

**Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan
2015 - 2031**

Basic Conditions Statement

**Published by Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and
Bryanston Parish Council for consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning (General)
Regulations 2012 as amended.**

July 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council and Bryanston Parish Council ('the Councils') to accompany the submission to the local planning authority, North Dorset District Council (NDDC), of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

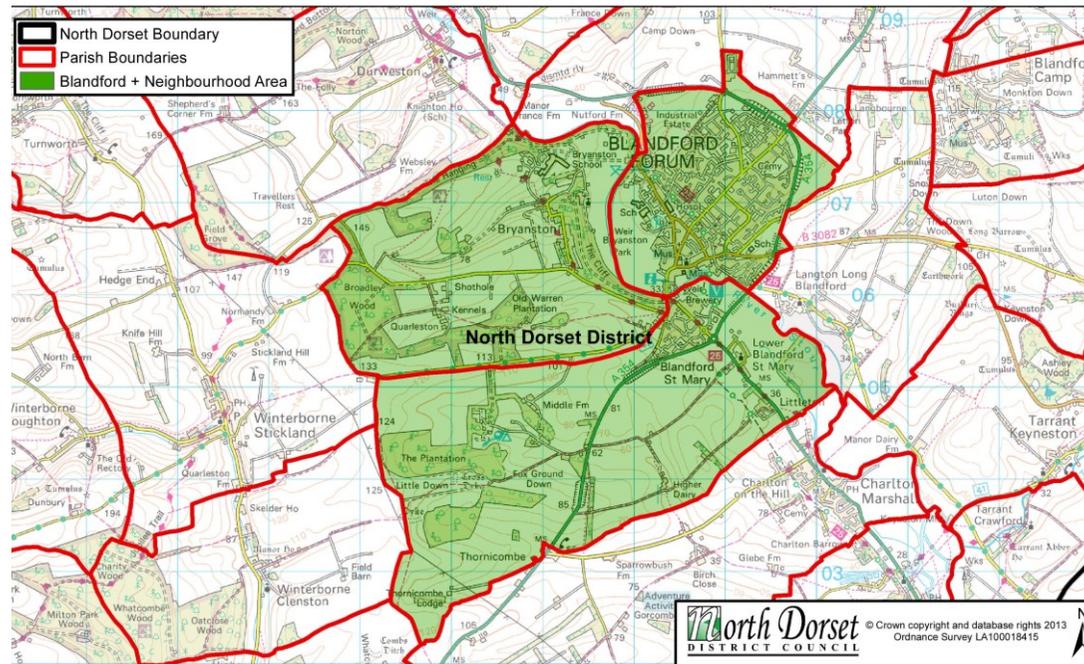
1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Blandford Forum Town Council (as the designated lead qualifying body on behalf of the Councils) for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Town and Parish Council areas, as designated by NDDC on the 17 February 2014 (see Plan A below). The policies described in Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan all relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area.

1.3 It does not contain policies relating to 'excluded development' as defined by, and in accordance with, the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2031. For clarity, the supporting text to Policy 1 refers to the complementary proposals of the Waste Authority, Dorset County Council, to allocate land in that location in the forthcoming Dorset Waste Plan for a new waste transfer facility to serve the local area. Although the preferred location, it is not the only location assessed in the Waste Plan, but the Councils have welcomed this proposal and have ensured that the land interests have taken it into account in their preliminary work on masterplanning the land for the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base. It is acknowledged that waste development falls under the definition of 'excluded development' and so the Neighbourhood Plan cannot itself make an allocation or contain a policy controlling the use of the land for that purpose. This is a matter for the Waste Plan only.

1.4 The document also contains a number of non-statutory proposals that relate to local planning matters in its Section 4 'Implementation'. Section 4 does not form part of the examined 'neighbourhood development plan' but provides the local community with a comprehensive view of issues that the Councils have considered during the preparation of the document.

1.5 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area); and
- the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.



