
Basic Conditions Statement - Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan



Prepared by: Dorset Planning Consultant Ltd, on behalf of Marnhull Council

Date of report: June 2025

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	A summary of the Plan and reasons why it should be made in the proposed terms	1
	What our consultations revealed	1
	What the plan aims to achieve.....	1
3.	Other Legal Requirements	3
	Has the Neighbourhood Plan been submitted by a qualifying body?.....	3
	Is what is being proposed relate to the development and use of land or sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?	4
	Do any of the policies extend beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Area or cover an area where there is a Neighbourhood Plan already in place?	4
	Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?.....	4
	Does the proposed Neighbourhood Plan state the period for which it is to have effect?.....	4
	Was the Neighbourhood Plan consulted on as per the requirements in Part 5 Section 14 of Neighbourhood Planning Regulations?	4
4.	Consideration of National and Strategic Policies	5
	National Planning Policy and Guidance	5
	The Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan area	5
	Conformity Analysis.....	6
	Conformity conclusions	14
5.	EU and sustainability obligations	14

1. Introduction

When a Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to the Local Planning Authority, it needs to be accompanied by a statement, known as the Basic Conditions Statement, which explains how the neighbourhood development plan as proposed meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act.

This means:

- the legal requirements (as prescribed) have been complied with in connection with the Plan;
- the Plan has had appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Development Plan for the area
- the Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and would not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained EU obligations and the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

2. A summary of the Plan and reasons why it should be made in the proposed terms

This is the first Neighbourhood Plan for Marnhull parish. It has been prepared by local residents, shaped by feedback from various consultations, with technical input from a range of planning and other experts, on behalf of the Parish Council. When finalised, it will have the official status of being part of the “development plan” for the area, to be used in determining planning applications.

What our consultations revealed

Our early consultations illustrated how much residents value the character of the countryside and of the village. The rural setting was one of the main reasons why people come to Marnhull, and many of us feel that the amount of

development planned in Marnhull could undermine its distinctiveness and village feel. The loss of green space, as well as the scale and density of proposed housing, were raised as key concerns, although the need for housing for younger people and for those wishing to downsize in their retirement, as well as more eco-friendly housing, was recognised. Significant concerns were raised that further growth will lead to additional traffic on our narrow lanes and at road junctions not designed for motorised vehicles. The lack of pavements was also cited as an issue for pedestrians. The impact of flooding, which may get worse as the climate changes, was also a major concern for many respondents.

The history of our village has been very important in shaping its character – and to help understand this better we embarked on an appraisal of the historic environment, including the influence of people like Thomas Hardy (the author of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*), and generations of landowners of the larger estates such as Nash Court. The fact that the village as we know it today resulted from the growth of various hamlets, with a distinctive settlement pattern and easy access to the countryside in between, is something that people do not want to lose.

The various facilities available in the parish are considered to be very important, and funding exists to improve some of these as the population grows. The facilities are spread about the village, but there was no real appetite to create a “new” village centre with a larger foodstore and other commercial units, although permission for this has now been granted by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector at appeal. The reinstatement of full medical (GP) services was seen as important, but this is not something that can be controlled through planning as it is more dependent on other factors, including the availability of trained doctors.

What the plan aims to achieve

Housing: at the time this Neighbourhood Plan was drafted (2024/25), there were approved plans to build new homes on four large sites, as well as some smaller sites, giving a total supply of about 250 dwellings. This has now been increased to more than 330 dwellings with the Tess Square appeal decision. When these are built over the next 5 – 10 years, Marnhull will have grown by more than 30%, which is quite a significant population increase over a

comparatively short period of time. This plan does not propose any more development, but includes policies for the sites that have planning permission but have not yet been built, so that we can influence how these are developed.

...for more information on housing, see Policies 7, 8 and 9 and Maps 3 to 5.

Employment: we have also considered the need for employment opportunities, to ensure that Marnhull does not simply become a dormitory settlement. Our survey showed that the typical needs for premises from people living locally were relatively small, ranging from retail / takeaway, consultancy and building-related trades. We have therefore included a policy that would allow small-scale employment uses that would be compatible with the rural character of the area and highway network to come forward, focusing these on locations with direct access onto the B3092 (such as the Church Farm complex if the farmyard is relocated) and through the re-use of previously developed land.

...for more information on employment, see Policies 8 and 10, and Maps 3 and 5.

Community facilities: there are funds to improve some of the existing facilities, and a community building was permitted as part of the development off Crown Road. We have also identified land for the potential expansion of the cemetery and recreation ground, as well as for additional allotment space.

