

# Neighbourhood Plan – Narrative Story

## Introduction

The creation of a long term development plan for Portland has been an objective of the Portland Community Partnership (PCP) since the Mid 2000's. There have been a number of earlier attempts by various parties to stimulate this type of approach but in general did not find support. From 2010 the PCP used a two fold approach to promote the need for a plan using the focus by Local Authorities towards multi agency work in those areas of multiple deprivation and also opportunities coming forward under the Localism agenda in particular those framed around Community Led Regeneration. From 2011 The PCP actively supported the development of the Local Plan and also the recognition of the need for Portland to have its own Neighbourhood Plan. This prompted in late 2012 Portland Town Council to apply for a Neighbourhood Plan area with some initial **consultation work occurring in early 2013** . Approval for the Plan area was finally granted in late 2013 by the Planning Authority. The Town Council is the lead body in overseeing the progress of the plan and the finance associated with the development.

## Portland Neighbourhood Plan -Initial Stages

**In early 2014 community members of the Working group, formed to progress the Plan, undertook a detailed analysis of policies, strategies together with demographic data to produce a detailed evidence base.**

This evidence base together with information drawn from the consultation, which had occurred in early 2013, then informed a community and business consultation process which was undertaken during the Summer 2014 . This included:

- ≥ Information about the consultations were inserted every month for three months in the local monthly newspaper which is delivered to every address on Portland.
- ≥ Over 80% of households and businesses were leaflet dropped with information.
- ≥ Over 30 drop in and consultation events were organised.

Responses from the survey were considered of material significance by Dorset County Council Statistics section.

Information from the Community and Business consultation together with additional details was drawn together in a **High Level Report which was widely circulated in late 2014.**

An analysis of the surveys and feedback from the High Level Report showed that there was an enthusiasm from the wider community around sustainable development on Portland and also from Business a recognition of the need to support further economic progress.

This led in late 2014 to Weymouth and Portland Borough Council funding the development of an Economic Vision for Portland drawing upon this data.

During 2015 The Working Group concentrated on the development of this Vision and the creation of a privately led Vision Board to lead on this (please see separate section below. )

In early 2016 the Working Group returned to progressing the wider Neighbourhood Plan to in particular establish a positive policy framework and appropriate land use opportunities.

### Neighbourhood Plan Framework

The framework for a Neighbourhood Plan comprises:

- [ a **vision** - for the long-term future of Portland;
- [ the **aims** - that it is hoped that the Plan can help achieve; and
- [ the **objectives** - that expect the Plan to attain by the application of appropriate neighbourhood planning policies

### Draft Aims

With this strategic context in mind, a set of topic-based aims for the Portland Neighbourhood Plan were devised that are wholly consistent with the Local Plan vision and the economic vision for Portland. The aims have been derived from the community consultation process and an analysis of what we have been told

#### Portland Neighbourhood Plan – Aims

**Environment** - *protect the special and unique character of Portland’s natural and built environment and use its natural resources carefully*

**Business and Employment** - *strengthen the Island’s business function, building growth and prosperity*

**Housing** – *encourage a balanced mix of housing in appropriate places that people need and want.*

**Transport** – *support non car travel options and accommodate the car in an unobtrusive manner.*

**Shopping and Services** - *support the shopping areas and service functions*

**Recreation** - *realise the leisure and recreation potential of the Island*

**Tourism** – *accommodate responsible and sustainable tourism development*

### Draft Objectives

Using these draft aims a more detailed and specific, set of draft objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan which also take account of the Economic Vision Work have been compiled and these are set out below

<b>Portland Neighbourhood Plan – Draft Objectives</b>
<b>Environment</b>
Recognise and protect heritage buildings, spaces and structures and enable the proper use of heritage assets
Protect and enhance the distinct character of settlements

