

Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Specification

Background

Locality were asked to advise on the options available to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan (B+NP) Qualifying Body following the report and recommendations of the neighbourhood plan Examiner. The main matters at issue were the recommendations to:

1. Delete Policy 1 (Land North and East of Blandford) from the submitted Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan (B+NP).
2. Delete the proposed Local Green Space designation on Crown Meadows.

On the advice of the Department of Communities and Local Government, Locality commissioned Urban Vision Enterprise CIC (UVECIC) to review the submission version of the B+NP and its evidence base along with Examiners recommendations. A key part of this review involved a series of meetings facilitated by UVECIC, with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (B+SG), officers of North Dorset District Council and the Examiner.

The report¹ published following the review, describes the methodology in full and outlines six options with a recommendation to the Qualifying Body to accept option 4 as the most appropriate way forward. This involves withdrawing the Submission Plan to enable the evidence base to be reviewed and updated prior to commencing a new Regulation 14 consultation. It would also allow consideration of material changes to the planning context for the area which include:

1. The revised housing land supply of 3.42 years published in the press on the 31st July 2017 and confirmed in the Annual Monitoring Report.
2. New evidence on the housing, economic and community infrastructure requirements for Blandford.
3. The indicative assessment of housing need of 366 dwellings per annum based on the Governments proposed new housing formula and the effect of this on the current housing target for Blandford (NDLP1 - 1200 homes)
4. The response to one of main modifications proposed by the Inspector of the NDLP1 to carry out an 'all encompassing' early review of the Local Plan to 'ensure that it remains appropriate for the District and continues to encourage and secure the development and infrastructure that the District requires'.

The UVECIC report concluded that the best outcome for the community is likely to be achieved if a shared strategy can be developed through close, cooperative working between the Neighbourhood Plan bodies and the Local Planning Authority.

The purpose of this note is therefore is to outline a specification for this 'shared strategy' for agreement with North Dorset District Council and to ensure there are no conformity issues with the development plan while having regard to the evidence base of the Local Plan Review. Once the specification is finalised, to publish it on both the B+NP and NDDC Neighbourhood Plan webpage.

¹ Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan: Options for Moving Forward (Urban Vision CIC Nov. 2017)

Local Plan Evidence Review

A review of the North Dorset Local Plan 1 and Local Plan Review document library has been completed (see list in Appendix B), the purpose being to identify key sources of evidence to create a synthesis of all existing local plan evidence into the B+ Neighbourhood plan.

The review has identified several essential and desirable items of evidence that have been commissioned to update earlier studies but are as yet unpublished.

These studies are listed below and will be used to inform the neighbourhood plan in the early stages and specifically the site assessment work and sustainability appraisal of the spatial options.

Inputs from land promoters and statutory consultees will be sought to fill gaps in available evidence, such as transport, ecological and landscape/visual impact assessment and also details of land promoter assumptions on development trajectories and proposed infrastructure items.

It has been confirmed by 'Locality' that the following services will be provided by AECOM

- SA/SEA
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (subject to screening – Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC)

The SA/SEA and a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been commissioned through Locality Technical Support and work on the SA/SEA Scoping Report has commenced by AECOM. A formal HRA screening will be requested from NDDC.

The SEA will be undertaken in the form of a proportionate SA/SEA to ensure the economic, social and environmental role of the plan and its cumulative effects are assessed in the round. This will also ensure the 'Basic Condition' of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development is considered appropriately and will address the key concerns expressed by the examiner.

The methodology for the SA work will be to consider at the earliest stage the reasonable alternative spatial options and will take forward the preliminary work by NDDC which identifies Areas A, B, E, F and J as possibly having some development potential, in addition to opportunities within the settlement boundary.

The SA will inform decisions on the most appropriate spatial strategy and will enable unsuitable and unsustainable approaches to be discounted.

Agreement was reached on the way at the meeting held with NDDC on 5th April², the key matters for the Liaison meeting on the 1st May will be to agree this project specification, the project timetable and the timing by which unpublished LPR evidence is shared with the B+NP group.

