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21 September 2006

## TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Dear Member

### COUNCIL MEETING

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of North Dorset District Council to be held on **Friday 29 September 2006 at 10.15am** in the Council Chamber, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum for the transaction of the following business.

***Please note the later start time of the meeting.***

***Members are requested to attend at 10.00am for an informal update.***

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Goodall  
Chief Executive

## A G E N D A – OPEN TO THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

*Fifteen minutes will be set aside to allow members of the public to ask questions relating to the work of the Council. (If no questioners are present at this point, the meeting will proceed to the next item.)*

### 3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their obligations under the Codes of Conduct to declare any personal or prejudicial interests.

***Members are asked to note that, following a suggestion made at the recent Code of Conduct training, there will be forms available on the tables at Council meetings for you to complete with details of any interests you have. You will still need to declare the interest at the meeting under this Agenda Item or as soon as you are aware of it.***

### 4. **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 July 2006, (previously circulated), subject to the amendment of Minute 26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST to read as follows:

‘The following Members declared personal interests in item 29 as Members of the Town and Parish Councils shown:

Councillor Batty-Smith	Stalbridge Town Council
Councillor Mrs Bone	Marnhull Parish Council
Councillor Mrs Chapman	Blandford Town Council
Councillor V Fox	Sturminster Newton Town Council
Councillor D Fox	Sturminster Newton Town Council
Councillor Kay	Melbury Abbas and Cann Parish Council
Councillor Mrs Lowe	Shaftesbury Town Council
Councillor Mrs Manley	Shaftesbury Town Council
Councillor Milsted	Gillingham Town Council
Councillor Lt Col Oliver	Pimperne Parish Council
Councillor Stewart	Gillingham Town Council
Councillor Tanner	Pimperne Parish Council
Councillor Tory	Bryanston Parish Council.’

### 5. **CHAIRMAN’S NOTICES AND URGENT BUSINESS**

### 6. **HOUSING LAND SUPPLY POSITION STATEMENT**

To consider a report from the Policy Manager (Planning) seeking Members’ agreement to the content of a Position Statement on housing land supply and to the production of a Supplementary Planning Document on housing land supply.

**Recommended by Cabinet** that Council agree:

1. the content of the Position Statement set out in Appendix 1 to the report:
2. to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on housing land supply.

## 7. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council are asked to confirm the following nominations (names to be notified at the meeting):

### 7.1 **Standards Committee** (1 Member)

**Recommendation:** to confirm the appointment of a Member from the Conservative Group as a replacement for Councillor Hine on the Standards Committee (name to be notified).

### 7.2 **Blandford PACT Panel** (1 Member)

**Recommendation:** to confirm the appointment of 1 Member to the Blandford PACT Panel (name to be notified).

### 7.3 **Appointments Panel** (7 Members)

**Recommendation:** To establish an Appointments Panel with 7 Members for the appointment of the Section 151 Officer (names to be notified).

## 8. CABINET REPORT AND GENERAL QUESTION TIME

### 8.1 **Cabinet Report**

The Leader of the Council to present a report on Cabinet activities during August – September 2006 (attached). Members may question individual Cabinet members on the contents of this report.

### 8.2 **General Question Time**

**In accordance with the new Procedure for General Questions (circulated on 15 September 2006) Members are asked to submit general questions, other than urgent ones, in writing to the Democratic Services Manager by Wednesday 27 September at the latest.**

## 9. MOTIONS

### 9.1 **DEFRA “Consultation on proposals for managing the co-existence of GM conventional and organic crops**

Motion proposed by Councillor Webb and seconded by Councillor Milsted:

‘This Council responds to the current DEFRA “ Consultation on proposals for managing the coexistence of GM conventional and organic crops” launched on July 20 2006, as follows:

This Council is seriously concerned that the proposed measures offer inadequate protection to a) organic producers; b) allotment holders; c) beekeepers; d) the general plant life environment; e) agricultural economic interests in general, and f) the general public interest.

This Council objects to the following explicit or implied DEFRA proposals:

1. The concept that a degree of GM contamination is acceptable in principle.
2. The lack of enforceable standards implicit in a voluntary approach
3. Inadequate separation distances.....miles rather than metres should be considered
4. The lack of a duty on future public disclosure on sites - potentially adversely affecting – e.g. nearby allotment holders, beekeepers, gardeners, organic farmers.
5. The lack of clarity on legal liability for any damage resulting from GM usage.

And calls upon the Government to adopt much more stringent measures to protect the non-GM interests of the whole community.'

## 9.2 **Devolution of Standards Board Responsibilities to Local Authorities**

Proposed by Cllr Moyle and seconded by Cllr Carr-Jones:

'The Council deplores the shift in responsibility for assessing complaints about Councillors from the Standards Board to local government without notice and without funding. The Council calls on the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to reimburse the additional costs incurred by local authorities. The impact on smaller, rural Councils is significant. North Dorset District Council is responsible for dealing with the ethical standards of all councillors in the district, town and parish councils – 428 Councillors in total. Additional, unbudgeted costs of £14,000 have already been incurred. The Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the DCLG and the Local Government Association to express its concern.'

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Friday 27th October 2006**

## NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Council

Date of Meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006

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**REPORT TITLE:** HOUSING LAND SUPPLY IN NORTH DORSET – PLANNING POSITION STATEMENT

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Peter Webb

**Report Author:** Trevor Warrick - Policy Manager (Planning)

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To seek members' agreement to the content of a Position Statement on housing land supply and to seek members' agreement to the production of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on housing land supply.
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**Statutory Authority:** Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

**Financial Implications:** No direct financial implications

**Consultations required/undertaken:** Senior Management Team / Cabinet / Council

**Recommendations:** That Council:  
(1) agrees the content of the Position Statement set out in Appendix 1; and  
(2) agrees to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on housing land supply.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide developers, agents and the public with more information on the housing oversupply situation in North Dorset and to agree a course of action to deal with the issue.

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### BACKGROUND

1. 'Oversupply' occurs where the rate of housing development in an area exceeds the planned rate of provision. Over time this can result in significantly more dwellings being built than were projected.
2. In North Dorset the rate of housing development has consistently exceeded the planned rate of provision. By the end of March 2006 the level of housing completions coupled with outstanding planning

permissions had exceeded the total number of dwellings proposed for the District in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (the Structure Plan) for the period up to 2011. Consequently, there is very little doubt that sufficient dwellings will be built in North Dorset by 2011 to meet Structure Plan housing provision figures.

