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from: the campaign group STAND

Save the Area North of Dorchester, Chair, Jane Ashdown

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<https://stand-dorchester.net/>

## **This is part one of our submission to Dorset Council**

### **Comments on Dorset Local Plan Consultation document 2025**

1.1 This submission regarding Dorset Council's Local Plan is on behalf of the campaign group STAND: Save the Area North of Dorchester <https://stand-dorchester.net/>.

2.1 This Consultation appears to breach rules one and two of the Gunning Principles of public consultation as confirmed in the case of R (Moseley) v Haringey [2014] UKSC 56. This may compromise the validity of the consultation.

#### **2.2 The Options document appears to predetermine development**

Paragraph 15.1.3 of the Council's Local Plans Options Consultation August 2025 states:

- 15.1.3. Consultation on the 'preferred options' for the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review was undertaken in the summer of 2018. This included a preferred option to develop land north of Dorchester for a mixed-use urban extension.

2.3 This plan was never adopted. The "preferred options" in the 2018 plan review by the former West Dorset Council were developer views. In addition, no mention was made of the Dorset Council's own 2021 Local Plan consultation which received more than 9000 comments from the public, many of them opposing the North Dorchester proposal.

No mention is made of Dorset Council's own strategic land assessment which concludes that North Dorchester is an unsuitable site for development.

#### **2.4 Missing information and reports**

2.5 A large amount of information is missing for key development proposal LA/STLB/006.

2.6 The site's transition from former DOR13 to LA/STLB/006 has occurred without any published updated technical evidence (Viability, Hydrology, Transport, or Heritage); This evidential gap undermines procedural integrity and soundness.

2.7 No viability assessment has been published for this 3750 home site despite promises from the previous planning portfolio holder more than four years ago.

2.8 No hydrology assessment has been published yet this is a site subject to significant flooding according to the Council's SHELAA.

2.9 No water assessment has been published, yet the site lies in a source protection zone.

2.10 The only mention of water supply is a statement in the Emerging North Dorchester Masterplan which says “an upgrade” will be needed to serve the development - this is not strictly accurate.

2.11 A new supply for the whole town and North Dorchester development would be needed for the very reason that the site is in a source protection zone.

2.12 Bringing water in from outside the immediate area will be expensive and likely to exacerbate local flooding problems in North Dorchester. Without 30,000 people tapping into the local aquifer, ground water levels would be expected to be higher.

## **2.12 Information is omitted**

Written details of the 3750 home site LA/STLB/006 are missing from Appendix A the Housing Opportunities document. This is the first document many people will have turned to for a simple description of the key sites proposed.

2.13 For North Dorchester there is just a red line on the map and no details of numbers, environment, flood risk, road requirements and other aspects which are included for every other site even sites which already have planning permission. This omission makes it more difficult for members of the public to find information about this site.

2.14 A director of STAND complained by email (Sept 12th) and printed letter (Sept 19th) to Dorset Council about this omission and has received a short acknowledgment but no reply or explanation at time of writing.

## **2.15 Conclusion**

For the reasons above, STAND considers that the consultation process fails to meet the standards of fairness and transparency required by the Gunning Principles and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.