

General comments

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **3.4.10 biodiversity enhancements.**

Suggested approach and aim

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ Agree subject to changes ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

Swift boxes could be very worthwhile, but you will need to ensure that good guidance is available, and that success is strictly monitored in terms of successful use by breeding swifts. It would be easy to produce a monoculture of house sparrows if the boxes are not blocked and unblocked at exactly the right times each year.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **the map on page 46 of Volume 1 (strategic diagram) and again on page 145 (key strategy map) showing A roads**

Comments:

These maps seem to indicate that the B 3390 is an A road - a continuation of the A 353. Even if this is a mistake, it is more than alarming that the main route northwards is indicated through Affpuddle. This road, especially through the Affpuddle bends and to the south of Affpuddle, is already completely unsuitable for the volume and weight of traffic using it. Some stretches are so narrow that two HGV's cannot pass each other, requiring lengthy and dangerous manoeuvring. A serious accident involving a motorcycle occurred here last year. At the very least, a weight reduction is needed to force the larger vehicles wishing to access the A35 to use the C3 from Waddock Cross and then the Wool to Bere Regis road. Unlike the road through Affpuddle, this is a wide, well-engineered road, paved on both sides through the village of Bere Regis.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **1.3.13 engagement with parish councils.**

Suggested approach and aim

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ Agree subject to changes ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

More detail about how this will be achieved. Many local councils feel that Dorset Council does not do all it can to work with Parish and Town Councils on planning matters. Parish and Town Councils should be engaged in the early stages of any application for a major development (for some small villages, half a dozen houses would constitute a major development). The standard period that Parish and Town councils are given to comment on planning applications should be increased to 1 month.

The proportion of CIL that is delivered to parish and town councils is not always sufficient to deal with demands placed on local infrastructure and some infrastructure (such as highways or schools) is the responsibility of Dorset Council but the demand and need is felt at a local level. Parish and Town Councils need to know how to make requests to tap into the CIL that Dorset Council retain in order to improve their local areas, especially if development has taken place in one village which would place a great demand on the services in a parish next door as the Parish Council in need wouldn't even receive CIL from the development.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **3.3 Habitats and Species**

Suggested approach and aim:

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ Agree subject to changes ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

The Erica Trust bought a large block of forestry at the sale of the Blackdown Estate. The block in question is south of Briantspuddle and Bladen Valley stretching from the C79 (Smokeham Bottom) to the B3390 at Sares Wood (excluding the "allotment plantation"). The purchase was to allow reinstatement of the original lowland heath, the remains of which are now internationally designated elsewhere in Dorset (Hardy's Heath) Many of the conifers planted there in the 1950s have now been removed and heathers, reptiles and birds characteristic of heathland are starting to benefit. (This kind of habitat and its need for protection is mentioned in the Draft Plan in the section dealing with development at Crossways and Moreton Station).

Dorset Council must now begin to phase in protection of this particularly valuable habitat (the protection against airborne nitrogen pollution from traffic is particularly pertinent as there is mention of "improvement" of the B3390 because of anticipated heavier traffic flows. This again argues for traffic being taken off this road to alternative routes which we argue for elsewhere in this submission to preserve quality of life for residents of Affpuddle. The Council should not wait possibly for years before this site ultimately receives a high-level conservation designation. A lot of money has been spent on the site and the tree removal and regular site management is in place. It makes no sense to delay protection and risk damage to this extremely valuable site.

In fact, the whole of the Piddle valley and the surrounding heathlands should be in the AONB.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **2.2**

Suggested approach and aim:

Agree ☐ Agree subject to changes ☒ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ Agree subject to changes ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

We are concerned after reading the arguments put forward by Dorset CAN that you are seeking to over cater for new housing development by 50%. Dorset does appear to have the features (landscape, natural habitats, geological features, exceptional density of international designations) to argue for the NPPF approach giving a true need of land for 20,000 houses.

It is unacceptable that housing must be added to Dorset because of unmet housing objectives in neighbouring areas. We accept that this is national policy and DC is not responsible for this but would like to see more push back. If the housing need cannot be met in other areas, then they should be forced to do more to accommodate that need. Dorset should not be forced to lose more of its green spaces just so that the New Forest can keep its own.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **ENV1 (iii)**

Suggested approach and aim:

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ **Agree subject to changes** ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

The requirement for including provision of sufficient green infrastructure, should apply to all developments and not just strategic sites. Too often we see dead end rights of way or missing links across just a small piece of land and landowners are very often completely unprepared to offer up their land. If Parish and Town Councils cannot be consulted on pre-applications then (particularly for areas without a neighbourhood plan) the planning authority should hold a data bank of local wishes (such as allotments or a right of way linking village A to village B) so that it can champion local communities during the pre-application stage. 3.2.3 hints at the importance of partnership working but there is nothing in the policy to say how this will be achieved and what it would look like. This needs to be clearer and firmer.

