

Knightsford Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

Prepared by: Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI, of Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, on behalf of Knightsford Group Parish Council

Plan period: 2023-2033

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1. Introduction

When a neighbourhood plan proposal is submitted to the local planning authority, it needs to be accompanied by a statement, known as the basic conditions statement, which explains how:

- the plan meets the legal requirements in terms of its contents and coverage
- the plan has had appropriate regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the area
- the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, is compatible with EU obligations, and would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

2. Legal Requirements

Has the draft plan been submitted by a qualifying body?

Yes – Knightsford Group Parish Council agreed the submission of the draft plan and supporting documents at its meeting in October 2024.

Does the proposed neighbourhood plan state the period for which it is to have effect?

Yes – the plan makes clear in section 1.4 that it is intended to cover the period 2023 – 2033.

Is what is being proposed a neighbourhood development plan making provision in relation to land or sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?

Yes - the Neighbourhood Plan proposal relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and its policies relate to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area or parts thereof.

Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?

The policies contained in the Plan cover:

- Policy 1. Development set in rural landscapes
- Policy 2. Wildlife corridors and biodiversity
- Policy 3. Plot formation, building set-back, orientation and boundary treatments
- Policy 4. Incorporating the car in developments – parking guidelines
- Policy 5. Density, building heights and rooflines
- Policy 6. Building mix
- Policy 7. Materials and architectural details
- Policy 8. Extensions and conversions – general principles
- Policy 9. Sustainability in design
- Policy 10. Local Green Spaces
- Policy 11. Important local views and landmarks
- Policy 12. Development in proximity to heritage assets
- Policy 13. Village roads and Quiet, Low Traffic Routes
- Policy 14. Prioritising walking, cycling and horse riding
- Policy 15. Supporting community facilities
- Policy 16. Meeting local housing needs in the Plan area .

The Neighbourhood Plan policies do not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or development that falls within Annex 1 to Council

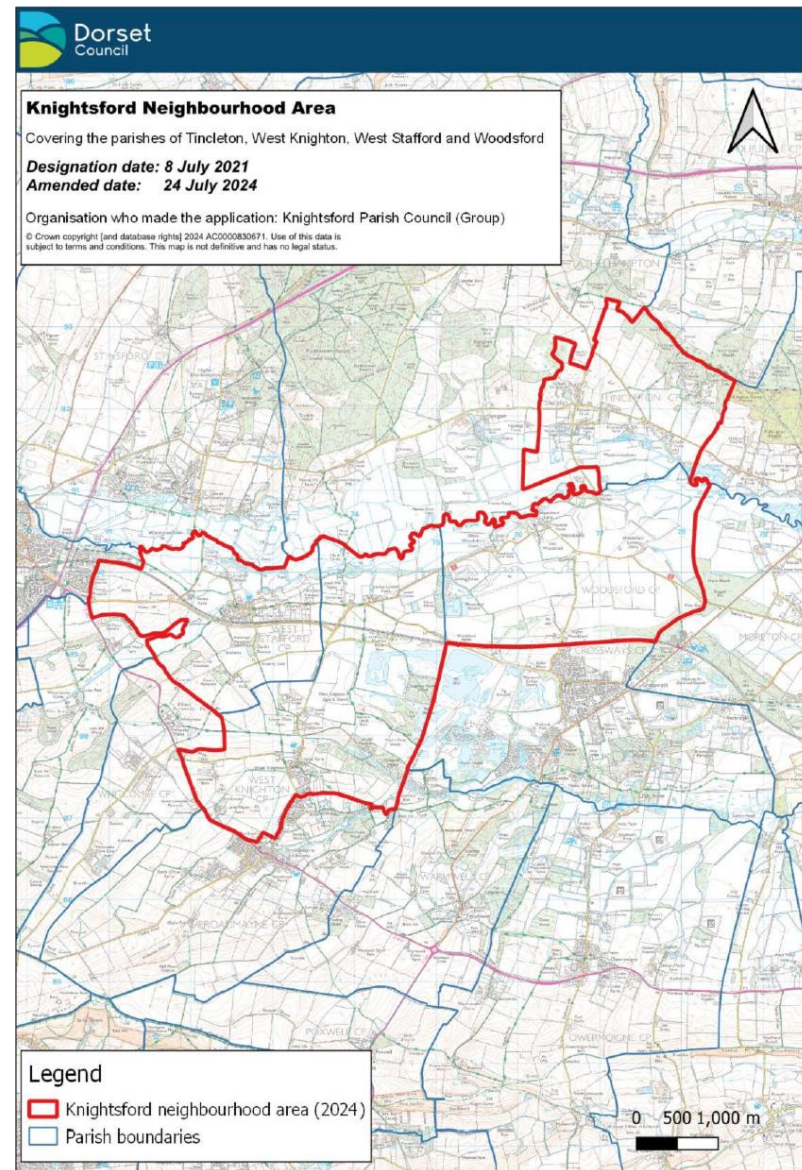
Directive 85/337/EEC. Whilst there are proposals for minerals and waste development in the area, including a large allocation described in 2.4.5 of the plan, it is made clear at the start (in 1.3.2) and later in 4.4.2 that this falls outside the remit of Neighbourhood Planning.

