



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Members of the Public & Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member

TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council Planning Committee which will be held **online** using Microsoft Teams on **Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.00 pm** to consider the following items.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
29th September 2020

A G E N D A

This meeting will be held in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4th April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England.

Members of the public are invited to join the meeting by [clicking here](#). If, as a member of the public, you wish to speak in the Public Session, please notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting via admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk or 01258 489490.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

1. Public Session
2. Apologies
3. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th September 2020 ([accessible here](#))
(These minutes are to be approved, but signed at a later date)
5. Appendix A – New Planning Applications ([refer to draft Appendix A attached](#))
6. Appendix B – Dorset Council Decisions on Planning Applications and Applications Awaiting Decisions (to be displayed at the meeting)
7. Site Visits/Dorset Council Planning Meetings
8. To consider the Working Group response to the Government consultation 'Planning for the future' ([paper attached](#))
9. Clerk's Report & Correspondence ([paper attached](#))

Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are available from Blandford Library, the Town Clerk's Office and at www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk.

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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PLANNING APPENDIX A – NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Planning Meeting on Monday 5th October 2020

	Application & Date	Application Details	Comments/ Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2033
1	2/2020/0166/LBC N/A 9 th September 2020	<u>5 Sheep Market Hill</u> Regularisation of works to replace front door and carry out all internal and external alterations associated with this.	B8 – Town Centre Boundary B11 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area
2	2/2020/1215/HOUSE Ms E Brake 11 th September 2020	<u>The Little House, The Close</u> Erection of single storey rear extension	B8 – Town Centre Boundary B11 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area
3	2/2020/0973/HOUSE Mr D Yates 15 th September 2020	<u>4 Warrington Walk</u> Erection of decking (Retrospective)	
4	2/2020/1216/FUL 22 nd September 2020	1 Market Place Change of use from office space to 1no. self contained flat at ground floor level	B8 – Primary Shopping Area B8 – Town Centre Boundary B11 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area
5	2/2020/1217/LBC 22 nd September 2020	1 Market Place Change of use from office space to 1no. self contained flat at ground floor level	B8 – Primary Shopping Area B8 – Town Centre Boundary B11 – Managing Design in the Conservation Area

Previous applications:

		Town Council	Dorset Council
2/2020/0537/HOUSE Miss E Brake 3 rd July 2020	<u>The Little House, The Close</u> Erection of single-story rear extension	The Town Council has no objections to the application as there is no impact to local amenities.	Withdrawn

To consider the Working Group response to the Government consultation 'Planning for the future'

The Working Group's suggested responses are in italics.

What is your name? *

First Name *

Surname *

What is your email address? *

Are your views expressed on this consultation your own personal views or an official response from an organisation you represent? *

- Personal
- Organisation

Q1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

Answer 1

Answer 2

Answer 3

Q2. Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area?

- Yes
- No

Q2 (a) **If no**, why not?

- Don't know how to
- It takes too long
- It's too complicated
- I don't care
- Other (please specify):

Q3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

- Social Media
- Online News

- Newspaper
- By post
- Other (please specify):

Q4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? (Please select **only three** answers)

- Building homes for young people
- Building homes for the homeless
- Protection of green spaces
- The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change
- Increasing the affordability of housing
- The design of new homes and places
- Supporting the high street
- Supporting the local economy
- More or better local infrastructure
- Protection of existing heritage buildings / areas
- Other (please specify):

Q5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

The premise here as with many subsequent questions is that it is the planning system that is a fault in delivering the urgently needed housing. We do not believe this to be the case. We also feel that simplification can lead to a wider interpretation not conducive to delivering more houses.

Q6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Whilst national guidelines can be useful in setting parameters, the process must be driven by local decisions and priorities.

Q7(a) Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Consolidation can lead to simplification; this in turn leaves the choice of strategic sites subject to interpretation and challenge by those opposed to development in a particular place. The Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessments are rigorous and less open to this. Any sustainability test must contain the requisite rigour – especially on environmental issues.

Q7.(b) How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

We would suggest that there should be a formal duty for designated planning officers from one Local Planning Authority to liaise closely with cross- boundary colleagues, especially where crucial infrastructure is concerned.

Q8.(a) Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

With each change to the Standard Method, we have noticed an increase in the amount of development that each Local Planning Authority is expected to provide. Whilst the Standard Method sets out ever ambitious targets, changing the Standard Method alone will not deliver the houses required or tackle the backlog of currently planned developments that have failed to be built out. Target changes also makes strategic planning in a rural area like Dorset very difficult and leads to anger and confusion in the communities. However, the constraints element is essential.