...for more information on local facilities, see Policies 8 and 11, and Maps 3 to 6.

Traffic and Transport: given the strong concerns about the impact of more traffic on our local roads, we have explored options to make it safer to walk or cycle around the village, and discussed these with the transport teams at Dorset

Council. While these measures will require funding, this work has highlighted the lived experience of residents to inform any future transport assessments, as well as identifying possible solutions to help address these points.

...for more information on this, see Policy 12, and Maps 7 and 8.

Design and Heritage: there is also design guidance in the Plan, spread across 6 policies. These are intended to help make sure that any new development reflects the distinctive character of our village (including the use of Marnhull stone), and does not destroy its historic charm and interest, or the rural character of the surrounding landscape. The policies look to safeguard the important green gaps and spaces that have shaped the village and relationship with the countryside and the many magnificent views that are deserving of protection. They also support changes that may be needed to support zero-carbon homes and biodiversity (such as the potential to use green roofs and the installation of solar panels).

...for more information on design and heritage, see Policies 1 to 6, and Maps 1 and 2.

Flood Risk: we ask developers to use the latest information on flood risk to ensure that development does not take place in the flood areas or worsen flooding off-site. This includes local knowledge of the geology and surface water drainage patterns but also recent flood events which have adversely impacted homes and businesses, and made roads impassable.

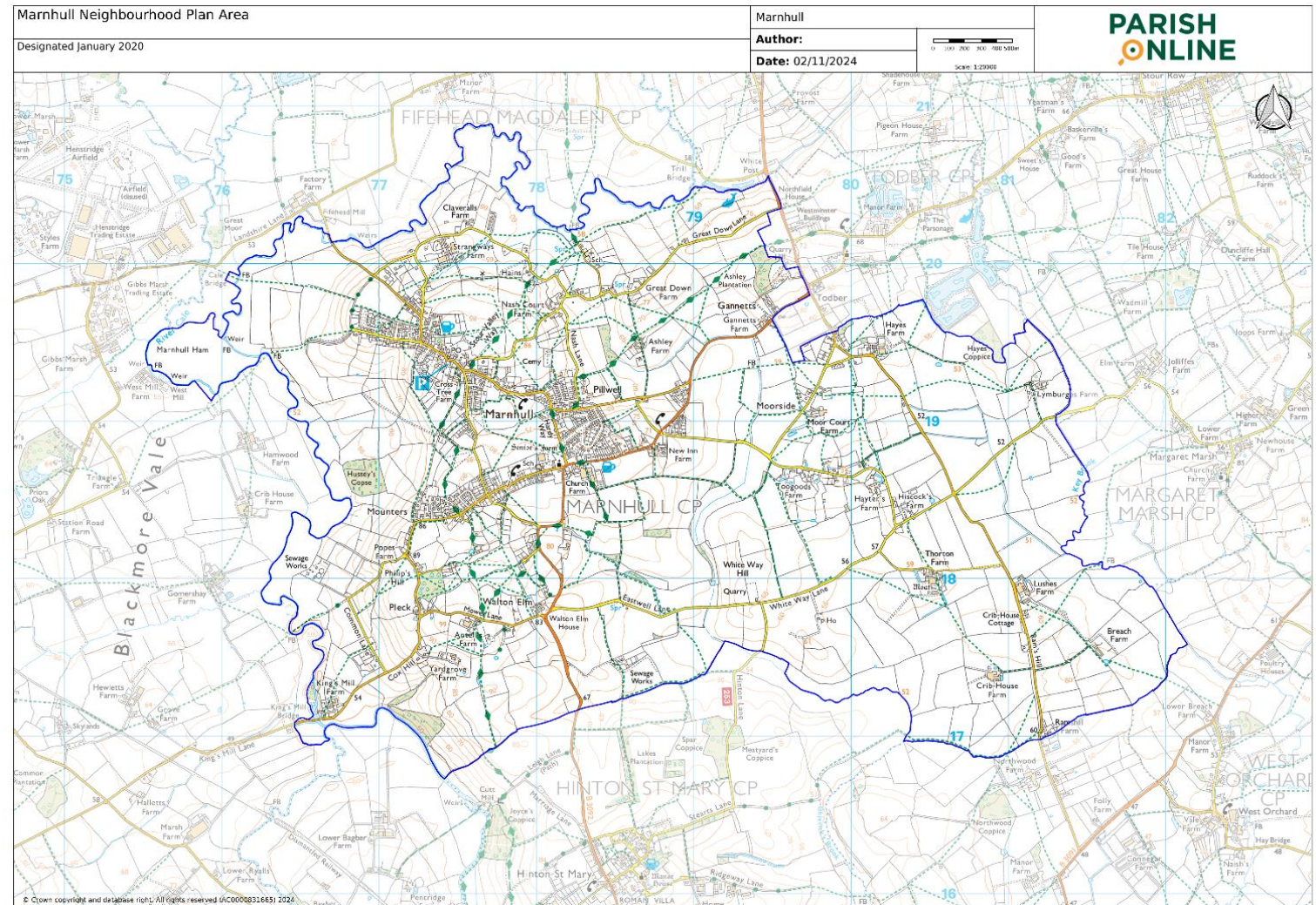
...for more information on flood risk, see Policy 13.