PLAN A: The Designated Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Area

2. Background

2.1 The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Councils in 2012. The Councils were concerned that the, then emerging Local Plan (since adopted as the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 or “NDLP1”), was failing to plan properly to secure the long term, sustainable future of the town and its neighbouring parishes. Most especially, there was a real concern of the local communities that the NDLP1 proposals for housing growth on the edge of the town would not help address social and other infrastructure weaknesses in the northern half of the town.

2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed by the Councils, whom have a longstanding, successful working relationship for the benefit of their communities. The group comprised Parish councillors from the three councils, members of the local community and representatives from the DT11 Forum Community Partnership based in the town. It was delegated with authority to make day-to-day decisions on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as the lead qualifying body, the Town Council approved the publication of the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan of February 2016 and now the Submission Neighbourhood Plan of June 2016, with the prior approval of both its Parish Council partners.

2.3 There has been very considerable community engagement activity on the Plan. This is laid out in detail in the separate Consultation Statement, which is published as part of the submission documentation. The Councils have sought to work with past and current officers of NDDC during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the policies of the NDLP1. As will become clear later in this Statement, this has unfortunately not led to a shared view on the merits of one part of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group has also benefited from the professional planning advice of Neil Homer MBA MRTPI and Jon Dowty MSc AIEMA of RCOH Ltd, which has an unrivalled track record in supporting neighbourhood plans.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan contains fourteen land use policies, a Policies Map and 3 Inset maps, which identify where some of the policies will apply in the neighbourhood area. The Councils have deliberately sought to focus policies on the key issues that matter to the local community and to avoid proposing policies that may duplicate national planning guidance and/or development plan policies that are already material considerations in determining future planning applications.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2 In overall terms, there are three NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

Para 16

3.3 The Councils believe the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for future development in the neighbourhood area within the various heritage and landscape constraints that apply. The NDLP1 has made provision for about 1100 homes at Blandford and was amended prior to its adoption to confirm a neighbourhood plan '*can allow for greater levels of growth by allocating additional sites for development*' (NDLP1 paragraph 3.45) an approach which reflects positive planning as expressed by NPPF §16. Not only does the Neighbourhood Plan support these strategic development needs, it goes further and enables those needs to be successfully accompanied by the crucial social and economic infrastructure on which the sustainable future of the town depends.

3.4 It does so with a clear vision of how and why this infrastructure can be delivered without hindering or undermining the spatial strategy of the NDLP1. Shaping and delivering that vision is not without its challenges and compromises. The geographical coincidence of spatial opportunities and constraints – most notably on the northern edge of the town beyond its town centre and partially within an AONB – has made these choices more difficult than they would otherwise be. But, the essence of neighbourhood planning is in enabling the local community to make those choices, informed by the technical evidence, rather than see them either not made at all or made wrongly. The long term failure of the local planning system to effectively plan for infrastructure is what has driven the communities to make their choices in their Neighbourhood Plan.

Para 183

3.5 The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a clear vision and objectives for the area that reflects the views of the majority of the local community. It has sought to translate the objectives into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development proposals.

Para 184 and 185

3.6 The Councils wish to use the power of neighbourhood planning to secure crucial social and economic infrastructure for the town. They have leveraged this power to negotiate with land interests, an inward investor and infrastructure operators a series of land use and infrastructure proposals within and on the edge of the town that will not only help the town accommodate the level of growth proposed in the NDLP1, but will also address existing infrastructure deficits. And in each case, those proposals will be able to avoid or minimise any harmful effects on the AONB and on the town centre. Without question, the Neighbourhood Plan is

seeking to reflect and positively support the strategic housing and other proposals of the NDLP1 – essentially its Policy 16 on Blandford – by ensuring the town becomes a more and not less sustainable community in years to come. The fact that its proposals require more new homes to be built than is required as a minimum by the NDLP1 will, as a secondary benefit, enable NDDC to plan for the additional unmet housing needs of the area over the next twenty years without prejudicing how and where the town may grow beyond then.