Support public realm improvements in identified areas such as Sea Wall/West Weares
Support measures that improve our resilience to climate change
Make responsible use of the island's natural resources
Identify opportunities to increase renewable and sustainable energy production
Identify, protect and enhance the Island's biodiversity
Support quarry nature park development plan when appropriate
Support of the re-use of redundant mines and quarries in benign and sustainable ways
<b>Employment</b>
Protect existing employment spaces
Facilitate appropriate conversions and extensions of local business space
Enable business hub development in local building if justified
Set criteria for developing land for business development
Set criteria for new business development to priority and growth industries
Establish policy that supports conversion of redundant buildings for business purposes
Encourage creation of business start-up units
Encourage and facilitate northern arc masterplan approach
Support development that provides for local education and training opportunities
Encourage development, to bring about better connectivity for all
<b>Housing</b>
Focus development on brownfield sites
Recognise exception site development to meet affordable housing needs provided by approved providers including CLT <sup>1</sup>
Relate housing development to local housing need
Establish a second home policy
Set criteria for new housing development including standards and infrastructure requirements
<b>Transport</b>
Support development which helps facilitate improvements to the public transport network
Support development which helps facilitate a more effective transport network
Support provision of off-street parking including Car Parks
Support improvements to existing footpath, bridleway and cycle routes and extension to the networks
<b>Shopping and Services</b>
If possible, retain the existing level of retail spaces
Support new shops in appropriate locations
Define and protect local shopping centres
<b>Recreation</b>
Support development of leisure and recreation facilities
Protect and enhance local parks
Support development of new community buildings and spaces
Support new facilities for young people
Support use of buildings or land for events and festivals
<b>Tourism</b>
Support tourism-related development in appropriate locations
Support the creation of individual, or a network of, tourist trails
Facilitate appropriate new marine berths

<sup>1</sup>CLT = Community Land Trust

**Current and Future Work**

The Neighbourhood Plan Working group is now agreeing draft policies and once the scope of these have been established further evidence will be obtained to assess their robustness. This may include identification of land areas to which the policies refer.

Due to the environmental sensitivities on Portland it is anticipated that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required prior to a public consultation phase which is scheduled to occur during the Autumn 2016.

Once the results of this consultation have been analysed and any changes to the plan made the plan will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (WPBC) and an independent examination conducted followed by a referendum to adopt the plan. It is estimated that this will occur in Mid 2017.

## **The Development of a Portland Economic Vision and Action Plan**

### **Background**

In late 2014 it was recognised that the information provided from the Neighbourhood Plan consultation phase provided a strong basis to take forward a Portland Economic Vision and action Plan.

Processes were therefore set in place to create a privately led Vision Board.

### **Portland Business Forum**

In April 2015 a public call addressed to Businesses and appropriate Community Groups led to an initial business breakfast at which the idea of a Business Led Vision group was proposed. This led to a number of individuals coming forward to support this and these are currently reflected in the Economic Vision Board Membership.

Consultants were appointed and during May/ June 2015 discussions took about the focus for an Economic Vision.

### **Economic Vision Group**

In August 2015 the group was formally constituted and then set out proposals to consult further on the emerging Vision document.

### **Stakeholder Workshops**

In September 2015 two workshops took place to introduce the Economic Vision and to seek feedback on the content and format. The first workshop was directed at larger businesses and local authority members and the second at smaller businesses and community groups. Over 60 delegates attended and positive feedback was received. The workshops also received information on two funding streams which had been instigated by the Department of Communities and Local Government both of these were looking to support the development of an Economic Plan. The first via the creation of a Coastal Community Team to look at Coastal issues and the second via Coop's UK to look at supporting developments which could be taken forward by Communities utilising community rights and skills and opportunities existing.

In November 2015 those who attended the first two workshops were invited to attend a further workshop to receive an update on the Vision work and proposed Action Plan. In addition specific group work occurred around those areas where it was felt that community action would yield early and sustainable results. These were

- ≥ Forming a Land Trust
- ≥ Tourism
- ≥ Enterprise and Employability
- ≥ Community Energy

Around 30 delegates attended this session.

In January 2016 a public meeting was held at which members from the Economic Vision Board updated the community and discussed with those attending the various strategic objectives and actions arising. There was support for the [report](#) and the approach undertaken. On 25<sup>th</sup> January a briefing for members of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council was held.

[A summary of the Vision document is available](#) and will be used together with other material to start talking with the business community. A communication strategy will be established and the role of Vision Board members as champions for the plan will be a key factor. With this in mind the membership of the Vision Board will be strengthened. At the same time we will be looking at the [Action plan](#) to ensure it provides a comprehensive opportunity to maximise any funding opportunities.