

# Summary of cross boundary planning issues in Dorset

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### Executive Summary

- The Strategic Planning Forum has been established to consider strategic planning issues that affect cross boundary matters, and to guide strategic planning at the 'larger than local' scale through effective policy development across boundaries. This will help ensure that each of the Dorset local planning authorities can meet the 'duty to cooperate', which is a legal requirement of the plan making process. The local planning authorities are currently at various stages in reviewing their current and emerging local plans, and the Dorset strategic planning work will both inform, and be informed by, work on the local plan reviews.
- This paper provides a summary of the key cross boundary planning issues in Dorset, to inform the scope of the Dorset strategic planning work. National planning policy sets out strategic issues where cooperation might be appropriate. This includes the need for homes and jobs; provision of shops and leisure facilities; ensuring that supporting infrastructure is in place; promoting healthy communities; and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- Emerging evidence indicates a need for just under 2,900 homes per annum in Eastern Dorset, in the period 2013 to 2033. This is significantly higher than the combined current and emerging local plan targets of just over 2,200 homes per annum. This means that there is a need to provide approximately 700 additional homes per year, over and above current and emerging local plan housing targets, in order to meet Eastern Dorset's full objectively assessed housing needs.
- Government guidance is clear that the objectively assessed housing need should form a starting point for setting targets in local plans, but that there may be environmental and policy constraints which will impact on the final local plan housing requirement. The government has also made it clear that local planning authorities should consider whether there are opportunities to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, to meet needs across housing market areas.
- There is a key requirement for the local planning authorities to work together to set out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Dorset. This work will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth.
- In addition to the provision of new homes, the Dorset strategic planning work will need to address any cross-boundary issues relating to employment land. Officers are currently updating the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy, and the update will include recommendations as to the employment land required in Dorset to 2033.
- This paper also summarises related matters that will need to be considered as an integral part of planning for new homes and jobs. This includes highlighting the importance of providing services and facilities to support growth, supporting healthy communities through effective planning, and the need to continue with effective joint working to protect Dorset's outstanding natural environment, including internationally protected sites. The paper concludes with a summary of the suggested scope for the Dorset strategic planning work.

### Introduction

- The Terms of Reference for the Strategic Planning Forum state that the main purpose of the Forum is to fulfil obligations under the legal duty to cooperate. The Terms of Reference go on to state that the Forum will guide strategic planning at the 'larger than local' scale through effective policy development across boundaries, and will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in the development of strategy to inform and align spatial and investment priorities.
- This paper aims to inform the scope of the Dorset strategic planning work, by providing a summary of the key cross boundary planning challenges and opportunities, both within Dorset and between Dorset and its neighbouring authorities.
- Following the abolition of structure and regional plans, the Government introduced the 'duty to cooperate'. This is a legal requirement of the plan making process<sup>1</sup>. The duty requires councils and public bodies to 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies on cross boundary matters.
- It is important to note that the duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. The Strategic Planning Forum has been established, however, to ensure that cooperation on strategic issues continues on an open and constructive basis across Dorset even where individual authorities may have different points of view. This approach will ensure that constructive cooperation on strategic matters is achieved in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- There is a strong history of effective joint working between the planning authorities in Dorset, and continued cooperation will be essential to support sustainable economic growth in the area. Cooperation on planning matters can also contribute to wider partnership working, helping to deliver mutually beneficial objectives for a range of stakeholders.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate<sup>2</sup>. This encompasses:
  - the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and

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<sup>1</sup> The duty to cooperate is set out in Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/110/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- This paper considers each of these broad themes in turn, and identifies broad cross boundary issues and opportunities affecting Dorset planning authorities in relation to each theme. The paper concludes with a summary of the suggested scope for the Dorset strategic planning work, highlighting the importance of cross-boundary working in supporting economic growth and directing development to the most sustainable locations. The strategic planning work will have an important role in helping to deliver the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, and any future revisions of this. The Dorset strategic planning work will also be influenced by sub-regional issues, such as plans for growth in Portsmouth and Southampton. Sub-regional issues are not considered in detail in this paper, but will form part of the wider context for strategic joint working in Dorset.

### Current and emerging local plans in Dorset

- The Dorset local planning authorities are currently at various stages in reviewing their current and emerging local plans, as summarised in table 1. Work on the local plan reviews will both inform, and be informed by, the Dorset strategic planning work.

Local Plan	Plan period	Current status	Future review?
<b>Eastern Dorset Housing Market Area</b>			
Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy 2012	2006 - 2026	Adopted October 2012	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.
Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy	2013 - 2028	Adopted April 2014	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.
North Dorset Local Plan – 2011 to 2026 Part 1	2011 - 2026	Inspector's report received (December 2015) and plan can now progress towards adoption.	Plan includes a commitment to an early review, to be adopted by November 2018.
Poole Core Strategy	2006 - 2026	Adopted February 2009	Review is underway. Currently anticipating adoption in 2018.
Purbeck Local Plan Part 1	2006 - 2027	Adopted November 2012	Partial review is underway. Currently aiming for adoption by end of 2017.
<b>Western Dorset Housing Market Area</b>			
West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan	2011 - 2031	Adopted October 2015	Early review needed by 2021 to provide sufficient housing to 2031 and beyond.
<b>Pan-Dorset</b>			
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy	2014 - 2028	Adopted May 2014	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Mineral Sites Plan	Likely to be 2017 - 2032	Plan due to be published in Spring 2016	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan	Likely to be 2017 - 2032	Plan due to be published in Spring 2016	No review currently scheduled in Local Development Scheme.
Joint Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document	The timetable for this work is currently under review.		