3. Other Legal Requirements

Has the Neighbourhood Plan been submitted by a qualifying body?

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Marnhull Parish Council, which is the qualifying body. The Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated by Dorset Council on 17 January 2020¹.

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



¹ Decision recorded on <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=269>

Is what is being proposed relate to the development and use of land or sites in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?

The Neighbourhood Plan relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and its policies relate only to the designated Neighbourhood Plan area or parts thereof.

Do any of the policies extend beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Area or cover an area where there is a Neighbourhood Plan already in place?

The Neighbourhood Plan policies relate only to Marnhull parish (which is the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area) and to no other area.

Do any of the policies relate to excluded development?

The Neighbourhood Plan policies do not deal with county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or other strategic / significant development that falls within Annex 1 to Council Directive 85/337/EEC.

Does the proposed Neighbourhood Plan state the period for which it is to have effect?

The Neighbourhood Plan makes clear on the front cover that it covers the period from 2024 to 2038, and this is also repeated in section 8.6 that deals with the housing target.

Was the Neighbourhood Plan consulted on as per the requirements in Part 5 Section 14 of Neighbourhood Planning Regulations?

The consultation ran for 7 weeks (10/2/25 to 31/3/25) and was widely publicised, in a manner that was considered likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area. This included:

- i. the use of flyers around the village,
- ii. articles in the Marnhull Messenger,

- iii. referenced at the parish council meetings,
- iv. posts on the parish council website,
- v. an email was sent to all the clubs and business and also to those individuals who had expressed an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan (and were therefore on the Steering Group email list),
- vi. an on-line campaign on the two facebook village sites,
- vii. two drop in events at the Village Hall (22/2/25 and 14/3/25)

Respondents were encouraged to complete a response form (either online or paper copies) which were processed via Survey Monkey software. Further details on how the consultation was run are set out in the accompanying Consultation Statement.

The following statutory consultees were consulted, as per the list provided in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 and taking into account whether their interests may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Potential consultee	Considered as potential interest
Mayor of London	n/a
Local planning authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area	Dorset Council, and Somerset Council (as an adjoining Local Planning Authority)
Coal Authority	n/a
Homes and Communities Agency	n/a
Natural England	Natural England
Environment Agency	Environment Agency
Historic England	Historic England
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	n/a

Potential consultee	Considered as potential interest
Strategic highways company any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area	National Highways
Marine Management Organisation	n/a
Electronic communications providers	n/a
Health Service providers	NHS Dorset, Dorset HealthCare
Electricity or Gas Infrastructure Providers	SSE, Southern Gas Networks
Water or Sewerage undertakers	Wessex Water
Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit all or any part of the neighbourhood area	The Royal British Legion, Marnhull Community Choir, Marnhull Craft Club, Marnhull Cricket Club, Marnhull Fest, Marnhull Flower Show, Marnhull Garden Club, Marnhull Green Teams, Marnhull Hub and Repair Café, Marnhull Lunch Club, Marnhull Men's Shed, Marnhull Players, Marnhull Ramblers, Marnhull Social Table Tennis Club, Marnhull Tennis Club, Marnhull Village Care, Marnhull Village Hall, Marnhull Walking Football Club, Marnhull WI
Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups; different religious groups; persons carrying on business in the area; and disabled persons in the area.	St Gregory's Church, St Mary's Catholic Church

4. Consideration of National and Strategic Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan must have regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan that covers the area.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance comes primarily from the published National Planning Policy Framework (last updated December 2024), but where appropriate, reference is made to the online National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and Ministerial Statements.

Strategic policies are described in the NPPF (para 21) as “those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross-boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed”.