² B+NP / NDDC Meeting Note 5th April 2018

Local Plan Review evidence requested

1. Issues and Options consultation and SA/SEA

The B+NP group request access to the responses to I&O consultation questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and relevant responses to the SA. These responses will be considered as part of the Draft Plan Site Assessment and SA if made available on time.

2. Blandford Housing and Infrastructure requirements

In advance of the emerging spatial strategy for the District, the neighbourhood plan will proceed on the assessment of spatial options based on the I&O preferred 'Areas of Search' and by using a bottom up approach to resolve the matter within the neighbourhood plan timetable. The housing number will be the minimum that is necessary to deliver the full mix of land uses that form the specification below.

By agreeing the specification of non-housing land uses and optimising housing through capacity assessment of available land and using the SA to determine total capacity this would avoid delay to the NP programme. Adopting this approach would also make it effectively impossible for the LPR to arrive at a larger housing number for Blandford which in turn would reduce the risk of potential 'non-conformity'.

Based on the above and the review of LP evidence, the following assumptions form the basis of the neighbourhood plan specification:

- The requirement to allocate land for at least 400 homes (upper OAN³ with the same District spatial strategy)
- 2 Ha employment land (to assist in making up the shortfall in existing employment land supply identified in the Workplace Strategy)
- 2FE primary school (based on DCC Pupil Places Statement 2017 with flexibility for expansion for any additional requirement identified by DCC in their updated evidence)
- Delivery of the necessary highway and green infrastructure
- 'Areas of Search' to be those identified in the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation as possibly having some development potential. These areas are A, B, E, F & J as defined by the map in Appendix A. Any available previously developed land within the settlement boundary will also be considered drawing on the evidence provided by the NDDC SHELAA and Brownfield Register

While nothing is ruled out at this stage, given the mix and scale of uses set out above, the only realistic prospect for delivering a new school and employment may be part of a larger mixed use scheme with a residential component. If this is the case then policy(s) will need to ensure there is a comprehensive masterplanned approach taken.

³ 366 dwellings per annum: North Dorset Local Plan review Issues and Options Paragraph 5.8 (Nov 2017)

NDDC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) - essential

Access to the updated SHELAA is essential to identify land promotion boundaries and any other supporting information and to ensure all land promoters in the areas of search can be identified quickly. Access to the Brownfield register is available on line. It is not intended to undertake a further 'call for sites' given NDDC completed this exercise recently.

BDP Workplace Strategy (available)

The updated economic evidence including the BDP Workspace Strategy (Oct 2016) and the latest published monitoring data indicates only 3.5 hectares of employment land is available in Blandford and that this is made up of a combination of smaller parcels of land⁴ compared to earlier estimates of 5.1 hectares. This compares to nearly 15 hectares of land available in Gillingham.

Dorset CC Pre-Submission Draft Waste Plan (Dec 2017)

The preferred location for the Waste Management Centre is on land adjacent to Sunrise Business Park within Parcel A 'area of search'. As the Waste Plan is now at an advanced stage, appraisal of any development options in Parcel A must avoid prejudicing this proposed allocation. We have been advised, the examination of the Waste Plan may commence as early as July 2018. It is recommended therefore that a statement of common ground is prepared between the Waste Authority (DCC), NDDC and B+NP for submission to the Waste Plan examination – notwithstanding a 'county matter'.

Dorset CC Pupil Place Strategy – essential

The B+NP will obtain an updated early years and pupil place planning statement for the neighbourhood area. We are advised by DCC that the pupil yield data has been updated and that a report will be going to committee within the next month to adopt the new figures.

Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group - desirable

We will also obtain the recommendations of the DCCG Clinical Services Review as it relates to Blandford and an update on their future options from the Whitecliff Practice and Blandford Clinic.

Town Centre and Retail Study – Carter Jonas - desirable

This study commissioned by the tripartite authorities will update the 2008 joint retail assessment. While details from a presentation by the consultants are available, the study is as yet unpublished, access will enable town centre policies to be updated.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – desirable

If unavailable then the previous SFRA will be used and relevant evidence from the Waste Plan.