Table 1: status of current and emerging local plans in Dorset

## Providing the homes and jobs needed in Dorset

### Housing need within Dorset

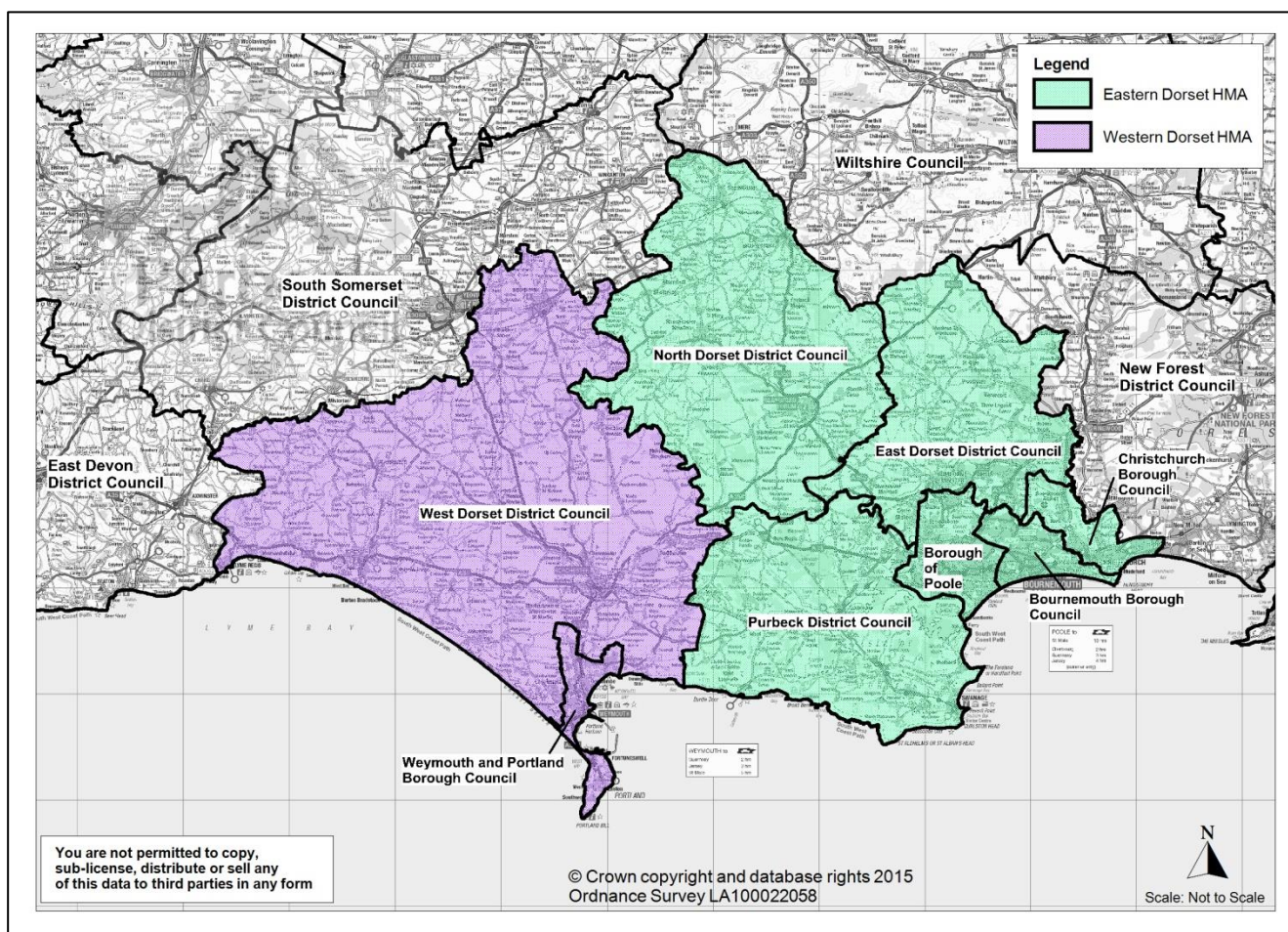
- The NPPF requires local planning authorities to meet ‘the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area’, as far as is consistent with other policies set out in the NPPF<sup>3</sup>. It goes on to state that ‘joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas’<sup>4</sup>.
- Two housing market areas (HMAs) have been identified in Dorset, as shown on map 1. The Eastern Dorset HMA includes Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset, Poole and Purbeck, whilst the Western Dorset HMA includes West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland.

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework





Map 1: Dorset housing market areas

- The objectively assessed housing needs for the Dorset authorities are identified in the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (December 2015), and the Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset Strategic Housing Market Report (July 2014). Table 2 (overleaf) summarises the objectively assessed housing need for each local planning authority, compared with the current (or emerging) local plan housing targets.

Local planning authority	Full Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)	Current or emerging local plan housing target
<b>Eastern Dorset HMA</b>		
Bournemouth	<b>979</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	<b>730</b> homes per annum (2006 to 2026)
Christchurch	<b>241</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	Joint target for <b>566</b> homes per annum in Christchurch and East Dorset (2013 to 2028)
East Dorset	<b>385</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	
Christchurch and East Dorset (joint OAN)	<b>626</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	
North Dorset	<b>330</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	Local Plan not yet adopted. Proposed target of <b>285</b> homes

		per annum (2011 to 2031)
Poole	<b>710</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	<b>500</b> homes per annum (2006 to 2026)
Purbeck	<b>238</b> homes per annum (2013 to 2033)	<b>120</b> homes per annum (2006 to 2027)
<b>Total for Eastern Dorset HMA</b>	<b>2,883 homes per annum (2013 to 2033)</b>	<b>2,201 homes per annum (plan periods not aligned)</b>
<b>Western Dorset HMA</b>		
West Dorset	<b>775</b> homes per annum in West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland (joint OAN) (2011 to 2031)	<b>775</b> homes per annum in West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland (2011 to 2031)
Weymouth and Portland		
<b>Total for Western Dorset HMA</b>	<b>775 homes per annum (2011 to 2031)</b>	<b>775 homes per annum (2011 to 2031)</b>
<b>Total for Dorset</b>	<b>3,658 homes per annum (SHMA periods not aligned)</b>	<b>2,976 homes per annum (plan periods not aligned)</b>

Table 2: Comparison of objectively assessed housing need and current (or emerging) local plan housing targets

- Table 2 demonstrates that there is a need to provide approximately 682 additional homes per year in the Eastern Dorset HMA, over and above the current and emerging local plan housing targets, in order to meet the full objectively assessed housing needs. However, it is important to note that the current plan periods in the Eastern Dorset area are not precisely aligned with each other, and none of the current plans extend to 2033 (as covered by the Eastern Dorset SHMA). In addition, recent housing completion rates have varied across the county, as discussed further below. The figure of 682 additional homes per year is therefore approximate, and further work will need to be undertaken to fully understand the additional housing need, over and above that which is already planned for.
- Recent housing delivery rates across Dorset as a whole have fallen significantly short of the total objectively assessed housing need for the county. Table 3 shows the housing completions for each local planning authority in 2013/14 and 2014/15. This highlights the need for a step change in housing delivery rates if the objectively assessed housing needs are to be delivered in full.

