

**NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026**

**TRANSPORTATION**

**BACKGROUND PAPER**

**November 2013**

This Background Paper is intended to be read and used in conjunction with the other background papers produced to support the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 - 2026 Part 1.

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# 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This document is one of a number of background papers produced to support the pre-submission publication of Part 1 of the North Dorset Local Plan that sets out the strategic policies for the District for the period 2011 to 2026.
- 1.2 The Local Plan Part 1 has been developed from the draft Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) that was published in March 2010. The Local Plan Part 1 has been drafted to reflect the major reforms to the planning system that have taken place since that document was produced and the recent significant downturn in the economy.
- 1.3 Given these changes, the Council has investigated different ways of delivering positive outcomes for local communities through planning policy and has reassessed the need for future development, particularly housing and employment development.
- 1.4 Public consultation in the autumn of 2012 on key issues for the revision of the Draft Core Strategy took into consideration the reassessed needs and reforms. This consultation included consultation on the Council's Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan which included transportation related elements of infrastructure.
- 1.5 The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 has been prepared having regard to the results of this consultation and all previous consultations, including the responses made to the draft Core Strategy.
- 1.6 The background paper is a working document which will be updated as evidence is acquired and the consultation process proceeds. It is based on previous topic papers that were originally published in 2009 to support the Draft Core Strategy and updated in 2012 to take into account changes to national planning policy, notably through the provisions of the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that was published in 2012.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The NPPF provides guidance for local planning authorities in drawing up plans, but it does not change planning law which still requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>1</sup>. The NPPF must also be taken into account when neighbourhood plans are prepared.
- 2.2 'Grey infrastructure'<sup>2</sup> is a term used to describe the physical works required to support development. Many people view transportation as the most important element within the overall definition of 'grey' infrastructure. While there are other important elements, transportation acts as an easily recognisable link to those elements of infrastructure, whether they are grey, green or social. Many of the issues facing North Dorset stem from its extensive rural nature and the communications, or lack of them, between settlements. As such, transportation in its many forms constitutes a considerable part of the grey infrastructure framework and is therefore the subject of its own background paper.
- 2.3 This background paper therefore provides a specific focus on transportation in North Dorset. It also refers to those parts of the evidence base which informed the spatial policies and also sets out the policy background – at national, regional and local levels – against which the plan was prepared.
- 2.4 The importance of transportation can also be seen in the fact that many of the projects listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan are transportation-related and range right across the District.

### Transportation - the North Dorset Context

- 2.5 The NPPF sees transport policies as having an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives<sup>3</sup>. However, it is appreciated by the Government that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. The Government urges<sup>4</sup> local planning authorities, when preparing local plans, to look to a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use

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<sup>1</sup> Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

<sup>2</sup> Grey infrastructure is defined in terms of the 'constructed' rather than the 'natural' of green infrastructure in Putting the Green in the Grey, Natural Economy North West (2007) and as 'the man-made structures that facilitate transportation, provide housing, and offer services such as water, energy, and telecommunications' in Trees - The Green Infrastructure (IQ Report, Gary Moll (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 29, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 30, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

of sustainable modes of transport.

- 2.6 The NPPF further states that developments likely to generate significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However, this needs to be in the context of policies set out elsewhere in the NPPF, particularly in rural areas<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.7 The Department for Transport (DfT) has also, over the years, published various specific guidance and notes on highways, traffic and transport issues<sup>6</sup>. Such guidance has not been replaced by the NPPF and is still valid.
- 2.8 The spatial strategy of the Local Plan Part 1 reflects guidance previously offered in paragraph 3 of former PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which stated that 'away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling.' While the PPS is no longer extant, the sustainability basis of the guidance put forward is still valid.
- 2.9 Overall, then, planning policies should seek a balance of land uses so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities<sup>7</sup>.

### Population Distribution

- 2.10 North Dorset is an area containing market towns with surrounding villages set within rural hinterlands and has been categorised as 'very rural'<sup>8</sup> in terms of its overall population distribution and settlements. The rurality of North Dorset can be

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<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 34, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012).

<sup>6</sup> For example, DfT's Local Transport Note 1/08 offers guidance on designing traffic management schemes to minimise their impact on the streetscape.

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 37, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012).

<sup>8</sup> The DEFRA classification system uses the following breakdown:

- 'Very rural': if 80% or more of their population live in either rural settlements or market towns. A 'rural settlement' is any settlement of less than 10,000 people and a 'market town' is a settlement of 10,000 to 30,000 people providing certain functions and services to its wider rural hinterland.
- 'Mostly rural': if between 50% and 80% of their population live in rural settlements or market towns. • 'Part rural': if between 26% and 50% of their population live in rural settlements or market towns.
- 'Major urban': if not any of the above but either at least 50% or at least 100,000 of their population live in an urban area with a total population of 750,000 or more.
- 'Large urban': if not any of the above but either at least 50% or at least 50,000 of their population live in an urban area with a total population of 250,000 or more.
- 'Other urban': if not any of the above.

further refined with regard to ‘sparseness’, which also applies to under-populated areas. In this categorisation, North Dorset supports a sufficient population to be classified as 'less sparse'<sup>9</sup> as Figure 1 illustrates. The generally dispersed nature of development and spread of population within the District means that transportation is a particularly important crosscutting issue, with social, economic and environmental impacts. For clarification, the District does not contain any urban area approaching major urban status.

- 2.11 The following figures clearly show that just over 90% of the population live in the four market towns (47.9%) or the numerous villages dotted through the District (42.4%) with only 9.7% living in a 'dispersed' manner. Thus, even the market towns lack the necessary critical mass to promote extensive public transport facilities which could assist in dealing with social, economic or environmental impacts caused by the need to use private transport extensively.

Figure 1: Population Distribution in North Dorset 2009

Rural Population		
Less Sparse		
Town	Village	Dispersed
29,758	26,338	6,012
47.9%	42.4%	9.7%

### Accessibility

- 2.12 In 2008, the Council mapped overall proximity to services across the District. It may be seen from Figure 2 that relative proximity to services is high around the three main towns and in the north-western part of the District where Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and Marnhull (the District’s largest village) are clustered together.
- 2.13 The NPPF recognises<sup>10</sup> that ‘where there are groups of smaller settlements; development in one village may support services in a village nearby’. The map provides a strategic overview of proximity to services, highlighting those areas that are more remote and most dependent on the car or public transport.
- 2.14 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Dorset<sup>11</sup> notes that older people and the disabled are particularly affected by poor levels of accessibility. It also places at