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on policies that translate the general requirements of the development plan and other adopted supplementary planning guidance into specific policies for the area. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.8 Set out in Table A below, is a summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

| Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| No. | Policy Title | NPPF Ref. | Commentary |
| 1 | Land North and East of Blandford Forum | 15, 17, 21, 22, 34, 50, 56, 58, 72, 110, 116, 162, 173, 177 | <p>This policy establishes the land uses and development principles that will apply to the major development directed to the north of Blandford within and in the setting of the Cranborne Chase AONB as an exception to policy in line with the requirements set out in § 116. It reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and will guide how development will be delivered over the plan period in line with § 15 of the NPPF, and contributes to a positive vision for the area reflecting the communities wishes (§ 17) and sets out the design parameters by which the allocation will be judged (§ 56).</p> <p>The main driver of the policy is to enable the town to secure a new primary school and new jobs in the northern half of the town in line with §72 and §21 respectively. The local education</p> |

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|-----|--------------|-----------|--|
| | | | <p>authority has made it very clear that the only effective means of delivering the essential capacity and choice of primary school places in the town to meet growing demand is on the northern edge of the town. With no spare capacity at the other three schools or room to expand any further than they already have, and with them all being located around the south of the town, it is neither practical or desirable to plan for new places anywhere other than in the northern half of the town. Suitable land has been made available for that purpose with access of the A350 bypass to enable easier traffic movements from within the town and from the rural communities around the town that might also use the school.</p> <p>The land is also judged as ideal by an inward investor keen to deliver new, higher value industrial jobs. Although the town has a healthy number of employers, they tend to be in lower value sectors, and previous employment land commitments in the Local Plan have not proved viable and have been lost to retail and housing. Again, the location off the bypass is ideal to manage traffic movements on land that lies between the bypass and the existing, successful Sunrise Business Park. The Councils have been mindful that in wanting to allocate land for additional employment uses, they must identify land that market signals indicate is competitive and attractive to investors, in line with §22. There is no clearer signal than the expressed intentions of the investor here.</p> <p>However, the delivery of those significant benefits requires utilizing land in an AONB (albeit on its very edge) and is dependent on an enabling housing development outside the AONB for the release of the land for those purposes. As the policy promotes a major development scheme in its totality, the tests of §116 apply to show that there are exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated the scheme is in the public interest. The land interest has provided a separate statement setting out how these tests are met. Suffice to say here, that the Councils are convinced of the need for the education and employment developments and their respective effects on the local economy and the quality of life for households with primary school age children in the area. The NDLP1 itself is reasonably clear (in its policies 14</p> |

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|-----|--------------|-----------|---|
| | | | <p>and 16) on the need this type of development, but crucially falls short of providing a coherent answer for its delivery. In effect, the Neighbourhood Plan has taken up this responsibility, in line with §162, and negotiated a viable outcome with land interests and infrastructure providers.</p> <p>The local education authority and inward investor have provided clear evidence that this location will meet their respective needs, and no other location that has or may be made available. And the statement sets out through its illustrative masterplan and LVIA work, how there is sufficient land to deliver structural landscaping and to orientate the buildings in such a way as to moderate any residual detrimental effects on the landscape in views towards the land from the north. And, the proposals will enable the re-organisation and extension of the existing allotments so they are better able to meet future needs.</p> <p>The enabling housing development lies outside the AONB but within its setting. Although the same tests need not apply, the Councils also believe that it too passes the §116 tests. The housing is necessary to release the adjoining land in the same ownership to deliver the social and economic infrastructure. Its land interests have confirmed they are content that this policy initiative will be viable, in line with §173. Ideally, NDLP1, in line with §177, but again, the Councils have worked with the key stakeholders to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan has benefited from a sound understanding of the fundamental delivery issues.</p> <p>In both cases, the Councils have been mindful of the published AONB Management Plan and Landscape Character evidence. Only very recently has this edge of the AONB received any attention in respect of its importance to defining the purpose of the AONB. For the most part, the focus of the AONB policies, guidance and proposals has been on the main and extensive area of Cranborne Chase. Even with the A350 bypass and successive encroachments of major developments into the AONB north of the town of the last 30+ years, this edge has not been acknowledged as having any special importance to defining the essential character of</p> |