Local planning authority	Housing completions (net)	
	2013/14	2014/15
<b>Eastern Dorset HMA</b>		
Bournemouth	394 dwellings	964 dwellings
Christchurch & East Dorset	305 dwellings	334 dwellings
North Dorset	228 Dwellings	178 dwellings
Poole	264 dwellings	199 dwellings
Purbeck	72 dwellings	67 dwellings
<b>Total for Eastern Dorset HMA</b>	<b>1,264 dwellings</b>	<b>1,742 dwellings</b>
<b>Western Dorset HMA</b>		
West Dorset and	372 dwellings	399 dwellings

Weymouth		
<b>Total for Western Dorset HMA</b>	<b>372 dwellings</b>	<b>399 dwellings</b>
<b>Total housing completions for Dorset</b>	<b>1,636 dwellings</b>	<b>2,141 dwellings</b>
<b>Total Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)</b>	<b>3,658 dwellings</b>	<b>3,658 dwellings</b>

Table 3: Recent housing completions in Dorset

- It is important to emphasise that the Eastern Dorset SHMA does not take account of constraints, such as Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and internationally protected heathlands, which may restrict the ability of the Eastern Dorset authorities to plan for the full objectively assessed housing needs. Government guidance is clear that assessing need through the SHMA is just the first stage in developing a local plan.
- Brandon Lewis clarified this position in December 2014<sup>5</sup>, stating that the outcome of a SHMA 'is untested and should not automatically be seen as a proxy for a final housing requirement in local plans'. He went on to state that 'Councils will need to consider Strategic Housing Market Assessment evidence carefully and take adequate time to consider whether there are environmental and policy constraints, such as Green Belt, which will impact on their overall final housing requirement. They also need to consider whether there are opportunities to co-operate with neighbouring planning authorities to meet needs across housing market areas'.
- There is a key requirement for the Dorset local planning authorities to work together to set out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Dorset, seeking to meet the objectively assessed housing needs. This work will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth across Dorset, taking account of issues such as land availability, infrastructure capacity, and development constraints.

### Strategic Green Belt Review

- The South East Dorset Green Belt extends over some 168 square kilometres of open land in and around Upton, Wimborne, Ferndown, Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch and stretching south-west as far as Wareham. As highlighted above, land allocated as Green Belt can be a constraint which may prevent local planning authorities from meeting their full objectively assessed housing needs. This is emphasised in the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>6</sup>, which states that 'The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the

<sup>5</sup> The letter from Brandon Lewis to the Chief Executive at the Planning Inspectorate about strategic housing market assessments (19 December 2014) can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-housing-market-assessments>

<sup>6</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, 'Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt?', Reference ID: 3-044-20141006, available online at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/stage-5-final-evidence-base/>



Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. Such policies include ... land designated as green belt ...'.

- However, the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>7</sup> goes on to state that 'The Framework makes clear that, once established, green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan'. This can lead to conflicting views, as, on the one hand Government guidance emphasises the importance of Green Belt, and that it can be a constraint that may prevent a Council from meeting its development needs. But on the other hand, national guidance also allows councils to review their Green Belts in exceptional circumstances and allocate Green Belt sites for development through the preparation or review of local plans.
- The Planning Advisory Service<sup>8</sup> has considered these conflicting views and concludes that: 'It is quite clearly the national policy position that it is for local planning authorities to take a view on whether the green belt needs to be changed to address the development needs of the community for the plan period'.
- When considering whether or not to allocate land for development within the South East Dorset Green Belt, it is important to recognise the potential sustainability benefits of providing new homes in close proximity to the conurbation, within easy reach of jobs and services. Not developing in the Green Belt would displace development pressure to elsewhere in Dorset. This is not to say that all areas outside the Green Belt are inherently unsustainable, but there are some more remote parts of the county where development could result in less sustainable commuting patterns and an increase in congestion.
- It will therefore be important for the Dorset strategic planning work to be informed by an appraisal of all realistic options for development, including the option of releasing land from the Green Belt. A Strategic Green Belt Review will be required, to help inform this options appraisal. The Strategic Green Belt Review will need to consider whether or not the current extent of the Green Belt remains fit for purpose, and whether changes may be appropriate to help accommodate the county's development needs. Any Green Belt reviews across South East Dorset will need to be assessed against the following five purposes of Green Belt as set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF:
  - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

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<sup>7</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, Reference ID: 3-044-20141006, see link above.

<sup>8</sup> 'Planning on the doorstep: the big issues – green belt' (2015)

### Unmet housing need from areas adjoining Dorset

- The Eastern Dorset SHMA considers housing provision in local authority areas which adjoin the Eastern Dorset HMA and concludes that the principle issue of potential unmet housing need is likely to arise from New Forest District<sup>9</sup>. This relates partly to Eastern Dorset and partly to South Hampshire.
- New Forest District Council has an adopted Core Strategy (adopted in 2009)<sup>10</sup> which covers the area outside the National Park, whilst the National Park Authority has an adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (adopted in 2010)<sup>11</sup>. The District Council has started work on a Local Plan Review, with an initial consultation anticipated during 2016. The National Park Authority has also started a Local Plan Review, with an initial consultation taking place during September and October 2015. At this stage, neither the District Council nor the National Park Authority has formally identified an unmet housing need, but the consultants who prepared the Eastern Dorset SHMA consider that 'it is unlikely that housing needs will be able to be met within the District in full'.
- The Eastern Dorset HMA also adjoins Wiltshire and South Somerset, whilst the Western Dorset HMA adjoins South Somerset and East Devon. Officers have not identified any current issues of unmet need arising from East Devon, South Somerset, or Wiltshire.
- The Dorset strategic planning work will need to consider any issues of unmet need arising from neighbouring local authority areas. At this stage, it is likely that the principle issue of potential unmet housing need will arise from New Forest District.

### Housing mix

- The NPPF requires local planning authorities to address the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community<sup>12</sup>. The Eastern Dorset SHMA identifies a recommended housing mix across the HMA for the period 2013-2033, as set out in table 4. This shows a higher need for one and two bedroom properties for affordable homes, and a higher need for two and three bed properties on the open market. However, this will vary by location. The SHMA also includes recommendations for the appropriate housing mix in each local authority area, and goes on to state that local authorities should consider detailed evidence for their areas when setting policies for the future mix of housing.