Do any of the policies extend beyond the neighbourhood area or cover an area where there is a neighbourhood development plan already in place?

No - the Neighbourhood Plan policies relate only to the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area (consisting of the parishes of West Knighton, West Stafford, Tincleton and Woodsford) and to no other area. The Neighbourhood Plan area was updated prior to submission to reflect the minor changes to the parish boundaries brought about through the Community Governance Review¹.

There are no other neighbourhood plans relating to the Neighbourhood Plan area. Dorset Council maintains maps of all the designated Neighbourhood Plan areas and made plans in the county. The latter shows the parishes of Stinsford and Puddletown as having made Neighbourhood Plan². These lie to the north of the area and the boundary changes have not impacted on these parish boundaries. None of the other adjoining parishes have been designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area³.

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



¹ Confirmed by Dorset Council in July 2024, for more information see <https://modern.gov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3901>

² Map as dated 10/07/24 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/dc-made-neighbourhood-plans-20240710>

³ Map as dated 29/07/24 <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/dc-neighbourhood-areas-20240729>

3. Consideration of National and Strategic Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan that covers the area.

The following conformity assessment summarises how the Neighbourhood Plan relates to the relevant national planning guidance and strategic development plan policies.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance comes primarily from the published National Planning Policy Framework (as last revised December 2023), but where appropriate, reference is made to the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and Ministerial Statements.

The Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan area

The West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, which was adopted by West Dorset District Council on 22nd October 2015, contains the bulk of the strategic planning policies for the area. Appendix 1 has been produced by Dorset Council to guide decisions on whether or not the policies are considered strategic (in terms of their contribution to the overall strategic objectives of the Local Plan), and those considered non-strategic have not been referenced further in this statement.

Dorset County Council's Minerals Strategy (adopted May 2014) also forms part of the development plan for the area, together with the more recently adopted Minerals Site Plan and the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan (2019).

The NPPG makes clear that in considering whether a policy is in general conformity, a view should be taken on whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general

principle that the strategic policy is concerned with and the degree, if any, of conflict and the rationale and evidence to justify that approach.

The NPPG also states that it is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in a neighbourhood plan and an emerging Local Plan, and that the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. Work is progressing on the Dorset Council Local Plan, and a first consultation draft was produced in January 2021 (this draft does not significantly alter the approach to development in rural areas such as Knightsford). At its Cabinet meeting on 12 March 2024, Dorset Council took the decision to move across to the new plan-making system, and is therefore preparing a new-style local plan with an expected completion date of May 2027.. As such, the Local Plan remains at a relatively early stage and is not being given any significant weight in planning decisions at this time.

The following table considers each section of the Plan and relevant policies in turn (grouping these together as appropriate), against the relevant national and local strategic policies for that particular topic.