Blandford Forum Conservation Area Appraisal – essential (publication May?)

⁴ NDDC Local Plan Issues and Options Document paragraph 4.10

Settlement boundary review - essential

NDDC have advised that work on the review of the settlement boundary is in its early stages and the work undertaken to date will be passed to the B+SG.

Approach to assessing the suitability of individual sites within each area of search

The neighbourhood plan would source land supply DATA to input into the spatial options based on sites identified in the latest version of the NDDC SHELAA and from the NDDC brownfield register.

The methodology for the site assessment will apply the methodology set out in Planning Practice Guidance and will be agreed with NDDC prior to the work commencing.

The objectives of the study would be to:

- consider and evaluate potential sites and their capacity and acceptability for growth on a thematic basis
- take account of the high level infrastructure requirements and in combination effects
- Enable the community, SG, NDDC, statutory consultees and land promoters to understand how each location performs
- Provide an output which forms the part of the evidence of the B+NP

Consultation Strategy

Consultation with the following will be undertaken as the plan progresses in line with the requirements of the NP regulations and to ensure the planmaking remains robust. An informal consultation on the spatial options is timetabled in July and will be informed by the initial SA of the spatial options and reasonable alternatives.

Consultees will include:

- Local people and organisations
- Statutory consultees and other appropriate bodies
- Land promoters

Project Timetable

The starting point for the neighbourhood plan will be to move forward the Local Plan Review Issues and Options stage as agreed at the meeting with NDDC on the 5th April 2018.

The timetable issued with this specification and target date for submission of the NP in Dec 2018 is achievable but is dependent on the two way flow of information and bi-monthly liaison meetings have been programmed between the B+NP and NDDC to ensure matters can be addressed in a timely fashion.

Work on the SA/SEA Scoping Report has commenced with the aim of completing the 5 week consultation on the scoping report by end of June.

Blandford + Steering Group - April 2018

Proposed B+NP2 policy scope

The B+NP SG have reviewed their earlier work and propose the following updated policy scope to inform the new plan. It should be noted that a number of policies in the B=NP Submission version have served their purpose and are omitted:

P1: Spatial Plan and Settlement Boundary Policy

To develop the spatial policy for the area and to define an updated settlement boundary for Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary.

P2: Housing Site Allocations

To deliver the specification/spatial strategy

P3: Employment Land Allocations

To deliver the specification/spatial strategy

P4: Early Years provision and allocation(s)

To deliver the specification/spatial strategy

P5: Education Provision and allocation(s)

To deliver the specification/spatial strategy

P6: Safeguarding community facilities

To review and update policy from the Submission Plan

P7: Blandford Forum Town Centre

To review and update having regard to the Parking Review and Cater Jonas Study conclusions.

P8: Green Infrastructure Network

To review and update the GI network proposed in the Submission Plan.

P9: Local Green Spaces

To review and update the LGS assessments proposed in the Submission Plan

P10: Blandford Forum Conservation Area

To review the Blandford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) to define a policy to protect and enhance the Conservation Area and its setting.

P11. Design Management: Blandford Forum

To review the Submission Plan design policy based on the updated CAAMP to manage the design of new development

P12: Design Management: Blandford St. Mary

To review the Submission Plan design policy based on an updated CAAMP to manage the design of new development

P13: Design Management: Bryanston

To review the Submission Plan design policy based on an updated character assessment to manage the design of new development

P14. Tourism

To review the Submission Plan policy alongside the Carter Jonas Study support and to update the policy to support leisure, recreation, and tourism including needs for hotel accommodation.

Matters to be excluded from the B+ NP2

Minerals and Waste (Blandford Waste Management Centre)

The A350/Charlton Marshall Bypass policy.

This is a matter of regional and sub regional significance.

