

Future Portland

The Portland Neighbourhood Plan—An Information Update-July 2016



How the Community will be Influencing Planning , Economic and Land Development Issues on Portland through the Neighbourhood Plan and other linked developments

Resources and documents referred to in this update are now available at Tophill Library, Easton as well as on the plan's website .

www.portlandplan.org.uk

In 2008 a report was produced by Terence O'Rourke which advocated a spatial approach to planning on Portland which over the years has suffered from ad hoc development. Members of the Portland Community Partnership (PCP) had been in favour for some time of such approach but were also aware that a new planning regime being introduced under National Planning Policy Framework presented both opportunity and further risks unless an active approach to a community led development could be achieved.

During 2010/11 a series of Future Portland Public meetings were held to identify support for such approach and these were well attended and positive feedback received.

In mid 2011 members of the PCP became active with the development of the Local Plan for the combined planning areas of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and West Dorset District Council. This document would establish the strategic direction for planning over the next twenty years. The intention was to lobby for a Neighbourhood Plan for Portland which would look at the specific needs and opportunities in more detail.

Over a period of nearly 5 years the PCP has worked with the Local Planning Authority and Portland Town Council and have progressed the development of the plan. It is anticipated that this development is in its final year with a referendum to adjudge it being appropriate aimed for in mid 2017.

Likely changes in Local Government in Dorset , an emphasis on Community Led Regeneration and increasing support for the process of Neighbourhood Planning has made the production of a plan even more relevant.

Over the next few pages we will aim to inform you of how the plan has developed. What the community has told us, how this has been interpreted and the next stages over this coming year.

A Neighbourhood Plan for Portland has been recognised as one of the more complex plans to be taken on. The opportunities for economic development sitting with and alongside a wide range of environmentally sensitive and unique areas present a difficult challenge and we hope by sharing this information as widely as possible a greater understanding of the content and direction of the proposed plan will be understood.

Date and Information	Resource References
Late 2010-Mid 2011 Series of Future Portland Public Meetings to identify desire for a more planned future were held	
Mid 2011- Mid 2012 As part of the Local Plan Lobby for a Neighbourhood Plan for Portland	
Mid 2012 – Portland Town Council agreed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.	
Early 2013 – Initial Consultations Occurred and outline themes established	Summary of Consultation 2013
Late 2013 – Approval of the Plan area agreed by the Planning Authority	
January 2014 – April 2014 Compilation of Evidence Base Report	Evidence Report 2014
June 2014 – September 2014- Community and Business Consultations held	
October 2014 – High Level Analysis Produced and Circulated	High Level Analysis
Late 2014 – Additional consultations undertaken	
Early 2015 Review of Consultation work	Summary of Consultation and Focus of Plan
Early 2015 – Business and Employment identified as a major development theme	
March 2015 to January 2016 – Development of Portland Economic Vision and Action Plan	Economic Vision Documents – Executive Summary, Main Document, Consultation Summary, Action Plan
Autumn 2015 – Revised Housing Land Holding Assessment conducted to update Local Plan Housing Supply	Maps of sites for potential development and areas subject to specific policies.
December 2015 – March 2016 – Town Council confirms Aims and Objectives for Neighbourhood Plan now including Economic Vision objectives	Summary of High Level Aims and Objectives
April – May 2016 – Town Council developed draft policy framework	Draft policies and further evidence requirements
Mid 2016 – Further evidence collected	Both Locally and by commissioned Technical Studies funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government
Autumn 2016 – A draft Plan will be consulted upon and any required changes will be made	
Autumn / Early 2017 – Submission to Local Authority and Independent Examination	
Referendum- Mid 2017	

Why develop A Neighbourhood Plan for Portland ?

Portland has suffered from ad hoc planning over the years.

Its full economic potential has not been recognised.

The National Planning Policy Framework presupposes sustainable development particularly where policy is silent about an area.

Current planning is not delivering the type of housing that is locally supported—elderly care, affordable arrangements.

The Local Plan recognises the appropriateness of a Neighbourhood Plan for Portland given the unique characteristics of the Island.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan ?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led planning framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area.