Section 4.1 and 4.5	The Landscape Character of our Area / Important local views and landmarks	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits including the economic and other benefits of trees and woodland.</p> <p>182. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.</p> <p>191. Planning policies and decisions should identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>ENV1 - Landscape and seascape includes the protection of landscape, seascape and mitigation where appropriate in line with national policy. As well as referencing nationally important landscapes, it makes clear that development should be located and designed so that it does not detract from and, where reasonable, enhances the local landscape character.</p> <p>ENV3 - Green Infrastructure Network - states that the councils will work together with local communities and other relevant partners to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area. The policy states that development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area’s inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations.</p> <p>ENV10 - Landscape and townscape setting - states that development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings, provide for the future retention and protection of trees and other features that contribute to an area’s distinctive character, and where appropriate incorporate features that would enhance local character.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 1. Development set in rural landscapes	The area lies outside of the Dorset AONB but parts of the area may be considered to fall within its setting. No locally valued landscapes have been identified through the Local Plan as adopted. The policy highlights the landscape features that contribute to the area’s character and seeks to ensure that these are conserved and enhanced. It also seeks to ensure that the dark night skies are retained by minimizing light pollution as far as possible through the planning system. This is considered to align with and add detail to the direction of both national and local plan policies.	
Policy 10. Important local views and landmarks	Whilst neither national nor local plan policies specifically reference important views, the policy is in broad alignment with the consideration of those landscape elements that contribute to the local landscape character. The views are all from public	

	areas and are therefore a legitimate material consideration as being in the wider public interest.
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Section 4.2	Wildlife Corridors and Biodiversity	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, by: protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity; recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of trees and woodland.</p> <p>181. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value and consistent with other policies in this Framework.</p> <p>185. To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>ENV2 - Wildlife and habitats includes protection of wildlife and habitats depending on their status / importance, and mitigation where appropriate in line with national policy.</p> <p>ENV3 - Green Infrastructure Network -states that the councils will work together with local communities and other relevant partners to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area. The policy states that development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area’s inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 2. Wildlife corridors and biodiversity	The policy is based on a broad understanding of the main wildlife corridors in the area and seeks to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. No obvious conformity issues identified.	

Section 4.3	General Design Principles	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>108. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages so that parking and other transport considerations are</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>HOUS1 - Affordable housing - Strategic Approach sets out that new open market housing sites should make provision for</p>

	<p>integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.</p> <p>131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this.</p> <p>135. Requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.</p> <p>136. Planning policies should ensure that new streets are tree-lined⁵³, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees</p>	<p>affordable housing. The type, size and mix of affordable housing will be expected to address the identified and prioritised housing needs of the area and should be proportionate to the scale and mix of market housing, resulting in a balanced community of housing and / or flats that are ‘tenure blind’.</p> <p>ENV10 - Landscape and townscape setting - states that development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings, retain / incorporate features that contribute to an area’s distinctive character, and include sufficient landscaping to successfully integrate with the character of the site and its surrounding area.</p> <p>ENV11 - the pattern of streets and spaces – expects development to create well-defined, safe and pleasant to use streets and spaces, with active and overlooked public areas and secure private areas. Development should be legible, well-connected and are not dominated by the motorcar. Provision should be made for bin stores, recycling facilities, drying areas etc appropriate to the uses proposed and character of the area.</p> <p>ENV12 - the design and positioning of buildings - the siting, alignment, design, scale, mass, and materials used complements and respects the character of the surrounding area or would actively improve legibility or reinforce the sense of place. Materials should be sympathetic to the natural and built surroundings and where practical sourced locally. Any alterations to or extensions of buildings should be well related to, and not overpower, the original building or neighbouring properties, unless they achieve significant visual enhancement to both the building and surrounding area.</p>
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	<p>elsewhere, and the long-term maintenance of trees is secured wherever possible.</p> <p><i>Footnote 53: Unless, in specific cases, there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate</i></p> <p>139. Explains that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes.</p> <p>158. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.</p> <p>175. Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.</p>	<p>ENV13- achieving high levels of environmental performance – expects new buildings and alterations / extensions to existing buildings to achieve high standards of environmental performance.</p> <p>ENV15 - efficient and appropriate use of land - development should optimise the potential of the site and make efficient use of land, subject to the limitations inherent in the site and impact on local character.</p> <p>ENV16 - amenity - development should be designed to minimize their impact on the amenity and quiet enjoyment of residents. Proposals for external lighting schemes should be clearly justified and designed to minimize potential pollution from glare or spillage of light.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 3, 5 - 8. Plot formation, building set-back / orientation, mix, boundary treatments, density, building heights, materials and detailing etc	<p>This suite of design policies deals primarily with the design of development to ensure that what is created is in keeping with and enhances the local character of the area. It has been based on an analysis of the built form and potential design codes provided by AECOM as part of the Government support package for Neighbourhood Planning. The guidelines contained in the policy are intended to provide clear guidance on design solutions and those elements of design that are likely to be important, without being unduly prescriptive. Taken as a whole the policies should ensure that the designs function well and are appropriate to the character of the local area. The inclusion of street tree planting is encouraged where space allows.</p>	
Policy 9. Sustainability in design	<p>This policy highlights a range of design responses that will help ensure that developments can achieve high levels of environmental performance in keeping with the more general policies on design (as referenced above), so that the two aims will be compatible.</p>	