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| | | | <p>the Chase and hence of being especially sensitive to development.</p> <p>Although the policy is not providing for new homes as a primary goal, there is no doubt that the additional homes will complement those provided for by NDLP1 in meeting a wide variety of local housing needs in this area, in line with §50. The new homes will likely come forward throughout the duration of the plan period and once the social infrastructure and employment land has been released for those purposes. With NDDC having to undertake an immediate review of its housing supply strategy in the light of the SHMA conclusions on unmet housing needs, this additional provision should be welcomed.</p> <p>The location of the land outside the A350 bypass is not, on the face of it, ideal in terms of seeking to minimise car trips on the local highway network, as guided by §34. However, the school and employment proposals are well located in respect of minimising their effects on the busy roads of the main town. It is already known that the lack of primary school places in the northern half of the town results in many car trips to the schools around its southern edge, using either the bypass or town roads. Even if the number of trips will increase with the larger school age population, the journey lengths will be shorter on average with the new school. And the evidence shows that satisfactory access can be achieved on to the bypass for these schemes.</p> <p>The principle of housing allocations beyond the bypass has been accepted by NDLP1, with its strategic proposals south of Blandford St. Mary. Although a shorter distance to the town centre than the land north of the town, in practice the distance is still too long to encourage walking from either location. The land north of the town will also benefit from the retail allocation of Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, which will be as close as the superstore at Blandford St. Mary is to the land allocation to its south. In both cases, the principle of allowing for pedestrian crossings of the A350 at grade should now be acceptable.</p> |

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| No. | Policy Title | NPPF Ref. | Commentary |
|-----|---|-----------------|---|
| | | | <p>This location has also been identified by the Waste Authority as a preferred location for a sub-regional waste transfer facility. Although welcomed by the Councils as a valuable and complementary proposal, no provision is made in the policy as this is regarded as 'excluded development' for neighbourhood plans and can only come forward through the Dorset Waste Plan. As such, its use for this purpose is not dependent on the land being made available for this purpose and so its justification does not fall within the §116 tests above. Should the land not be required for this purpose, it may be used for any other purpose provided for in the policy, but more likely as additional employment land.</p> |
| 2 | Land at Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum | 21, 23, 24, 116 | <p>This policy seeks to promote retail and employment development on land where the principle of both uses has been well established. These uses will benefit the town as a whole but especially its northern half, in line with §23 and §21 respectively. The retail use has already been accepted as complementing, rather than competing with, the town centre, and so is in line with §24, especially as the location and size of the site is suited to an Aldi/Lidl-type discount retail format (for which there is a current planning application). Such retail formats are acknowledged to be distinct from larger, more conventional superstore formats, in respect of their effects on traditional town centres, and the policy is not therefore considered to pose a threat to this town centre. The remainder of the land is suited to employment or hotel uses, given its prominent location on the junction of the A350 bypass and Shaftesbury Lane.</p> <p>The land lies within the Cranborne Chase AONB, although it no longer makes any effective contribution to the essential character of the AONB since being severed by the bypass. On that basis, it is not considered that the §116 test applies. But, in any event, the social and economic benefits of these land uses for the town, and the requirement for any effective landscape buffer to the AONB, are sufficient to justify the proposal.</p> |
| 3 | Land at Salisbury Road, Blandford | 50, 70, 126 | <p>This policy promotes the reuse of the site for both housing and a community purpose, given the established public service use of the site and its convenient location on a main road into the town, in line with §70. The new homes will contribute to meet local housing needs, in line with</p> |