Important Open and Wooded Areas policy

The NDLP1 notes that this policy (Policy 1.9 of the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan) remains part of the development plan and that the policy protects land from development. However, it also outlines that at the examination the Inspector recommended a review of the IOWA designations and that this review could be undertaken as part of Local Plan Part 2 which now forms part of the Local Plan Review or through neighbourhood plans. While it is not intended for the neighbourhood plan to review all IOWA sites in detail, the plan will review those that are considered to meet Local Green Space criteria and propose their allocation accordingly in line with the statement in paragraph 14.8 of the I&O – some of which were allocated as such in the Submission Plan.




Appendix A

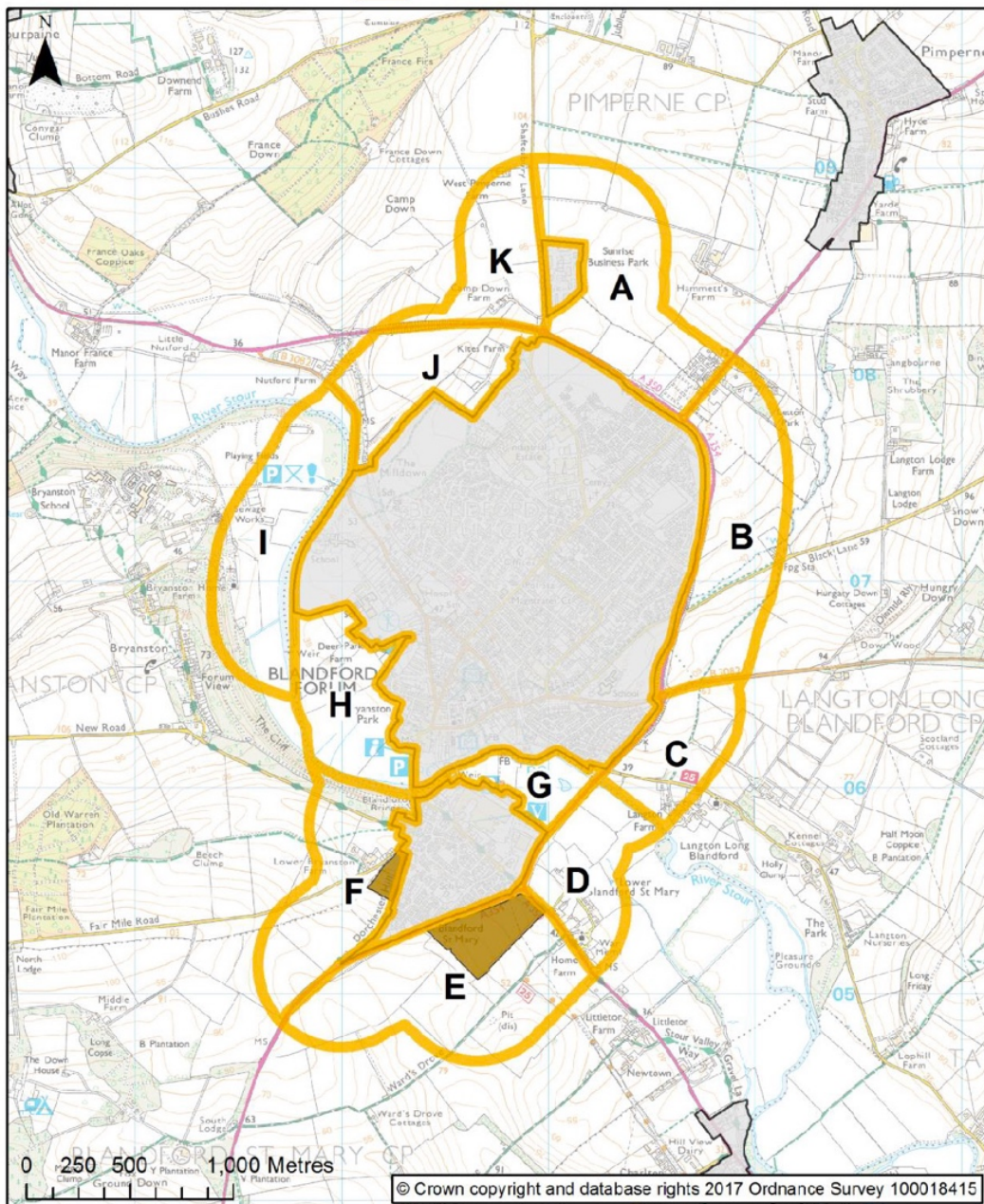
North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Maps