Policy 4. Incorporating the car in developments – parking guidelines	The parking guidelines do not seek to set different standards from those established for the area through the Local Plan, but highlight considerations regarding the design of parking areas and security issues (which is particularly relevant given the relatively isolated nature of the Neighbourhood Plan area). No obvious conformity issues identified.
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Section 4.4	Local Green Spaces	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>105. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.</p> <p>106. The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>107. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>ENV3 - Green Infrastructure Network -states that the councils will work together with local communities and other relevant partners to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area. The policy states that development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area’s inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 10. Local Green Spaces	The proposed Local Green Spaces have been assessed against the criteria set out in the NPPF, and direct contact made with the landowners. All of the sites relate to settlements, are local in character (the largest being 1.2ha) and have been subject to consultation to check that they are locally valued, with the reasons for their significance included in the description in Table 1.	

	<p>Other areas were also considered but not proposed for inclusion, such as the triangle of land west of West House / West Knighton Farm in West Knighton which is identified through the Local Plan as Land of Local Landscape Importance, but there was no evidence that this area was valued by the local community and as such has not been promoted as a LGS. Similarly, the land north of West Stafford has not been promoted as a LGS despite being identified through the Local Plan as Land of Local Landscape Importance. The LLLI covers an area in excess of 6.5ha and is considered in the context of the village to be an extensive tract of land, the northern extent is within the flood risk zone, and the western end includes the setting of the Grade 1 Listed Manor House. The wording of the policy has been based on that of other (now made) Neighbourhood Plans in Dorset, which have been considered to be consistent with Green Belt national policy.</p>
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Section 4.5 – combined with Section 4.1 (above)

Section 4.6	Development in proximity to heritage assets	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).</p> <p>206. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>ENV4 - Heritage assets – refers to the protection of heritage assets, including non-designated assets, and broadly mirrors national planning guidance.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 12. Development in proximity to heritage assets	<p>This policy highlights the importance of understanding the setting of the many heritage assets found in the Neighbourhood Plan area, complementing the Local Plan and national planning policies on this issue. It has been based on advice from the design codes produced by AECOM and supplemented by an understanding of schemes that have come forward in the local area. No obvious conformity issues identified.</p>	

Section 5	Improving Road Safety and Opportunities for Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	National Planning Policy Framework	West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan

	<p>104. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks.</p> <p>108. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed and opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.</p> <p>110. Planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.</p>	<p>COM7 – is about creating a safe and efficient transport network. It broadly aligns with national policy, and ensures that development is not permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it would not have a severe detrimental effect on road safety, or measures can be introduced to reasonably mitigate potentially dangerous conditions. It also references that support should be given for the delivery of a strategic cycle network and improvements to the public rights of way network. Development should not result in the severance or degradation of existing or proposed routes.</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>Assessment of general conformity</p>	
<p>Policy 13. Village roads and Quiet, Low Traffic Routes</p>	<p>Both of these policies seek to ensure that opportunities to promote walking and cycling are pursued and that decisions protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks. No obvious conformity issues identified.</p>	
<p>Policy 14. Prioritising walking, cycling and horse riding</p>		
<p>Section 6</p>	<p>Retaining and Improving our Local Community Facilities</p>	
<p>Summary of most relevant policies / guidance</p>	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>97. Planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments, and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>COM2 – COM6 – provide for the retention of local community facilities, focusing on sites within or adjoining an existing settlement, and provided that these would be located to their main catchment population – based on the strategic approach which states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel.</p>