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<sup>9</sup> See paragraphs 10.53-10.58 of the Eastern Dorset SHMA (due to be published in December 2015)

<sup>10</sup> The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy for New Forest District (outside the National Park) (2009) can be accessed online at: <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=14183>

<sup>11</sup> The New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2010) can be accessed online at: [http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20040/planning\\_policy/23/core\\_strategy](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/info/20040/planning_policy/23/core_strategy)

<sup>12</sup> See paragraph 159 of the National Planning Policy Framework

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
<b>Market</b>	10%	45%	35%	10%
<b>Affordable</b>	35-40%	30-35%	20-25%	5-10%
<b>All dwellings</b>	20%	40%	30%	10%

Table 4: Recommended Housing Mix for Eastern Dorset HMA

- The Western Dorset SHMA<sup>13</sup> indicates a greater need for two and three bedroom homes on the open market, but again this will vary according to location, and will change over the plan period.
- The mix of homes needed across the Eastern Dorset HMA is likely to have implications for the most appropriate strategy for housing. As an example, family housing is unlikely to be provided in the more central areas of the conurbation, where flats are more viable, and hence a need for family housing may lead to pressure for development on the edges of the conurbation. This relationship between housing mix and the appropriate location of development will need to be considered as part of the appraisal of options for future growth in Dorset.
- Local authorities will also need to consider the need for different types of affordable housing (intermediate housing and social or affordable rented homes), specialist housing and accommodation for older persons (sheltered housing and extra care provision), registered care provision (for households who live in care homes), student housing provision, and wheelchair accessible homes. The Eastern Dorset SHMA considers each of these matters and includes recommendations for the individual local authorities to consider through their local plans.
- The Government appears to be shifting the emphasis towards affordable housing to buy, rather than to rent, and this is likely to have implications for each of the Dorset local planning authorities. The Planning Practice Guidance currently indicates that ‘local planning authorities should work in a positive and proactive way with landowners and developers to secure a supply of land available for Starter Homes exception sites to deliver housing for young first time buyers in their area’<sup>14</sup>. The guidance goes on to explain that Starter Homes should be offered for sale at a minimum of 20% below the open market value of the property. The guidance states that Starter Homes exceptions sites are expected to be on land that has been in commercial or industrial use, and which has not currently been identified for residential development, and suitable sites are likely to be under-used or no longer viable for commercial or industrial purposes.
- The Government has recently published the Housing and Planning Bill<sup>15</sup>, which includes proposals for a new duty for local planning authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes. The Bill also indicates that the Government may introduce regulations to determine that Councils may only grant planning permission if a specific

<sup>13</sup> The Weymouth and Portland and West Dorset Strategic Housing Market Report (2014) can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/410419/Local-Plan-Examination-Document-Library-Other-Evidence---Sustainable-Pattern-of-Development>

<sup>14</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, ‘Starter Homes’, Reference ID: 55-001-20150318, available online at: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/starter-homes/starter-homes-guidance/>

<sup>15</sup> The Housing and Planning Bill (October 2015) can be accessed online at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/housingandplanning.html>

Starter Home requirement is met. Full details of this proposal are not yet available, and it is unclear what impact this will have on existing requirements to plan for affordable housing. The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to ensure a consistent approach to any forthcoming changes to national policy and guidance in relation to Starter Homes.

- At this stage, officers consider that the Dorset strategic planning work could include reference to the broad mix of housing types needed across the two HMAs, and it will be important to consider the appropriate housing mix when appraising options for the broad location of additional homes. There is also an opportunity to ensure a consistent approach across Dorset to any forthcoming changes to national policy and guidance in relation to Starter Homes, in light of recent Government announcements. However, it is envisaged that the issue of housing mix will be considered in more detail by individual local authorities through their local plans.

### **Gypsy and Traveller provision**

- The Dorset local authorities are all working together to prepare a Dorset-wide Gypsy and Traveller (including Travelling Showpeople) Joint Development Plan Document (DPD). In 2013 the Councils commissioned an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) which identified a county wide need for 150 residential pitches<sup>16</sup>. The aim of the joint DPD would be to allocate sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to meet identified needs. However, to date the possible sites identified through the DPD process are below the assessed need. At this stage, officers envisage that this issue will be dealt with through the joint DPD.

### **Dorset's economy and employment land requirements**

- The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across their area. To achieve this, local authorities should work together with county and neighbouring authorities, and with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to prepare and maintain a robust evidence base to understand both existing business needs and likely changes in the market. In addition, local authorities should work closely with the business community to understand their changing needs and identify and address barriers to investment<sup>17</sup>.
- Dorset is covered by a single Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). A 'Review of Economic Evidence' undertaken for the Dorset Leaders Growth Board in February 2015<sup>18</sup> notes that 'the issue of Dorset as a functional economic market area was fully addressed when the establishment of the Dorset [LEP] was proposed and approved by government'. It goes on to state that 'whilst, like all LEP areas, there is diversity within Dorset, it does function as a specific business location with its own identity and

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<sup>16</sup> The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2013) can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/travellerpitches>

<sup>17</sup> See paragraph 160 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>18</sup> The Dorset Leaders' Growth Board 'Review of Economic Evidence' (February 2015) can be viewed online at: [https://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/201819/Dorset-Review-of-Economic-Evidence/pdf/Dorset\\_Review\\_of\\_Economic\\_Evidence.pdf](https://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/201819/Dorset-Review-of-Economic-Evidence/pdf/Dorset_Review_of_Economic_Evidence.pdf)

as an economic area, whilst also having links to the wider locality and their economies’.

- The Dorset LEP area consists of a range of distinct geographical areas which all play a key part in Dorset’s economy<sup>19</sup>:
  - The **Conurbation** (Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch and parts of East Dorset and Purbeck) contains the majority of Dorset’s population and employment. It benefits from an airport, a major port, two universities and a strong business services and visitor economy.
  - The **Central Area** is based on the twin towns of Dorchester and Weymouth and their immediate hinterland, around which major employment sites, two ports and county wide services are based.
  - **Rural Dorset** is characterised by coastal and market towns, including Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Wareham, Swanage, Portland, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis, as well as the wider countryside. This area accommodates a diverse range of businesses in manufacturing, technology, tourism, retail, accommodation and food services.
  - The **‘Jurassic Coast’** between Swanage and Lyme Regis (and beyond into Devon) has World Heritage Status and serves as a major attractor of visitors to the area. This rural and semi-rural area is typified by a diverse range of small and micro businesses delivering retail and accommodation and food services.
- The Dorset LEP has prepared a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), Transforming Dorset, which outlines ambitions and aspirations for transformative change to the Dorset economy<sup>20</sup>. The SEP identifies four thematic priorities (Connected Dorset, Talented Dorset, Responsive Dorset, and Competitive Dorset) and emphasises that partners in Dorset are committed to ensuring that the LEP area can deliver the local growth potential suggested by economic forecasts. The LEP is currently reviewing the SEP through a ‘Priority Project Refresh’ and this process may identify additional economic issues and priorities.
- Local planning authorities have a key role in helping to deliver the priorities of the LEP through the identification of employment land (for use classes B1: Business, B2: General industrial and B8: Storage or distribution) in their local plans.
- The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (2008, updated 2012)<sup>21</sup> provides estimates of the amount of employment land required in the period 2011 to 2031 for the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole area; the Strategically Significant Cities and Towns of Bournemouth & Poole and Weymouth & Dorchester; and the Rural Dorset area. The Workspace Strategy has informed the current and emerging local plans of each of the Dorset authorities.