3. The North Dorset District Wide Local Plan: First Revision (the Local Plan) identifies sufficient land to accommodate the proposed dwellings and also includes a range of policies to monitor and manage the release of housing land in the District. The information on the level and rate of housing development shows that a number of key housing targets in the Local Plan are being exceeded. The Local Plan also indicates that the Council will produce supplementary guidance if there is a need to control housing land supply.
4. The housing land supply situation is a material consideration which must be taken into account when planning decisions are made. The Council has had regard to this issue in recent months; however, no formal statement on the current position (or of what action the Council intends to take to deal with it) has been produced.
5. This report includes, as Appendix 1, a 'Position Statement', which provides a clear summary of the housing land supply situation. This report also suggests that the Council should prepare a Supplementary Planning Document to deal with the issue; the intention being to produce a draft for consultation later this year / early 2007.

### **WHY MANAGE OVERSUPPLY?**

6. In many parts of Britain local authorities struggle to deliver sufficient housing to meet strategic housing targets, which is a concern to the Government as this means that the need for housing in a particular area is not met. In order to ensure that strategic housing targets are met, it may be appropriate for a Council to grant planning permission for a slightly higher level of development than is planned for, because certain schemes may not come forward during the Structure Plan period. However, if strategic housing targets are likely to be exceeded by a significant margin, as is the case in North Dorset, this departs from the consulted and agreed planning basis.
7. The 'plan-led' system is central to planning in Britain and it requires that planning decisions are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Housing provision figures are a key feature of development plans. They are formulated having taken into account a wide range of factors and are determined following a great deal of public consultation. Once adopted, the figures provide the basis for predictability that the planned level of development will be delivered. Failure to broadly accord with the figures (either in terms of under or over supply) would undermine

confidence in the 'plan-led' system as a means of delivering sustainable development.

8. In North Dorset, the level of housing provision sought in the Structure Plan can already be provided from completions and outstanding planning permissions alone. However, there are still five years of the Structure Plan period remaining and unless some form of further control is exerted, significantly more dwellings than were projected will be built. Oversupply is already being taken into account when planning applications are determined and when pre-application advice is being given. There is, therefore an urgent need for the Council to provide factual information on the current oversupply situation and to explain the course of action it intends to take to deal with the issue.

### **THE OVERSUPPLY SITUATION IN NORTH DORSET**

9. The Position Statement in Appendix 1 provides full details of the oversupply situation in North Dorset. It demonstrates that the average annual rate of housing development (456 dwellings per annum) is significantly above the rate envisaged in the Structure Plan (347 dwellings per annum). It also shows that by the end of March 2006, the 5,900 dwellings envisaged for North Dorset for the period between 1994 and 2011 could well be delivered from completions and outstanding planning permissions.
10. It shows that there is oversupply in all parts of North Dorset, except Shaftesbury, with rates of development being particularly high in the rural area (i.e. the villages and countryside of the District). By the end of March 2006 the sub-area housing provision figures for Blandford, Gillingham, Sturminster Newton, Stalbridge and the Rural Area for the period up to 2011 could already be met from completions and outstanding planning permissions. Only in Shaftesbury is there a level of under provision.
11. The position statement also examines oversupply in the context of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS) that will replace RPG 10 and the Structure Plan, probably sometime in 2008. The draft RSS proposes a build rate significantly below the planned rate in the Structure Plan and the historic build rate in the District. The Position Statement shows that the draft housing provision figure in RSS to 2011 would be significantly exceeded:
  - (a) if past rates were allowed to continue; or
  - (b) if all outstanding planning permissions were implemented and the remaining allocations in the Local Plan were brought forward before the end of March 2011.
12. The Position Statement also briefly summarizes the key policies from the Local Plan which provide the policy basis for the production of further guidance. In short the Local Plan:

- indicates that the Council will take remedial action if housing targets are being significantly exceeded or under achieved (paragraph 2.39);
  - indicates that planning permission for any site, including allocations and windfall sites, may be withheld if there is oversupply (Policy 2.9 and paragraph 2.42);
  - indicates that any re-phasing of development should take place towards the end of a particular phase (paragraph 2.45). Phase 2 ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006; and
  - states that Supplementary Planning Guidance will be produced if any changes to the Plan's phasing programme are necessary (paragraph 2.45).
13. The Position Statement clearly demonstrates that there is significant oversupply in North Dorset and the Local Plan provides a clear policy justification for seeking to manage housing land supply in the current circumstances. It is recommended that the Council should endorse the contents of the Position Statement as a factual summary of the oversupply situation and that it should be published to enable agents, developers and the public to understand the Council's position. Preliminary summary information has already been distributed to members, town and parish councils, agents and developers.

## **OPTIONS**

14. In the light of the current situation there are three main options the Council needs to consider to deal with the issues. These are:
- Option 1 - to manage oversupply without further policy guidance;
  - Option 2 - to produce interim policy guidance to manage oversupply; or
  - Option 3 - to produce SPG / SPD to manage oversupply.
15. These options are considered in more detail below in the light of a legal opinion that has been obtained. Another option is to do nothing and to allow oversupply to continue unchecked. This option would not deal with the issue now faced by the Council. The consequence of failing to control housing land supply is discussed in more detail in the section on risk management.

### ***Option 1 - To Manage Oversupply Without Further Policy Guidance***

16. Officers have had regard to oversupply in recent months. Oversupply is being used as a reason for the refusal of planning permission for residential development and agents and developers are being advised of the oversupply situation when pre-application advice is given. The Council has won a number of appeals on oversupply grounds, notably on the site at 2 Park Villas, Gillingham.

17. Whilst it is possible to manage oversupply in this way, it is not clear to agents, developers and the public why the Council has adopted the position it has. The lack of information or a stated policy position gives rise to uncertainty and there is a significant risk that inconsistent decisions could be made, undermining confidence in the development control process.
18. Many letters and phone calls have been received from agents, developers and the public. They have sought further information on the issue and on the Council's position with regard to oversupply. Without further general information or policy guidance, the Council's position will remain unclear.

***Option 2 - To Produce Interim Policy Guidance to Manage Oversupply***

19. Option 2 is to produce an interim policy document including policies to deal with oversupply. The benefit of such a document is that it could be produced quickly to address the lack of clarity that currently exists. This option has been pursued by officers and legal advice on its merits has been sought. There are a number of reasons why this course of action is considered unsuitable.
20. Firstly, the adopted Local Plan states that the Council will produce Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), if it needs to manage housing land supply or alter the phasing programme for the release of allocations. An interim policy document would in this respect be contrary to the Plan.
21. Secondly, interim policy guidance would not accord with the new planning Regulations introduced in 2004, in conjunction with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Regulations set out clear requirements for the production of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which supersede SPG, including the requirement for public consultation. Any interim policy document which was not produced in accordance with the Regulations (i.e. was not SPD) would carry very limited weight and be likely to be insufficient for its purpose.
22. Thirdly, if the interim policy guidance went beyond interpreting existing policy, it would be susceptible to legal challenge in the Courts. Such guidance might seek to control oversupply, but still to allow a level of housing development significantly higher than that envisaged in the Local Plan. This would go beyond what might reasonably be considered to be 'supplementary' and legal advice is that matters such as this should be dealt with through the revision of the Local Plan or the production of a Local Development Framework.