	<p>and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.</p> <p>102. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.</p>	
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 15. Supporting community facilities	The policy supports the provision of community facilities, recognising the dispersed nature and scale of the area’s settlements and importance of these facilities to the local communities, balanced against the environmental sensitivity of the area and its rural road network. The policy is in general conformity with the approach taken in National Policy and the Local Plan.	

Section 7	Meeting our Housing and Employment Needs	
Summary of most relevant policies / guidance	<p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>60. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that sufficient land can come forward where it is needed to meet as much of an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.</p> <p>82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.</p> <p>83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village</p>	<p>West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</p> <p>SUS1 - The Level of Economic and Housing Growth - Strategic Approach includes the requirement for housing and employment, but does not specify targets for Neighbourhood Plan areas. The district-wide housing need is shown to be met through site allocations and identified windfall sites within settlements.</p> <p>SUS2 - Distribution of development - Strategic Approach includes reference to the settlement hierarchy and that development in rural areas will be directed to the settlements with defined development boundaries, and will take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the settlement. Settlements with no defined development boundary may also have some growth to meet their local needs. It recognises that neighbourhood plans may allocate additional sites, add or extend development boundaries.</p> <p>ECON1 - Provision of Employment – refers to employment</p>

	<p>may support services in a village nearby.</p> <p>88 Planning policies and decisions should enable: the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas; the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.</p> <p>109. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth, focusing significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.</p>	<p>development being supported: within or on the edge of a settlement (not restricted to those with a defined development boundary); through the intensification or extension of existing premises; as part of a farm diversification scheme; through the re-use or replacement of an existing building; or in a rural location where this is essential for that type of business.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Assessment of general conformity	
Policy 16. Meeting local housing needs in the Plan area	<p>The current adopted plan does not set a specific housing target for the NP area, and the only settlement with a defined development boundary includes Broadmayne (where the bulk of the housing and facilities are) which lies outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The other settlements in the area were not considered to be sufficiently sustainable to act as a focus for potential growth. The decision to specifically allocate sites was considered but not taken forward, given the lack of local support and issues relating to those sites. As a result, the proposed policy seeks to be supportive of further housing delivery and broadly aligns with the Local Plan and national planning policy in this respect, but including further detail on the anticipated scale of development (which may be exceeded) and mix of dwelling types. There is no policy in respect of local employment needs, given that the Local Plan policies were considered sufficiently robust.</p>	

Conformity conclusions

The analysis of the Plan’s policies in relation to national planning policy and guidance and the strategic policies of the local plan, as shown in the preceding tables, does not highlight any fundamental conformity issues.

On this basis, there are no apparent reasons to conclude other than the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic condition of having regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.

4. EU and sustainability obligations

The ‘making’ of the Neighbourhood Plan must not breach or conflict, and must be compatible, with EU obligations, must not have a significant effect on a European site, and must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It must not breach human rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Plan is accompanied by both a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. These were provided in draft form for comment during the pre-submission Regulation 14 consultation, and no concerns raised in their regard by the statutory consultees. Whilst the changes recommended by the HRA were in relation to the now deleted Policy 17, reference to the need for mitigation on the European Habitat sites has been included in Policy 16.

