



Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation August 2025



Dorset is changing – help us shape it.

Dorset Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide development. The consultation explores how much development we should provide and identifies opportunity sites for new homes, employment land and traveller sites. It also identifies areas of opportunity for wind and solar power.

The Local Plan options consultation is available to view at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-is-changing. You can comment on the Local Plan by completing all or part of this survey online or by using this form. You can also view the site options on a map online and make your comments. Alternatively comment on the site options using the site response form. You can view a paper copy of the Local Plan Options Consultation at your local Dorset library or at County Hall, Dorchester.

If you need help with the survey, please contact the Planning Policy team at planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or 01305 838334.

You are able to give your views between 18 August 2025 and 13 October 2025.

**The consultation will begin on
18 August 2025 and end on 13 October 2025**

How can I make a comment?

To give your views, please:

- Make sure you give your name and either postal or email address along with your postcode so that your response can be considered appropriately.
- Use the official form.
- Make your comments within the consultation period to ensure they are considered.
- If you are part of a group that shares a common view, please include a list of the contact details of each person (including names, addresses, emails, telephone numbers and signatures) along with a completed form providing details of the named lead representative.
- Continue on separate sheets if necessary.

Please note:

- Representations cannot be treated as confidential. By completing a representation, you agree to your name (but not your address) and comments being made available for public viewing.
- The council do not accept any responsibility for the contents of the comments submitted. We reserve the right to remove any comments containing defamatory, abusive or malicious allegations.

You can respond:

Online

View the consultation and submit your response online via the following link:

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-is-changing

The benefits of providing your response this way are as follows:

- less impact on the environment as we do not need to use paper or postage
- you will be emailed a copy of your response as confirmation once submitted
- you will be able to start your response, save it, and return to it at a later date - a confirmation email will send you a link to where you left off
- using the online survey greatly assists our analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of the issues raised

E-mail

We can also accept responses emailed to us, preferably using this form.

planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Written responses

There are paper copies of the response form available upon request for those without internet or computer access.

Please telephone **01305 838334** to request a copy.

Responses returned by post should reference the **Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation 2025** and be sent to the **Spatial Planning Team, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ**.

Part A

Please complete one part A form

	Individual	Agent (if applicable)
Name*	Kirsty Riglar – Parish Clerk	Click or tap here to enter text.
Organisation	Stinsford Parish Council	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 1*	c/o 57 Louise Road	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Town	Dorchester	Click or tap here to enter text.
Postcode*	DT1 2LU	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address*	stinsfordclerk@gmail.com	Click or tap here to enter text.

Client's details if applicable:

Name*	Click or tap here to enter text.
Organisation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 1*	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 2	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 3	Click or tap here to enter text.
Town	Click or tap here to enter text.
Postcode*	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address*	Click or tap here to enter text.

*essential fields

Group representations

If your representation is on behalf of a group, ensure the lead representative completes the contact details box above. Also, please state here how many people support the representation:

Stinsford Parish Council

Part B

Opportunity sites

Which site are you commenting on?

LA/STLB/006: North of Dorchester

What are the main considerations for this site?

- a. Specific design requirements ☐
- b. Natural environment and ecology ☒
- c. Landscape and visual ☒
- d. Heritage ☒
- e. Flood risk ☒
- f. Amenity, health, education ☒
- g. Transport (access and movement) ☒
- h. Green Belt (if applicable) ☐
- i. Other issues ☒

Please provide further details on these considerations, and how they might be addressed

Set out below as the response is too lengthy for the number of characters in the online survey.

Background

The area covered by the North Dorchester Master Plan was mooted as a possibility in the run up to the start of the development of Poundbury in 1993. It was considered unsuitable for several reasons including highways and hydrology. In 2008 the Halcrow Report stated that not a single building should be constructed before the completion of a Dorchester Northern Bypass. The estimate provided was prohibitive and no further action was taken. It was held that without this it would add unacceptable amounts of traffic to the Dorchester Bypass and the High West Street / High East Street axis through the town centre. The site was to come forward again in 2018 in the consultation on the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan. Residents rejected it. Regardless of this, following the creation of a unitary council approach, a preferred options consultation took place when residents overwhelmingly opposed the development of the site. 2021 also saw the adoption of the Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan. Roughly 95% of the potential development falls within the parish of Stinsford and residents were vocal in their opposition. We are now asked to provide a view on the site option based on a limited masterplan. Stinsford Parish Council has consulted with residents and they have again given us the same response. They do not want the proposed development for a number of reasons based on the planning suitability of the site.

Further to the above outline history of the site it is pertinent to touch on the issue of the Garden Community Bid. This was submitted in 2019 after residents had rejected the site in the 2018 West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan options consultation. Garden Communities (MHCLG, Aug. 2018) states that 'Strong Local Leadership is crucial to developing and delivering a long-term vision for these new communities' (para 11). Para 12 emphasises the need to 'set out how local community is being, or will be, engaged and involved at an early stage' and that 'both current and future residents must have a meaningful say in developing the proposal from design to delivery'. The approach taken to the bid for the North Dorchester Garden Community was to do it secretly with no resident involvement or knowledge of the application. Stinsford Parish Council later discovered that it had been included in the bid as a supporter. Stinsford Parish Council had made its opposition clear. The Council complained about this and its name was removed but only after the submission was made. We therefore contest the validity of the bid.