It is about the use and development of land and may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.

What are the strengths of a plan ?

A neighbourhood plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the area, if successful at referendum. This statutory status gives neighbourhood plans far more weight than some other local documents, such as parish plans,

The Role of the Town Council

In areas which are Parished the Town Council has a responsibility to support the Community if a need for a Neighbourhood Plan can be demonstrated.

This support is normally in the form of providing financial control and support, ensuring project management and process compliance. Allocating funds or holding external funds secured.

To have legal force it must

Be based on robust evidence impartially collected and analysed

Reflect the views, aspirations, wants and needs of local people and properly understand the area

Meet certain basic conditions these include

Compliance with European and national legislation

Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development having regard to national planning policy and conformity with existing strategic local planning policy

Other considerations - amongst other issues

It should not promote less development than that identified in the Local Plan and can promote more

It can change the location of housing development sites allocated within the Local Plan if a more logical case can be shown

It can specify policies and guidance on how new development should be designed, orientated and located

It can support a positive use of green spaces particularly where these are linked to the development of a Green Infrastructure Network

It should be established for a 10,15 or 20 year timeframe but with a review period recognised

Checking the Plan meets these requirements

Once a Plan is completed it will have to be submitted to the local planning authority and then be subjected to an independent examination

Referendum

Once approved by the Inspector the plan will be subject to a referendum with a simple majority required to approve a plan

Evidence Gathering and Community and Business Consultations

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 Free Portland News

☒ 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.

Main Surveys Results Review Summary

Housing

- We need more affordable homes
- We need more age-appropriate dwellings
- We should resist the growth in second homes
- We do not want a lot more homes built – but recognise that some new development is necessary to help meet specific needs

Shopping and Shopping Centres

- We should resist loss or conversion of existing shops to other uses
- More shops would be welcomed
- We should retain and enhance our two 'centres'
- We should protect and enhance the individual character of both centres
- We should encourage tourist-related development in and around the two centres

Traffic and Transport

- We should protect and improve the public transport services
- The transport network has to be improved
- Underhill should have a relief road
- Parking opportunities need increasing in the right places
- We should create more off-street parking
- We should enhance the cycle network
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Leisure and Recreation

- We need to improve and extend the range of local leisure and recreation opportunities and facilities
- We need to improve our parks and open spaces
- We need better and more flexible community spaces
- We must create more opportunities for children and young people

Business

- We should protect our existing employment areas
- We should support local businesses
- We should allocate more land for business development
- We should encourage new business development
- We should enable the conversion redundant buildings for business purposes

The Environment

- Open areas should be protected
- We must protect our old buildings and heritage
- Wind, tidal and solar farm development is acceptable in the right places

In Short -Conclusions from Consultation

- **The Neighbourhood Plan should intend to:**
 - Provide the housing that local people need
 - Support the shopping centres and shopping function
 - Accommodate the car in an unobtrusive manner
 - Realise the leisure and recreation potential of the Island
 - Welcome responsible and sustainable tourism development, whilst protecting the special and unique character of Portland's natural and built environment
 - Strengthen the Island's business function, building growth and prosperity

Strengthen the Island's business function, building growth and prosperity

During 2015 an emphasis was placed on creating an Economic Vision for Portland and forming a business led Economic Board . This anticipated Portland's role in the development of the Western Dorset Growth Corridor The Portland Plan website provides links to the current work of the group and further information will be distributed as activities occur.

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 were ratified by Portland Town Council in early 2016.

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*

Objectives and Policy Development

A series of objectives have now been established and draft policies constructed. Full details of these are available via Portland Plan website or located with the resources at Tophill Library.

Current work is now focused on collecting further evidence to support these policies . In addition funding and additional support has been obtained from the Department of Communities and Local Government to progress Technical requirements of the Plan .

Helping Progress the Plan

If you are interested in helping with progressing the plan please contact the Town Council via the following

Telephone 01305 821638

Email : clerk@portlandtowncouncil.gov.uk

New Office Address : 52 Easton Street, Easton