The NPPG also recommends that any conflicts between policies in a neighbourhood plan and an emerging Local Plan should be minimised, and that the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested.

The Development Plan for the Neighbourhood Plan area

The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1, prepared by North Dorset District Council and adopted January 2016, contains the bulk of the strategic planning policies for the area. The development management policies and saved policies in the 2003 Local Plan are generally not considered strategic.

The Local Plan has a start date of 2011 and covers the 20-year period to 2031. The plan is more than five years old, and for the purposes of calculating the five-year supply, Dorset Council now uses the Local Housing Need (LHN) figure derived from the government's standard methodology calculation, and does so on a Dorset wide basis.

The Local Plan does not contain any specific policy for Marnhull, but the village is named as being one of the ‘larger villages’ identified as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns in Policy 2 (the Core Spatial Strategy).

Policy 2 states that the four main towns will function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. It goes on to identify Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages (of which Marnhull is one) as the focus for growth to meet the local needs. This focus on meeting local needs is reiterated in Policy 6 (Housing Distribution), which states in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) the level of housing and affordable housing provision will be the cumulative number of new homes delivered to contribute towards meeting identified local and essential rural needs, and that at least 825 dwellings will be provided in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011–2031.

The settlement boundaries defined around the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages in the 2003 Local Plan were retained and Policy 2 explains that these “identify the broad locations for housing and employment growth and regeneration”. It was anticipated that these would be reviewed either through site allocations in Part 2 of the Local Plan or through neighbourhood planning.

In recent appeal decisions, Inspectors have found that the strategy follows national planning policies which seek to focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable and which (in rural areas) respond to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs and recognise the intrinsic

character and beauty of the countryside. However Inspectors have also accepted that the strategy is not delivering the level of development required under current national planning policy, and the 825 new homes anticipated for the rural areas should not be considered a cap on development (and has now been significantly exceeded²).

Emerging Policy

A first draft of the new Dorset Council Local Plan was published for consultation in January 2021, and identifies Marnhull as a Tier 3 settlement. Draft Policy DEV4, which sets out the development strategy for the northern Dorset functional area, reads as shown:

DEV4: Growth in the northern Dorset functional area

In the northern Dorset functional area housing growth will be delivered:

- I. at the market towns of Gillingham and Sherborne, including through major urban extensions to the south of Gillingham and the west of Sherborne;
- II. through the more modest expansion of Shaftesbury and the smaller market towns of Sturminster Newton and Stalbridge; and
- III. through windfall and infilling within existing settlements defined by local plan or neighbourhood plan development boundaries.

Across the northern Dorset functional area, employment growth will be delivered through:

- IV. infilling and intensification within existing employment sites;
- V. the southern extension of Gillingham and existing undeveloped land at Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton; and
- VI. development of land within the west of Sherborne development.

At its Cabinet meeting In February 2025, Dorset Council updated its local development scheme setting out the timetable for completing the Local

² This target was exceeded in 2022/23 (some 8 years prior to the end of the plan period), and according to the 2023/24 monitoring report for the North Dorset area [CD5.017], is likely to reach in excess of 2,000 completions by 2031

Plan. This includes a further site options consultation (Regulation 18) scheduled for late Summer 2025, that will be required in order to meet the new housing target, with the draft Local Plan produced for consultation (Regulation 19) in late Summer 2026, and the Plan's examination and adoption anticipated in 2027. As such, the Local Plan remains at a relatively early stage and is not being given any significant weight in planning decisions at this time.

Minerals and Waste policies

Dorset Council also has a Minerals Strategy (adopted May 2014) that also forms part of the development plan for the area, together with the more recently adopted Minerals Site Plan and the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan (the latter replacing the 2006 Waste Local Plan that was in place when the Neighbourhood Plan was made). Neither the waste plan nor minerals strategy contain proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan Area, other than defining minerals safeguarding areas.