Although encouraging developers to include “green corridors” as part of applications, there should also aim to create such connections retrospectively where possible. How will Dorset Council look to link smaller settlements where there would be unlikely to be development (such as tier 4)?

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **6.3.8**

Suggested approach and aim:

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☒ Agree subject to changes ☐ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

We strongly support the approach of only allowing development where it will not result in greater need for significant long term private car use.

Paragraph/policy/chapter/section referred to: **Transport Network (Section 6.7)**

Suggested approach and aim:

Agree ☐ **Agree subject to changes** ☒ Disagree ☐

Suggested wording:

Agree ☐ **Agree subject to changes** ☒ Disagree ☐

How could the paragraph / policy / section / chapter be amended to reflect your concerns?

The focus of this section is mainly on locating new development near facilities, and thus reducing the need to use private vehicles. Public transport is only addressed in cases where new developments absolutely require it (COM7, p.239). This is fine, but what about the poor public transport in the rest of the county, requiring residents to use private transport, contributing to 40% of Dorset’s carbon footprint (Local Plan’s own figures)? COM7 should include a section on improving public transport across the county, reducing the need for private vehicle use and reducing rural isolation. It should also include a section on how public transport will be de-carbonised.

Other key transport issues need consideration in this plan such as mitigating the use of small country roads by large commercial and agricultural vehicles, traffic speed in rural areas (including the use of 20 mph zones in rural areas).

Sites for housing and Employment

Site referred to: Crossways

Site allocation:

Agree ☐ **Agree subject to changes** ☒ Disagree ☐

Is there anything not covered within the policy that should be considered in relation to the site?

The pressure on local roads is considerable. The construction of a link road to the West Stafford bypass will only help with those who are trying to get to Dorchester. What is the aim for people who are travelling from this area to the east?

It is probable that people will try to use the B3390 to get up to the A35 to avoid the traffic hotspots at Wool, Wareham, and Sandford. Narrower parts of the B3390 were never intended to handle such heavy use. The cross-roads at Waddock Cross are particularly hazardous.

The expansion of Crossways will lead to significantly higher traffic flows through Affpuddle, where the quality of life of residents is already being dramatically impacted by heavy traffic flow.

Crossways and Moreton are in the catchment area of St Mary's Middle School in Puddletown. And so, residents of Crossways will (for now) need to be able to easily access Puddletown.

Are there any community infrastructure needs within the area that should be considered?

Consideration needs to be given to new or wider roads linking crossways with Bere Regis and these roads needs significant traffic calming strategies and pavements if they pass through any small villages.

Crossways needs its own Middle School provision or safe roads linking it with Puddletown.

It is good news that a surgery is already planned for Crossways, but further development should not now take place until this has been built as otherwise the expansion will increase the traffic flow from Crossways to Puddletown.

The B3390 is particularly narrow and sinuous through Affpuddle. The Draft Plan, where it deals with development at Crossways and Moreton Station states that "improvements to the B3390 will occur". Done inappropriately this could lead to significantly higher traffic flows through Affpuddle, where the quality of life of residents is already being dramatically impacted by heavy traffic flows. The only way to tackle this issue is to send more traffic off the B3390 at Waddock, to Gallows Hill (C6) and thence to link to A35 and A31 at Bere Regis. (This C designated road is in fact a much better road than the B3390 as it is wide and strong, having been built to carry tank transporters to Bovington).

If it is deemed necessary to also protect Bere Regis (Rye Hill) from traffic increase there is probably now a good case for going ahead with a southern bypass for Bere Regis taking traffic from the A35 roundabout east of Bere Regis, across the Bere Stream floodplain directly to the top of Ryehill and re-joining the C6 to pass then to Crossways or Bovington or Winfrith or the coast. This sort of solution would protect quality of life for people living by the B3390 in Affpuddle and close to Rye Hill in Bere Regis. In addition, it would allow us to take forward a safe cycling/walking scheme linking Briantspuddle and Affpuddle for which there is a demand. (Very much in line with what you seek to encourage in your response to the Climate and Environmental emergency). This would incorporate a 20-mph zone on the very short stretch of the B3390 involved.

Overall, this solution allows traffic coming from north and east to access likely destinations south of the A35 with far less adverse impact on rural communities than having an “improved” B3390 as the major route south from the A35.