Q8.(b) Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Although we believe that this is tinkering at the edges of the whole notion of 'affordability' given the Government's preferred model and ideology in delivering affordable homes we would welcome any measure that would increase the housing stock – providing that it is truly 'affordable'.

Q9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic permission in principle for areas for substantial development (*Growth areas*) with faster routes for detailed consent?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

This again arises from the premise that it is the planning system that is at fault in not delivering houses. We do not agree with this premise. Currently there are a million homes waiting to be built. We have examples in North Dorset where developers have not built out on sites for which they have permission. We believe that this is an egregious example of land banking and/or permission banking. The Permission in Principle would exacerbate this. This is not likely to lead to quicker development. Another factor is that 75% of Dorset is AONB. The Local Planning Authority and Neighbourhood Plan authorities must retain the ability to choose the most suitable sites for growth and development.

Q9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for *Renewal* and *Protected* areas?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Renewal areas have been the province of Neighbourhood Plans where the local community have given a strong steer on the way they wish those areas to be used. If this is removed, an important aspect of localism is taken away. Again with 75% of Dorset 'protected' the proposed policy does nothing to address rural housing deprivation in protected areas. Whilst safeguards should obviously exist, Local Planning Authorities and Neighbourhood Plan groups should have the power to decide upon limited development in those areas to meet critical local need, including in 'protected' areas.

Q9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

We would give a cautious welcome to this – historic examples have shown with careful planning, such settlements can be very successful (Milton Keynes; Welwyn Garden City), but with due regard to local need and environmental constraints.

Q10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Again, this arises from the premise that it is the planning system that is at fault. We do not believe this to be the case. However, we would welcome more speed in the process if the necessary safeguards can be guaranteed and there is a concomitant speed in penalising tardy developers.

Q11. Do you agree with our proposals for digitised, web-based Local Plans?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

The best local plans and Neighbourhood Plans are already doing this. Hopefully, this will engender greater community involvement.

Q12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 - month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

For an urban area this may be a realistic timescale; however, for a rural county like Dorset, (75% AONB) it would place a great burden on an already overstretched planning system and would need an increase in resource. If implemented, Neighbourhood Plan bodies should play a critical role for Neighbourhood Plans to play in the spatial strategy of individual towns and villages. This would then feed into the Local Plan and retain a close connection with the communities.

Q13. (a) Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Neighbourhood Plans are a critical interface with the immediate parish or area community. Local people, should rightly through their Neighbourhood Plan body, have an important say in how local land is used. The Neighbourhood Plan also feeds into the Local Plan – so it's therefore essential in a rural area like Dorset that Neighbourhood Plans are retained. In our own example, the Neighbourhood Plan group, working with Dorset Education Department, Locality, advisors and the Local Plan Authority, took forward a much needed local desire for a new primary school in the northern part of the town as the driving force of the NP. Strategic sites for development were identified to support the business plan for the school. Retaining NPs should also involve a commitment to allow NP groups to continue in this vital localised way. We also feel that NPs should have legislative power for a minimum of five years before legal renewal.

Q13 (b) How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

Much of the answer to this is in the previous answer. We do not believe that parishes or NP groups (and therefore the local community) will engage with a process that diminishes a NP group to deciding upon cosmetic aspects of architecture to blend with the local vernacular. NPs need a clearly defined role within the overall structure of planning, and this should extend to identifying strategic sites in consultation with the Local Planning Authority.

Q14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Yes! We would absolutely welcome this and feel that the principal way to achieve this would be to penalise developers for not building out in a defined timescale.

Q15. What do you think about new development that has happened recently in your area?

- Not sure / indifferent
- Beautiful / well-designed
- Ugly / poorly-designed
- There hasn't been any
- Other (please specify):

1.
2. *Certainly a mixture of bullet points two and three, highlighting a need for a National policy on design management and national standards for build quality. The quality of the local 'Council' houses built in the inter war and post war years stands in sharp contrast to the poor build quality of many recent local developments. In all of the recent and current developments there is insufficient stock for local people who struggle to afford the high rents and can only dream of owning their own home. There appears too, a lack of an identifiable National or local strategy to meet critical social, educational and health infrastructure need. Witnessed through meetings with other Council representatives, this is the experience of much of rural Dorset. They are the things that tax local people leading them to a negative view of the recent and planned developments.*

Q16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area?

- Less reliance on cars

- More green / open spaces
- Energy efficiency of new buildings
- More trees
- Other (please specify):

Q17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Design codes need to be allied to build quality codes and should also set minimum standards for living space. Having sets of design codes could be beneficial but flexibility needs to be built into the system so that exciting and innovative projects can gain planning traction. Especially important in rural areas where developments need to blend in with the local scene.

