

Neighbourhood Planning (NP) – Update and to consider application to Dorset Council for a designated neighbourhood area

Notes from Neighbourhood Planning Workshop held on Monday 18th October 2021 at the Town Hall, Swanage at 4.45 p.m.

In attendance:

Councillor M Bonfield (Chair of Planning and Consultation Committee)

Councillor C Finch

Councillor T Foster

Councillor A Harris

Councillor C Tomes

Councillor M Whitwam

Dr M Ayres, Town Clerk

Miss N Clark, Administration and Communications Manager

Mrs E Evans, Management Support Officer

Mr B Foster

Mrs K Gallagher

Mr M Norris

Mr G Richardson

Mr R Smith

Also present via online video link: Councillor D Monkhouse & Councillor N Rogers

Apologies were received from Councillors Moreton and Trite.

Before discussions commenced, an introduction was provided by Councillor Bonfield, Chair of the Planning and Consultation Committee, and the Town Clerk.

Attendees were asked to come along to the meeting with their comments under the following headings to help to inform discussions. Attendees were also asked to consider their principal concerns, and whether they felt that these would be addressed in the new Dorset Local Plan (DLP).

- **Economy/Town Centre**

- Failure to deliver the Co-op scheme.
- Outcome/difference to original plan, consider alternatives.
- Needed to be an assessment of up to date retail space requirement, to include the impact of online shopping, post-Covid/homeworking, demographic changes/ population figures, and second homes.
- Protection of town centre retail space - inability to stop planning applications when changing retail space to residential use.
- Does plan adapt to 'post-Covid world' - needed to be current/relevant and would need to be updated every 2-3 years.

- **Historic/Conservation**

- Demolition of existing buildings a concern – loss of character, and buildings/ features of architectural and historic interest – adverse impact on Conservation Areas and AONB.
- How do we protect locally listed buildings? Could the Purbeck Society Local Listing hold same value as listed buildings?
- The conservation value needs to be considered.
- Historic appearance – positive impact on economy. Tourism links to historic buildings.
- Tightening of policy through other routes.
- Intensification of development in ‘low density areas’ - how do we better protect these areas in future?

- **Environment**

- What can be preserved from the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy in the DLP? At the very least preserve document as an appendix to the DLP.

- **Affordable Housing**

- Social housing project progressing through the Swanage Community Land Trust Limited.
- Need to have a local connection. Landowner could put covenant on development. Specific criteria i.e. time lived in area, worked in area, primary residence.
- Question regarding new development in Coastal Change Management Area.
- Need clarification on the status of Swanage in the DLP, page 138 refers. Does Swanage fit in Zone 1 or Zone 2? Need to check percentages referred to.
- Affordable housing- 4.7.7. Need clarification on second homes policy, are clauses only available by completing a NP?
- NP can be useful to achieve the correct balance of housing including social and affordable.
- Noted an increase in professional people needing affordable housing.
- Check DC Housing – testing criteria.
- Explore options more once the amended draft DLP provided.

- **Housing Supply**

- West of allotment development – DC correspondence.

Other comments:

Government’s Housing White Paper – how would this affect the DLP and NP proposals?

Does the group feel that it would want to take NP forward? A suggestion was made that working parties could be established to work on each of the above headings to consider a strategy for each area.

It was felt some NP’s were too ‘broad’, and that they did not have to have a long list of policies to be ‘robust’.

A query was raised as to whether policies for all of the above headings had to be completed at the outset, or whether policies could be added to the plan as it progressed.

Attendees felt that the town would be stronger by completing NP.

NP could help address issues surrounding the impact of second homes, and affordable housing for young people.

It was felt that to protect existing policies in the Swanage Local Plan a Neighbourhood Plan should be taken forward.

As certain elements of the SLP had moved on since adoption of Plan a NP would provide an opportunity to update these areas/policies.

All attendees confirmed that they were in support of commencing the NP process, and the next steps were noted as:

- Take to full Council Meeting for decision on whether to register the Town Council's interest in commencing the NHP process with Dorset Council.
- Logic of waiting for the amended draft of the DLP, and clarity about what would be included in the NP.
- Explore options/apply for funding.
- Employ a consultant to assist with project – undertake presentations.
- The importance of community engagement/involvement was discussed.
- Look at process, invite people to provide presentations demonstrating what they would be able to achieve in relation to the project.
- All attendees confirmed that they would be happy to be involved in taking the NHP project forward. The timescale regarding the establishment of a steering group to be confirmed following discussion/decision at the Council Meeting.

Decision required:

To consider application to Dorset Council for a designated neighbourhood area. (See Appendix 1 for further information.)

October 2021

[Designating a neighbourhood area - Dorset Council - Dorset Council](#)

[Neighbourhood plans in Dorset - Dorset Council](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning how to and useful links - Dorset Council](#)

Designating a neighbourhood area - Dorset Council

The neighbourhood area needs to be agreed by the local planning authority before a neighbourhood plan can be submitted for examination.

Stage 1: Application for designation of a neighbourhood area

Town and parish councils and neighbourhood forums will need to apply to Dorset Council in order to designate a neighbourhood plan area. To do this they can apply in writing with:

- a map identifying the area to which the application relates
- a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area
- a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body.

Applications from a neighbourhood forum will require additional information to be submitted. Please contact the community planning team for further details neighbourhoodplanning@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Applications from a parish council that align with their parish boundary can be approved without delay, more complex applications must be publicised.

Stage 2: Publicising an area application

Where an area application is received that requires publicising we will publish on our website:

- a copy of the area application
- details of how to make representations
- the date by which representations must be received

The application may also be advertised locally on parish and town council notice boards and website to ensure that it is brought to the attention of people who live, work or conduct business in the area.

Stage 3: Decision on a neighbourhood area application

After the close of the public consultation, we will take a report to the next available Cabinet meeting for consideration before issuing a decision on the agreed area.

When deciding on the neighbourhood plan area we will consider the following issues:

- village or settlement boundaries, which could reflect areas of planned expansion
- the catchment area for walking to local services such as shops, primary schools, doctors' surgery, parks or other facilities
- the area where formal or informal networks of community-based groups operate
- the physical appearance or characteristics of the neighbourhood, for example buildings that may be of a consistent scale or style
- whether the area forms all or part of a coherent estate either for businesses or residents
- whether the area is wholly or predominantly a business area
- whether infrastructure or physical features define a natural boundary, for example a major road or railway line or waterway
- the natural setting or features in an area
- size of the population (living and working) in the area

Stage 4: Publicising a designated neighbourhood area

Once the Council have designated a neighbourhood area we will include it on a [map of designated areas](#)

For more information on [neighbourhood plans in progress](#).