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| No. | Policy Title | NPPF Ref. | Commentary |
|-----|---|--------------|--|
| | Forum | | §50. The site lies on the northern edge of the Blandford Conservation Area and is prominent in views along Salisbury Road. The policy therefore requires that proposals have regard to the heritage significance of the site, in line with §126. |
| 4 | Land at Hunt Road, Blandford Forum | 70 | This policy provides for a new pre-school or other early years educational use of the site, in line with §70, as the existing facility on Salisbury Road (Policy 3) will be lost |
| 5 | East Street/Langton Road, Blandford Forum | 23,28, 70 | This policy seeks to make better use of land within the town centre for a combination of tourism, retail and early years education facilities to complement the existing range of town centre uses. The site comprises one of the main car parks serving the town centre and lies on the Trailway, an important green infrastructure asset running through the town. It therefore has the potential, through redevelopment and reorganising the car parking arrangements, to make the town centre more attractive to visitors and local people, in line with §23 and to bolster local economic development, in line with §28. It is also considered a convenient location for an early years use to serve this part of the town, in line with §70. |
| 6 | West Street, Blandford Forum | 23,50,70,126 | This policy seeks to encourage proposals to enhance the Blandford Conservation Area at this prominent southern gateway into the town centre by redeveloping this vacant site for a mixed use, in line with §126. It provides for dwellings on the upper floors about a retail and/or community ground floor use, thereby encouraging town centre living (in line with §50) and creating a new active frontage for the town centre through either additional retail, in line with §23 or a community use, in line with §70 |
| 7 | Community Facilities | 28, 70 | This policy accords with paras 28 and 70 of the NPPF by encouraging and enabling the use of a variety of the existing community facilities in the area through supporting proposals that further this objective, including proposals that sustain, create or develop new facilities to maintain their viability as valued community assets. |

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| No. | Policy Title | NPPF Ref. | Commentary |
|------------|---|--------------|--|
| 8 | Blandford Forum Town Centre | 23, 28, 40 | The policy reasserts the social and economic value and importance of the town centre, in line with §23. It makes some minor changes to the town centre frontage policy boundaries and establishes the importance of car parking spaces to serve the growing population, from which it seeks to capture the custom, by ensuring there is no net loss of spaces, in line with §40. |
| 9 | Green Infrastructure Network | 114 | This policy promotes the many different benefits of the established green infrastructure network of assets in the area, in line with §114, and requires new proposals to avoid harming the network. |
| 10 | Local Green Spaces | 76, 77 | This policy proposes a number of important green spaces in the Parish to be protected from development by the designation as Local Green Spaces in line with § 76 and § 77. |
| 11,12 & 13 | Design Management, Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston | 58, 110, 126 | This policy accords with § 58 and §110 in requiring the design of all development proposals to reflect the local character and countryside of the area and especially of the landscape and historic land use qualities of the town and villages, in line with §126 in respect of the Conservation Area. |
| 14 | Local Tourism | 23 | This policy encourages investment in the tourism offer of the area, both in terms of tourist attractions (to be located in the town centre) and of the supply of tourist accommodation (within the development boundary). This will enable the town to boost the economic value of tourism, in line with §23. |

4. Contribution to Achieving Sustainable Development

4.1 On the 23 October 2015, NDDC determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required for the Neighbourhood Plan; thus:

'Given the numerous environmental constraints, including in terms of landscape designations (Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB and Dorset AONB) and the historic environment, relating to the plan area and as a result of the fact that it is currently proposed that the plan will allocate large areas of land for development I confirm that North Dorset District Council (NDDC) considers that a SEA of the plan will be required under The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, 2001/42/EC (known as the SEA Directive).'

4.2 However, the basic condition of 'contributing to the achievement of sustainable development' requires a broader scope of assessment to embrace social and economic, as well as environmental objectives. The Submission Plan has therefore been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.