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<sup>19</sup> See ‘Review of Economic Evidence’ at link above.

<sup>20</sup> The Dorset Strategic Economic Plan, Transforming Dorset (March 2014), is available online at: <http://dorsetlep.co.uk/local-delivery/strategic-economic-plan/>

<sup>21</sup> The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (2008, updated 2012) can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/405217/Bournemouth-Dorset-and-Poole-Workspace-Strategy-and-Study>



- Officers are currently updating the Workspace Strategy, to take account of more up to date projections for employment growth. The update to the Workspace Strategy will be looking at the functional economic areas within and beyond Dorset, and will include recommendations as to the employment land required in Dorset in the period to 2033. The Workspace Strategy update may lead to the identification of cross boundary issues that will need to be addressed through the Dorset strategic planning work.

## Provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development

### Town centres

- National planning policy states that local planning authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres<sup>22</sup>.
- Table 5 sets out the town centres, district centres and local centres across Dorset, as identified in current and emerging local plans.

Local planning authority	Town, district and local centres
Bournemouth	<b>Town centre:</b> Bournemouth <b>District centres:</b> Castlepoint; Boscombe; Westbourne; Winton; Boscombe East; Charminster; Holdenhurst Road; Kinson; Moordown; Southbourne Grove; Tuckton; Wallisdown
Christchurch and East Dorset	<b>Town Centres:</b> Christchurch; Ferndown; Verwood; Wimborne Minster <b>District Centres:</b> West Moors; Highcliffe <b>Local Centres:</b> Purewell; Barrack Road; Corfe Mullen; West Parley
North Dorset	<b>Town Centres:</b> Blandford Forum; Gillingham; Shaftesbury; Sturminster Newton <b>Local Centre:</b> Stalbridge
Poole	<b>Town Centre:</b> Poole <b>Key local centres:</b> Broadstone; Ashley Cross; Ashley Road (there are also a number of smaller local centres in Poole)
Purbeck	<b>Town Centres:</b> Swanage; Wareham <b>Local Centres:</b> Bere Regis; Corfe Castle; Lytchett Matravers; North Wareham; Swanage (Herston); Upton; Wool
West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland	<b>Town Centres:</b> Weymouth; Dorchester; Bridport; Sherborne; Lyme Regis <b>Local Centres:</b> Easton (Portland); Fortuneswell (Portland); Beaminster

Table 5: Town, district and local centres in Dorset

- There are many instances across the county where town centres in neighbouring local planning authorities have an influence on one another (e.g. the town centres in North

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework

Dorset are each influenced by larger centres in neighbouring authorities, such as Poole, Salisbury and Yeovil). There is an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to explore this further, and identify key relationships between town centres, as well as emphasising the importance of a 'town centre first' approach for the location of new retail development.

- It is also important to recognise that retail need is likely to be driven by the location of future housing. The identification of the most sustainable broad locations for additional housing could therefore have implications for the retail hierarchies identified in the current and emerging local plans. This will need further consideration as the Dorset strategic planning work progresses.
- Some local authorities may also need to consider commissioning updated retail studies to reflect recent changes in retail trends (such as the growth in internet shopping), whilst others already have up-to-date studies (e.g. the Poole and Purbeck Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study published in early 2015). There could be a role for the Dorset strategic planning work in addressing any cross-boundary issues that may be identified through updates to existing retail studies.

### Tourism

- Tourism makes an important contribution to Dorset's economy. Around 8% of all Dorset employees work in tourism, with the highest proportions seen in Weymouth and Portland (14%) and Purbeck (13%)<sup>23</sup>. The current and emerging local plans include policies to support and guide tourism related development, such as tourist accommodation and new tourist attractions. The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of planning for sustainable tourism across the area.

## Provision of infrastructure

### Transport

- National planning policy sets out that local planning authorities should seek to support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. In addition, local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable transport infrastructure to support sustainable development<sup>24</sup>.
- The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3 sets out the strategy for the management, maintenance and development of the area's transport system. LTPs explain how funds, largely allocated by the Government, will be used to deliver improved transport and help meet the key objectives for transport established by both government and local authorities.
- The LTP3 came into effect from April 2011, and covers the period 2011 to 2026. The plan identifies five goals to guide the approach to transport in Dorset:

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<sup>23</sup> Dorset in Profile 2014 (based on data from 2012), available online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

<sup>24</sup> Paragraphs 30 – 31 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- Supporting economic growth
- Tackling climate change
- Equality of opportunity
- Better safety, security and health
- Improved quality of life.
- Key solutions are identified for each of the five goals. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and the review of the SEP currently being undertaken by the LEP, will also have important implications for transport priorities.
- There is an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to re-emphasise the importance of improving transport infrastructure in the area, as part of an integrated strategy to deliver infrastructure improvements alongside new homes and jobs.

### Telecommunications

- National planning policy states that, in preparing local plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband<sup>25</sup>.
- The Superfast Dorset project is currently progressing across the whole of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, and aims to provide 97% of Dorset premises with access to superfast broadband (at least 24Mbps), and 100% of premises with access to broadband speeds of greater than 2Mbps.
- At this stage, officers have not identified any specific cross boundary issues in relation to telecommunications infrastructure. However, the Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of improving telecommunications across the area, through projects such as Superfast Dorset.

### Waste Management

- A new Waste Plan is currently being prepared to provide for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole's waste management needs. The new Waste Plan will identify sites for new waste management facilities to meet the county's needs. Once adopted it will provide the policy framework for determining planning applications for waste management facilities.
- Officers envisage that any cross boundary issues relating to waste management will be dealt with through the new Waste Plan. However, the Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of sustainable planning for waste to maximise its value as a resource and as a key supporting element for economic competitiveness.

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<sup>25</sup> Paragraph 43 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Water supply and wastewater

- National planning policy states that local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for water supply and wastewater, and its ability to meet forecast demands, and to take account of the need for strategic infrastructure within their areas<sup>26</sup>.
- The Dorset local planning authorities have contacted water suppliers and wastewater treatment providers during the preparation of each of the current and emerging local plans, in order to ensure that any issues arising can be addressed. The Dorset strategic planning work will need to be informed by a similar exercise, to ensure that any proposed development strategy can be accommodated in terms of water supply and wastewater infrastructure.
- At this stage, officers have not identified any specific cross boundary issues in relation to water supply and wastewater provision. However, the Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided alongside development.

