



# Transport for New Homes

BRINGING TRANSPORT AND PLANNING TOGETHER

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## Dorset Local Plan Options Consultation

### **Question 1: Do you have any comments on the proposed vision for Dorset?**

First of all we acknowledge that the Dorset housing need figure given by government is very high for a predominantly rural area. With this in mind we feel that the vision needs to point to the need for innovative urban design around sustainable modes, and in particular to a move away from car-dependent low density estates, to places built around higher densities to achieve a proximity of population that will support public transport, local shops and services.

In terms of planning and transport, we would like to see a commitment to Vision-led planning in the early sections of the Local Plan to emphasise the importance of urban form, density, walkability and less space devoted to the car, as part of building more sustainable and healthy places.

By building a higher densities and around sustainable modes, less countryside is needed for both the homes and the car. This model means more opportunities for green infrastructure, small parks and biodiversity conservation.

We would also like to see more emphasis on a vision for cycling. Cycling is a low priority in planning in England due to a historical focus on car-centric infrastructure, underfunding compared to road spending. We would like mention of the importance of a connected network of cycle routes in the larger Dorset towns, a network which was then extended into urban extensions.

Lastly we are concerned that the location of some of the large housing allocations as such that new communities would not be continuous with existing urban areas. This means that connected and overlooked safe cycle and walking routes are hard to put in place.

### **Question 4: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the south eastern area?**

We feel that there should be a strategic plan for the Greater Bournemouth and Poole

area sand SE Dorset, looking at a mass transit system to deliver greater public transport coherence in tandem with choices for where and what to build in the way of new homes and employment land. A unified cross-boundary approach would surely be useful, this taking into account landscape and environmental constraints.

**Question 5: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the central area?**

We are concerned that the development north of Dorchester risks being cut off from the town with respect to everyday walking and cycling, and that the temptation will be to use transport funds for road building rather than high quality bus infrastructure and services into Dorchester to the stations and town centre.

We would like to see some aspirational text regarding frequency of rail services and some analysis of what the barriers are to better services (eg passing loops, platforms etc.).

We are concerned that allowing large-scale housing site at Crossways/Upper Woodfords will end up car-dependent unless measures to restrain car use are taken. This needs to be explicit we feel, in the text of the Local Plan sections relating to this development, as part of the Vision-led approach newly in the NPPF (eg in section 3.4.8)

In terms of Vision-led planning and the expansion of Dorchester, it would be useful to have a section outlining the success of Poundbury, listing the achievements and key aspects of planning and transport that have been so successful.

**Question 6: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the northern area?**

We are concerned that there is insufficient recognition of the drift of much retail, employment and services to fringe of town locations and the deleterious effects that this has had on town centres. What is the strategy for avoiding town centre depletion and re-focussing on town centres (eg Gillingham)?

**Question 8: Is there any important infrastructure that needs to be delivered alongside new homes in the Western/Central/South Eastern/Northern area?**

We feel there needs to be more emphasis on the provision of dedicated town-wide cycle networks for places set to grow, and a clearer specification for public transport including specific interchanges, with consideration of a modern mass trans system for the Greater Bournemouth/Poole/SE Dorset area.

**Question 9: Housing**

**The Local Plan sets out a strategy to meet the area's housing needs through allocating sites for new homes, the flexible settlements policy, new settlements and the efficient use of land. Are there any other measures could**

## **help to meet housing needs?**

It will be very hard to plan sustainably for 3,246 homes a year, 55,182 homes in total 2026 - 2043. We agree that to achieve this target will require a step change in approach.

Given the very high targets for Dorset, one suggestion is that some high density developments European-style with low to mid rise apartments could be part of innovative new settlements or urban extensions. One needs to be brave! The default of low-density car-based sprawl is show to deliver and ends up adding traffic to roads including country lanes.

This approach involves finding the right house-builder who can build in creative ways around sustainable transport and local shops and services. We have seen examples in England that have worked, but the Local Plan needs to set the density requirements to succeed.

The policy of 'self-containment' is only possible in our experience, where much higher densities are built because local shops, community spaces, services and public transport are then supported, and distances become short enough for walking.

We would support incremental, organic growth of smaller settlements where this came with better bus links and local shopping.

## **Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Plan including a lower housing target for the first few years and a higher figure towards the end of the plan period to meet housing needs?**

It seems that considering the very high housing target generated by an algorithm that did not take into account the rurality of the area and consequent problems regarding sustainable transport, that the strategy would make sense.