Q18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

This may bring in an unneeded extra layer of bureaucracy and such matters should be left to plan making bodies negotiating with developers. However, national guidelines, particularly addressing green elements would be welcome.

Q19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

Guidelines not over prescriptive or over restrictive should be considered – again driven by the climate change agenda.

Q20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

'Beauty' will need to be defined before we are able to comment.

Q21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

- More affordable housing
- More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health)
- Design of new buildings
- More shops and/or employment space
- Green space
- Don't know
- Other (please specify):

Infrastructure accompanying development is essential in our area (see answer 10).

Q22. (a) Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

The 'strength' of s106 contributions is that they are local and relate to a specific development enabling local planning bodies and town and parish councils to off-set the impact of the development. CIL money is more regionally determined. Whilst this is vital to secure infrastructure, a new consolidated CIL levy will need to contain a local element. If there is a change, we would hope that the percentage of CIL/s106 monies currently given to town and parish councils will be continued. This should be a statutory requirement.

Q22. (b) Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?

- Nationally at a single rate
- Nationally at an area-specific rate
- Locally

The needs of some areas will be greater than others – perhaps a cap in percentage terms set nationally might work.

Q22. (c) Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?

- Same amount overall
- More value
- Less value
- Not sure

Please provide supporting statement

It is essential that local identified infrastructure needs are met. Since the government seem to be wedded to the (failing) ideology of allowing the market to produce the housing stock needed, any CIL money which enables investment in affordable housing would be welcome.

Q22. (d) Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

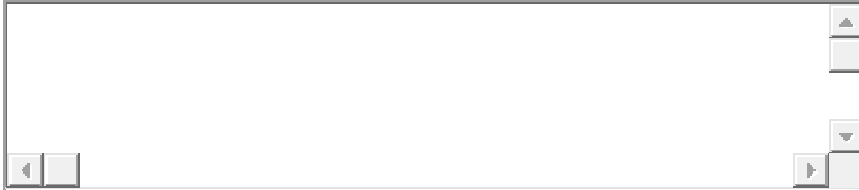
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Possibly, as this may speed up much needed infrastructure delivery. The caveat is the developer actually delivering the CIL negotiated.

Q23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

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We do not support permitted development rights.

Q24. (a) Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

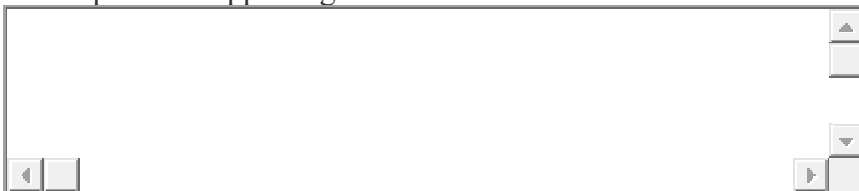
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(see also q 22) It is essential that we have homes that people can afford to buy or rent in sufficient quantity.

Q24. (b) Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

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We believe it is essential for local authorities to build up stocks of housing for local key workers. This will help to meet (albeit insufficiently) the urgent need for more housing stock that people can actually afford to rent or buy in some form. Allowing Local Planning Authorities to commission building homes to retain local and key workers in an area would be better.

Q24. (c) If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

- Yes

- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

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Q24. (d) If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

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A national design and build code(s) which set rigorous minimum standards would do this.

Q25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

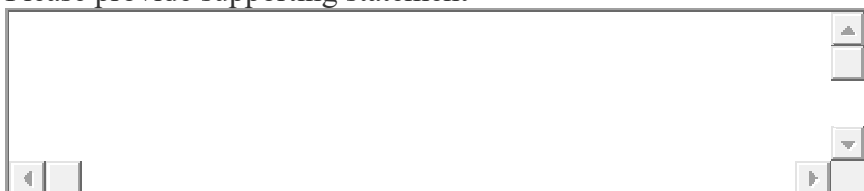
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Local Planning Authorities and Neighbourhood Plan groups must have the freedom to meet local perceived and evidenced need.

Q25 (a) If 'yes', should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement

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Again, we believe this is tinkering with a failed system for delivering housing stock so anything which increases the provision of affordable housing is acceptable.

26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Please provide supporting statement



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Clerk's Report & Correspondence

Bats at Nordon – Following the Planning Committee meeting on 7th September a letter was sent by Cllr Carter, on behalf of the Town Council to NET, advising them of bat activity near Nordon. A response has been received, which has been forwarded to all Councillors. A Thank You letter has been sent in return.