### **Option 3 - To Produce SPG / SPD to Manage Oversupply**

23. The legal advice the Council has been given advocates the production of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is in line with the Local Plan, paragraph 2.45 of which states:  
*“any proposed changes to the Plan’s programme of development will be published as Supplementary Planning Guidance and made available for public comment prior to implementation.”*
24. Any SPD would need to be supplementary to the Local Plan. It could seek to hold back the release of, or alter the phasing programme for the remaining allocations (or parts of allocations) which do not yet have planning permission. It may also be able to provide some general advice on the other planning issues the Council will give priority to when considering the issue of oversupply, such as affordable housing. However, further legal advice may be required on the precise wording.
25. Under the new planning Regulations, the SPD must be subject to a period of public consultation and must be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal. These requirements have to be met and will increase the length of time taken to produce the document.
26. Councils are now required to set out the documents they propose to produce in a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which has to be agreed with the relevant Government Office, in this case the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). GOSW has agreed to the principle of producing a SPD on housing land supply. It is hoped that the draft SPD could be produced for public consultation later in 2006 / early in 2007.
27. The preferred option is to produce SPD on housing land supply (Option 3), subsequent to the production of the Position Statement set out in Appendix 1, which contains no planning policies, only a factual summary of the current situation.

### **COSTS**

28. The cost of production of SPD and legal advice can be met from existing Planning Policy budgets. The longer term costs are uncertain. The SPD may result in a reduction in the number of planning applications submitted. However, it could also result in more planning appeals.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

29. There are risks associated both with taking action to address the oversupply issue and taking no action. If a SPD is produced to deal with oversupply, this will be subject to objections and the validity of the

document could be challenged in the Courts. It is intended to obtain legal advice on the content of any draft document to minimize this risk.

30. Controlling oversupply also brings with it the potential risk of more appeals. The Council's position could be challenged through the appeal process and appeals could be lost as a result. Potentially appellants could apply for costs. However, it should be borne in mind that the principle of seeking to manage oversupply is strongly supported both by Government and Local Plan policies.
31. Failure to control housing land supply will result in levels of development significantly above those envisaged in the Structure Plan. This may result in the Secretary of State calling in other planning applications, in addition to the ones on land to the east of Shaftesbury, for his own determination. This is costly to all concerned.
32. The Council has been criticized by the Audit Commission in its recent inspection of the Planning Service for not controlling housing land supply in the past. Failure to address this issue in the future will reflect poorly on the Council in any future Audit Commission inspections and may lead to greater involvement of the Commission in Council affairs in the future.

#### **RECOMMENDED OPTION AND REASONS WHY**

32. The preferred option is to produce SPD to deal with the oversupply issue. The recommendation is that Council:
  - (1) agrees the content of the Position Statement set out in Appendix 1; and
  - (2) agrees to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on housing land supply.
33. The reason for seeking this decision is to provide developers, agents and the public with more information on the housing oversupply situation in North Dorset and to agree a course of action to deal with the issue.

**Author:** Trevor Warrick, Policy Manager (Planning)

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**Background Papers:**

North Dorset District Local Plan: First Revision (January 2003)  
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (February 2001)

**Contact Details:** Trevor Warrick Tel 01258 484211

**North Dorset District Council  
Planning Position Statement**

**Housing Land Supply  
In North Dorset**

**September 2006**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Position Statement has been produced by North Dorset District Council (the Council) and deals with the issue of housing land supply. It provides factual information on the current 'oversupply' situation within the context of national, regional, county and district policy and guidance.
- 1.2 It also explains the course of action the Council intends to take to deal with the issue.

## 2. The 'Plan-led' System and 'Plan, Monitor, Manage'

- 2.1 'Oversupply' occurs where the rate of housing development in an area exceeds the planned rate of provision. Over time this can result in significantly more dwellings being built than were projected. This is contrary to the 'plan-led' system and the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach to controlling housing land supply advocated by the Government.
- 2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides the statutory basis for the 'plan-led' system. Section 38(6) of this Act states:

*“if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*
- 2.3 This provision is reflected in Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS 1): Delivering Sustainable Development, which stresses the important role the plan-led system has in delivering sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that:

*“This plan-led system, and the certainty and predictability it aims to provide, is central to planning and plays the key role in integrating sustainable development objectives. Where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*
- 2.4 Housing provision figures are a key feature of the documents that make up a development plan. They are determined following a detailed analysis of future housing needs, the capacity of the local environment to absorb development and locational considerations, such as accessibility. By taking account of all the relevant factors, the figures should represent a level of development that is consistent with the principle of sustainable development.
- 2.5 Housing provision figures in Structure and Local Plans represent the outcome of a great deal of public consultation during which all the relevant issues are discussed and competing interests considered. Once determined, the figures provide developers with the 'certainty and predictability' that sufficient land will be made available to enable the planned level of housing provision to be delivered. The figures also provide those with 'conservation interests' (in the broadest sense) with the 'certainty and predictability' that the planned level of provision will not be significantly exceeded. Failure to broadly accord with housing provision figures removes the 'certainty and predictability' that the Government seeks to achieve and undermines confidence in the 'plan-led' system as an effective vehicle for delivering sustainable development.

- 2.6 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG 3): Housing, the Government indicates that local planning authorities should achieve sustainable levels and patterns of housing by adopting a 'plan, monitor, manage' approach. Paragraph 33 of PPG 3 states that local authorities:
- "should manage the release of sites over the plan period in order to control the pattern and speed of urban growth, ensure that the new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development and deliver the local authority's recycling target."*
- 2.7 These policy considerations show that it is important to manage housing land supply both in order to maintain confidence in the plan led system and to deliver sustainable levels and patterns of development.

### **3. Housing Land Supply, RPG 10 and the Structure Plan**

- 3.1 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) covers the period from 1996 to 2016 and indicates that 2,650 dwellings per annum (dpa) should be provided across Dorset as a whole. The proposed level of development in the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (the Structure Plan), which covers the period from 1994 to 2011, reflects this County-wide annual housing target and housing provision figures for each District are identified to enable it to be met. Housing Policy A (page 62) sets the strategic housing provision figure for the District indicating that *"about 5,900 dwellings"* (gross) should be constructed in North Dorset between April 1994 and March 2011. On average 347 dwellings (gross) (about 335 dwellings net) need to be provided each year in order for the 5,900 dwellings to be delivered over this 17-year period.
- 3.2 Paragraphs 6.6 to 6.28 of the Structure Plan provide considerable detail on how the overall level of housing provision was determined. In short the Structure Plan rejects a market-led approach in favour of a more sustainable approach which:
- "allows for demand to be met in certain areas, within the limits of the locational requirements of sustainability and taking account of strategic environmental constraints."* (para. 6.28).
- 3.3 Monitoring shows that the average annual rate of housing development in North Dorset has significantly exceeded the planned rate of provision set out in the Structure Plan. Indeed, by the end of March 2006, the 5,900 dwellings could easily be delivered from completions and commitments. This is explained below.
- 3.4 By the end of March 2006, 5,466 dwellings (gross) had already been completed in the District at an average annual rate of 456 dwellings per annum (dpa) (gross). This represents a rate of provision 31% above the planned rate of development for the District as a whole. As a consequence only 434 dwellings (gross) need to be built over the next five years in order for the 5,900 dwellings envisaged in the Structure Plan to be provided, as summarised below.