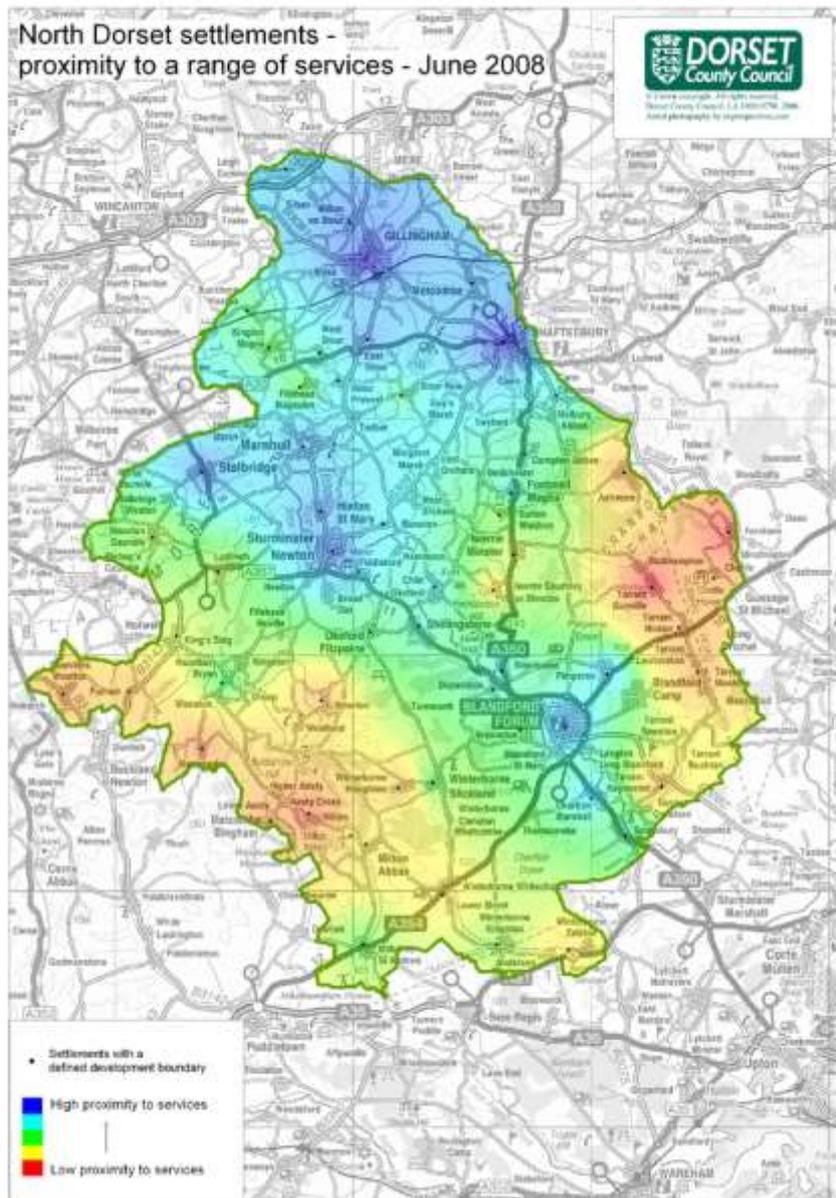
<sup>9</sup> Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs 2009. Settlements of over 10,000 inhabitants are classified as ‘urban’; others are 'town and fringe', 'village or hamlet' and 'dispersed' depending on size, based on residential densities in 1 hectare cells across England and Wales. Density is also used to assess sparseness.

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 55, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>11</sup> Shaping Our Future – Dorset Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020, Dorset Strategic Partnership (November 2010)

a disadvantage the young and adversely affects their ability to access employment, training and leisure opportunities.

Figure 2: Proximity to Services in North Dorset



## Roads

- 2.15 Three large roads traverse the District, namely A30, A350 and A354 while A303 and A31 touch the District in the north and south respectively. These roads are supported by a widespread network of smaller roads to serve North Dorset's settlements. Many of these roads are of restricted width, frequently with bends and hills.
- 2.16 The general character of many of the roads in North Dorset can be surmised from the fact that only 8% of the District's roads are classified as A. Around 8% of the District's roads are of B classification, about 37% are class C and some 45% are

unclassified. Problems created by increasing levels of traffic are compounded by the use of often unsuitable roads: unsuitable by the nature of the roads themselves (narrow, bendy and with obscured sightlines on bends) and by the nature of the traffic using them (commuters, commercial vehicles, buses and large agricultural vehicles and machinery). The combination of these two factors leads to a range of problems, including damage to road surfaces and verges, road safety hazards and congestion.

### Car Ownership

2.17 Car ownership and usage in the District is relatively high outside the towns (Figures 3 and 4), reflecting the dispersed population and the poor provision, or complete lack, of public transport in many parts of the District. While a certain amount of this stems from car dependence, much relates to car reliance, in other words, without a car people cannot travel to work, health facilities and so on<sup>12</sup> easily or at all.

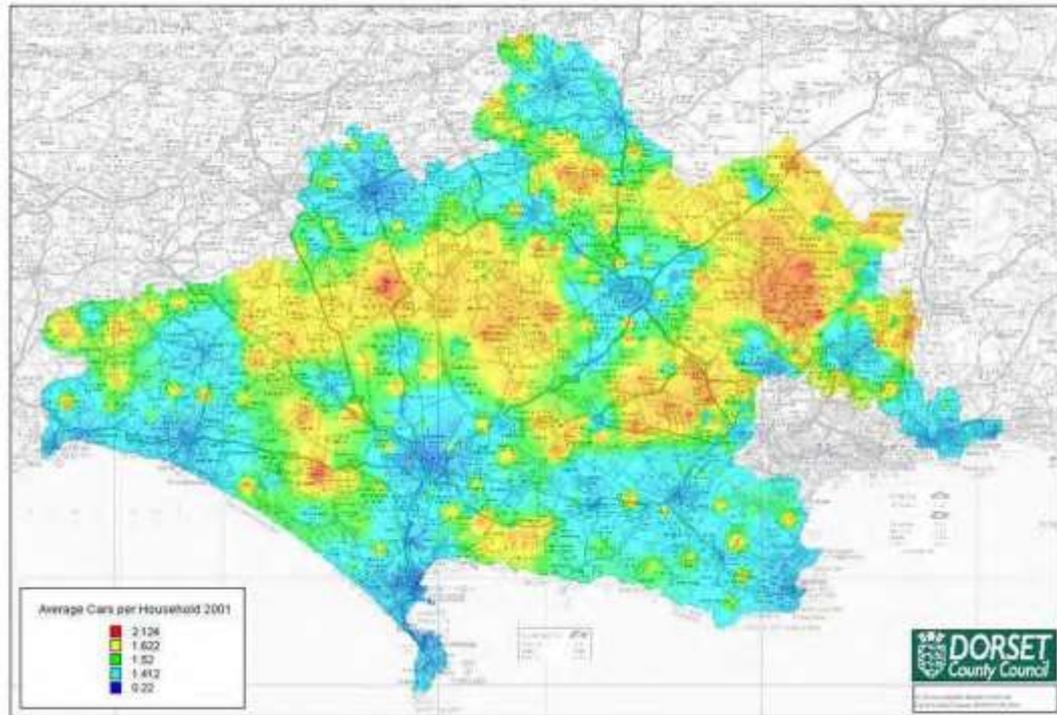
Figure 3: Vehicle Ownership in North Dorset 2001<sup>13</sup>

Number of cars or vans		No car or van	1	2	3	4 or more
Urban		0	0	0	0	0
Rural	Town	73.6%	54.9%	42.9%	39.3%	36.0%
	Village	22.6%	37.6%	45.8%	47.0%	49.7%
	Dispersed	3.7%	7.5%	11.3%	13.6%	14.4%
Total		3,552	11,514	7,848	1,722	606

<sup>12</sup>The Commission for Integrated Transport identifies these two categories of car users - those who have a 'habit' of car use who do not consider other modes of transport and those for whom other modes of transport are impracticable. See Planning for Sustainable Travel, CFIT (October 2009).

<sup>13</sup>Although the 2001 Census figures are now somewhat dated, there is no reason to suppose that the basic distribution of ownership levels has significantly changed.

Figure 4: Average Car Ownership per Household 2001



### Travel to Work and Containment

2.18 The reliance of workers in North Dorset on the private car to travel to work can be inferred from Figure 5, where the relatively high proportion of home working may also reflect the lack of public transport and the increasing costs of private car ownership.

