

11. DORCHESTER

11.1 INTRODUCTION

- 11.1.1 Dorchester is the county town of rural Dorset, with a population of over 19,060. It is the district's largest town and it has a significant demand for housing, employment and retail development, and a substantial affordable housing need.
- 11.1.2 The town currently also has around twice as many jobs (15,100) as it has economically active residents (7,680). Workers commute in from nearby towns (particularly Weymouth) and from the surrounding rural area. So one of the challenges for the local plan is to try to improve the balance between housing and jobs in this area.

VISION FOR DORCHESTER

- 11.1.3 In 2031 Dorchester:
- Is a quality county town with a significant offer of retail, health, cultural, leisure and community facilities
 - Has an attractive and vibrant sub-regional town centre that people come to enjoy, away from motor traffic
 - Has a more diverse local economy with good employment opportunities
 - Is a place where more people can live and work locally, without having to commute
 - Has good quality transport links to the surrounding towns and rural area
 - Has a high standard of design that promotes the character and heritage that is special to Dorchester
 - Makes the most of the surrounding countryside, including its links with Thomas Hardy, Maiden Castle and Kingston Maurward College.

MAIN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 11.1.4 There are a number of developments currently taking place that will help achieve this vision, and further proposals that should come forward within the plan period. These include:
- **Poundbury urban extension** - the continuation of the urban extension to the west of the town providing a mix of homes, jobs and community facilities
 - **Town Centre regeneration** - the development of Charles Street is extending the town centre offer to include further retail and office development. There is potential for future town centre development on land off Trinity Street.
 - **Weymouth Avenue site** - redevelopment of the Brewery site as a mixed use site including new homes, a hotel, a new arts centre and new retail stores, as well as improvements to the railway station
 - **Sites off St George's Road and Alington Avenue** - planning permission has been given for the provision of housing in association with the extension of Lubbecke Way to St George's Road. Further development potential also exists on land to the south off St George's Road and Alington Avenue, either side of the rail line.
 - **Dorchester Transport & Environment Plan** – will provide public realm enhancements in the town centre, and more appropriate traffic management. The successful delivery of this scheme is also linked to the provision of adequate park and ride facilities on the periphery of the town.

- 11.1.5 The existing and proposed sites outlined above comfortably meet the needs of the town for the early part of the plan period, but fall short of meeting the needs for housing and employment towards the end of the plan period. However there are no easily deliverable sites for major growth. A proposal is therefore included for **Crossways** (a village to the east, connected to Dorchester by the rail line) which is contained in the following chapter, and further investigations are proposed in relation to the plan area - for the period post 2026 (see Policy SUS 1)
- 11.1.6 Dorchester lies within the hydrological catchment area for Poole Harbour. It is known that any development within the Poole Harbour catchment may contribute to an increase in the discharge of nutrients into the harbour, largely through sewage treatment and disposal. This may cause excessive macroalgal growth within Poole Harbour, resulting in a significant adverse impact upon the internationally designated wildlife site. Development within Dorchester must be nitrate neutral in order to prevent additional nutrients entering Poole Harbour. For further information regarding this issue, please refer to policy ENV 2

11.2 POUNDBURY URBAN EXTENSION

- 11.2.1 Land within the line of the bypass at Poundbury was designated from the late 1980s to meet the long term needs of the town, including new homes, employment workspace, a new school, community, leisure and recreation facilities and public open space. The Poundbury Development Brief adopted in 2006 established a number of principles for development, based upon the local plan policies of that time and lessons learnt from the delivery of the earlier phases.
- 11.2.2 Outline permission was granted in December 2011 for the final phases of the development, permitting the erection of 1,200 new homes, a new 450 children primary school, 25,000m² of non-residential development and associated roads, drainage and other infrastructure. It is anticipated that this development will be completed in the early 2020s. The following policy reflects this delivery:

DOR 1. POUNDBURY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

- i) Land at Poundbury (as shown on the Proposals Map) will provide for the strategic growth of the town through a comprehensive mixed-use development of homes and businesses and associated community facilities.**
 - i) The development of the site will be in accordance with the Poundbury Development Brief (2006) and subject to:**
 - **the provision of pedestrian and cycle links within Poundbury and to the centre of Dorchester and to the surrounding areas including the countryside;**
 - **highway improvements identified as necessary for the development to go ahead, following a full transport assessment**
 - **the provision of affordable housing and necessary education, community, leisure and recreation facilities (including both built facilities and public open space).**
- 11.2.3 The existing employment area south of the Parkway (known as Poundbury Parkway Farm Business site) is a well-contained site within the bypass and physically part of the town. The site has good road links and is located away from nearby homes and other potentially sensitive uses, and therefore provides an opportunity for less neighbourly business uses to be located in the area. There is scope to extend this site to the south-west. Although (like much of Poundbury) the site is within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, any

buildings should be sympathetically designed so that it can be accommodated into the landscape without visual harm.

DOR 2. POUNDBURY PARKWAY FARM BUSINESS SITE EXTENSION

- i) Land south-west of the Parkway Farm Business site (as shown on the Proposals Map) is designated for non-neighbourly B2 and similar employment uses, subject to the provision of satisfactory design, landscaping and mitigation measures to reduce any adverse impacts to an acceptable level.**

11.3 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

11.3.1 The history of the town is evident in the layout of the area within the town walls of Roman Dorchester (Durnovaria), marked by tree-lined walks along the west, south and east sides of the town centre. Much of the built character is derived from Georgian times (as major fires in the 17th and 18th centuries burnt down most of the earlier buildings). Although the area needs to evolve with the times, its historic character is central to the success of the town.

DOR 3. DORCHESTER ROMAN TOWN AREA

- i) Any development within the Roman Town Area, as shown on the proposals map, should help reinforce the historic character of the area.**

11.3.2 The Charles Street project is moving ahead with the first phase (district council offices, library and adult learning centre) now complete. The second phase has outline permission for a mixed use development that includes new shops, car parking spaces, affordable homes, and a hotel.

DOR 4. CHARLES STREET

- i) Land at Charles Street, Dorchester, as identified on the Proposals Map, is a key town centre site, to deliver significant new retail development with ancillary mixed uses. The development of the site will include a significant element of public car parking and provide improved pedestrian links to South Street.**
- ii) On completion, the site will form part of the primary shopping area.**

11.3.3 The development of Charles Street will provide a significant boost in the retail floorspace available in the town centre. There is scope for further expansion of the primary shopping area for the later phases of the plan period through the redevelopment of land to the west of Trinity Street. The amount of land included within any scheme will be dependent on land assembly costs and scheme viability, together with an appropriate amount of car parking. Creating a stronger frontage on to Trinity Street would be a positive redevelopment benefit. Upper floors of any new development could be suited to a mix of residential and other town centre uses.

DOR 5. FUTURE TOWN CENTRE EXPANSION

- i) Land off Trinity Street, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be the preferred location for future retail expansion of the primary shopping area. Any scheme will need to retain an appropriate amount of public car parking.**

11.4 WEYMOUTH AVENUE BREWERY SITE

11.4.1 The former brewery site and adjoining land at Weymouth Avenue has planning permission for a comprehensive mixed use scheme, and is under construction. A development brief for this site has been produced and many of its guiding principles remain relevant.

DOR 6. WEYMOUTH AVENUE BREWERY SITE

- i) **The former Brewery site and adjoining land at Weymouth Avenue (as shown on the Proposals Map) is an important area linking the town centre to the railway station. The development of the site will be guided by the Weymouth Avenue Development Brief (2004) and will include the delivery of:**
- **a mix of homes, businesses and community facilities, including an arts centre, hotel and limited retail appropriate to its location outside the town centre**
 - **a transport interchange facility to enhance the use of the railway station**
 - **effective open spaces and pedestrian and cycling links through the site and connecting with adjoining areas, including from Dorchester South Station to South Street**

11.5 SITES OFF ST GEORGE'S ROAD AND ALINGTON AVENUE

- 11.5.1 Land at Red Cow Farm off St George's Road has been granted permission for 54 new homes, allotments and 6 light industrial units. The development is dependent on the extension to Lubbecke Way linking it to St. George's Road.