Total strategic requirement (1994 – 2011)	5,900
Less total completions (1994 – 2006)	5,466
Remainder to be built @ 31/03/06	434

3.5 In addition, at the end of March 2006 there were extant planning permissions for a further 792 dwellings in North Dorset. This figure includes sites with planning permission where development has not yet started and uncompleted units on sites with planning permission where construction is taking place. It excludes allocated sites, and parts of allocated sites, in the North Dorset District Wide Local Plan: First Revision (the Local Plan) where there are no extant planning permissions.

3.6 In the event that all these permissions were entirely built out by the end of March 2011, the figure of 5,900 dwellings would be exceeded by 358 dwellings (approximately 6.1%) as summarised below.

Outstanding consents @ 31/03/06	792
Less remainder to be built	434
Oversupply (6.1%) @ 31/03/06	358

3.7 Even if an allowance is made that some of the existing planning permissions will not be built out by the end of March 2011 there is very little doubt that the 5,900 dwellings figure would be met, because only 55% of the existing stock of permissions needs to be implemented over the next five years for this to be achieved. Also further planning permissions have been granted since the end of March 2006, adding to the level of oversupply.

#### 4. Local Plan Policies for Managing Housing Land Supply

4.1 The policies of the Local Plan identify sufficient land to deliver the strategic housing requirement for North Dorset for the period up to 2011. The Local Plan also includes a range of policies that seek to monitor and manage the release of housing land in the District. These policies and the relevant supporting text are summarised in this section.

4.2 Policy 2.1 of the Local Plan states that:

*“Provision will be made for the construction of about 5,900 dwellings in the period April 1994 – March 2011. This includes about 3,470 dwellings, built or committed at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000, about 680 dwellings to be built on windfall sites and about 1,750 dwellings to be built on sites allocated under Policy 2.4 of the Plan.”*

4.3 Policy 2.3 breaks down the total (gross) housing requirement. It identifies that the “*approximate scale and rate*” of housing development in the District’s six ‘sub-areas’ (the five main towns and rural settlements) shall be as set out below:

Blandford	about 1,050 (62 dwellings/year)
Gillingham	about 1,610 (95 dwellings/year)
Shaftesbury	about 1,170 (69 dwellings/year)
Sturminster Newton	about 640 (38 dwellings/year)
Stalbridge	about 170 (10 dwellings/year)
Rural Settlements	about 1,260 (74 dwellings/year)
Total	about 5,900 (347 dwellings/year)

- 4.4 Policy 2.4 sets out the sites allocated for residential development in tabular form giving details of site areas and potential dwelling supply and indicating when each site would be phased for release.
- 4.5 The Local Plan recognises that housing development across the District as a whole may not always progress precisely in line with the rate of development envisaged in the Structure Plan and outlines the circumstances in which the Council would take remedial action to control housing land supply. This relates both to the over and under provision of housing land against policy targets.
- 4.6 Policy 2.8 states that the take up of housing land will be monitored and the supporting text (paragraph 2.39) states that:  
*“where targets are being significantly exceeded or under achieved (i.e. by + or – 10%), the Council will take steps to rectify the situation as explained in the following section on phasing.”*
- 4.7 The current rate of development is 31% over the planned rate. This is over three times more than the 10% margin of leeway identified in paragraph 2.39 of the Local Plan.
- 4.8 The Local Plan includes a policy on phasing (Policy 2.9) and identifies three phases of development covering the periods 1994 – 2000, 2000 – 2006 and 2006 – 2011. The expected rates of development for each phase are set out in Table 3 of the Plan. By the time the Local Plan was adopted in January 2003, the first phase had already been completed. The remaining allocated sites were divided between the latter two phases. Policy 2.9 establishes a phasing mechanism, which indicates that sites may be brought forward early if housing targets are not being met. Conversely it also indicates that:  
*“planning permission for any site may be withheld or be subject to conditions restricting the commencement of development until a later phase, if monitoring indicates that: (i) planned construction rates are being significantly exceeded ...”*
- 4.9 Further detail is provided in supporting paragraph 2.42, which clearly establishes that it is appropriate for the Council to seek to control windfall sites as well as allocations. Paragraph 2.42 states:  
*“The final phase of 01.04.06 – 31.03.11 will allow for adjustments to be made according to progress on earlier phases. For instance if planned densities on earlier sites have been exceeded or more windfall development than anticipated has come forward, the sites allocated for the final phase may be held back or additional windfall development be refused permission until the situation has stabilised.”*
- 4.10 The Local Plan also provides assistance as to the appropriate time for implementing any changes. Paragraph 2.45 identifies that:  
*“To merit a change from the phasing programme set out in the Plan it must be shown that planned levels of development are being significantly exceeded or underachieved (i.e. by + or – 10%). This assessment should be made towards the end of a particular phase ...”*

- 4.11 Paragraph 2.42 indicates that the second phase of development ran from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.
- 4.12 The Local Plan establishes a clear policy framework outlining the circumstances in which the Council will seek to control housing land supply. The figures available demonstrate that a number of the key housing targets are being significantly exceeded. This is further explained in Section 5.

## 5 Housing Land Supply and the Local Plan

- 5.1 Development progress in all sub-areas of North Dorset, except Shaftesbury, significantly exceeds planned levels of provision. Table LI (iii) in the Council's 2005 Annual Monitoring Report provided a breakdown of housing development by settlement for the period up to the end of March 2005. Table LI (iii) has been updated to the end of March 2006 to include the 579 dwellings (gross) built during 2005/06 and is set out below.