Dorset Local Plan Site options consultation 2025

In our consultation with residents over the North Dorchester Garden Community site option as set out in the document labelled as a masterplan concerns raised include the following:

1) Nature Environment and Ecology

The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan details valued views within the parish. It calls for open space in a quiet rural setting. It is not clear how the development of the North Dorchester Garden Community can sustain either the views or what residents currently value about the parish. Proposals will intensify the use of the water meadows and impact both ecology and biodiversity. The ancient droveway known as Lovers Lane will be inevitably damaged. The proposals do nothing to reinstate chalk grassland in the area to the north of the water meadows to Waterston Ridge. The Parish Council is opposed to off-site offsetting solutions. Run-off should be maintained within the site itself. Failure to do this will have implication for the Stinsford Water Meadows SSSI and all protected sites to Poole Harbour including the Harbour itself.

2) Heritage Assets

Any development should respect the heritage of the area. The north of the site is covered with Bronze Age sites making a circuit with the south ridgeway around the large-scale ceremonial sites that existed in the valley. The value of the water meadows and areas closer to the town are directly connected with the legacy of Thomas Hardy (please refer to Policy SNP 2 in the Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan).

3) Landscape

The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan calls for a dark skies approach to all future development. It also lists a number of important views that we would wish to see maintained and unhindered by development. These include the panoramic views from Waterston Ridge to the north as well as many

views across the water meadows to Dorchester. In consultations the development of the site was described as an act of cultural vandalism on grounds that it is central to the landscape legacy of Thomas Hardy. The water meadows and the downs in this area feature in many of his writings, as does the area to the immediate north including Fiddlers Green and Waterston Ridge. Part of this legacy is the views from the area across the Water meadows to Dorchester. This landscape that attracts visitors from all over the world will be destroyed by the proposed development.

4) Flood Risk

The downs to the North of Dorchester are a source feeding the integrated catchment area for complex aquifers in the area providing water to the town. No evidence has been provided to suggest that there will be no impacts on the aquifers from the proposed development. The proposals must demonstrate how groundwater will be protected and an adequate water supply provided to the town, any new development and private residential bore holes. There is also a need to ensure protection of the area surrounding the bore hole at Eagle Lodge. Increased run-off will potentially lead to flooding in the lower parts of Dorchester and disrupt highways and active travel routes to the town centre. Even if reed beds for filtration are provided there is no evidence to suggest that this will be an effective solution and how they will be maintained in the medium to long term.

5) Amenity, Health and Education

There are already inadequate facilities in the area. There is a need for GP surgeries, nursery provision and hospital services. It is noted that Dorset County Hospital is already operating at capacity in relation to its current catchment area. Likewise there is a desperate need for more leisure, sports and cultural provision. No evidence is provided as to what cultural facilities will be provided. The development of Poundbury led to a lot of facilities being attracted away from Dorchester town centre. There is a need for proposals to prevent this happening again on this site. There will also be a need for extra recycling and waste facilities.

6) Transport and Highways

Highways and traffic raise serious concerns. The Halcrow Report (2008) stated that not a single property should be built before the construction of a northern bypass. Presently the road network is too busy for cycling. Whilst we welcome active travel this will not happen because the site is divided from Dorchester; presently the suggested routes flood in winter and this may be enhanced by greater run-off resulting from development. The proposed development site will therefore mainly be served by cars and vans. The A35 would require serious upgrading with an extra junction off the trunk road and a high quality link road between the A35 and the A37. Slyers Lane (B3143) is not a feasible option; it is already a country lane in use by heavy traffic and car usage. This has been further impacted by the further development of the Piddlehinton Industrial Estate which has a potential to grow by almost three times its present size in the local plan options consultation. This problem will also be enhanced by the development of three educational establishments on the B3143. There is no meaningful consideration of either strategic or local traffic routes in the proposals. There are also impacts on Cuckoo Lane and Hollow Hill on the opposite side of the A35. These tend to be used for blockage

avoidance when blocks occur on the A35. Further congestion will occur in Stinsford, east of the A35, from potential large scale development at Crossways. This needs to be factored into any analysis of traffic and highways issues. There is a need to demonstrate how the road network will link to the A35 and what improvements will be made to the A35 and B3143 and elsewhere on the network and how these will be funded. Please see the section on Traffic in the Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan.

General Observations

The Stinsford Neighbourhood Plan provides a series of design elements that we would hope be adhered to and recognises the need for genuine affordable housing. We would also hope that any new development remains within the administrative boundaries of Stinsford Parish Council without any attempt to revise the boundaries. Stinsford Parish Council was formed in 1894. The name of Stinsford is internationally known because of its links with Thomas Hardy and attracts many visitors to the area. If the parish loses the area west of the A35 it is unlikely that it will continue as a viable administrative unit. Any new development should have strong active travel links across the A35 to connect it to Kingston Maurward, Stinsford and Higher and Lower Bockhampton.

There are now several versions of what is presented as a draft masterplan. These provide different boundaries making any overall assessments impossible. The promoters have now had seven years from 2018 to develop an evidence base to suggest that the proposed site is viable. This has not happened. We do not believe that the site is viable because of the shortfall in the evidence and remain fully opposed to the development. Therefore Stinsford Parish Council requests that the emerging masterplan included as a supporting document to the Local Plan consultation not be submitted for examination alongside the Local Plan because it provides the misleading impression that the site is viable and deliverable.