

Dorset Local Plan – 6 Month delay

As a result of an overwhelming response to the consultation on the local Plan, with a wide range of opinions offered, we have decided to delay the process by six months whilst we carefully evaluate all of the responses and incorporate any changes. A revised overall workplan has been agreed which sets the publication of the revised document for spring 2022.

The plan, which will run to hundreds of pages, will again go out for public consultation, seeking views on any changes which may be proposed as a result of the first public consultation. The plan seeks to shape the way the county will develop in the future – with a focus on further housing and the creation of jobs.

Purbeck Local Plan Review

Recently the government's Planning Inspector suggested that we abandon the Purbeck local Plan and incorporate it into the forthcoming Dorset Local Plan. This would jettison years of work and would (in our opinion) lead to even more housing being put forward in Purbeck. Officers have rebutted this in the strongest terms. So, we continue to argue that the Purbeck Local Plan should be put into the emerging Dorset Local Plan – as unchanged as possible.

Current Budget Summary for Dorset Council

2020/21 was an extremely challenging year financially with Covid 19 impacting on income, expenditure, and in particular the revenue we receive from particular sources including car parking and Council tax.

Financial support from Government has been gratefully received, but has not fully covered the financial consequences of Covid. The Council has reprofiled its remaining reserves to prepare for any further financial and economic shocks. The medium term is of concern, as the service and financial consequences of COVID will be felt for years to come - such as the increase in demand for Children's social care, and the downturn in business rate collection.

During the pandemic the Government has provided unprecedented levels of support for Dorset's economy. Dorset Council has passed on grants and support worth over £250M since the pandemic started. We hope this will have sustained businesses through the lockdown, and that the local and national economy will start to pick up again soon.

Lulworth Firing

Following our recent regular update with the Commanding Officer Bovington and Lulworth we understand that there will be no firing at Lulworth ranges over August, however this can change if circumstances change.

Parking Charges Strategy - proposals

The purpose of this strategy is to align parking charges across Dorset Council locations bringing consistency and structure to all charges. The three objectives are to:

- Implement a 3-level tariff that recognises the difference between coastal, town and rural locations
- Support Dorset Councils goals to reduce carbon footprint
- Provide fairer charging options for Dorset Council and for residents

The strategy includes car park tariffs, on-street tariffs and car park permits. On-street residents' permit schemes, blue badge schemes and health care permits are currently not included in this

strategy. More information when the scheme is finalised, Any increase in charges will be subject to the usual procedures for consultation and advertisement.

Ministerial Statement on National Park proposals (including Dorset)

A minister recently made a statement on proposals for national Parks across the Country. Four areas have been selected for detailed analysis work to be conducted by Natural England (NE) who are the responsible body for evaluating and producing an outline plan for implementation. The four areas are below. Dorset, which was one of the areas considered, has not been selected. This does not mean it will not ever happen but in my opinion, it won't be considered until these four have run their course which is likely to be between 10 and 20 years.

- Yorkshire Wolds AONB
- Cheshire Sandstone Ridge AONB
- An extension to the Surrey Hills AONB
- An extension to the Chilterns AONB

Lobbying our MPs

We meet our Dorset Council MPs once a fortnight and use these meetings to lobby for issues relevant to Dorset. Where appropriate we agree that one of our five MPs will act as a single focal point and work on behalf of all our MPs with a common set of agreed goals. The first area for this is IT and we persuaded Chris Loder to act as a focal point to Westminster for our digital issues, this directly led to the recent Ministerial visit described in the next item. Additionally Laura coordinated the production of a briefing for MPs on Social Care Reform (next but one item).

Meeting with the Digital Minister Matt Warman

On Wednesday 7th July I hosted a visit by Matt Warman MP to the 5G Rural Dorset project. The day began at Dorset Innovation Park at Winfrith where the Minister was given a demo of a fully connected emergency response vehicle, which included drone footage transmitted over the 5G network from Lulworth.

He then toured the Ministry of Defence's new Battle Lab workshop. This new facility houses a private 5G network and will allow the MOD and small, agile technology companies to collaborate and develop new 5G products and services. The Minister was then taken to Durdle Door where he was shown the new 5G connected digital signage which informs the public of sea conditions and tide times via data collected using a sea condition monitoring system (SCMS) located offshore. This includes what is believed to be the only self-powered floating 5G buoy on the globe. Charged by the sun, it shows how innovation has a huge part to play in meeting net zero carbon objectives. The four digital signs installed by the project at popular tourist hotspots also include footfall counting technology to help landowners and the local authorities manage potential overcrowding along the Jurassic Coast.

There was also the chance to meet the Lulworth First Responders who have recently had their emergency response vehicle brought into the 21st century with the latest communications kit and 5G connectivity. Finally, the Minister was then taken by boat to view the SCMS buoy up close and to look at the coastline where the project is examining how 5G can be used to help monitor land slippage and cliff stability.

I commented "This visit marks an important milestone in the project as our research starts to become more visible and is being recognised at the highest levels of government. We hope what the Minister has seen here today will help inform decisions about 5G and rural connectivity, not just in Dorset but across the whole of the UK."

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said: “5G is about much more than having a faster mobile phone and I’ve seen some incredible innovation happening across Dorset with the help of government funding. Whether it’s saving lives at sea, monitoring coastal erosion or helping our dedicated first responders, what we are learning in Dorset about this technology will help us improve lives and create new solutions to age-old problems.”

All in all, a very positive day which raised the profile of ground-breaking digital work underway here in Dorset and puts us in an excellent position for any further work funded by government.