<b>Table LI (iii) N Dorset Residential Development Rates 1994 - 2006 (Gross)</b>					
<b>Sub-Area</b>	<b>Total planned development 1994 - 2011</b>	<b>Dwellings planned per annum 1994 - 2011</b>	<b>Total dwellings built 1994-2006</b>	<b>Average dwellings built per annum 1994 - 2006</b>	<b>% above/below planned dpa</b>
Blandford	1050	62	1084	90	45%
Gillingham	1610	95	1617	135	42%
Shaftesbury	1170	69	511	43	-38%
Sturminster Newton	640	38	554	46	21%
Stalbridge	170	10	151	13	30%
Rural Areas	1260	74	1549	129	74%
<b>North Dorset</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>5466</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>31%</b>

Source DCC Residential Land Monitoring Report 2005 - updated with figures for 2005/06

- 5.2 The rate of development is particularly high in the 'rural areas' (i.e. the villages and countryside of the District), where it is running at 74% above the planned rate of provision. Planned rates are also being significantly exceeded in Blandford, Gillingham, Sturminster Newton, and Stalbridge. The only area with a significant deficit in supply is Shaftesbury.
- 5.3 The existing stock of planning permissions at the end of March 2006, which would enable a further 792 dwellings to be built, can be broken down by sub-area, as shown in Table 1 below.

- 5.4 In the cases of Sturminster Newton and Stalbridge, the unimplemented planning permissions will, if implemented, enable the specific sub-area provision figures identified for these settlements in Policy 2.3 to be met over the next five years.

<b>Table 1 – Completions and Outstanding Planning Permissions by Sub-area</b>				
<b>Sub-area</b>	<b>Total planned development 1994 - 2011</b>	<b>Total dwellings built 1994 - 2006</b>	<b>Outstanding consents @ 31/03/06</b>	<b>Completions plus consents</b>
<b>Blandford</b>	1,050	1,084	154	1,238
<b>Gillingham</b>	1,610	1,617	169	1,786
<b>Shaftesbury</b>	1,170	511	32	543
<b>Stur. Newton</b>	640	554	114	668
<b>Stalbridge</b>	170	151	46	197
<b>Rural Area</b>	1,260	1,549	277	1,826

- 5.5 In addition to planned rates being significantly exceeded, Table 2 below shows that at the end of March 2006, completions and commitments also already significantly exceed (i.e. by more than 10%) the specific sub-area housing provision figures for Blandford, Gillingham, Stalbridge and the Rural Area. Again, it is only in Shaftesbury that there is a significant level of under provision in relation to the identified figures for housing development in Policy 2.3.

<b>Table 2 – Completions and Outstanding Planning Permissions Expressed as % Under / Over Supply @ 31/03/06</b>				
<b>Sub-area</b>	<b>Total planned development 1994 - 2011</b>	<b>Planned dev't + 10%</b>	<b>Completions plus consents</b>	<b>% Over or Under Supply</b>
<b>Blandford</b>	1,050	1,155	1,238	+17.9%
<b>Gillingham</b>	1,610	1,771	1,786	+10.9%
<b>Shaftesbury</b>	1,170	1,287	543	-53.6%
<b>Stur. Newton</b>	640	704	668	+4.4%
<b>Stalbridge</b>	170	187	197	+15.9%
<b>Rural Area</b>	1,260	1,386	1,826	+44.9%

- 5.6 These figures do not take account of planning permissions granted since March 2006, developments where the Council has resolved to grant permission but the planning consent has yet to be issued, or the capacity of the remaining allocations, or parts of allocated sites, currently identified for release during phase 3 of the Local Plan (2006 – 2011).

5.7 The Council granted planning permission for about 35 dwellings between the end of March 2006 and June 2006. The Council has also resolved to grant permission for 110 dwellings on allocated Site 'F': land off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford, subject to a planning agreement being satisfactorily concluded.

5.8 In addition, the remaining allocations (or parts of allocations) in the Local Plan have the capacity for about 1,030 dwellings. The approximate capacity of these sites is as set out below:

Site 'F' Off Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford	c.100
Site 'E' South of The Meadows, Gillingham	c.90
Land east of Shaftesbury	c.750
Site 'C' N. of Livestock Market, Stur. Newton	c.90
Total	c.1,030

5.9 Overall these additional consents and remaining allocations have the capacity for about 1,175 dwellings as summarised below.

Consents granted 01/04/06 – 30/06/06	35
Resolutions to grant consent	110
Remaining allocations & parts of allocations	1,030
Total	1,175

## 6 Housing Land Supply and the Emerging Regional Spatial Strategy

6.1 Under the new planning system Structure Plans will be phased out and replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs). In April 2006, the South West Regional Assembly submitted the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West to the Secretary of State. This document contains draft housing provision figures for each district in the region, including North Dorset.

6.2 Policy HD1 of the Draft RSS states that:

*“LDDs should deliver an average annual net increase in housing across their area according to the locational principles and priorities set out in the Development Policies A to C, and the sub regional statements SR1 to SR41. The overall distribution to 2026 is set out in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.*

6.3 Table 4.1 establishes an overall annual average net dwelling requirement of 255 dwellings for North Dorset for the period 2006 to 2026. This is broken down into two 10-year phases as follows:

2006 – 2016	-	290 dpa (net);
2016 – 2026	-	220 dpa (net).

6.4 The 290 net additional dpa proposed for the period between 2006 and 2016 and the 220 net additional dpa for the 10 years after 2016 are significantly below both the rate of 335 net additional dpa implied by the Structure Plan and the build rate of 456 dpa (gross) that has been achieved since 1994.

6.5 Assuming the draft annual average housing figure of 290 dpa for the period 2006 -2016 remains unchanged in the adopted RSS, 1,450 net additional dwellings would need to be provided between April 2006 and March 2011. This figure would be significantly exceeded if past rates of development were allowed to continue. It would also be significantly exceeded if all outstanding planning permissions and the remaining sites allocated in the Local Plan were developed by the end of March 2011.

6.6 If the past rate of housing development (456 dpa) continued over the next five years, it would result in 2,280 dwellings being completed by the end of March 2011. This would result in the RSS figure to 2011 being exceeded by 752 net units (or 52%). This situation is summarised below.

Projected completions to 31/03/11 (456 dpa x 5)	2,280
Less 3.4% (conversion gross to net) <sup>1</sup>	78
Less draft RSS requirement to 2011 (290 dpa net x 5)	1,450
Projected oversupply against draft RSS (net)	752

6.7 As previously observed, at the end of March 2006 outstanding planning permissions would enable a further 792 dwellings to be constructed in North Dorset. Consents or resolutions to grant consent issued between March and June 2006 total 145 dwellings. The remaining allocations or parts of allocated sites, in the Local Plan have the capacity for a further 1,030 dwellings. If all these consents and allocations were developed by the end of March 2011, the total number of dwellings would exceed the draft RSS figure to 2011 by 517 net units (or 36%). This situation is summarised below.

Outstanding consents @ 31/03/06	792
Plus additional consents etc. 01/04/06 – 30/06/06	145
Plus potential of remaining allocations	1,030
Total	1,967
Less draft RSS requirement to 2011 (290 dpa net x 5)	1,450
Projected oversupply against draft RSS (net)	517.