### Flood risk

- The current and emerging local plans in Dorset are each supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, as required by national planning policy<sup>27</sup>. As an example, a joint Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1 SFRA) was prepared in 2007 for Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Salisbury. The study area for the SFRA was defined by the main river catchments of the Stour and the Avon, and the SFRA formed part of the evidence base for the participating local planning authorities. It is acknowledged that SFRA's across Dorset will need to be updated to support future Local Plans.
- Another example of cross boundary work in relation to flood risk is the Dorset Stour Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) (2009), which gives an overview of flood risk in the Dorset Stour catchment and sets out a preferred plan for sustainable flood risk management over the next 50 to 100 years. The Management Plan was produced by the Environment Agency and Christchurch and East Dorset Councils, and informed the preparation of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy.
- It is worth noting that flood risk is a significant constraint to development within the urban areas of Christchurch, Poole and Weymouth, and this has implications for the appropriate location of future development.
- Officers have not identified any specific cross boundary issues relating to flood risk which need to be addressed through the Dorset strategic planning work, but the work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. The strategic planning work could also explore opportunities for strategic scale flood attenuation and mitigation infrastructure.

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<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>27</sup> Paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Coastal change management

- The Dorset coast is covered by two shoreline management plans<sup>28</sup> which set out policies to assist decision making on flooding from the sea and coastal erosion risk management over the next 20, 50 and 100 years. The original shoreline management plans (SMP1) have been reviewed and updated to produce SMP2.
- The Poole and Christchurch Bays SMP2 (October 2010) covers the length of coast between Hurst Spit near Milford-on-Sea and Durlston Head near Swanage, and includes the harbours of Poole and Christchurch. The Durlston Head to Rame Head SMP2 (June 2011) covers the length of coast from Durlston Head (near Swanage) to Rame Head (near Plymouth).
- National planning policy states that local planning authorities should identify Coastal Change Management Areas to cover any area which is likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast. In addition, local authorities should be clear about what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances, and they should also make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas<sup>29</sup>.
- This matter will need to be considered in detail by each of the coastal local authorities in Dorset. Appropriate policies could be developed through either local plan reviews (e.g. Purbeck District Council will be considering this matter through its Local Plan Partial Review) or separate DPDs (e.g. West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils are planning to prepare a Coastal Change Management Guidance DPD). The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to develop a consistent approach, to be applied along the full length of the Dorset coastline.

### Provision of minerals

- The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy was adopted in May 2014 and sets out the strategy for quarrying stone, sand and gravel, ball clay and other minerals within the county, taking into account the need to meet requirements in a sustainable manner. The plan contains the policies and criteria used for considering planning applications for mineral developments. A Minerals Sites Plan is currently being prepared, to allocate suitable sites for quarrying of sand, gravel, building stones and ball clay to meet requirements.
- Officers envisage that any cross boundary issues relating to the provision of minerals will be dealt with through the adopted and emerging minerals plans, without the need for further consideration through the Dorset strategic planning work. However, the joint work offers the opportunity to ensure effective integration of minerals planning with growth and infrastructure needs in Dorset. There is also an opportunity to ensure the restoration of quarries has regard to economic, social and environmental opportunities that support sustainable economic growth.

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<sup>28</sup> Information about the Shoreline Management Plans can be accessed online via: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/408559/Shoreline-Management-Plans---round-2-SMP2>

<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 106 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



### Provision of energy (including heat)

- National planning policy states that local planning authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources, and design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily<sup>30</sup>.
- The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020 is being implemented by the Dorset Energy Partnership<sup>31</sup>. The strategy sets out the agenda for renewable energy in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and identifies six priority areas:
  - Supporting the development of community renewable energy;
  - Maximising the local economic benefits of renewable energy generation;
  - Creating a more supporting planning system for renewable energy;
  - Developing locally appropriate technologies;
  - Delivering leadership and partnerships that support renewable energy; and
  - Improving renewable energy communications and learning.
- The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (March 2012) supports the Renewable Energy Strategy and summarises local renewable energy resources, based upon a national methodology<sup>32</sup>. The assessment covers onshore wind, biomass, microgeneration, hydropower and offshore (wind, tidal and wave) resources.
- In addition, the local planning authorities for Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck commissioned Land Use Consultants Ltd to undertake studies to assess landscape sensitivity to wind and solar energy development in each district. The studies were published in April 2014 and can be accessed on the relevant local planning authority pages of the Dorsetforyou website.
- The national Planning Practice Guidance has recently been updated in regard to planning for wind turbines, and now states that planning applications should not be approved unless the proposed development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan<sup>33</sup>. This matter will need to be considered by each local planning authority through their local plans, but there may be a role for the Dorset strategic planning work in helping to ensure a consistent approach to renewable energy provision, including wind energy, across Dorset. There

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<sup>30</sup> Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>31</sup> The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy to 2020 is available online at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/renewable-energy-strategy-2020>

<sup>32</sup> The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment for Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole can be accessed online at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/renewable-energy-strategy-2020>

<sup>33</sup> Reference ID: 5-005-20150618, Planning Practice Guidance, 'How can local planning authorities identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy', available online at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

may also be an opportunity to explore the potential for cross boundary district heating through this work.

## Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure

### Promoting healthy communities

- Councils have a legal duty to take appropriate steps to improve the health and wellbeing of residents<sup>34</sup> and in April 2015 Public Health Dorset launched the LiveWell Dorset lifestyle service, which provides a single point of contact to help people with their health and wellbeing<sup>35</sup>.
- National planning policy highlights the role of planning in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities<sup>36</sup>. This should include consideration of how best to promote:
  - Opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other;
  - Safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
  - Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- This also includes planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services; guarding against the loss of valued facilities and services; ensuring that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable; and ensuring an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
- These matters are considered through the current and emerging local plans of each of the local planning authorities in Dorset. However, there is also an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to highlight the importance of promoting healthy communities through planning, thus contributing to the wider duty on Councils to take steps to improve health and wellbeing.

### Green infrastructure

- Green infrastructure can be defined as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities<sup>37</sup>. National planning policy states that local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their local plans, planning

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<sup>34</sup> See Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, available online at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted>

<sup>35</sup> Further information on the LiveWell Dorset service can be accessed at: <http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/index.html>

<sup>36</sup> Paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>37</sup> Page 52 (Glossary) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure<sup>38</sup>.