Figure 5: Mode of Travel to Work 2001

Travel to work method	England & Wales		North Dorset	
All people aged 16-74 in employment	23,627,754		<b>28,730</b>	
People who work mainly at or from home	2,170,547	9.19%	<b>4,052</b>	<b>14.10%</b>
Driving a car or van	13,050,529	55.23%	<b>16,667</b>	<b>58.01%</b>
On foot	2,364,633	10.01%	<b>4,583</b>	<b>15.95%</b>
Bus; Mini Bus or coach	1,747,683	7.40%	<b>400</b>	<b>1.39%</b>
Passenger in a car or van	1,477,211	6.25%	<b>1,469</b>	<b>5.11%</b>
Train	964,642	4.08%	<b>256</b>	<b>0.89%</b>
Underground; metro; light rail; Tram	710,083	3.01%	<b>34</b>	<b>0.12%</b>
Bicycle	650,977	2.76%	<b>725</b>	<b>2.52%</b>
Motorcycle; Scooter; moped	258,344	1.09%	<b>302</b>	<b>1.05%</b>
Taxi or minicab	122,478	0.52%	<b>82</b>	<b>0.29%</b>
Other	110,627	0.47%	<b>160</b>	<b>0.56%</b>

- 2.19 Although the 2001 Census showed that about 70% of the working age population both lived and worked in North Dorset, it also showed that North Dorset had a net loss of over 3,000 workers who travelled to work destinations outside the District. These destinations were mainly in other parts of North Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset but commuting to the South East Dorset conurbation from Blandford and the southern part of the District was also an issue. The linked provision of homes, jobs and services was a key element of regional policy. It remains an important issue for North Dorset now that regional policy has been revoked, especially since commuters in North Dorset travel on average further (17 km) than in any other part of Dorset and the South West region (16 km and 14 km respectively).
- 2.20 The containment index<sup>14</sup> for Dorset towns reflects the extent of commuting. It is noticeable that the market towns in North Dorset are grouped together as being relatively less contained than a number of other similarly sized settlements in Dorset.
- 2.21 Generally, transport costs in rural areas bear down proportionally more than in urban areas. In villages and hamlets, transport costs represent 18.4% and 17.7% of total household expenditure compared with 14.5% in urban areas<sup>15</sup>. Given that the gross median weekly earnings in North Dorset are only 80% of the national figure and the second lowest in Dorset<sup>16</sup>, transport costs are clearly a matter of concern.
- 2.22 People living in the most rural areas, including North Dorset, travel 53% further than those living in urban areas, mainly by car. In 2009, only 42% of households in the most rural areas had a regular bus service close by compared to 96% of urban households<sup>17</sup>. Some 17% of members of households in rural areas are likely to face a walk of over 14 minutes to the nearest bus stop which offers a bus at least every hour. This compares with less than 4% of those in towns and larger villages. This situation has worsened in rural areas since 2000, when the figure was 13%.

### Public Transport

- 2.23 Much of Dorset is poorly served by bus routes, apart from services within Dorset's main towns and on key inter-urban routes. Figure 6 shows the paucity of bus services in North Dorset. The District's only railway station is located at Gillingham on the London to Exeter main line.

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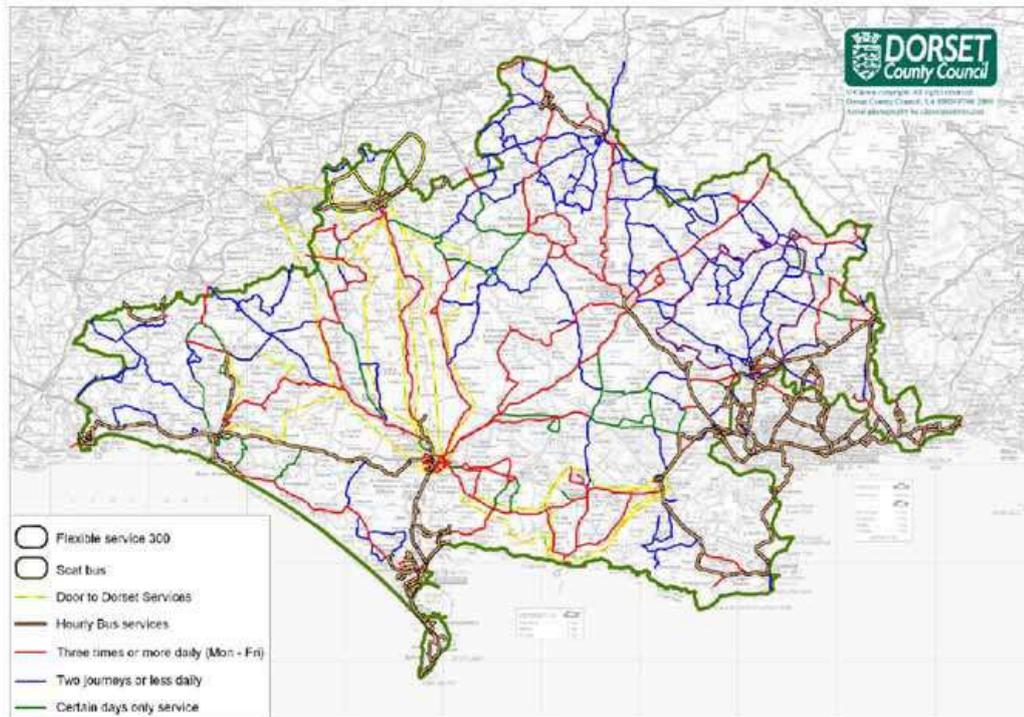
<sup>14</sup> Assessing the Growth of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins Ltd (December 2009)

<sup>15</sup> 'Finding Work in Rural Areas: Bridges and Barriers', S Monk, J Dunn, M Fitzgerald and I Hodge - Joseph Rowntree Foundation (September 1999)

<sup>16</sup> Statistical Digest of Rural England 2012, DEFRA (2012)

<sup>17</sup> Statistical Digest of Rural England 2012, DEFRA (2012)

Figure 6: Bus Services in Rural Dorset



### Traffic Volumes

- 2.24 In terms of volumes of traffic, while North Dorset's roads have seen rising volumes for many years, there has been some local variation in the extents of increases in traffic volumes and, in one or two cases, actual decreases. For example, between 2002 and 2012, A30 east of Shaftesbury saw traffic levels rise by 2% while A350 north of the town saw an increase of 9%. East of Gillingham, B3081 saw the volume of traffic rise by 13% during the period. Blandford experienced a traffic increase of around 3% on the by-pass section of A354 and an increase of 5% was recorded on A357 between Blandford and Sturminster Newton. However, over the ten year period a decrease of 2% on A354 north east of Blandford was recorded.
- 2.25 Use of the rural road C13 as an alternative to the A350 route between Blandford and Shaftesbury has become more noticeable in recent years. Traffic on the former route (C13) increased by 3% between 2002 and 2012 while traffic decreased on the Blandford-Shaftesbury section of A350 by 13%.
- 2.26 The impact of increase in use of the transport network is felt not only in levels of air pollution but in other ways, such as noise and visual intrusion, and sometimes vibration, borne by people living close to major routes and in the countryside. It may also be experienced in the severance of rural communities, the pollution of watercourses by runoff from roads, the disturbance of wildlife and habitats and an increased risk of accidents and additional congestion.

## 3. National, Regional and Local Policies, Strategies and Plans

### National

- 3.1 Key influences in subsequently framing the draft Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 1 are to be found in the NPPF, although other relevant guidance may also be found in publications such as White Papers and Government reports.
- 3.2 Essentially, the NPPF sets out a number of 'core planning principles' which local plans must embrace with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. One of these is to 'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.'<sup>18</sup>
- 3.3 Local plans must address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change within the NPPF's overall guidance. Local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 3.4 As set out in the NPPF, one of the objectives for local planning authorities is to improve the conditions in which people travel by promoting sustainable transport. Consequently, when drawing up local plans, local planning authorities should seek to:
  - take up opportunities for sustainable transport modes in order to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
  - achieve safe and suitable access to sites for all people; and
  - explore whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that in a cost effective manner limit the significant impacts of development.
- 3.5 While stressing that developments which generate significant levels of movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport mode can be maximised, the NPPF refers to the need to support the rural economy by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development in rural areas. The NPPF also implicitly acknowledges that public transport does not extend into all rural areas while the District Council is also aware of the complicated issues surrounding dealing with rural transport needs within its scattered communities and population.
- 3.6 Reference is made in the NPPF to the location and design of new development being accommodating to pedestrian and cycle movements as well as giving access to high quality public transport facilities. The transport needs of people with

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<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

disabilities are also highlighted.