Specific discussion points

Vision and Strategic Priorities

Comments on the Vision and Strategic Priorities:

Spatial Strategy / Settlement Hierarchy

Do the boundaries of the four functional areas reflect how the area’s housing markets and economy function?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Is the distribution of housing between and within the functional areas appropriate?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Do you agree with the proposed hierarchy of settlements?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Do you agree that there is a need to amend the green belt to enable development?

Yes ☒ No ☐

How could the strategy/policy be amended to reflect your concerns?

Even for Tier 4 villages, common sense should be applied at the margin where useful and entirely compatible development supported by the community is envisaged.

More needs to be done to ensure that the housing development is accompanied by appropriate social infrastructure (funded by the housing developers as far as reasonable possible).

Little thought seems to have been given to the impact in Tier 3 and 4 areas that have significant housing and employment development in a Tier 1 and 2 area next door. An example being the impact of 600 houses in Crossways on areas with middle and secondary schools that serve Crossways. Thought needs to be given to all of the reasons that people would need to leave an area and where they will be travelling. The suitability of these roads then needs to be fully considered along with any other infrastructure in these areas that may need improving to meet extra demand.

Wind turbines

The locations identified as opportunities for larger scale wind developments are shown on Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6. Do you support the principle of allocating any of the areas for wind turbines?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Are there any planning issues that would need to be resolved to enable community backing to be secured?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Comments:

There needs to be a firmer position that sites will not go ahead without community backing. Local Parish and Town Councils should be approached early on and the community fully engaged.

Elsewhere the draft plan talks about the fact that ‘development should not erode the qualities that make Dorset attractive in the first place’ - the intimate small-scale nature of the Dorset landscape renders it quite unsuitable for huge on-shore turbines.

It is vital that such installations do not compromise the very environment, the essence of Dorset, that we are keen to preserve. That means that wind development sites must be of appropriate scale given their surroundings and site allocations must have minimal impact on the landscapes, ecology, historic structures, and culture of the areas involved.

Given the continual references elsewhere in the document to working with Parish Councils and communities, it is also important that they are genuinely engaged and brought along with any such proposals. The map showing potentially suitable areas for wind farm sites should not be published at this stage. The identification of possible sites should be community led and no site should be identified in policy until it has community backing and a site-specific policy which has been produced with the local community.

The draft plan currently designates an area along the A35 corridor between Tolpuddle and Milborne St Andrew and areas on the south side of the Piddle Valley around Affpuddle and Cliffe as medium risk ecologically for wind turbine sites. The previous application on this site was withdrawn following enormous local opposition to its effect on the landscape and the conservation areas to the immediate south, the Grade 1 listed gardens and house at Athelhampton, and Grade 1 listed Waterston Manor to the west, not to mention the longer scale views out of the AONB southwards. Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle Parish Council does not support this allocation.

The Dorset Local Plan needs to set a much clearer framework to guide any such applications. In particular it should be stated that such schemes will be judged not just against how they affect ecology, but also how they impact on historic structures, our cultural heritage and on the closely neighbouring AONB. Historic structures should include all listed buildings (not just be those listed Grade 1) because it is the pattern and density of historic buildings that is an issue. Objections on these grounds (including from English Heritage) led to the refusal or withdrawal of applications for giant wind turbines north of the A35 previously: these objections are every bit as relevant today. Lastly, the neighbouring AONB is important - it is not just the designated area that is special but the views into and out of it which would certainly include part of the A35 ridge.

it is crucial that any applicants are required to engage constructively with the local communities affected with the aim of achieving a consensus on what may be built. It should not be the case that an applicant’s claims about the scale necessary to make a scheme viable in terms of the prevailing rates on offer should have priority over safeguarding our landscapes: if the only way to make a scheme viable is to make it inappropriate in scale, it should not go ahead.

Broadband

The plan requires the provision of full fibre broadband connections to each home on major development sites. Do you agree with this proposal?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Comments:

Climate change

What else could the local plan do to mitigate climate change and help people adapt to its effects?

There are useful references to how historic buildings will be conserved, including through the use of the listing system, but also some helpful comments about improving energy efficiency in these buildings. The

key here, is ensuring conservation officers take a pragmatic view and give sufficient weight to energy efficiency/renewable energy in their assessments of applications, especially for the second tier of listed buildings (i.e. below Grade 2*). All too often, they can refuse sensible changes (e.g. double/secondary glazing) when the historic impact is tiny but the environmental one is significant. More flexibility is needed with regards to efficiency improvements listed buildings and those in conservation areas.