4.3 The B+ SA/SEA Report confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and balances the needs of the environment with economic and social objectives that have been described in previous sections. This outcome may be inevitable for Neighbourhood Plans prepared in similar planning policy circumstances. If local communities are to back development in this type of location, to the extent they will turn out to vote at a referendum, then they will expect that the environmental assets of the neighbourhood area will be protected from inappropriate development but that this is balanced with clear social and/or economic benefits that will arise from new development. In any event, the planning policy context is such that to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, the Neighbourhood Plan must acknowledge those environmental constraints.

5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, that is primarily the strategic policies of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (NDLP1) adopted in January 2016 but also with some saved policies of the District-Wide Local Plan of 2003. Table B below considers the general conformity with the relevant adopted NDDC policies.

5.2 As noted in sections 2 and 3 above, there have been a small number of matters – notably Policy 1 - on which the Councils and NDDC have not been able to find an agreement in terms of meeting this basic condition. In the earlier phases of the Neighbourhood Plan project up to the consultations on the Draft Plan, the Councils had sought to use the Plan to demonstrate its relative merits over the spatial strategy proposed by the, then emerging, NDLP1. As such, it was promoted at the examination of the NDLP1 as an alternative strategy than that proposed in its Policy 16 for Blandford.

5.3 In light of the modifications proposed by the Inspector during the NDLP1 examination, and of its subsequent adoption by NDDC, the Councils have modified the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan to regard the provisions of Policy 1 as being complementary to the spatial strategy of Policy 16 of NDLP1. Both the NDLP1 and the Neighbourhood Plan regard Blandford Forum as the main service centre in the south of the District with an extensive rural hinterland. Both confirm this role should be maintained, with the NDLP1 stating that 'housing growth will be matched by employment growth and provision of supporting infrastructure with the aim of increasing self-containment and reducing the need for commuting particularly to the South East Dorset conurbation'. The combination of Blandford's sensitive landscape setting and special heritage interest means the town can only sustain future growth in its population, jobs or services through sensitive consideration of growth options.

5.4 The Councils consider that there is scope within NDLP1 to allow the Neighbourhood Plan to make such complementary provisions for the additional development proposals in respect of delivery of further growth to the north of the town 'beyond the bypass'. This direction of growth reflects Blandford's historic growth pattern and was successfully argued through the local plan examination, resulting in a number of changes included in Main Modification 14.

5.5 As the Neighbourhood Plan SA/SEA Report confirms, the Plan is considered to strike a positive balance between the policy constraints of land to the North of Blandford and the critical need to enable the delivery of essential infrastructure (other options having been discounted) which would otherwise not be delivered. This in turn is intended to provide a level of certainty for delivery

of this essential infrastructure, which is otherwise missing from NDLP1. In this respect, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Post Submission NDLP1 changes including Main Modifications (MHD051, July 2015) describes the effects of these changes in Paragraphs B.81 – B-85. The relevant passages are referred to in this analysis. The mitigation measures outlined in Paragraph B.86 have been separately assessed in the Neighbourhood Plan SA/SEA Report and incorporated within Policy 1.

5.6 The Pre-Submission Local Plan made provision for about 1100 homes at Blandford with this provision being made on greenfield sites to the south east and south west of Blandford St Mary. The strategy also included the identification of regeneration opportunities to the south of East Street in the town centre. As a result, the policy was amended to allow for additional homes to be built to the south east of Blandford St Mary, bringing the total housing provision in the town to 1200 dwellings and to allow for additional greenfield sites outside of the bypass to be allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan. The revised approach also makes provision for the allocation of a site for a new doctor's surgery and for the extension of the town centre regeneration area to cover areas to the south of Market Place as well as East Street.

5.7 Although the revised approach, as NDDC confirm, does not alter the strategy overly much, there are a number of changes that have SA/SEA implications. Enabling the allocation of additional housing sites outside of the bypass will have landscape implications; this is inevitable as the town is almost completely circled by AONB. The additional housing that may be provided as a result of such an allocation, above the strategic level of growth identified in the Local Plan would have an impact on the local housing market. The result may be a reduction in house prices locally however the supply of new housing will help to meet need.