- 3.7 The NPPF looks to travel plans and transport assessments to assist in dealing with new development to ensure that sustainability is properly embraced.
- 3.8 It is stressed in the NPPF that local planning policies should be looking to achieve a balance of land uses so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities. In terms of larger scale developments, policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities, including work, within the area of the development. Key facilities, such as primary schools and local shops, should be located within walking distance of most properties wherever possible.
- 3.9 Parking is also an issue given attention in the NPPF, covering both residential and non-residential parking. In particular, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure.
- 3.10 Where local parking standards for residential and non-residential development are set, local planning authorities should take into account:
- the accessibility of the development;
  - the type, mix and use of development;
  - the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
  - local car ownership levels; and
  - an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.
- 3.11 It is noteworthy that local planning authorities are encouraged to identify and protect where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.
- 3.12 The Department for Transport (DfT) has a number of strategic objectives, one of which is to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, seeking to achieve a fairer society. As a result, DfT is working towards enhancing social inclusion and the regeneration of deprived or remote areas by improving connections with employment opportunities, key local services, social networks and goods. It is doing this with respect to transport infrastructure by seeking improvements in accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability. Legislation, policy and good practice publications range across these areas of concern.
- 3.13 For example, the Traffic Management Act 2004 focusses on efforts to tackle congestion and disruption on the road network. The Act places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the efficient movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities. As well as network management, the Act gives authorities the means to better manage parking, for example.
- 3.14 The DfT also publishes Traffic Advisory Leaflets on a range of matters, including cycling and walking, and Local Transport Notes concerned with issues such as

shared space<sup>19</sup> and Cycle Infrastructure Design. Various Notes are also published by the DfT - Local Transport Note 1/08 offers guidance on designing traffic management schemes to minimise their impact on the streetscape, for example.

- 3.15 Other guidance has also been produced by the Government, such as Manual for Streets<sup>20</sup> and Manual for Streets 2<sup>21</sup> which provide guidance on dealing with all users of streets, not only cars.
- 3.16 A number of other publications have relevance. The Eddington Study<sup>22</sup> found, amongst other things, clear evidence that a comprehensive and high-performing transport system is an important enabler of sustained economic prosperity. Network delays and unreliability have a direct impact on people and businesses. The Study stated that key inter-urban corridors are showing signs of increasing congestion and unreliability. For sustained productivity into the future, transport policy must reflect the economic and structural changes that are shaping the country's transport needs.
- 3.17 In response to the Eddington Study, the Government published 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System'<sup>23</sup> in which five goals were presented:
- supporting economic growth;
  - tackling climate change;
  - contributing to better safety, security and health;
  - promoting equality of opportunity; and
  - improving quality of life.
- 3.18 These goals are all relevant at the local level, especially when elements such as connectivity and accessibility are highlighted. The report acknowledges that there are some tensions between the goals set out and that the maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure will involve some difficult choices. However, it is pointed out that some goals can become more significant in some circumstances than others, such that consideration of local factors will help determine priorities.

## Regional

- 3.19 The former emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) previously provided a draft regional policy framework within which the draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

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<sup>19</sup> 'Shared space' is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians.

<sup>20</sup> Manual for Streets, DCLG and DfT (2007)

<sup>21</sup> Manual for Streets 2, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (September 2010).

<sup>22</sup> The Eddington Transport Study- Transport's Role in Sustaining the UK's Productivity and Competitiveness, DfT (December 2006)

<sup>23</sup> Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, DfT (November 2008)

drew out transportation elements. Following the abolition of regional planning, the RSS will not now be taken forward to adoption. Nevertheless, much of the evidence that underpinned the draft policies remains relevant.

- 3.20 In the former emerging RSS, Policy SD4 'Sustainable Communities' stated, most notably, that growth and development should be planned and managed so as to create and maintain sustainable communities by:
- Linking the provision of homes, jobs and services based on role and function so that cities, towns and villages and groups of places have the potential to become more self-contained and the need to travel is reduced; and
  - Promoting a step change in public transport, taking steps to manage demand for travel, and promoting public transport.
- 3.21 The NPPF effectively restates the essence of this broad view:
- 'Local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development...'<sup>24</sup>
- 3.22 Aspects of policies and key parts of policies in the draft RTS still have relevance to North Dorset, especially:
- Corridor Management - making provision to manage the demand for long distance journeys and reduce the impacts of local trips on corridors of regional importance, in order to improve the reliability and resilience of journey times and to develop opportunities to facilitate a modal shift; and
  - Parking - implementing measures to reduce reliance on the car and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. To this end, relevant plans and strategies should include policies and proposals for parking standards relating to parking provision and parking charges.
- 3.23 A report on connectivity<sup>25</sup> was published in 2009 which the former South West Regional Assembly<sup>26</sup> had commissioned to examine the close relationship between economic prosperity and the transport network. It followed an earlier report prepared for the Regional Development Association<sup>27</sup> which concluded on the basis of the evidence collated during this research that inter-regional connectivity is more important to economic growth in the South West than intra-regional connectivity.

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<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 31, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>25</sup> Connectivity Problems, Challenges and Issues for the Region - Unlocking Economic Potential via Improved Connectivity, South West Regional Assembly (March 2009)

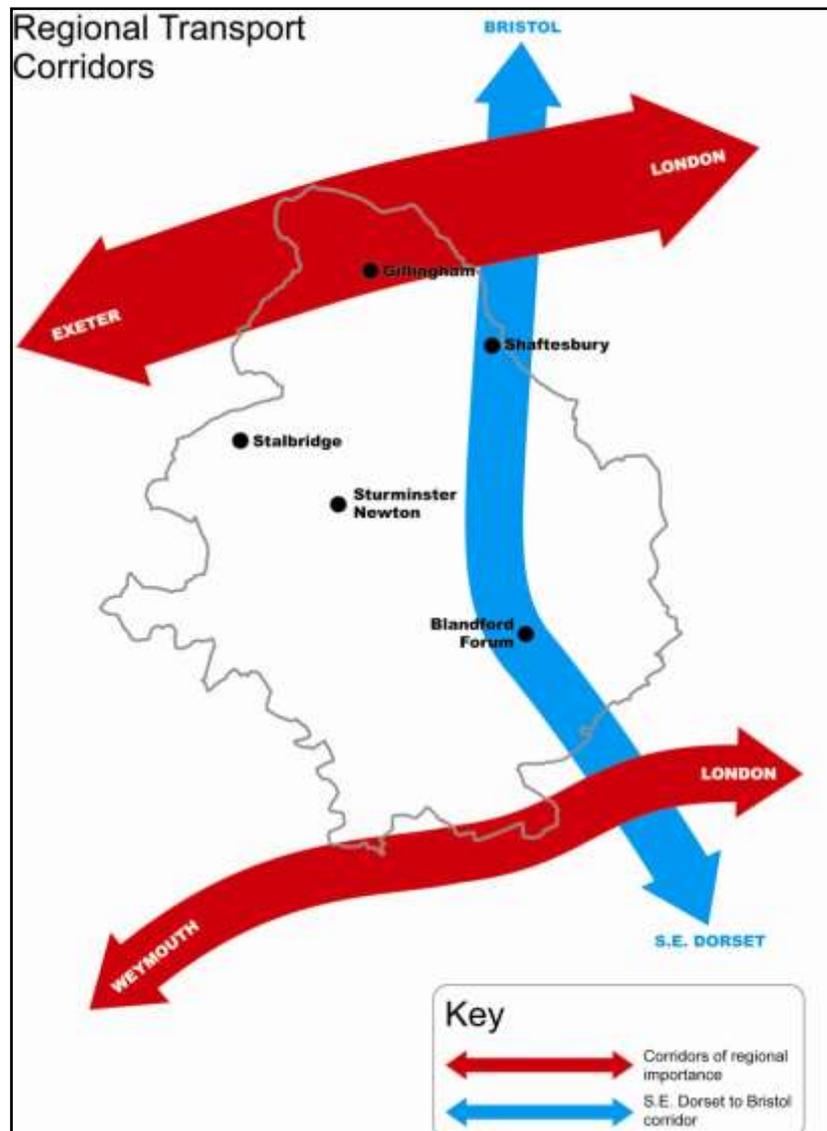
<sup>26</sup> The Regional Assembly was abolished in May 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Intra-regional Connectivity in the South West - Final Report, South West of England Regional Development Association (April 2005)

3.24 The study identified a number of regionally significant transport corridors in the region, two of which affect North Dorset, as shown in Figure 7:

- The Exeter – London (via Taunton and/or Salisbury) Corridor which includes the A303 (which passes across the very northern edge of the District at Bourton) and the Exeter to London Waterloo railway line (which passes through Gillingham). The A30 (which passes through Shaftesbury) lies just to the south of these two main routes; and
- The Weymouth – London (via South East Dorset) Corridor which includes the A31 (touching the very southern edge of the District at Winterborne Zelston) and the A35 (which runs just outside the District to the south of Milborne St. Andrew).