The Neighbourhood Plan’s policies have also been assessed against the three overarching objectives considered in achieving sustainable development as identified in the NPPF, ie:

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support

growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The assessment is summarised in the following table. This demonstrates that the plan’s policies should help contribute towards sustainable development.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies	Economic	Social	Environmental
Policy 1. Development set in rural landscapes			✓
Policy 2. Wildlife corridors and biodiversity			✓
Policy 3. Plot formation, building set-back etc		✓	✓
Policy 4. Incorporating the car in developments etc		✓	✓
Policy 5. Density, building heights and rooflines		✓	?
Policy 6. Building mix		✓	✓

Neighbourhood Plan Policies	Economic	Social	Environmental
Policy 7. Materials and architectural details		✓	✓
Policy 8. Extensions and conversions – principles		✓	
Policy 9. Sustainability in design		✓	✓
Policy 10. Local Green Spaces		✓	✓
Policy 11. Important local views and landmarks			✓
Policy 12. Development in proximity to heritage assets			✓
Policy 13. Village roads and quiet, low traffic routes		✓	✓
Policy 14. Prioritising walking, cycling and horse riding		✓	✓
Policy 15. Supporting community facilities		✓	
Policy 16. Meeting local housing needs		?	

The main areas of potential concern relate to Policy 5 and 16. The former is in relation to the density of development, given that the policy seeks to ensure that development respects the density of the area in which it is

proposed, and the relatively low density that exists. However this policy does include reasonable flexibility and does not propose a ‘cap’ per se, and national planning policy itself acknowledges that the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character is a factor that should be taken into account in decision on density (NPPF paragraph 128). With regard to Policy 16 – the plan lacks site allocations to ensure that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations. However given the housing target and potential for infill, rural exceptions sites etc it is not considered that it either promotes less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermines those strategic policies (NPPF paragraph 29).

Whilst the table does not identify any clear economic benefits relating to the plan’s policies, this is due to the decision to rely on the Local Plan in this regard and no obvious adverse impacts are identified as a result of this omission.

No issues have been raised in relation to the possible contravention of Human Rights in the preceding consultations, and given the conclusions on the plan’s general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and regard to National Planning Policy, it is reasonable to conclude that the making of the plan should not breach human rights.

Appendix 1 – Local Plan Policies List

Policies relating to the towns are not shown here as not relevant to the area.

POLICY	SUBJECT	STRATEGIC ASPECTS
INT1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Strategic policy (reflects national policy, as well as strategic objectives of the local plan)
ENV1	Landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest	Strategic Approach includes the protection of landscape, seascape and sites of geological interest, and mitigation where appropriate
ENV2	Wildlife and habitats	Strategic Approach includes protection of wildlife and habitats, and mitigation where appropriate
ENV3	Green infrastructure network	Strategic Approach includes protection of important local green spaces, and mitigation where appropriate
ENV4	Heritage assets	Strategic Approach includes protection of heritage assets
ENV5	Flood Risk	Strategic Approach includes directing development away from areas at risk of flooding
ENV6	Local flood alleviation schemes	Linked to policy ENV5 above
ENV7	Coastal erosion and land instability	Strategic approach includes directing development away from areas at risk of coastal erosion
ENV8	Agricultural land and farming resilience	Not specifically covered in Strategic Approach
ENV9	Pollution and contaminated land	Strategic Approach includes directing development away from areas at risk

		of air and water pollution
ENV10	Landscape and townscape setting	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV11	Pattern of streets and spaces	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV12	Design & positioning of buildings	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV13	High levels of environmental performance	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV14	Shop fronts and advertisements	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area, but does not specifically refer to shopfronts and advertisements
ENV15	Efficient and appropriate use of land	Strategic Approach includes that development should be of high quality design, and contributing to local identity of area
ENV16	Amenity	Strategic Approach refers to enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors
SUS1	Level of economic and housing growth	Strategic Approach includes the requirement figures for housing and

		employment
SUS2	Distribution of development	Strategic Approach includes: the principles that have led to the proposed distribution (p55-56) the strategic site allocations as listed in Table 3.7 reference to the settlement hierarchy and development within settlement boundaries general restriction of development in rural areas – but recognition that neighbourhood plans may allocate additional sites, add or extend development boundaries, and that some development types are needed to support the rural economy.
SUS3	Adaptation and reuse of buildings outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
SUS4	Replacement of buildings outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
SUS5	Neighbourhood development plans	Neighbourhood plans need to take account of this policy, which sets out expectations of how neighbourhood plans will relate to the local plan. The Strategic Approach identifies that neighbourhood plans can allocate development beyond that allocated in the local plan, and can extend or add