Areas of Search

North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options

November 2017

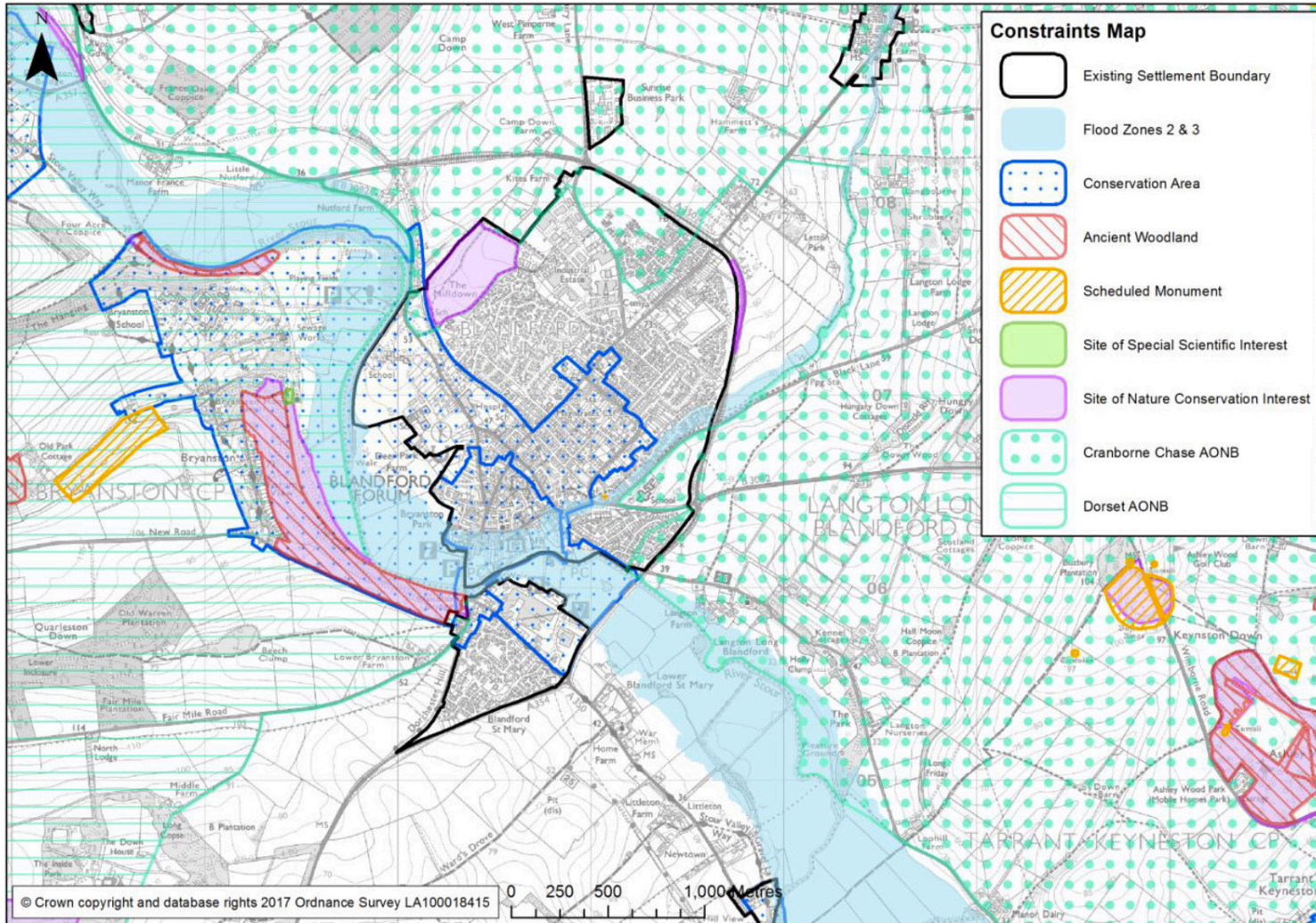
-  Area of Search
-  Inside settlement boundary (Local Plan 2016)
-  Existing development sites outside settlement boundary