## 7 Proposed Action by the Council

7.1 Chapter 2 of the Local Plan includes policies on monitoring and phasing the release of housing land and these policies are explained in more detail in Section 4. Chapter 2 also states that the Council will take remedial action if housing targets are being significantly exceeded or underachieved and indicates that, if necessary, additional control will be exerted over the phasing and release of both allocated and windfall sites. The Local Plan indicates that any supplementary policies would be produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

<sup>1</sup> The housing provision figures in the Structure Plan are expressed in gross terms, whereas those in the draft RSS are expressed as net. The Structure Plan indicates that the net equivalent figure for 5,900 dwellings is 5,700 (i.e. 200 dwellings or 3.4% less). In the assessment of past rates of development against the draft RSS in this section, a reduction of 3.4% has been made when converting gross figures to net.

- 7.2 The new planning system requires that any supplementary guidance should be produced as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), rather than a SPG. It also requires the production of SPD to be agreed by the relevant Government Office (through an amendment to the Council's Local Development Scheme – LDS) and for it to be produced in accordance with the relevant Planning Regulations.
- 7.3 The Council is currently negotiating with the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) with regard to the production of a SPD on housing land supply. Subject to GOSW's agreement, it is intended to produce the draft SPD for public consultation later in 2006 / early 2007.

NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

**CABINET REPORT FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2006**

**DEPUTY LEADER'S REPORT – Cllr Peter Webb**

**STEAM FAIR**

Licensing had to cope with late applications for this event, which they managed well. One alcohol retailer was closed during the event for lack of a licence – none had been applied for. Four Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors were used for the event, including two from Bournemouth who benefited from the training experience. Our officers worked effectively with Police in identifying potential problems in advance. The site traffic management was improved on previous years. The inevitable clean-up operation outside the event site went well and was administered quickly. Some 50 complaints were received concerning the incursion of people onto the Milldown. A fuller report will follow the normal wash-up meeting for this event.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The quarterly performance report has been further enhanced in a presentational sense and the information is easier to assimilate, both in overview and in detail.

Team North Dorset met and reviewed selected areas of the Council Improvement Plan on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

The Audit Commission very recently published their findings concerning this Council's Planning services (which, from their perspective, include Building Control, Enforcement, Conservation, Trees, Design, Planning Policy and Development Control). They confirmed our own view that this service has improved and is improving, and also confirmed areas (such as housing oversupply) that we have recognised require additional action. Members should read this slightly harsh, but nevertheless objective report, which contains recommendations for action.

**CABINET DECISION WITHIN THIS PORTFOLIO**

**A Strategic Approach to Partnerships/Shared Services**

The Cabinet Meeting on 17 August 2006 endorsed a report establishing North Dorset's approach to partnership working with other Councils in response to a letter from the County Council, and resolved to send a copy of the report to the County.

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS**

### **Community Services – Cllr Michael Roake**

#### **MILLDOWN TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENT**

Following the traveller encampment on the Milldown site, in accordance with eviction procedures, the travellers were served with eviction notices on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September requiring them to have vacated the site by Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Most of the travellers moved off by the evening of Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September. The remaining caravans departed on Saturday afternoon when the site was made secure again.

Council staff commenced the clear up on Saturday morning 2<sup>nd</sup> September and this continued on the Monday. Specialist cleaning contractors were called in to clean up the soiling of the area and worked through Monday and Tuesday. The Steam Fair has already promised to contribute to the cleaning costs.

The District and County Councils and the Police will immediately be searching for a site to be made available next year to prevent this sort of unauthorised camping. Such a site will enable action to be taken to prevent a recurrence of this year's unauthorised encampment and be of real benefit to the local community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for all the hard work involved in dealing with the situation.

#### **YELLOW WOOD CHALLENGE 2007 FOR SCHOOLS**

Following the great success of our trial Yellow Pages schools recycling competition in 2005, the Council has now signed up to run the Yellow Pages-Yellow Woods Challenge 2007. The Yellow Woods Challenge is a simple, educational and fun environmental campaign for schools, which is run by the Yellow Pages working in partnership with the Woodland Trust and up to 100 local authorities across the UK.

Details about the scheme are as follows:

- Schools simply collect old Yellow Pages directories for recycling.
- The Council will provide a wheeled bin for the storage of the directories.
- Schools will need to tear off and keep the old front cover from every directory collected to enable us to total up how many have been collected.

The competition will start on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and run for 8 weeks (excluding school holidays) until Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. To run the scheme we need at least fifteen schools in North Dorset to participate. Cash prizes

will be awarded to the top three schools that recycle the highest number of old Yellow Pages directories per pupil:  
1<sup>st</sup> - £300 Gold Oak prize, 2<sup>nd</sup> - £200 Silver Birch prize, 3<sup>rd</sup> - £100 Bronze Beech prize.

## **WASTE & RECYCLING**

We have now received confirmation that both the Environment Agency and SITA are happy for us to continue to deliver our organic material to Sherborne. With this delivery point secured, we can now make plans to utilise the spare capacity in the existing brown bin rounds. At the Recycling Working Group held on 21<sup>st</sup> August, Members supported extending the brown bin scheme to encompass more properties; however these properties would have to remain on a weekly sack collection for residual waste.

WRAP have announced that they have a new fund available for food waste collections. As well as trailing new schemes, the fund covers monitoring and evaluation of existing schemes. The amount of funding available only equates to around £25k per partner each year (2 yr scheme). Currently Sarah Wasey is working on the application that has to be submitted by 25<sup>th</sup> September.

## **COUNTRYSIDE & HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP PANEL**

At the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006 an update was given on managing the North Winterbornes Liveability Project, which now completes a very successful scheme. Key lessons gained include the importance of community involvement. An update on the Local Nature Reserves was given, with the Woolland and Butts Pond sites last year declared Local Nature Reserves. Future options proposed would include Riverside Meadows, the Milldown, Stour and Larks Meadows. The Fiddleford Bridge on the Trailway is nearing completion and should be erected hopefully before the weather changes.

## **LEISURE - FOCUSED HOURS UPDATE**

### **Blandford**

- Fitness Suite: the income is up for the period April-July 2006 when compared to the same period last year.
- Aerobics: the income is also up for the period April-July.
- Public Swimming: the income is currently down for the period April-July 2006 when compared to the same period last year.

### **Gillingham**

- Fitness Suite: the income is currently down for the period April-July 2006 when compared to the same period last year.
- Aerobics: a comparison can not be made against last year, as there were no figures available to compare.

## **Sturminster Newton**

- Fitness Suite: the income is currently down for the period April-July 2006 when compared to the same period last year.
- Aerobics: a comparison can not be made with 2005/06, as no budget had been set, although against a budget projection income is significantly ahead.

## **Shaftesbury**

- Fitness Suite: the income is currently up for the period April-July 2006 when compared to the same period last year.
- Aerobics: a comparison can not be made with 2005/06 as no budget had been set, again the figure is ahead of budget.