5.8 The additional population that would arise as a result of the delivery of housing would have an increased impact on local community facilities and local infrastructure. A new doctor's surgery would be needed as would a new school and sports provision. These facilities would have to be incorporated into any proposals that come through the neighbourhood development plan for the town.

5.9 The Councils therefore believe the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with all the relevant strategic policies of the NDLP1 including the strategic direction set out in Policy 16 - Blandford. However, NDDC's response to the Pre-Submission plan asserted that Policy 1 does not conform with the strategic policies of NDLP1 including Policy 16, but did not go into any detail on how that view had been formed. In earlier discussions, officers were concerned that insufficient evidence had been provided to support the policy, but this has now been rectified. Further, the response is at odds with the results of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Main Modification 14 (set out in MHD051).

5.10 The Councils have worked hard to encourage NDDC to regard the Neighbourhood Plan as making a positive and

complementary contribution to NDLP1 and are disappointed that, despite their extra efforts to broaden and deepen the evidence base as requested, NDDC does not appear willing to alter its position. They considered the consequence of deleting Policy 1 in order to remove NDDC's objection prior to the examination. However, they came to the view that the most likely scenario would be the failure of proposals for a new primary school and for a new employment use to win planning consent, or, were they to do so, the unwillingness of the land interest to make the land available for those purposes. This outcome has not been supported by the majority of local people that have engaged with the Neighbourhood Plan thus far. And it would leave a crucial social infrastructure dependency of NDLP1 undeliverable, with serious consequences for the ability of the town to achieve a better level of sustainability.

Conclusion

5.11 The Councils share the view of NDDC that they wish to ensure infrastructure is delivered at the right time and in the right place to support growth proposed in the the NDLP1 and to make good the educational deficit set out in the NDDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan. However, since the adoption of the NDLP1 circumstances have changed and the Dorset CC Pupil Place Planning Statement confirms paragraphs 7.81 and 8.45 of the Local Plan are now out of date as there are no alternative sites for a 2.1ha 2FE primary school in Blandford other than that proposed in Policy 1. The statement also confirms that a new school located elsewhere will have significant impact on the school's ability to address the needs of the community to the north of Blandford and a location elsewhere could significantly increase the environmental impact on the area by the additional car movements required to ensure 400 children could access the primary school safely.

5.12 The only viable option for the provision of a new 2FE primary school identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is in the north of the town and growth to the South East of Blandford is unlikely to deliver this essential community infrastructure the town needs. An incursion into the Cranborne Chase AONB to deliver such infrastructure is considered to be in the public interest, and the recent recovered appeal (APP/W1145/A/14/2228355 – Feb 2016) for an application for a new school at Steart Farm, Bideford within the Dorset AONB confirms the Secretary of State's view that the provision of additional educational choices, where there is no alternative site outside the AONB, is in the national public interest and would meet the requirements of paragraphs 17, 56 and 58 of the NPPF.

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary

| No. | Policy Title | Commentary |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | Land North and East of Blandford Forum | <p>This policy is consistent with NDLP1 Policy 1 by taking a positive approach to sustainable development. The policy embraces policy 2 that allows for a neighbourhood plan for one of the four main towns, of which Blandford is one, to allow greater levels of growth by allocating additional sites for development. While the location is considered an 'exception' to national policy, in all other respects it will offer a good range of everyday facilities and will facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport as well as minimising the impacts of climate change overall through measures to reduce flood risk as per Policy 3. The policy ensures that development on this site is accompanied by effective mitigation as part of the development proposals in relation to the harm to the AONB.</p> <p>In any case it meets Policy 4 which allows for proposals which would harm the natural beauty of the AONBs to be permitted where it is clearly in the public interest to do so. The need for the school at this site is clearly in the public interest and the policy also allocates land for economic development, in line with Policy 13 and 14. Policy 16 of the local plan allows for local communities to take an active role in shaping the places they live and work because local people know best what local needs are and how they can be met and as such it encourages the production of neighbourhood plans. Policy 16 also states that in the market towns, neighbourhood plans can play a key role in enabling local communities to shape strategic growth, and is consistent with Policy 16 which allows for additional greenfield sites beyond the bypass to be allocated as well as the provision of a new 2 FE Primary School and a new doctor's surgery which is planned for in this Neighbourhood Plan policy.</p> |
| 2 | Land at Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford Forum | <p>This policy is consistent with Policy 11 and Policy 16 which sets out the provision of a new supermarket off Shaftesbury Lane as supporting economic development and meeting the additional retail floor space requirements of the area.</p> |