		settlement boundaries. But it also sets out principles such as concentrating development where jobs and facilities are accessible, and development being at an appropriate scale to the size of the village.
ECON1	Provision of employment	Strategic Approach includes the general support for employment development as expressed in this policy. The specific wording on live-work units is not considered to be strategic.
ECON2	Protection of key employment sites	Strategic Approach includes the protection of existing employment sites, taking into account their significance – the key employment sites are clearly the more strategically significant ones.
ECON3	Protection of other employment sites	Strategic Approach includes the protection of existing employment sites, taking into account their significance.
ECON4	Retail and town centre development	Strategic Approach includes directing retail and town centre uses to the town centres of Weymouth, Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis, or to local centres, and avoiding development that would undermine the functioning of any centre or adversely affect its vitality or viability. This indicates that criteria i-iv are strategic but that criteria v-vi are

		not.
ECON5	Tourism attractions and facilities	Not strategic, except for the strategic locational principles reflected in criteria ii-iii and originating in policy SUS2
ECON6	Built tourist accommodation	Not strategic, though criterion ii reflects a strategic aspect of policy ECON4
ECON7	Caravan and camping sites	Not strategic
ECON8	Diversification of land-based rural businesses	Not strategic
ECON9	New agricultural buildings	Not strategic
ECON10	Equestrian development	Not strategic
HOUS1	Affordable housing	Strategic Approach sets out that: the type, size and mix of housing will be expected to meet local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities opportunities will be taken to secure affordable homes to meet local needs New open market housing sites should make provision for affordable housing. The percentage of affordable housing on market housing sites, thresholds above which it is sought, and tenure split within the affordable provision, are not part of the strategic approach.
HOUS2	Affordable housing exception sites	The Strategic Approach refers to flexible policies that encourage

		affordable housing to come forward, but does not refer to exception sites so this is not a strategic policy. The local plan policy allows these sites only for affordable housing, but the text indicates that if a community wants to allow open market cross-subsidy on exception sites they could do this in neighbourhood plans without being contrary to the strategic policies.
HOUS3	Open market housing mix	Strategic Approach refers to the type, size and mix of housing being expected to reflect local needs as far as possible and result in balanced communities, as reflected in this policy, so it is strategic.
HOUS4	Development of flats, hostels and houses in multiple occupation	Not strategic
HOUS5	Residential care accommodation	Not strategic
HOUS6	Other residential development outside defined development boundaries	Not strategic
COM1	Making sure new development makes suitable provision for community infrastructure	Strategic Approach states that new local community facilities will be provided as part of developments where possible and practicable
COM2	New or improved local community buildings	Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be

	and structures	provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel
COM3	The retention of local community buildings and structures	Strategic Approach states that existing facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society
COM4	New or improved local recreational facilities	Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel
COM5	The retention of open space and recreation facilities	Strategic Approach states that existing facilities will be protected through a flexible approach which recognises the changing needs in society
COM6	The provision of education and training facilities	Strategic Approach states that community facilities should be provided within local communities, recognising the benefit of reducing car travel
COM7	Creating a safe and efficient transport network	Strategic Approach states that providing a safe transport route network for all types of travel, and providing choices for 'greener' travel options where practicable, are also a key part of the strategy, and that development contributions towards transport infrastructure will be made
COM8	Transport interchanges and community travel exchanges	Not regarded as a strategic policy, but Strategic Approach does refer to providing choices for greener travel

		options where practicable
COM9	Parking standards in new development	Not strategic, though may be impacts on COM7 on safe and efficient transport networks
COM10	The provision of utilities service infrastructure	Strategic Approach refers to developer contributions towards strategic infrastructure needs
COM11	Renewable energy development	Not identified in the plan as a strategic policy, but there is national policy on the subject which must be taken into account