The total number of direct debit customers is at the 2nd highest level since June last year. Blandford and Gillingham have seen the greatest increase in the number of direct debit customers since January 2006.

## ***CABINET DECISIONS WITHIN THIS PORTFOLIO***

### **Delegated Powers to Take Action Under the Housing Act 2004**

At the meeting of Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> August it was resolved that the Environmental Health and Licensing Team Leader be delegated powers to take action under the Housing Act 2004 for a period not exceeding six months, to enable the team to take appropriate action to secure improvements to unsafe housing and to issue licences for housing in multiple occupation. This is a temporary measure until the Council Constitution is amended later this year.

## **Amendments to North Dorset District Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006-2008**

At the meeting of Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> September it was resolved to approve the amendment to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006-2008. Concerns raised include a possible conflict between policies. It was noted that a grant would only be approved once planning consent has been given.

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

#### **Shaftesbury Open Air Pool**

I took an Executive Decision on 4<sup>th</sup> September to write-off £6,000, 50% of the cost of running the open air pool in 2005/6. The Shaftesbury Open Air Pool Trust had agreed to fund 50% of the cost of opening the pool in 2005/6. By writing off the Trust's contribution, this puts them in a stronger financial situation for the future. This decision is made on the basis that there would be no further financial or in kind contributions to the Shaftesbury Swimming Pool Trust.

#### **Customer Facilities – Cllr Graham Carr-Jones**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

The Licensing and Food and Safety teams have been particularly busy during August and September due to two new festivals on the Larmer Tree site, with the Great Dorset Steam Fair in between. The following is a summary of events and work carried out by the Environmental Health team:

#### **The Bloom Festival**

On the evening of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August officers were notified of the intended supply from stalls of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) for recreational purposes (by way of inhalation) to the public at the festival. The cartridges containing the gas were intended for dispensing food products and contained the wording on the packaging 'not for inhalation'. This resulted in an immediate investigation by the Food and Safety team, including consultation with the Health Protection Agency. A Prohibition Notice was served by the Team Leader on the event organisers to prohibit the supply of nitrous oxide. The Health Protection Agency has recognised the prompt action taken by North Dorset District Council and the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Laboratory are considering undertaking research into this recreational substance following our action.

As this was a new festival, Licensing officers carried out several visits over the weekend to check on compliance with the licence issued for regulated entertainment and alcohol.

## **Steam Fair**

Officers from the Food, Safety and Licensing Team visited the Great Dorset Steam Fair on a number of occasions during the day and evening. They checked on food safety and the supply of alcohol/regulated entertainment (with Dorset Fire and Rescue Service/Police); considered transport management on site, security provision, general safety (including a joint visit with HSE inspectors), animal welfare, supply of drinking water; and attended site operational meetings.

This year there was a focus on transport safety and the organisers prepared a traffic management plan prior to the show. It was noted during the event that there was a further reduction in unnecessary vehicle movement within public areas on site. For example, prompt action was taken by the Police and security to stop the use of mini-motor bikes.

Two officers from Bournemouth Borough Council assisted in site inspections and considered the event to be generally well run. This provided useful experience for those officers to take back to their authority. At the time of writing only one safety issue was reported to this authority by the public.

## **The End of the Road Festival**

At the time of writing the report, this event has not been held. Several well known artists are headlining the music festival including Badly Drawn Boy and Bryan Adams. The organisers have engaged Capita Symonds to undertake safety management for the event. Officers will attend during build up and over the weekend to check on all areas in their remit.

## **Blandford Fly**

A meeting with partner authorities - the Health Protection Agency and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) - was held at Nordon early in September.

Pre-treatment surveys determined the level of larvae in the river and treatment window, which was late due to cold weather. The post-treatment survey on 13<sup>th</sup> April showed a poor kill (reason unknown). A second treatment was undertaken, as it was felt there may have been a resistance to the pesticide. The second treatment gave much better results.

Bite results (31) confirm the continued effectiveness of the treatment following the dramatic reduction in bites between 1988 (1440) and 1991 (390), following the commencement of river treatment. The treatment cost for 2007/08 is to rise by 4%.

There is the possibility that the North Dorset Primary Care Trust may withdraw funding, in which case it would be unlikely that the other partners would be able to make up the funding and the river treatment would cease. The CEH has advised that it is their opinion that bite reports would return after several years to pre-treatment numbers.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE**

During July the Policy Manager (Housing and Community Safety) presented the Council's Young People Strategy to the Dorset Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. The strategy was well received and it was suggested that it could be a model for other districts and boroughs in the county. There was discussion about whether the Council should have a strategy for the 0 – 15 year olds (the Young People's Strategy covers 16 – 25 year-olds). The Policy Manager advised that it was unlikely that the Council would pursue its own strategy for this age group as it had fewer direct responsibilities for 0 – 15 year olds. Instead, the Council would probably be a partner in a county-wide strategy for this younger age group. The Young People Strategy remains out to consultation until October.

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

The Democratic Services team is currently running the annual canvass for the compilation of the 2007 Register of Electors.

One of the requirements of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, that recently received royal assent, is that the Council must use canvassers to personally visit non-responding properties, i.e. those households where an electoral registration form has not been returned or who have not registered using the telephone registration service. This year will be the first time the Council has used canvassers for some years.

It is estimated that it may be necessary to personally visit as many as 5,000 households in North Dorset. The Government has provided funding to carry out this work, as well as for other requirements of the Electoral Administration Act.

## **CABINET DECISION WITHIN THIS PORTFOLIO**

### **Overview of Single Non-Emergency Number and Overspend Arrangements with the Dorset 101 Partnership**

The Cabinet Meeting on 7 September 2006 considered a suggested scheme for funding any overspend in the application stage of the Dorset 101 project. It was resolved to convey to Dorset Police and the Partnership that it strongly expects that the Project will not exceed its budget and to endorse the methodology used by Dorset Police to limit the contribution of the Council to 2% of any overspend and that of any incorrectly incurred expenditure having to be paid back to the Home Office (up to a maximum of £2,000) in the application of the Dorset 101 project and agree that the *in principle* agreement to the funding arrangements be signed.

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

### **Park Road Toilets**

On 10 August 2006 a portfolio holder decision was made to approve Blandford Football Club's request to use the Park road Public Toilets on match days only. This request follows a decision by Council on 9 March 2006 to close the toilets. The Football Club will meet the running costs of the facilities.

### **In-house Services – Cllr Richard Moyle**

#### **BARTON HILL CAR PARK**

The construction of the 80 space car park in Shaftesbury commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> August and is likely to be available for use on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October subject to weather conditions being suitable for the finishing work, eg car park markings. The project is on programme and within budget. Additional works including street lighting and landscaping will be carried out after the car park is open for use.