Figure 7: Major Transport Corridors affecting North Dorset



- 3.25 The 2009 report acknowledged the South East Dorset to Bristol Corridor as one of three highway links of importance connecting the Bournemouth/Poole area with the M4 corridor and Bristol. It is also identified in the North and north East Dorset Transport Study<sup>28</sup> as an important north-south route, particularly for freight.
- 3.26 A report prepared for South West Councils<sup>29</sup> found that in terms of accessing jobs and training, the second most important barrier facing people in rural areas is transport, mainly the provision and availability of public transport. The issue of accessibility to employment, goods and services, as well as leisure and the importance of transport infrastructure, is also highlighted in the Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy (DSCS) (see below).

## County and Local

### Dorset Sustainable Communities Strategy

- 3.27 The DSCS<sup>30</sup> set the community framework for the draft Core Strategy, which was prepared to be in close alignment with the priorities set out in the DSCS. The Strategy seeks better access to services, employment and leisure and sees improvements to the County's transport infrastructure as key to achieving that objective. The Strategy also wishes to encourage greater use of alternatives to the private car.
- 3.28 The DSCS Strategy highlights a number of issues, including:
- the poor standard of north-south routes;
  - congestion on the main routes crossing North Dorset, in part due to long stretches of single carriageway road;
  - the limited nature of the bus network in the rural and some urban parts of the County and the fact that it is beyond the resources available to the County Council to provide a frequent, high quality, countywide, bus service;
  - use of the private car still being the main means by which Dorset people get to work;
  - low levels of self-containment in some settlements, resulting in high volumes of commuter traffic;
  - the location of services affecting accessibility as well as the availability of transport; and
  - the environmental impact of roads such as A350 on the villages through which it passes.

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<sup>28</sup> North and north East Dorset Transport Study, Buro Happold (November 2008 to November 2011)

<sup>29</sup> Significance of Transport Availability and Cost in Limiting Access to Jobs and Training, Fauber Mansell for SW Regional Assembly (May 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Shaping Our Future: The Community Strategy for Dorset 2010 - 2020, Dorset Strategic Partnership (November 2010).

### South East Dorset Strategy

- 3.29 The South East Dorset Strategy<sup>31</sup> was drawn up particularly to assist in the formulation of the South West Regional Strategy. It was supported by a number of technical papers which focussed on certain key issues. These included Transportation<sup>32</sup> and Commuting<sup>33</sup>. While relating primarily to the urban areas of Poole and Bournemouth, it took into account the close relationship with North Dorset via the important highway links which exist between the two areas, principally A350, and the economic relationship which is reflected in commuting patterns between North Dorset and the conurbation.

### Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan

- 3.30 The Local Transport Plan (LTP), prepared by the County Council and Bournemouth and Poole unitary authorities, is of significance in setting out the authorities' local transport strategies and policies together with an implementation programme. The current LTP<sup>34</sup> (known as LTP3) is for the 15 year period 2011-2026. It is through LTP3 that many of North Dorset's transport policy objectives will be achieved. LTP3 sets a number of goals under the overarching core principle of sustainability which echo the DfT's goals in Delivering a Sustainable Transport System<sup>35</sup>:

- economic growth;
- reduction in carbon emissions;
- equality of opportunity;
- improved safety, security and health; and
- improved quality of life for residents.

- 3.31 These priorities will be tackled by, amongst other things, widening choice, improving infrastructure, managing demand and making better use of existing assets. LTP3 has been developed within the framework of the core strategies and local plans which Districts in Dorset are developing to set out a complementary strategy by:

- reducing the need to travel;
- managing and maintaining the existing network more efficiently;
- enhancing choices for active travel and 'greener' travel;
- providing realistic public transport alternatives to the private car;

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<sup>31</sup> South East Dorset Strategy (November 2006), Bournemouth Borough, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Councils

<sup>32</sup> South East Dorset Strategy (November 2006) - Technical Paper SED08 Transportation, Bournemouth Borough, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Councils

<sup>33</sup> Dorset (Excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan, Dorset County Council (April 2011) - referred to as LTP3

<sup>34</sup> Dorset (Excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan, Dorset County Council (April 2011)

<sup>35</sup> Delivering a Sustainable Transport System, DfT (November 2008)

- car parking;
- making travel safer; and
- improving the strategic transport infrastructure.

3.32 The problems and challenges facing Dorset are set out in LTP3 in some detail, especially in terms of accessibility and use of the private car allied to the provision of public transport. In particular, measures are proposed to increase accessibility in the area and increase/improve alternatives to the private car. A suite of supporting strategy documents, covering topics such as rural transport and road safety, underpins LTP3.

3.33 LTP3 contains 3 year implementation plans<sup>36</sup> which detail the programmes for schemes to deliver the strategy. In the first period, programmes involving North Dorset include:

- improving rail-bus integration (with particular reference to Gillingham station);
- supporting rural and market town bus services;
- improving rural accessibility;
- improving rural footways, cycle ways and the Trailway;
- reducing road casualties; and
- maintaining highways.

### **Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership**

3.34 The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership<sup>37</sup> (LEP) includes within its aims and objectives the intention to improve accessibility and infrastructure, including north-south transport links. One of the LEP's objectives is to improve physical connectivity across the County. An increasingly strong relationship is likely to develop between the work of the LEP and the LTP, in both financial and strategic planning contexts.

### **North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan**

3.35 The current Local Plan<sup>38</sup>, adopted to 2011 but with many of its policies now 'saved', included a number of aims and objectives relating to transportation which look:

- to seek adequate and safe highways, including provision for walking, cycling and public transport;

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<sup>36</sup> The 3 year Implementation Plans each sets out a three-year programme of actions and schemes which link the LTP priorities with available financial resources for delivery, including the LTP funding allocation from government. Indicators and targets will monitor the performance of delivery.

<sup>37</sup> Set up in June 2011 embracing Dorset County Council and the unitary authorities of Poole and Bournemouth.

<sup>38</sup> North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (First Revision), North Dorset District Council (January 2003)

- to minimise the need to travel by locating services and employment opportunities in existing local centres, thereby protecting and enhancing the viability and utility of these centres;
- to locate development relative to the highway and public transport network.

### Local Studies

- 3.36 The Council has been a partner in three key studies sponsored by the County Council as Highway Authority. A number of other studies are also relevant.

#### North and north East Dorset Transport Study

- 3.37 The first of these, the North and north East Dorset Transport Study<sup>39</sup>, forms part of the preparatory work which will inform the preparation of local plans. Taking into account likely amounts of new residential development and its location, the Study identifies issues especially relating to accessibility, car usage, commuting and settlement self-containment, parking, public transport and road capacities (both physical and environmental). Consideration of these leads to a set of recommendations intended to enable the transport network in Dorset to begin to adapt to the levels of growth anticipated to 2026 and beyond. These recommendations relate to demand management, utilisation of the highway network, public transport, and walking and cycling.