Social Care Reform – Briefing note to our MPs

The current system is not working so at our regular meeting with our local MPs we put forward our thoughts and our requests for them to consider. Apologies for the length but it only makes sense as a complete document, so it is shown below unedited. We also attached “Nine Statements to Help Shape Adult Social Care Reform” produced by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) which you can Google if you need to.

We need MPs’ help to ensure certainty for adult social care, progress on meaningful reform of the funding system and to secure a long-term plan for adult social care. Reform has been a challenge for governments of all political shades, but a fair and sustainable solution is vitally needed.

Social care provides care, support and safeguards for us at different stages in our lives. It supports us when we are disabled or older or caring. It supports us to live good lives and die good deaths. We are relieved to hear Government restate its commitment to adult social care reform in the Queen’s Speech, but disheartened by the absence of concrete proposals or timescale, particularly in the context of the impact the pandemic has had on older and disabled people and their carers. We believe it is vital the Government keeps its promise to sort out adult social care ‘once and for all’. It is crucial the Government sets out its plans at the earliest opportunity and certainly ahead of the Autumn Spending Review.

Millions of us, including thousands of people in your constituency, are not getting the care and support we need, and every delay means that more older and disabled people, families and carers are being left to struggle. To get the care and support we all need, now and the future, requires Government to:

Set out its plans for the long-term future of Adult Social Care before the parliamentary recess in July: Enabling us all to get the care and support we want for ourselves and our families, today and in the future, and so that we can live the lives we want to live.

Provide certainty about funding: Guaranteeing – before the parliamentary recess in July – that all existing short-term funding will continue, and then use the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review to set out what money will be available over the course of the whole of the Parliament to ensure we all continue to get the support we need.

Support the development of a ten year plan for Adult Social Care: Setting out how social care links with other public services and supports resilient individuals, families and communities – complementing and supporting the NHS Long Term Plan and prioritising care and support in our homes and communities.

Waste and Recycling information

I have been requested by a number of people to summarise the costs, services and in particular some questions concerning the collection of garden waste. Next month I will cover Recycling.

The budget for waste collection at Dorset Council is around £32M. Just over £15M of this is in disposal of the waste. The collection vehicles and staff are operated from six depots across the

county. As of this month all homes in the county have the same service, a weekly food waste collection and a fortnightly black bin collection and recycling collection with a separate glass and battery collection on this week. We collect about 190,000 tons a year, and over 60% of this is recycled. We are proud to be in the top five for our waste services in the country and would even reach the top spot if our collections were not more expensive than urban authorities due to our rural area. All our waste is collected and taken to transfer stations where it is bulked up and taken in larger vehicles for processing.

Black Bin Waste

A normal dustcart can hold ten tons of compacted black bin waste. Each full lorry costs the council approximately £1200 to dispose of the contents after the costs of collection. After bulking up the waste is delivered to a site near Wimborne operated by New Earth Solutions. Here the waste is treated and any compostable materials like food waste, garden waste and dog poo are removed and treated in a high temperature plant to sterilise. The residual from this process is then used to back fill large quarries like the china clay quarries in Cornwall. Any tins are taken out for recycling and the residual matter including film, nappies, and you know what else you put in the black bin!! is compacted and wrapped like big bale silage. These are then taken for refuse derived fuel, large incinerators that create electricity and which also use the heat in outer outlets. Currently the bulk of or waste goes to Europe where the plants are very efficient. However, from September this will go to a new state of the art plant at Bridgewater and the heat is going to be piped to the Muller dairy close to the site.

Garden Waste

The brown bin garden waste is bulked up at the transfer stations and the household recycling centres and mostly taken to Eco Solutions at Parley for Windrow composting. There are two other small facilities at Stourpaine and Weymouth. The material is put through a massive shredder and laid out in long lines to compost. The whole site is about 8 acres but does wood recycling as well. It is quite a scientific process with probes regularly monitoring the temperature ups and downs to determine when the heap need to be turned. The material is then sold in bulk to landscapers and the like.

Food Waste

The food caddy collection is taken to depot to be bulked up and then goes to the anaerobic digester at Piddlehinton. This is a top end facility which feeds energy back into the grid from the process and well as using the spare heat generated to supplement the nearby grain store. The end product is a sludge that can go back on agricultural land.

Batteries

We will recycle all kinds of domestic battery, but they must be kept separate!! Every week somewhere in the country there is a fire either in the lorries or at a plant because batteries have been put in with the waste. In particular, lithium batteries are lethal as they still have so much energy left in them.

Collection of Garden Waste

There are a small number areas of Dorset where it is economically and environmentally beneficial to collect garden waste with the rubbish. This is predominantly restricted access areas, where we would have to send a smaller dedicated garden waste vehicle excessive distances to empty a customer's garden waste bin. In these instances, all of the garden waste collected with rubbish is taken to a treatment facility where the garden waste is composted as part of the treatment process. Therefore, no garden waste ends up in landfill as was suggested in recent social media posts

The garden waste material that is collected with the general waste will be sent to a treatment facility. Any organic material is separated and composted as part of this treatment process. However, each year we review and optimise all garden waste collection rounds. This is predominantly completed to create capacity for new customer growth, but we also review all

garden waste bins that are collected with the rubbish and assess whether we can effectively and efficiently collect these bins with the dedicated garden waste vehicles. During our last optimisation exercise (winter 2020) we were able to move a further 80 garden waste bins from rubbish rounds onto dedicated garden waste collection rounds.

Surgery

We are not (yet) holding face to face meetings for the moment. However, we would be more than delighted to talk to you on the telephone or via Zoom. Please ring or email us with some details so that we can prepare ourselves. Peter's email address is peterwharf@hotmail.com telephone 07986 600799 and Laura's is cllrLaura.miller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk telephone 07814 569563.

Peter Wharf & Laura Miller, Dorset Councillors for West Purbeck