#### **NORDON ACCOMMODATION PROJECT**

The works to Nightingale Court were completed in April and the works to the reception area commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> September with completion due on 6<sup>th</sup> October. Further phases are programmed to take place throughout the year with an anticipated completion date of March 2007.

#### **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (DDA) PROJECT**

Minor works and changes in procedures are being implemented at the leisure centres to comply with the terms of the Act. Further works may be required when the future of the leisure centres has been determined.

The proposed DDA compliant path at Nordon has been rescheduled because of the felling of the cedar tree, which will allow for redesign of the path and landscaping of the area around the felled tree.

## **CIVIL CONTINGENCY ACT- SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

A report is to be put before Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> September recommending the continuation of the Service Level Agreement with Dorset County Council and an enhanced provision of Civil Contingency advice and service to the District Council.

## **CARBON TRUST ENERGY USE SURVEY**

The Carbon Trust has completed a survey of the Council's energy usage and will be providing a briefing for Members and Officers in October. The survey results are generally satisfactory and the suggestions for further improvement in usage are few and relatively easy to implement.

## **CABINET DECISIONS WITHIN THIS PORTFOLIO**

### **Working Environment in the Environmental Health and Licensing Portakabin**

On 17 August 2006 Cabinet agreed measures to address workplace environment problems within the Environmental Health and Licensing Portakabin.

### **Lease of 8 Bell Street, Shaftesbury (Former District Council Tourist Information Office) to Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Company**

On 7 September 2006 Cabinet resolved to approve the granting of a seven year lease of 8 Bell Street, Shaftesbury to the Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Company at a peppercorn rent for use as a tourism and community office. The General Manager (Community Services) was delegated authority to agree the terms of the lease.

## **Finance – Cllr Peter Webb**

### **PLANNING**

The application for some 44 dwellings at Bourton Mill – rejected by the Development Control Committee – was allowed on appeal. We are seriously considering a challenge to this decision, both on policy grounds, and also as a result of an inadequate and unconsulted set of unilateral undertakings conditioning the permission.

The draft Sustainability Assessment – part of our Local Framework of documents replacing the District Wide Local Plan – is on our web site and out to five weeks' public consultation. This details legislative and policy

background and general aims for subsequent documents, in the context of 'Sustainability' guidelines.

## **REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) have recently changed their performance assessment of Local Authorities and now assess based on 'grade ranges' from 1 to 4 (4 is best performance). They now issue a quarterly report. Ours shows an average grade of 2.7 for the six measures published by DWP which, although above average for authorities in general, is below our own targets in some cases. There are measures in place to improve the weaker areas which, as recent Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) show, are starting to have a positive effect.

Drops in meeting time targets have been caused by staff turnover and temporary vacancies but extra work has reduced backlogs. The recent introduction of increased services by the Customer Contact team is reducing the time it takes to do changes in circumstances.

## **ICT**

Issues under consideration at present include the need to respond to changes in Health and Safety Executive (HSE) duties, which argue for a new application to support future Environmental Health work; and investment in communications to overcome the poor present telephony infrastructure quality in the Blandford area, which is inhibiting the effectiveness some of our staff outside of Nordon. Any expenditure proposals will be subject to normal procedures.

## **FINANCE**

There is good progress in involving Parishes and Towns in the considerations leading up to preparing the Revenue Budget for next year. This is being managed under the Tough Choices programme, which will generate options to consider in the normal way that Council considers its Budget. The Medium Term Financial Plan is being developed but this year it has a wider range of scenarios than usual, reflecting the realities of the overall position the Council is in. Unusually, the choice of which scenarios are considered most likely will not rest solely with this Council, and will be heavily influenced by the approach taken by Towns and Parishes to the Local Delivery options within the Tough Choices programme. Discussions will be held with GOSW in the near future to gain their support for our community-led approach to budgeting in these highly constrained times.

## **CABINET DECISIONS WITHIN THIS PORTFOLIO**

### **Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West – Submitted Version**

Cabinet at its meeting on 17 August 2006 approved the Council's formal response to the submitted draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

## **Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (June 2006)**

The 17 August 2006 meeting also noted the Revenue Budget Monitoring report and management actions for the three months to 30 June 2006.

## **Housing Land Supply in North Dorset – Planning Position Statement**

Cabinet on 7 September 2006 recommended to the Council (see Item 6 on this Agenda) the content of the Position Statement on Housing Land Supply in North Dorset and that, subject to the views of the Government Office for the South West, to produce a Supplementary Planning Document on housing supply.

## **Rural Regeneration – Cllr Michael Cox**

### **TOURISM**

We met with East Dorset District Council for our first liaison meeting to review Tourism operations - all entirely satisfactory. One of the Shaftesbury TIC managers applied for the Assistant Tourism post at East Dorset District Council and was successful. After a much earlier and fruitless meeting with Purbeck District Council to seek partnership working, there is now greater interest from Purbeck. A report to be considered soon by the Council will recommend sharing with the combined North Dorset and East Dorset 'Days Out' free guide which promotes attractions, events and the countryside. This guide presently has a print run of approximately 100k and could increase to 250k, which will lower the unit cost.

Funding from all the south west county councils is being agreed for software purchase and then implementation of the Destination Management System. This is hoped to be in place and running by early spring. This is hoped to be of significant benefit to tourism generally, providing inter county links and linking in to the countryside 'England Net'.

### **RURAL ECONOMY/REGENERATION**

Councillors, officers and representatives from other rural organisations attended a 'Countryside Day', arranged by the SW Region National Farmers Union, at a local farm. Various subjects relating to farming and the countryside were demonstrated and discussed, especially the use of redundant farm buildings when of high quality and having high conservation value.

The North Dorset MP has been leading a campaign to retain and develop the Defence College for Communications and Information Training at Blandford Camp. Thank you to all district councillors who have pledged support, to town and parish councillors, DT11 partnership members and representatives from the business and wider community who have agreed to help to co-ordinate a parliamentary petition. Annette Brooke MP has also pledged her support and

the consortium of agencies is growing in number. The original group of North and East Dorset District Councils, Dorset County Council, South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and Learning and Skills Council has been joined by Poole Unitary Council, Dorset Business and the Blandford Chamber of Commerce. A meeting with the new Minister, Derek Twigg, has been arranged for 17 October.

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS**

### **Transfer of Future Management of Shaftesbury Tourism Information Office to a Community Interest Company**

On 24 August 2006 the portfolio holder authorised the release of funding approved by Council on 9 March 2006 (see Minute 97) to enable Shaftesbury Tourism Information Office to remain open.

### **Transfer of Future Management of Blandford Tourism Information Centre to a Trust**

On 24 August 2006 the portfolio holder authorised the release of funding approved by Council on 9 March 2006 (see Minute 97) to enable Blandford Tourism Information Centre to remain open.