#### Dorset Residential Car Parking Study

- 3.38 The second study, the Dorset Residential Car Parking Study<sup>40</sup>, examines residential parking in Dorset and likely demand to 2026, leading to the development of appropriate parking standards to use when assessing new development.

#### A350 Corridor Study

- 3.39 The A350 Corridor Study, the third study, was completed in 2006<sup>41</sup> and aimed to determine appropriate transport policies for the improvement of the A350 Corridor and to mitigate the impacts on the local communities as a result of the growth in the volume and weight of traffic using the route. To a large extent, the A350 Study has now been overtaken by the North and north East Dorset Transport Study. Most of the councils and the road user groups consulted in the A350 Study were in favour of constructing the Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall and Sturminster Marshall and the Outer Eastern Shaftesbury bypasses and an upgraded C13 with Melbury Abbas bypass. However, as A350 has, to date, not been considered to be a strategic route, funding for improvements has not been available; neither has funding been

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<sup>39</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: various documents, Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (November 2008 to November 2011)

<sup>40</sup> The Dorset Residential Car Parking Study, Dorset County Council (March 2010)

<sup>41</sup> The A350 Corridor Study, Buro Happold (2007)

available for the construction of by-passes.

- 3.40 The location and design of new developments will be crucial in promoting sustainable transport and accessibility to employment and services. The Commission for Integrated Transport sees the location of activities - homes, workplaces, health and other facilities - as acting as the physical 'structuring framework' for travel<sup>42,43</sup>.

### The Gillingham Study

- 3.41 In 2009, the Council partnered the County Council in a study of Gillingham<sup>44</sup> to assess the potential of the town to accommodate new development to 2026 and beyond, where accessibility is an important element of the study. The future growth scenarios developed within the study significantly reflected transportation and accessibility matters.
- 3.42 The Strategic Site Allocation at Gillingham has transportation implications which were first identified in 2009 in the Gillingham Study<sup>45</sup>. The report, prepared by Atkins Ltd, looked at a number of highways and transportation related matters around the issue of the expansion of Gillingham. If the town were to be significantly expanded, the report suggested that there would be a need to address north-south linkages as key junctions (including the New Road junction) would become congested. In addition, the capacity of the B3081 towards Shaftesbury would require improvement to accommodate additional trips. This could be remedied by implementing the Enmore Green road improvement to link B3081 to A30. The link at Enmore Green would encourage its use as an alternative to A303.

### North Dorset Local Accessibility Study

- 3.43 In 2010 the Council produced the North Dorset Local Accessibility Study<sup>46</sup>, which examined the accessibility of local services and facilities across the District. This showed that there are some parts of the District which are quite remote from services and poorly served by public transport in accessing services.

### Dorset Rural Roads Protocol

- 3.44 The rural parts of the District are embraced by the Dorset Rural Roads Protocol<sup>47</sup> which emerged from the publication of Reclaiming Our Rural Highways<sup>48</sup>. It sets out

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<sup>42</sup> Planning for Sustainable Travel, CFIT (October 2009)

<sup>43</sup> 'Planning for a more effective location and form of development is at the heart of the challenge to achieve sustainable travel': Planning for Sustainable Travel, CFIT (October 2009)

<sup>44</sup> Developing a Vision for the Growth of Gillingham, Atkins Ltd for Dorset County Council (December 2009)

<sup>45</sup> Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham, Dorset, Atkins (December 2009)

<sup>46</sup> North Dorset Local Accessibility Study, North Dorset District Council (March 2010)

<sup>47</sup> Dorset Rural Roads Protocol, Dorset County Council (April 2008)

<sup>48</sup> Reclaiming Our Rural Highways, Dorset AONB Partnership (2005)

the way in which road management will respect the nature of rural roads in their landscape and streetscape settings together with their function in serving and connecting settlements in a more local and intimate way as well as catering for longer-distance travellers.

## 4. Issues Arising from Stakeholder and Community Consultations

### Consultation 2007 – ‘Issues and Options’

- 4.1 The community’s views on the key issues arising out of the national and the then emerging regional policy framework were first sought when the Council undertook consultation on the issues and options<sup>49</sup> for a ‘stand-alone’ Core Strategy in June – July 2007. The consultation issues and options discussions were based on the draft RSS, which was published in June 2006.
- 4.2 The question was posed ‘How can poor transport infrastructure and high reliance on private cars be addressed?’ Other issues raised included the impact of the design of residential developments on choice of transport, (that is, whether specifically designing for pedestrians and cyclists, for example, will reduce the use of the car) and how much car parking should be provided.
- 4.3 Many people commented in this consultation to transport related questions and issues, most notably regarding the highway network. It was suggested that road character is a particular issue in the AONBs and the potential difficulties in reconciling the conservation and enhancement of the landscape with transport demands should be included. There were also many views on the main roads of the District. For example, it was felt that the spatial portrait should reflect the fact that there is no alternative to A350 and the needs of traffic using the route should be recognised. It was also suggested that A350 did not merit the development priority given it in recent years by the County and District authorities. It was also suggested that the importance of the A357 as an alternative to the A350 in accessing the A303 should be mentioned, along with the numerous bends on that road. Reference to A354 as a route between Dorchester, Blandford and Salisbury was also felt to be worthy of inclusion in the spatial portrait, especially as it acts as a route for residents in the north-east of the district to reach Salisbury.
- 4.4 There was some concern that the draft vision for the plan did not make sufficiently strong reference to transport and in various references to other topics suggestions were made concerning public transport and sustainable transport options. Extended use of the Trailway was highlighted.

### Consultation 2010 – The Draft Core Strategy

- 4.5 Further consultation was undertaken in March 2010 on ‘The New Plan for North Dorset’, embracing the draft core strategy and development management policies for the District. A large number of responses covered a wide variety of issues, of

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<sup>49</sup> Core Strategy: Issues and Alternative Options, North Dorset District Council (June 2007)

which transport infrastructure and transportation issues figured large, and many concerns echoed those of the 2007 consultation exercise.

- 4.6 The topics provoking responses included parking provision and management as well as the number of large vehicles using rural roads. Traffic congestion at certain times in the market towns was also raised as an issue, often in conjunction with parking, as was the volume of traffic on certain through routes.
- 4.7 The lack of public transport in the rural parts of the District was a continuing major concern to many people. This related to routes and frequency of service, and to actual timings in some cases, where outward and return journeys did not allow sufficient time for shopping or other activities<sup>50</sup> to be undertaken satisfactorily or included large amounts of waiting time. Integrated timetabling for trains/buses was raised as an issue together with better interchange facilities and opportunities.
- 4.8 There was a general concern about the need to discourage use of the private car, provide appropriate car parking and a desire to see better cycling facilities.

## Consultation 2012 – Key Issues

- 4.9 The Draft Core Strategy contained a Section devoted to grey, social and green infrastructure provision and supporting policies reflecting the Council’s intention to ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure to underpin new development.
- 4.10 Subsequently, the Council prepared the North Dorset Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), Consultation Draft in 2012, publishing it for consultation in October 2012. The IDP is a supporting document for the Local Plan Part 1 and, in essence, discusses and puts forward what is considered as the extra infrastructure necessary to support the proposals in the Local Plan. Transportation featured significantly in this document and it contains a number of transportation related projects.
- 4.11 The consultation on key issues undertaken in November 2012 included three questions specifically seeking comment on the IDP Consultation Draft. The questions asked (in the overall sequence of questions) were:
- **Question 17:** Do you agree with the level of significance assigned to different types of infrastructure, as set out in Appendix A of the draft IDP Background Paper?
  - **Question 18:** Is the information relating to the specific projects identified in Appendix B of the draft IDP Background Paper correct? In particular do you agree with the significance assigned to individual projects (i.e. critical, essential, necessary or desirable) and do you have any comments on the information relating to funding, phasing and the lead delivery agencies identified?

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<sup>50</sup> Hospital appointments were particularly mentioned.