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary

| No. | Policy Title | Commentary |
|-----|---|---|
| 3 | Land at Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum | This policy is consistent with Policy 1 by taking a positive approach to sustainable development. The policy embraces policy 2 that allows for a neighbourhood plan for one of the four main towns to allow greater levels of growth by allocating additional sites for development. The site is appropriately sited and planned to be served by a good range of everyday facilities and will facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport as per Policy 3. The policy is also in line with Policy 24 which requires developments to incorporate existing mature trees, hedgerows and other landscape features as it requires the retention of existing mature trees and Policy 27 which requires the retention of a local community facility as it requires the retention of a community hub to provide these facilities. |
| 4 | Land at Hunt Road, Blandford Forum | This policy is consistent with Policy 3 as the site is appropriately sited and planned to be served by a good range of everyday facilities and will facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport. Policy 14 also enables the needs for existing pre-school facilities to be met. |
| 5 | East Street/Langton Road, Blandford Forum | This policy consistent with Policy 1 by taking a positive approach to sustainable development as well as Policy 3 as the site is appropriately sited and planned to be served by a good range of everyday facilities and will facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport and seeks to incorporate measures to reduce flood risk overall. The policy also complements and refines Policies 11, 12, 15 and 16 which highlights that this site will be an important element of town centre regeneration. |
| 6 | West Street, Blandford Forum | This policy consistent with Policy 1 by taking a positive approach to sustainable development. The policy embraces policy 2 to allow greater levels of growth by allocating additional sites for development. The site is appropriately sited and planned to be served by a good range of everyday facilities and will facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport as per Policy 3. |
| 7 | Community Facilities | This policy is consistent with Policies 14, 15 and 16 that promotes the protection and enhancement of such facilities. |
| 8 | Blandford Forum Town Centre | This policy is consistent with Policies 11, 12 and 16 which allows for town centre boundaries, primary |

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary

| No. | Policy Title | Commentary |
|-------------|---|--|
| | | and secondary shopping frontages to be defined in neighbourhood plans. |
| 9 | Green Infrastructure Network | This policy complements and refines Policies 4, 15 and 16 which seek the creation of linkages between existing sites and integrations with new green infrastructure networks. |
| 10 | Local Green Spaces | This policy complements and refines Policies 4 and 15 which seek to protect and enhance local green spaces, designated in a neighbourhood plan, from inappropriate development, as well as landscape character of the District through retention of the features that characterise the area. |
| 11, 12 & 13 | Design Management, Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston | This policy compliments and refines Policy 2, 5 and 24 that allows for specific guidance on how development should be designed. |
| 14 | Local Tourism | This policy compliments and refines Policy 11 that allows for tourism accommodation in Blandford and Policy 31 that allows for tourism accommodation in the countryside. |

6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 The 'Qualifying body' consider the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.

6.2 Further, the Designated Neighbourhood Area is not in close proximity to any European designated nature sites. On the 23 October 2015, NDDC determined that no Habitats Regulation Assessment is required of the Neighbourhood Plan under the EU Habitats Regulations thus:

'With regards to the need for the B+NP to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the Habitats Directive, 92/43/EEC the Council considers it unlikely that a HRA will be required due to the distance between the plan area and areas of land that are subject to international nature conservation designations.'