



ramblers
at the heart of walking

Ramblers, North Dorset Group
Footpath Secretary

www.northdorsetramblers.org.uk

BY E-MAIL

Planning Policy Manager
NDDC
Nordon
Salisbury Road
Blandford Forum
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20 January 2014

Dear Sir

THE NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN - 2011 TO 2026

I am responding on behalf of the North Dorset Group of the Ramblers to the above. Because of the wide-ranging scope of the document, I have made brief observations regarding the Objectives, as stated in Figure 11.1 – Monitoring Framework for the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 to 2026 Part 1, rather than address each Policy.

The aims of the Ramblers

The Ramblers is Britain's biggest charity working to promote walking and to improve conditions for all walkers. Applying this to our district, it should be a place where people choose to go walking, where it is easy and enjoyable to do so, and where walking is a popular choice, both for relaxation and in daily life. We work to promote walking for health, leisure and transport to everyone, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, both in urban and rural environments.

Walking is an excellent form of exercise which is promoted by a wide range of organisations, has both physical and mental health benefits, and aids recovery from illness as well as preventing it.

The Ramblers also believe government should do more to encourage energy conservation (both industrial and domestic) and must invest substantially in a wide range of renewable technologies to help limit the impact of climate change.

Based on this therefore, I fully support many of the Objectives in the above document.

Objective 1 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

Any new renewable energy proposals – be they wind or solar developments - have to be balanced with the protection of our landscape and natural heritage assets, and I suggest there should be some form of monitoring the density of renewable energy production development sites.

Objective 2 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment

We fully support this objective, and comments made with regard to Objective 1 also apply.

Objective 3 - Ensuring the Vitality of the Market Towns

We are pleased to note that included in this objective is the improvement of 'sustainable transport links and accessibility within the towns, between the towns and the villages in their rural hinterlands', and also that this includes extended use of the North Dorset Trailway.

I would suggest that there needs to be a far more positive, pro-active approach to this, by developers and planners alike, and not only along the route of the old Somerset and Dorset Railway. There are links between most villages and settlements using the existing public rights of way network, and the potential to provide viable routes for residents who need easy, non-motorised access to the Market Towns taking advantage of these should not be lost.

To summarise: any future strategy should consider access to existing rights of way, and open access areas, which are essential to provide a balance between the built environment and the countryside, and provide the continuing health benefits that physical exercise for all ages can bring.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mrs Jan Wardell.

Mrs Jan Wardell

Footpath Secretary
Ramblers – North Dorset Group