- **Question 19:** Are there any new or additional projects (that are needed to support growth) that should be included in Appendix B of the draft IDP Background Paper?

4.12 While responses were sought in terms of all aspects of infrastructure, views and comments were received in connection with particular transportation elements. These suggested that highways and transportation are basically priority matters, especially given the possibility of development at Crown Meadows in Blandford Forum and its relationship to the one-way system in the town. Responses relating to transportation matters included the widespread view that walking and cycling facilities are more significant infrastructure elements than simply 'desirable' (which is the category of significance assigned to them in the draft IDP) and should be seen as 'essential'. Road safety infrastructure was also viewed by some as 'essential' as was public transport.

## 5. Issues Arising from the Evidence Base

- 5.1 The previous versions of this background paper (published as the Transportation Topic Paper) provided evidence on population, facilities and accessibility to assist the Council's response to the challenge of applying the regional 'spatial hierarchy' to North Dorset. Since the Draft Core Strategy was produced in March 2010, national policy has changed considerably, the abolition of regional planning means that the emerging RSS is no longer being taken forward and neighbourhood planning has been introduced<sup>51</sup>.
- 5.2 The NPPF states that developments likely to generate significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However, this needs to be in the context of policies set out elsewhere in the NPPF, particularly in rural areas<sup>52</sup>.
- 5.3 The Government urges local planning authorities, when preparing local plans, to look to a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.<sup>53</sup> However, it is appreciated by the Government that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Overall, though, planning policies should seek a balance of land uses so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.<sup>54</sup>
- 5.4 Transportation and all other aspects of infrastructure cannot be considered in isolation and other background papers<sup>55</sup> address the matter of the location of new development and the need to relate it properly to the transport network. Policies in the Local Plan Part 1 reflect the clear linkage of new homes, jobs and travel and deal with the location of new development, public transport and the encouragement of non-car modes of transport.

### Accessibility

- 5.5 The outstanding issue involving movement and travel within the District is that of accessibility, most notably to employment, services (especially medical facilities), education and leisure facilities.
- 5.6 In North Dorset, travel needs to be addressed in terms of:

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<sup>51</sup> At the time of writing, 6 neighbourhood plans are being progressed in North Dorset.

<sup>52</sup> Paragraph 34, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>53</sup> Paragraph 30, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>54</sup> Paragraph 37, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

<sup>55</sup> Particularly relevant are the Background Papers dealing with the Spatial Strategy, Economy, Housing and Infrastructure.

- sub-regional movements, that is, journeys crossing the District boundary;
- district movements, where trips are made between the settlements of North Dorset; and
- local movements within and around the towns and villages of North Dorset.

5.7 There are particular segments of the population and certain parts of the District which are particularly affected by poor accessibility. Low population densities in parts of North Dorset make it uneconomical to run traditional public transport services and so innovative approaches must be adopted to tackle problems of accessibility.

## Movement

5.8 Sub-regional road movements primarily affect the A303, A30, A31 and A350 but also, to a lesser extent, the A354 and A357 / A3030 routes. Longer distance trips can also be made by rail from Gillingham to Yeovil, Salisbury and beyond. However, these routes (road and rail) are unlikely to be significantly enhanced over the next 20 years, even though parts of the A31 and A303 will exceed their capacities within this timeframe. Improvements to the A303 are not envisaged by the Highway Agency, although the Council has urged<sup>56</sup> the Agency to upgrade a section of the road to dual carriageway standard. Somerset County Council is also currently promoting a 'corridor improvement package' for A303/A358/A30.

5.9 The capacity of the rail line passing through Gillingham has been improved to some extent in recent years through the construction of a 'passing loop' in the Axminster / Chard area. However, the major upgrade which would result from the dual tracking of the railway is unlikely to take place in the foreseeable future<sup>57</sup>.

5.10 Growth in the District, particularly at Gillingham, will need to be planned with regard to the regional approach to transport and the likelihood that the major regional routes affecting North Dorset will not be significantly upgraded. Demand management will need to try and reduce pressure on the regional routes and make the best use of more local transport networks, where possible.

5.11 The District's main roads still have some capacity<sup>58</sup> to meet forecast demand to 2026, both technical (carrying) and environmental. However, there are 'pinch points' which restrict overall capacity (for example narrow highways and buildings

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<sup>56</sup> The Council resolved on 30 January 2009 to call on the Highways Authority to dual the A303 trunk road between Mere and Wylve and also urged Dorset County Council and Wiltshire County Council to make representations to this effect.

<sup>57</sup> Connecting Local Communities: Route Plans 2009 – Route 4 – Wessex Routes, produced by Network Rail in March 2009 states that 'The expectation that both passenger and freight demand will double in the next 30-year period from 2007 will most likely be met on Strategic Route 4 by the operation of longer trains, or by exploiting paths which are not currently utilised, rather than by significant enhancements to infrastructure'.

<sup>58</sup> The North and north East Dorset Transport Study: Working towards a Transport Strategy, Buro Happold for Dorset County Council (March 2010)

close to the road in locations such as the B3092 in Sturminster Newton and the A357 through Stalbridge). Increases in traffic levels will need careful management to deal with these issues.

## Reducing Levels of Car Use

- 5.12 Travel demand between and within settlements can be reduced if settlements are more self-contained and better meet their residents needs in terms of employment opportunities and service and educational facilities. This needs to be supported by clear increases in the provision and promotion of public transport within and between settlements, requiring a step change in public transport operations which is difficult to foresee in current economic circumstances.
- 5.13 While settlement self-containment is a longstanding objective, it can only be achieved if genuine alternatives to the private motor vehicle exist. Apart from public transport, the provision of safe and convenient cycle routes, for example, will assist while pedestrian routes which are also safe and convenient are required within settlements to encourage people to walk.

## Public Transport

- 5.14 Managing travel demand will be key to achieving more sustainable transport patterns in North Dorset. Car ownership levels usage levels in the District reflect the rural nature of North Dorset and also the limited provision of public transport. In terms of movements between settlements, public transport provision is critical in encouraging people not to use their cars.
- 5.15 The NPPF sets out a number of 'core planning principles' which Local Plans must embrace with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. One of these is to 'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable'<sup>59</sup>.
- 5.16 Public transport, particularly buses, can provide an alternative to the car for trips between towns and to key destinations within towns, such as town centres, major employment sites and schools. Public transport is also important in rural areas, particularly for those without other means of accessing facilities. However, in many cases the viability of the public transport service is an issue.
- 5.17 The operation of public transport serving North Dorset has (2012/13) been examined by Dorset County Council and the outcome of this review is likely to have implications for the future provision of bus services in the District. In particular, it is likely that 'demand responsive transport' solutions, such as building on existing

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<sup>59</sup> Paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012)

solutions such as the NORDCAT<sup>60</sup> scheme will be promoted as a way of improving rural public transport services. These could include more innovative and co-ordinated solutions, such as the development of Community Travel Exchange Hubs, which could help bring services to rural settlements and enable residents to travel to other services and facilities outside their village.

- 5.18 Reductions in 'traditional' services providers means that increasing emphasis is being placed on other means of providing transport to those without access to a car or who do not wish to use a car. Such alternatives need to be explored and accommodated into travel patterns if use of the private car is to be curtailed and accessibility is to be improved for those without use of a car. In addition, the Council will continue working with the County Council and Network Rail to further enhance Gillingham Railway Station as a transport hub serving Gillingham and the surrounding area.

## Freight Movement

- 5.19 The impact of freight movement and planning for freight movement is important. Freight movements are dominated by road transport<sup>61</sup> and although rail freight has increased significantly over the last decade, road freight is still dominant. Around 70% of road freight has its origin and destination within the same region and, with a relatively limited rail network in Dorset as a whole and only Gillingham station in North Dorset, there is little opportunity for modal shift.
- 5.20 The use by large commercial vehicles on the smaller rural roads in the North Dorset highway network can cause problems by increasing damage to road surfaces and verges and by creating congestion on narrow roads. Road safety implications are also important, most especially on narrow rural roads without footways. Consequently, freight routing is an issue in the District.