Conformity Analysis

The most relevant national and local plan policies for each section of the plan, and how the policies relate to these, are summarised below:

Chapter 6	Village Character – Heritage and Design
<p>Summary of national policy and guidance noted</p>	<p>NPPF paragraph 132. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 136. Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.</p> <p>NPPF paragraphs 202-203. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, ... and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</p>
<p>Summary of most relevant development plan policies</p>	<p>Policy 3 Climate Change Neighbourhood plans will be required to consider local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Policy 4 The Natural Environment Development should be shaped by the natural environment so that its benefits are enhanced and not degraded. Landscape character will be protected through the retention of the features that characterise the area. Where significant impact is likely that impact must be mitigated and important landscape features incorporated in the development scheme.</p> <p>Policy 5 The Historic Environment Any development proposal affecting a heritage asset (including its setting) will be assessed having regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of that asset. Where a development proposal will lead to harm to the significance</p>

	<p>of a non-designated heritage asset, regard will be had to: e) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the asset; and f) the scale of any harm or loss; and g) the significance of the heritage asset.</p> <p>Policy 7 Delivering Homes Design and layout of housing development should be of a density that respects local character and amenity. Infilling within settlement boundaries, should respect the amenity of adjoining properties, and local communities are encouraged to develop more detailed policies relating to infilling through Neighbourhood Plans.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Policy overview and assessment of conformity
Policy 1 Heritage	This policy provides further detail on heritage features in the area and how these should be considered in planning decisions, including potential non-designated heritage assets and also the important cultural associations with Thomas Hardy and the history of Nash Court. It seeks to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through raising awareness of the area's unique heritage and potential for non-designated heritage assets, and seeks to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, in line with national planning policy (NPPF 203 and 210 in particular) and NDLP Policy 5.
Policy 2 Design Guidelines	This policy sets out the design expectations for new development, referencing the Design Guidance and Codes that were produced for the area, and including the most relevant points from this and further consultation within the main body of the policy. The design requirements have been developed based on a thorough understanding of the area, and in consultation with the local community. Consideration has been given to all aspects of design, including sustainability (in terms of aspects such as renewable energy / energy efficiency and re-use of materials), and what is required to be sympathetic to local character and history but not preventing appropriate innovation or change, in line with national planning policy (NPPF 132 and 133 in particular) and NDLP Policy 3. The policy does not duplicate Policy 24 on Design (which is a generic development management policy).

Chapter 7	Landscape characteristics, green spaces and important views
Summary of national policy and guidance noted	<p>NPPF paragraph 106. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 107. Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 108. Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts, excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 135. Requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding</p>

	<p>built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This includes by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 198. Planning policies and decisions should identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.</p>
Summary of most relevant development plan policies	<p>Policy 4: The Natural Environment Protects environmental assets which include valued landscapes and other features which make the natural environment special. Seeks to establish a coherent ecological network of designated sites and stepping stone sites linked via corridor features. Buffers should be provided to environmental assets to improve their biodiversity value and facilitate adaptation to climate change. Development should be shaped by the natural environment so that its benefits are enhanced and not degraded. Landscape character will be protected through the retention of the features that characterise the area. Where significant impact is likely, that impact must be mitigated and important landscape features incorporated in the development scheme.</p> <p>Policy 15 Green Infrastructure Development will be required to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and deliver environmental benefits. Neighbourhood Plans should consider measures that assist in delivering key green infrastructure benefits, including the designation of Local Green Space, where appropriate.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Policy overview and assessment of conformity
Policy 3. Green Gaps, Local Green Spaces and the Settlement Pattern	<p>This policy sets out the overall approach to respecting the historic, linear settlement pattern (through appropriate layouts and retention of key undeveloped gaps), and the treatment of the settlement edge where sites would immediately adjoin countryside. This has had regard to NPPF 135 and is in general conformity with NDLP policy 4. It also designates areas of Local Green Space, with their assessment against the national criteria set out in Appendix 8) and using policy wording consistent to Green Belt (the supporting text noting how this is to be applied, i.e. excluding provisions relating to grey belt and previously developed land, and disapplying the exception that allows infill within villages). The approach to LGS designation is supported by NDLP Policy 15 and has had regard to the requirements set out in NPPF 106-108, as well as the associated guidance provided in the NPPG.</p>
Policy 4. Tranquillity and Dark Skies	<p>This policy seeks to safeguard the perception of tranquillity as experienced in the countryside, and minimise the harm to the dark night skies through inappropriate design and lighting schemes. This accords with NPPF 198 (with evidence about the importance of these factors on the area's landscape character included in the plan) and NDLP Policy 4.</p>

Policy 5. Important Views	This policy seeks to ensure that development is not unduly prominent in the landscape (as advised as part of the landscape character assessment) and preserve and where possible enhance the area's important views, which have been identified and are appraised in Appendix 11. Views are not specifically referenced in either National Policy or the strategic policies, but the policy is considered to be in general conformity with those elements of the NPPF which seek to protect and reinforce local character, and to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (NPPF 135 and 187).
Policy 6. Woodlands, Hedgerows and Wildlife Areas	This policy seeks to ensure the key wildlife features that also contribute to the area's landscape character (deciduous woodlands / trees and hedgerows and banks) are retained (insofar as this is possible and would not undermine other objectives) and sets out further expectations to support wildlife and habitats. This has regard to national policy on biodiversity (NPPF 187) and is in general conformity with NDLP Policy 4 without being unduly prescriptive.

