing events as part of the Olympics in 2012
- 8 Support and protect tourism infrastructure and opportunities, including gaining benefit from the World Heritage Site and AONB designation while ensuring that the special qualities aren't harmed



- 9 Support businesses to become more environmentally sustainable (such as waste minimisation and energy efficiency) and support 'green' businesses (including providers of sustainable technology, renewable energy, eco-building, using local resources, for example water power)
- 10 Support agricultural and rural businesses developing, producing or using local products and encourage communities to support local business, for example farmers markets
- 11 Support initiatives to provide extended childcare services to allow parents to access work and training as well as health and leisure services



Safer communities

We want to:

- ① Reduce the fear of crime, for example by continuing the visible police presence, including the use of the Police Community Support Officers
- ② Increase data sharing between organisations to support vulnerable and / or at risk people
- ③ Promote crime prevention schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and support the prevention of reoffending and the victims of crime, for example by developing community justice panels and restorative justice panels
- ④ Support organisations to tackle domestic violence, and alcohol and drug related crimes
- ⑤ Support initiatives to reduce anti-social behaviour and bullying
- ⑥ Consider a strategic approach to providing CCTV across the district
- ⑦ Reduce discrimination of minority groups, by supporting for example, the reporting of hate crime, activities to promote mutual respect and English language lesson schemes
- ⑧ Reduce preventable accidents, incidents and injuries, including serious fire related injuries in the home and workplace by helping people to be more safety conscious, such as home safety checks including checking smoke alarms, educating on security measures and preventing falls
- ⑨ Support to reduce the number of deliberate fires
- ⑩ Reduce deaths and serious injuries in road traffic collisions in the district and help reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured
- ⑪ Implement the 'Prevent' strategy to raise awareness of violent extremism and violent acts by highlighting the risks and seek to enhance links with local vulnerable communities



Health and wellbeing

We want to:

- 1 Focus effort and support on people who experience the worst health to reduce social and health inequalities
- 2 Help people understand and use the benefits they are entitled to and advice that is available to them
- 3 Improve care in people's homes to support independent living
- 4 Provide more support and improved respite opportunities for carers, and their dependants, of all ages
- 5 Support work to help vulnerable people by closer working across agencies and improve data sharing
- 6 Encourage and support community health and leisure initiatives that can help resource, improve and promote healthy and active lives, for example walking, cycling, countryside volunteering, working on allotments and using play areas
- 7 Develop new ways of supporting people who find it difficult to access health and wellbeing services, for example bringing health services/clinics into villages, using technologies as alternatives to traditional methods and looking at transport options



Culture and leisure

We want to:

- 1 Maintain, strengthen, support and promote the provision and access to cultural, sports and leisure facilities and opportunities for everyone
- 2 Improve cultural, sport and leisure provision for children and young people, including transport and access to facilities (such as youth shelters, play and activity areas, skateparks) for all ages and those with disabilities
- 3 Ensure that barriers to participation, particularly cost and transport and physical access, are recognised and addressed where possible
- 4 Increase access to lifelong learning opportunities, including through music, visual arts, craft and languages
- 5 Improve information about cultural, sport and leisure – for example by supporting local libraries and community learning centres, youth centres and advice and information centres as community resources
- 6 Encourage and support the use of schools, pubs, fire stations, and housing association communal halls and churches as venues for community activities, and help provide necessary equipment (either in-place or mobile) for arts performances and sport use
- 7 Lobby for improved radio and television receptions, including improved digital coverage
- 8 Identify areas where the 2012 Olympics and assets such as the World Heritage Site and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty can generate lasting community benefits





Supporting our local communities

We want to:

- ① Support joined up services in local centres, for example post offices in local pubs; joint oil deliveries in communities; community information and activity hubs
- ② Increase community participation in decision making, particularly through the local area partnerships and parish plans. Include particular emphasis on encouraging involvement of minority groups and those under-represented in public life – for example disabled people, young people and those from ethnic minorities
- ③ Support intergenerational and multicultural activities to allow everyone to make a positive contribution to society
- ④ Support communities and volunteers by building capacity through training and advice for example on funding and legislation
- ⑤ Ensure there is equal access across the district to support and advice for voluntary and community groups
- ⑥ Support volunteering opportunities to strengthen community activities, and well as offering experience as a pathway to employment
- ⑦ Work together and share best practice to support local groups to develop sustainable solutions to enable communities to be more self-sufficient and resilient - for example: supporting local services within communities, Transition Towns, renewable energy projects and garden-share



Protecting and enhancing our environment

We want to:

- 1 Support initiatives that reduce the causes of climate change and the impact of peak oil, promoting adaptation to evolving environmental effects and more sustainable lifestyles
- 2 Halt the decline of biodiversity, for example promoting traditional management practices that benefit wildlife (such as coppicing and hedge laying); and by supporting local community spaces and projects, such as community orchards and wildlife gardens
- 3 Promote and develop communities in ways that enhance our heritage and protect environmental quality and foster a sense of place. Protect those features places and spaces which make a place locally distinctive in both towns and the countryside
- 4 Where possible use previously developed land in towns and villages before allowing development on the surrounding countryside
- 5 Support the development of an environmentally and economically sustainable land-use sector that protects the most productive agricultural land and the quality of the groundwater and surface watercourses
- 6 Ensure tourism and recreation is environmentally sustainable. New developments should be sustainable, avoid causing pollution and include facilities to generate renewable energy.
- 7 Support action to reduce, reuse, recycle or recover waste and minimise littering
- 8 Maintain the coastal and marine environment through sustainable coastal management, including supporting measures to reduce flooding such as community flood wardens



The West Dorset Partnership

The community plan will be delivered by the West Dorset Partnership, which is made up of representatives from:

- Age UK Dorchester
- Beaminster and Village Local Area Partnership
- Bridport Local Area Partnership
- Business Link Wessex
- Churches Together Dorset
- Citizen Advice Bureaux
- Dorchester Area Community Partnership
- Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
- Dorset Community Action
- Dorset County Council
- Dorset Fire and Rescue
- Dorset Police
- Dorset Wildlife Trust
- Federation of Small Businesses
- LymeForward – Lyme Regis Local Area Partnership
- Magna Housing Association
- NHS Dorset
- Sherborne Area Partnership
- South West Dorset Multicultural Network
- Third Sector Sustainability Network
- West Dorset District Council

¹NEETs – Not in Employment, Education or Training.





If you require large print, audio, Braille, translation into alternative language or an interpretation service please contact West Dorset Partnership 01305 252305 or email westdorsetpartnership@westdorset-dc.gov.uk.

If you would like more information about the West Dorset Partnership or community planning or have any queries see the partnership's web pages at: www.dorsetforyou.com/communityplan/west or contact westdorsetpartnership@westdorset-dc.gov.uk or 01305 252305.