## Travel Plans

- 5.21 Travel Plans (TPs) offer a means of managing demand and are often one of the outcomes of a Transport Assessment (TA). TPs<sup>62</sup> are an important tool for delivering sustainable transport to new development, whatever the use, and help to combat over-dependency on cars by promoting alternatives to single occupancy car use. When considering planning applications involving a significant number of employees or visitors or applications for sites not well served by public transport,

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<sup>60</sup> North Dorset Community Accessible Transport is a charitable organisation which provides a dial-a-ride door-to-door service in the North Dorset area primarily for the elderly, disable and socially excluded. It has vehicles based in Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.

<sup>61</sup> Network Analysis of Freight Traffic, MDS Transmodal Ltd for DfT (September 2009)

<sup>62</sup> The main types of Travel Plan (TP) are Workplace TPs and Residential TPs and can include measures such as car sharing schemes, a commitment to improve cycling facilities, a dedicated bus service or restricted car parking allocations.

the Council will be looking for developers to submit an appropriate TP (or TP Statement) with their application which fully assesses the existing and future role of public transport in relation to the development.

## Car Parking

- 5.22 The availability and location of car parking has a major influence on the choice of mode of transport, even in locations well served by public transport. Accordingly, managing car parking is important to encourage public transport, walking and cycling to take priority when people consider how to make different trips.
- 5.23 The number and type of spaces in off-street car parks and the time for which they can be occupied need to be carefully organised. On-street spaces also need to be similarly managed so that there is appropriate accessibility and turnover. Many car parks in the District are owned and managed either by the Council or by other public bodies. A strategy will be developed to achieve a more effective and sustainable use of this resource.

## 6. North Dorset Local Plan Part 1

6.1 The revised sustainable development strategy for North Dorset, as it relates to transportation:

- has regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development in NPPF;
- reflects the new, less rigid 'higher level' policy framework and the localism agenda;
- accords with the NPPF which seeks to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable;
- is based on evidence studies that identify Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the District's main towns.

6.2 In summary, the strategic policies relevant to transportation are noted below.

### Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

6.3 This sets out how the Council will take decisions in the context of 'the presumption' and the supporting text provides guidance on how this will be applied in North Dorset.

### Policy 2 – Core Spatial Strategy

6.4 This policy establishes the 'core spatial strategy' for North Dorset. It identifies Blandford (Forum and St Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton as the key strategic settlements in the District and seeks to concentrate the vast majority of the District's growth at these 'four main towns'. It also establishes that outside the four main towns' development will be more strictly controlled with an emphasis on meeting local and essential needs.

6.5 One of the consequences of this policy should be that movements between settlements, both within and without the District, are restrained.

### Policy 13 - Grey Infrastructure

6.6 The policy most closely associated with transportation is that relating to grey infrastructure (Policy 13). This addresses many of the key issues already outlined. It seeks to develop a more sustainable approach to transport in North Dorset by:

- managing demand in the Exeter to London corridor associated with the proposed growth at Gillingham;
- making effective use of the existing route network including improvements to traffic flows at 'pinch points' and key junctions as well as schemes to improve environmental quality on busy routes or to improve road safety;
- using Transport Assessments and Transport Statements to assess the impact of new development on the existing highway network, clarify its consequences and put forward mitigation measures;

- seeking public transport improvements, especially to bus services;
- improving walking and cycling facilities in the main towns and in rural areas, particularly between villages and nearby towns;
- completing the North Dorset Trailway as a strategic walking and cycling route; and
- developing appropriate and effective parking standards and guidance.

## Policies 16 - 19: Town Policies

6.7 For each of the four main towns (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton) there is a separate policy that broadly identifies the location for future housing and other uses such as employment (Policies 16 to 19). There is also a Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) for the southern extension of Gillingham (Policy 21). These policies each contain segments focussed on the provision of grey infrastructure which embraces the following significant investment in transportation related schemes:

- the provision and enhancement of walking and cycling links within Blandford between residential areas and key destinations, such as the town centre, employment sites, schools and other community facilities;
- the provision and enhancement of public transport, cycling and walking links between Blandford and nearby villages (and Blandford Camp);
- the improvement and extension of the North Dorset Trailway along, or close to, the route of the former Somerset and Dorset railway line for cycling and walking;
- a new link road between B3081 and B3092 through Gillingham SSA to the south of the town;
- the enhancement of Gillingham Railway Station as a public transport hub and the improvement of the Town Centre's pedestrian and cycle links with the railway station and Waitrose;
- the provision of a new road link from B3081 to A30 at Enmore Green, north of Shaftesbury;
- improved walking and cycling links between Shaftesbury Town Centre and residential development to the east of the town;
- improved walking and cycling links between Sturminster Newton Town Centre and new developments;
- the extension of the North Dorset Trailway to the north west of Sturminster Newton, including the provision of a pedestrian / cycle bridge over the River Stour; and
- the improvement of pedestrian / cycle links between Sturminster and North Dorset Business Park.

## Policy 20 – The Countryside

- 6.8 The Core Spatial Strategy (Policy 2) establishes that in the countryside (including Stalbridge and all the villages) the focus is on meeting local, rather than strategic, needs. The emphasis of the countryside policy is on restraint, which will not encourage increased numbers of car journeys on the road network.

## Development Management Policies

- 6.9 The development management policies in the Local Plan Part 1 form part of the strategic policy framework. They provide more detail for decision making in relation to particular issues and assessing the acceptability of certain types of development. Policy 23 deals with the provision of parking in relation to proposals for development, establishing standards and guidance that ensure adequate and appropriate parking is provided for cars, motorcycles and other vehicles.

## 7. Implementing Policies

7.1 Implementation of the Council's transportation-related policies will be carried out by a number of means, chief of which are:

- Planning conditions. The use of planning conditions to achieve planning objectives is well established and a key element of policy implementation;
- Planning obligations. Improvements to transport infrastructure and public transport provision can be achieved by careful use of planning obligations;
- Negotiation with developers. In the course of pre-application discussions, the LPA can influence new development schemes at an early stage to achieve more sustainable patterns of transport;
- Fully assessing development impact. Preparation of Travel Plans and Travel Assessments can help raise awareness of transport issues and achieve more sustainable transport. They can also encourage developers to properly consider the transport impact of their proposals as part of the overall design process;
- Parking control/management. The application of on and off-street parking controls, including charges, can encourage the use of public transport;
- Traffic management. Well-designed traffic management measures, undertaken in conjunction with other planning and transport measures, can help in promoting walking, cycling and public transport and the introduction of residents' parking schemes can produce local environmental benefits.

### Partnership Working and Supporting Other Plans / Strategies

7.2 In order to achieve its objectives, the Council will work with others, especially where it does not hold a primary responsibility. By working alongside developers, agencies and other bodies, the Council will ensure that the necessary transportation infrastructure is put into place to support growth, development and North Dorset's economy. Working with local communities and groups will ensure that the most appropriate and feasible local courses of action are adopted.

### Monitoring

7.3 Chapter 11 of the Local Plan Part 1 sets out how the policies will be monitored. It outlines the Council's approach for regularly assessing and reviewing outcomes against the six District-wide objectives that relate to:

- meeting the challenge of climate change;
- conserving and enhancing the historic and natural environment;
- ensuring vitality of the market towns;
- supporting sustainable rural communities;
- meeting the District's housing needs; and
- improving the quality of life.

7.4 Assessing outcomes against objectives will enable the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the policies in the Local Plan Part 1. The monitoring framework sets out:

- the intended outcomes to achieve different aspects of each objective;
- the indicators that will be used to assess the achievement of performance against the intended outcomes;
- targets that establish the level of performance that is being sought in relation to each relevant indicator; and
- the policy (or policies) relevant to the delivery of intended outcomes.

7.5 The Council intends to set out this information in regularly produced monitoring reports.