DOR 7. RED COW FARM, ST. GEORGE'S ROAD

- i) **Land at St. George's Road Dorchester is allocated for new homes and employment development. The development will include the provision of an extension of Lubbecke Way linking it into St. George's Road.**

- 11.5.2 Land south of St George's Way, adjoining the bypass, could provide an additional site for housing (subject to suitable noise and odour mitigation from the bypass and nearby sewage treatment works) or employment. There is a woodland belt either side of the bypass, and dense vegetation along the site boundaries with adjoining land. Public rights of way run along the site boundaries linking to the wider network.

DOR 8. LAND SOUTH OF ST GEORGE'S ROAD

- i) **Land South of St George's Road, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing and/or employment use. Any development should not have a significant impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties. A landscape strategy will be required to ensure that there is no significant adverse impact on wider landscape views, and that public rights of way linking to the wider network are retained.**

- 11.5.3 There is also potential for the two areas of undeveloped land south of the railway, off Alington Avenue, to be developed for housing, subject to suitable landscaping and noise mitigation.

DOR 9. LAND OFF ALINGTON AVENUE

- i) **Land off Alington Avenue, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing. A landscape strategy will be required to ensure that there is no significant adverse impact on wider landscape views.**

11.6 DORCHESTER TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT PLAN

- 11.6.1 Traffic through the centre of Dorchester has returned to the same levels experienced before the bypass was opened. With this amount of traffic, there are problems with air pollution (and an Air Quality Management Area has now been designated), conflicts

between vehicles and pedestrians and a knock-on impact on the quality of (and people's experience of) the town centre.

- 11.6.2 A Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan (DTEP) has been devised in consultation with the local community. Its objectives include supporting the economic prosperity of the town, reducing through traffic, and providing a higher quality environment (both in terms of the historic fabric of the town and for pedestrians, cyclists, the elderly and disabled). The reduction in traffic using High East and High West Street is one way in which the air quality issues can be managed. These improvements should be achieved while still making sure that there is accessible car parking for shoppers, residents and essential users, and maintaining access for emergency, servicing and public transport. A simple but quality approach to design is called for, so as not to distract from the high quality historic buildings.
- 11.6.3 Key to its success is the reduction of east-west traffic along High East Street and High West Street, to create opportunities to enhance public space in the town centre. Improvements and changes are also needed at the Top O' Town roundabout, the Fiveways junction at the southern end of South Street, and at the junctions at Maumbury Rings and Great Western Cross. The scheme needs to reflect the needs of both local residents and workers and the needs of the wider rural communities that the town serves, as well as making provision for other visitors to the town.
- 11.6.4 The provision of a new larger park and ride site on the outskirts of the town will help achieve these objectives. A study of traffic movements around the town indicates that, if delivered as a single site (which is more feasible), the site should be located between Monkey's Jump and Stadium roundabouts to capture the main commuting flows. The preferred site is on land to the south of Stadium Roundabout, which is within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, the public interest of delivering the scheme and the lack of suitable, available alternative options outside the designated landscape are considered to be sufficient to justify the allocation within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This may be combined with the provision of adequate roadside facilities for road users of the A35 trunk road, if this can be delivered. Adequate justification of the need for the trunk road service area and its location within the AONB will be required to support any planning application.

DOR 10. DORCHESTER TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT PLAN

- i) The Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan will be implemented in the plan period. Any development that would significantly undermine its delivery will not be permitted.**
- ii) Land to the south of Stadium Roundabout (as shown on the proposals map) is allocated for a park and ride site, and a new trunk road service area.**

12. CROSSWAYS

12.1 INTRODUCTION

12.1.1 Crossways is a large village that has a comparatively short history, developing from a World War 2 fighter base which operated until 1946, and then becoming an important area for sand and gravel extraction. It now has a population of just over 2,260. The village has a range of local services, though their provision has not always kept pace with development. These facilities are also dispersed around the village, and the village lacks a defined centre. Recent development has provided opportunities to improve the local facilities, including a new first school.

12.1.2 Due to the relatively unconstrained nature of the available land around the village, Crossways has the potential for a significant scale of development. Moreton Station within the adjoining parish of Moreton in Purbeck is on the Weymouth to Waterloo rail line and provides an opportunity for public transport accessibility to jobs, shops and services.

VISION FOR CROSSWAYS

12.1.3 In 2031 Crossways:

- will have a reasonable balance of homes, jobs and community facilities
- will have a strong sense of identity and place, as one of the larger Dorset villages, reflecting its unique history
- will have good links to Dorchester, including taking advantage of the opportunities of its proximity to a frequent rail service.