- The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy (Investing in Green Places, July 2011) was jointly prepared by the councils in South East Dorset (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck) in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission<sup>39</sup>. The Strategy provides a non-statutory framework for green infrastructure across South East Dorset. It sets out a vision for the area which seeks to co-ordinate the planning for, and investment in, parks, open spaces, wildlife corridors, street trees and other green spaces. More recently, the Dorset Local Nature Partnership's Natural Investment Strategy for Dorset and Dorset County Council's Dorset's Environmental Economy are important publications that need to be taken into account as part of pan-Dorset strategic planning on environmental issues.
- The Stour Valley forms an important sub-regional area of green infrastructure, and the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies a key strategic project to develop a strategy for the Lower Stour Valley. The project aims to develop a strategy for the river Stour and its floodplain from Sturminster Marshall to Christchurch. Key aspects include provision of an accessible route for walking and cycling, encouraging access to existing 'hubs' (recreational facilities, greenspace, visitor centres, etc) and encouraging multifunctional uses via provision of footpaths, cycle routes, access to river, flood attenuation and biodiversity and landscape enhancements.
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) have a key role in heathland mitigation in the eastern Dorset area, and this is discussed further below, in the section on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
- West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils are planning to prepare a Green Infrastructure DPD which will identify a green infrastructure network to support, but not prevent, the long-term development of communities.
- There is an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to include consideration as to whether any update is needed to the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, and whether there could be merit in preparing a single joint Green Infrastructure Strategy to cover Dorset.

### Housing Standards Review

- The Housing Standards Review highlighted the issue of councils imposing a range of local technical requirements on the construction of new dwellings (e.g. requiring specific levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes or different wheelchair accessible housing standards). The recommendations of the review have been encompassed in the Deregulation Act which received royal assent in March 2015<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Paragraph 114 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>39</sup> The South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, Investing in Green Places, can be accessed online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/greeninfrastructure>

<sup>40</sup> The Deregulation Act 2015 can be accessed online at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/deregulation.html>

- The Deregulation Act provides a set of national standards (space, water efficiency and accessibility) that can only be applied if they are included in an adopted local plan. The Act also ended the Code for Sustainable Homes (Part L of the Building Regulations is now the only energy efficiency delivery mechanism) and replaced 'Secured by Design' with Part Q (Security) of the Building Regulations. This means that existing local plan policies which seek to set standards for new development in relation to these matters are now likely to be out of date.
- Each local planning authority will need to consider the implications of these changes for their own local plan policies, but the Dorset strategic planning work may offer an opportunity to encourage a consistent approach to the new national standards across Dorset.

## Addressing climate change and conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment

### Climate change mitigation and adaptation

- National planning policy highlights the role of planning in helping to shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure<sup>41</sup>. Climate change mitigation and adaptation are broad ranging topics, encompassing issues of flood risk, coastal change management, water supply and demand, green infrastructure, and planning positively for renewable energy provision. These issues are each considered in more detail elsewhere in this paper, but the Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to re-emphasise the role of planning in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment

- Dorset has a high quality natural environment. Around 55% of Dorset is covered by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), whilst 19,000 hectares of the county (7% of the land area) are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest<sup>42</sup>. The county also includes a number of internationally protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) including the Dorset Heathlands and Poole Harbour.
- The Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) has adopted a vision and strategy for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset<sup>43</sup>. The strategy identifies six strategic priorities which will guide the LNP's actions:
- Natural capital – investing in Dorset's natural assets;
- Natural value – adding value to the local economy;

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<sup>41</sup> Paragraph 93 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>42</sup> Dorset in Profile (2014), available online at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

<sup>43</sup> Dorset Local Nature Partnership: A vision and strategy for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset (March 2014) can be accessed online via: [http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset\\_local\\_nature\\_partnership.html](http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset_local_nature_partnership.html)



- Natural health – developing Dorset’s ‘natural health service’;
- Natural resilience – improving environmental and community resilience;
- Natural understanding – improving understanding of, and engagement in, Dorset’s environment;
- Natural influence – integrating natural value in policy and decision-making, locally and beyond.
- The Dorset AONB stretches from Lyme Regis in the west, along the coast to Poole Harbour in the east, and north to Hambledon Hill near Blandford Forum. It covers parts of North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland. The current Dorset AONB Management Plan (2014 to 2019)<sup>44</sup> sets out the AONB Partnership’s vision for the landscape and describes how the area’s authorities, communities and businesses might work together to achieve that vision.
- The Cranborne Chase AONB extends from Wimborne Minster in the south to Warminster in the north, and covers parts of North and East Dorset. The current Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan (2014 to 2019)<sup>45</sup> sets out objectives and policies to help conserve and enhance the AONB.
- The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of nature conservation issues across the county, and to ensure that these are given full consideration when appraising options for future growth.

### Dorset Heathlands

- The Dorset Heathlands cover an extensive area of South East Dorset, with many sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites. The local authorities of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset County, East Dorset, Poole and Purbeck have been operating a strategy for the protection of heathland since 2007. During this time the local authorities and Urban Heath Partnership have been gathering evidence into the effects of urban pressures on the protected heaths to inform the future strategy for avoiding and mitigating the significant adverse effects of development.
- The Dorset strategic planning work will need to be accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to demonstrate that any proposed development strategy will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the European designations (SAC, SPA and Ramsar). The HRA will test growth options, and will include consideration as to whether appropriate mitigation is achievable for the level of growth proposed.
- A joint officer group is preparing a new Dorset Heathlands Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to cover Bournemouth, Christchurch, East Dorset, Poole and

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<sup>44</sup> The Dorset AONB Management Plan can be accessed online at: <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/the-dorset-aonb/management-plan>

<sup>45</sup> The Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan can be accessed online at: <http://www.ccwdaonb.org.uk/publications/aonb-management-plan/>

Purbeck. The SPD will ensure that there continues to be a strategic approach to the protection of the internationally important heathlands in South East Dorset. Consultation on a draft SPD took place between January and February 2015, and the SPD was adopted by the Bournemouth, Poole and Purbeck local planning authorities in January. It is anticipated that the SPD will also be adopted in Christchurch and East Dorset in due course. The updated SPD is based on the current local plan housing requirements, and a further update is likely to be required following adoption of any revised local plans by any of the local authorities. The Dorset strategic planning work offers an opportunity to secure renewed commitment to the existing joint approach to address heathlands mitigation.

- Strategic Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) can be provided alongside development to mitigate adverse effects on the Dorset heathlands. The Dorset strategic planning work could offer an opportunity to identify broad locations for strategic SANGs, to link in with the preferred strategy for additional housing (once this is identified).