Map 6.2: Blandford – Areas of Search

Constraints Plan

Map 6.1: Constraints at Blandford



Appendix B

The documents listed below have been considered as part the evidence base review. The document references refer to those contained in the Local Plan Part 1 Examination library:

NDC002 – Topic Paper – Issue, Challenges, Vision and Objectives for North Dorset (Nov 2012)
SDS001 – Sustainable Development Strategy Background paper (Nov 2013)
ECC002 – Historic Environment Background Paper (Nov 2013)
ECC005 – Implications of the Habitats Regulations Assessment NDLP (Nov 2014)
ECC006a – Heritage Assessment – Crown Meadows Blandford Forum (Aug 2014)
ECC006b – Heritage Assessment – St Mary;s Hill, Blandford St Mary (Aug 2014)
ECC011 – Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019)
ECC013 – Dorset AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019)
ECC019 – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Final Report (Feb 2008) (to be updated)
ECC020 – Landscape Impact Assessments of Potential housing sites at Blandford (2010)
SED001 – Supporting Economic Development Background Paper (Nov 2013)
INF001 – Transport Background paper (Nov 2013)
INF002 – Infrastructure Background paper (Nov 2013)
INF016 – Whole Plan Viability and CIL Assessment (Feb 2015)
MCT022 - Blandford St Mary Parish Plan (Jun 2009)
MCT024 – Bryanston Parish Plan (Apr 2008)
COD004 – Addendum to the Initial SA Report – incl. land south of the A350/A354 Junction (Oct 2012)
COD010 – Initial Sustainability Appraisal Report (Core Policy 15 Blandford Spatial Options page 240) (March 2010)
COD011 – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (June 2009)
SUD003 – NDLP 2011 – 2026 Sustainability Report and Appendices (Nov 2013)
SUD005 – NDLP 2011 – 2026 Part 1 Habitat Regulations Report (Nov 2013)
SUD020 – NDLP 2011 – 2026 Infrastructure Delivery Plan Updated (Nov 2014)
MHD050 – NDLP1 Schedule of Main Modifications (July 2015)
MHD051 - NDLP1 Sustainability Appraisal Post Submission Changes (MM14 Paragraph B.81 to B86 pages 58/59) (July 2015)
MHD052 – North Dorset Main Mods Habitat Regulations Assessment (July 2015)
Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Proposals Maps
Blandford Forum Conserve and Enhance; D.W. Insall (May 1970)
DCC Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) 2011-2026

Key NP evidence documents

SUD002b – NDLP 2011 – 2016 Removal of Settlement Boundaries (Bryanston removed, Blandford Forum and Blandford St Mary retained unaltered) (Nov 2013)
North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 2011 – 2031 (Adopted January 2016)
NDDC Issues and Options Consultation Report (to be published)
NDDC Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal Consultation Report (to be published)
NDDC Local Plan Review Scoping Report Final (Feb 2017) Unpublished

NDDC Annual Monitoring Report (Dec 2017)
NDDC SHELAA (essential)
NDDC Brownfield Register (Dec 2017)
Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Draft (Nov 2017)
Dorset CC Pre-Submission Waste Plan (Dec 2017)
Dorset County Council Blandford Pupil Place Strategy (essential)
NDDC Blandford Forum Conservation Area Appraisal (essential publication May 2018?)
NDDC Town Centre and Retail Study – Carter Jonas (desirable)
NDDC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (essential)
Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Workspace Strategy (Oct 2016)