MAIN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

12.1.4 There are a number of sites around Crossways which provide opportunities for significant development. These include:

- **Land to the north** – adjoining the most recent area of development at Woodsford Fields and leading up to the railway line, with the potential to link to the station in the adjoining district of Purbeck.
- **Land to the south-east** – to the east of Warmwell Road. This development has the potential to focus community facilities in a central location. The function of the Warmwell Road within the village will need to be carefully considered.
- **Land to the south-west** – land to the southern side of the link road to Dorchester is more segregated from the heart of the village, but does provide a good location for employment.

12.1.5 Only the site to the south-east has been allocated for development in the plan period to 2031.

12.2 LAND AT CROSSWAYS

12.2.1 Development of land around Crossways provides a unique opportunity to enhance the character of the settlement and provide more of a community focus. The provision of additional employment and community facilities in conjunction with any housing development is important to increase the village's relative self-containment and reduce the need to travel. Development should also take advantage of the village's proximity to the railway line, and provide safer pedestrian and cycle access to it. Following further local consultation, land to the south east of the existing village, on the southern side of the

Warmwell Road, has been identified as the most appropriate location for growth. The development could deliver in the region of 500 new homes and a minimum of 3.5 ha for employment. In terms of the distribution of uses, the area to the north-east is likely to be more suited to employment uses as a Key Employment Site. Opportunities for district heating networks along with other sustainable development issues for the site should be explored through a nationally recognised assessment, such as BREEAM Communities

- 12.2.2 There are internationally protected heathlands in the wider surrounding area and it is essential that sufficient, attractive informal recreational land is available in easy walking distance, through the provision of a strategic network of green spaces, to ensure that any adverse impacts from additional recreational pressure on the sensitive heathland sites are avoided. It will also be necessary to mitigate any impact that the development, and the associated recreational land, upon the setting of the earthworks in Bowley's Plantation which are a Scheduled Monument.
- 12.2.3 Although development in this area can come forward, further work is required to properly plan the development, including the necessary phasing of infrastructure. In addition, there are potentially viable deposits of sand and gravel around Crossways and these will need to be safeguarded from sterilisation by the development. Work will be needed to establish if any viable mineral deposits will be affected and the possibility of prior extraction.
- 12.2.4 On and off-site provision and contributions to community infrastructure will be sought in line with policy COM 1 and secured through a section 106 legal agreement.
- 12.2.5 Cross-boundary cooperation with Purbeck District Council is needed to ensure that the road and rail connections and impact on nearby heathlands is reflected in both local plans.

CRS 1. LAND AT CROSSWAYS

- i) Land at Crossways, as shown on the Proposals Map, will provide for a comprehensive mixed-use development to include new homes, local community facilities and at least 3.5ha of employment land.**
- ii) The development will be required to mitigate any adverse effects upon internationally designated heathlands.**
- iii) The development will be required to incorporate measures to secure effective avoidance and mitigation of any potential adverse effect of additional nutrient loading upon the Poole Harbour internationally designated sites.**
- iv) The development will deliver highway improvements necessary for the development to go ahead. The site should be developed in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan for the village prepared in conjunction with Crossways Parish Council, adjoining parish councils, Dorset County Council, Purbeck District Council, Network Rail and the local community, and agreed by West Dorset District Council. In order to address sustainable development issues, the masterplan will need to be subject to a sustainability assessment, such as a BREEAM Communities Assessment, carried out by a suitably qualified assessor. The masterplan should ensure that:**
 - There is an appropriate mix and layout of uses, including community facilities within the village and there is adequate provision of community infrastructure**
 - the layout secures opportunities to provide improved access and recreational use and promote biodiversity within a network of spaces. This will include the provision and location of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS).**
 - good links to the wider footpath and cycle network are provided through the village. This should include pedestrian/cycle links to Moreton station**

- **the design and layout relates positively to the surrounding area, enhances local character and does not have an adverse impact on the landscape setting of the village or scheduled monuments. Existing hedgerows, trees and woodland within the development are retained where possible and provision for their future retention and management put in place**
- **Sustainable drainage methods are implemented to manage surface water flooding issues and ensure flood risk is not exacerbated elsewhere**
- **the development is appropriately phased**