### Poole Harbour

- Poole Harbour is an outstanding natural feature and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site for its nature conservation importance. Increasing nitrogen levels from sewage and agriculture are contributing to the growth of algal mats in the harbour, restricting the growth, distribution and variety of important food available for wading birds protected under European law and smothering estuarine habitats.
- As with the Dorset Heathlands, it will be necessary to demonstrate that any proposed development strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of the Poole Harbour SPA/Ramsar. Adverse effects could arise in relation to recreational pressures and/or impacts on water quality. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will need to be prepared alongside the Dorset strategic planning work, to include consideration as to whether appropriate mitigation can be provided.
- Officers are preparing a joint 'Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour' SPD which will provide detailed guidance to ensure that development does not lead to an increase in the level of nitrates in Poole Harbour. The SPD will cover the catchment for Poole Harbour, which incorporates parts of North Dorset, Poole, Purbeck and West Dorset<sup>46</sup>. A draft SPD has recently been published for consultation, and it is anticipated that the SPD will be adopted by each of the participating councils in 2016.
- One of the options for providing mitigation is to purchase agricultural land and change the use to a sparsely treed landscape. This leads to a reduction in the amount of nitrogen which is being spread onto the land within the catchment from agriculture, which offsets the additional nitrates arising due to residential development. It is worth noting that land purchased for nitrogen mitigation can also be considered for SANGs or more general green infrastructure, thus offering multiple benefits. Nitrogen mitigation can be delivered anywhere within the catchment, and the Dorset strategic

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<sup>46</sup> A small part of the Poole Harbour catchment falls within East Dorset, but as it is protected habitat where no development is planned, mitigation is not necessary.

planning work offers an opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of local authorities working together to ensure that appropriate mitigation is delivered.

### Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment

- Dorset has a rich historic environment, and includes 5% of the nationally protected ancient monuments<sup>47</sup>. 95 miles of the Dorset and Devon coast, between Orcombe Point near Exmouth and Studland Bay near Poole, are protected under World Heritage status as the Jurassic Coast. The county also includes numerous other heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, and parks and gardens of special historic interest.
- The current Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (WHS) Management Plan (2014 – 2019)<sup>48</sup> outlines aims and policies for managing the WHS over the coming years, and indicates a range of activities for achieving them.
- National planning policy states that local planning authorities should set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats<sup>49</sup>. Each of the Dorset local planning authorities will have considered these issues through the preparation of the current and emerging local plans, but there is an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to reinforce the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment through planning policy. There may also be scope to develop a positive strategy for conserving the historic environment across Dorset as a whole.

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<sup>47</sup> Dorset in Profile (2014, data from 2013) available online at:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/339782/District-profile-leaflets-and-documents>

<sup>48</sup> The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014 - 2019) can be accessed online at:

<http://jurassiccoast.org/conserving-the-coast/management-files/category/14-management-plan-current>

<sup>49</sup> Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Recommended scope for the Dorset strategic planning work

- This paper has summarised broad cross boundary matters which affect the local planning authorities in Dorset. There is an opportunity for the Dorset strategic planning work to set out a positive planning strategy to provide for additional growth in Dorset, including additional homes. The strategic planning work also offers an opportunity to highlight key planning themes and issues, and to promote continued effective joint working across the area.
- Officers recommend that the Dorset strategic planning work should include consideration of each of the matters listed in table 6. It is important to emphasise that at this stage the suggested scope of the work is necessarily broad. Each of the issues will require further investigation, and further issues may arise, as the work progresses.

Theme	Suggested scope for Dorset strategic planning work
Homes and jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting out a positive planning strategy to provide for additional growth in Dorset, including additional homes.</li> <li>• Setting out a strategic approach to the provision of additional homes in Eastern Dorset, to meet objectively assessed housing needs. This strategy will need to be informed by an appraisal of all reasonable options for the distribution of growth, taking account of issues such as housing mix, land availability, infrastructure capacity, and development constraints.</li> <li>• A Strategic Green Belt Review will need to be undertaken to help inform the strategy.</li> <li>• Identifying and addressing any issues of ‘unmet’ housing need arising from areas adjoining Dorset.</li> <li>• Ensuring a consistent approach to any forthcoming changes to national policy and guidance in relation to Starter Homes.</li> <li>• Providing an overview of the broad mix of housing types needed across the Eastern and Western Dorset Housing Market Areas.</li> <li>• Addressing any cross boundary issues relating to employment land provision identified through the Workspace Strategy update.</li> </ul>
Retail, leisure and other commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying key relationships between town centres, both within Dorset and in neighbouring areas.</li> <li>• Emphasising the importance of a ‘town centre’ first approach to new retail development.</li> <li>• Considering any implications of the location of additional housing for the retail hierarchies identified in the current and emerging local plans.</li> <li>• Addressing any cross-boundary issues that may be identified through updates to existing retail studies.</li> <li>• Highlighting the importance of planning for sustainable tourism across Dorset.</li> </ul>

Table 6: suggested scope for Dorset strategic planning work(continued overleaf)



Theme	Suggested scope for Dorset strategic planning work
Infrastructure and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasising the importance of improving infrastructure, including improvements to transport, telecommunications, water supply and wastewater infrastructure.</li> <li>• Ensuring effective integration of minerals planning with growth and infrastructure needs in Dorset.</li> <li>• Ensuring sustainable planning for waste to maximise its value as a resource and as a key supporting element for economic competitiveness.</li> <li>• Ensuring the restoration of quarries has regard to economic, social and environmental opportunities that support sustainable economic growth.</li> <li>• Highlighting the importance of avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.</li> <li>• Exploring opportunities for strategic scale flood attenuation and mitigation infrastructure.</li> <li>• Developing a consistent approach to Coastal Change Management Areas, to be applied along the full length of the Dorset coastline and beyond.</li> <li>• Ensuring a consistent approach to renewable energy provision, including wind energy, across Dorset.</li> <li>• Exploring the potential for cross boundary district heating.</li> </ul>
Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlighting the importance of promoting healthy communities through planning.</li> <li>• Encouraging a consistent approach across Dorset to the new national standards for space, water efficiency and accessibility.</li> <li>• Considering whether any update is needed to the South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy, and whether there could be merit in preparing a single joint Green Infrastructure Strategy to cover Dorset.</li> </ul>
Climate change and historic and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasising the role of planning in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation.</li> <li>• Highlighting the importance of nature conservation issues across the county, and ensuring that these are given full consideration when appraising options for future growth.</li> <li>• Securing renewed commitment to the existing joint approaches to address heathlands and nitrates mitigation.</li> <li>• Identifying broad locations for strategic SANGs (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces), to link in with the preferred strategy for additional housing, once this is identified.</li> <li>• A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will need to be prepared alongside the strategic planning work, to demonstrate that any proposed development will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the European designations.</li> <li>• Reinforcing the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment through planning policy, and developing a positive strategy for conservation of the historic environment across Dorset as a whole.</li> </ul>

Table 6: suggested scope for Dorset strategic planning work