Chapter 8	Meeting local needs for housing, employment and community facilities
Summary of national policy and guidance noted	<p>NPPF paragraph 30. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 61. To support the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need..</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 63. Within the context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 66. Where major housing development is proposed, planning policies should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 69-70. Strategic policies should set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocation. Otherwise, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 74. Neighbourhood planning groups should give particular consideration to the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in their area.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 85. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs</p>

	<p>and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 94. When assessing applications for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. Examples of this include mixed use developments, the provision of high quality public spaces, sports facilities, allotments and designing layouts that encourage walking and cycling.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 98. Planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 100. It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 103. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 104. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless specific requirements are met.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 105. Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 140. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (e.g. through changes to approved details such as the materials used).</p>
Summary of most relevant development plan policies	<p>Policy 2 Core Spatial Strategy states that the four main towns will function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. It goes on to identify Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages (of which Marnhull is one) as the focus for growth to meet the local needs. The settlement boundaries identify the broad locations for housing and employment growth and regeneration, and may be reviewed through neighbourhood planning.</p>

	<p>Policy 6 Housing Distribution states in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) the level of housing and affordable housing provision will be the cumulative number of new homes delivered to contribute towards meeting identified local and essential rural needs, and that at least 825 dwellings will be provided in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011–2031.</p> <p>Policy 7 Delivering Homes All housing should contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities and seek to meet the needs of different groups in the community.</p> <p>Policy 8 Affordable Housing Development that delivers eleven or more / more than 1,000 square metres net additional dwellings will contribute to the provision of affordable housing (40% of dwellings for areas such as Marnhull). Within the District as a whole, 70% to 85% of all new affordable housing should be provided as affordable rented and/or social rented housing. This can be varied if justified by local circumstances, local needs or local viability considerations.</p> <p>Policy 11: The Economy Economic development in the countryside (including at Stalbridge and the District’s villages) will be supported by enabling rural communities to plan to meet their own local needs, particularly through neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure The adequacy, availability and provision of grey infrastructure will be key considerations when planning applications are considered. Development will be expected to maintain, enhance and provide grey infrastructure, as appropriate to the particular development.</p> <p>Policy 14 Social infrastructure Seeks to maintain and enhance the level of social infrastructure through retaining and improving existing facilities, and new provision where required.</p> <p>Policy 15: Green Infrastructure Development will be required to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and deliver environmental benefits. All elements of green infrastructure should be provided on site in line with standards of provision set in the development plan.</p> <p>Policy 20 The Countryside Development in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries will only be permitted if it is of a type appropriate in the countryside (as set out in the Local Plan) or it can be demonstrated that there is an ‘overriding need’ for it to be located in the countryside.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Policy overview and assessment of conformity
Policy 7. Meeting Local Housing Needs	<p>Policy 7 sets out the housing target for the NP area, agreed with Dorset Council, taking into account the spatial strategy in NDLP Policy 2, 6 and 20 (insofar as it remains up-to-date and accords with national policy – see preamble on page 5/6). The policy also sets out the mix of house types required based on evidence of local need, having regard to NPPF 63 and 66 and in general conformity with NDLP Policy 7 and 8. The two site allocation policies (Policy 8 and 9) confirm the acceptance of the areas for development approved through extant permissions, that forms part of the housing land supply for Policy 7, and ensures that these sites remain within the potential supply should any of the permissions lapse. The policies also provide details on the approach to the site in terms of the various constraints (also tested as part of the SEA process), related infrastructure needs (in conformity with NDLP Policies 13-15), and in regard to the related policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. The</p>
Policy 8. The eastward expansion of Marnhull	

Policy 9. The southward expansion of Marnhull	evidence demonstrates that the local housing needs will be substantially exceeded (335 dwellings in the supply vs 238 need). On this basis it is considered appropriate to revert to a plan-led system, taking into account the anticipated refresh of the Local Plan by 2027 (whose strategic policies will then take precedence). The policies have had regard to NPPF 61 and 69-71, and there is no need to identify additional small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in the area. The settlement boundary has been reviewed as envisaged in NDLP Policy 2.
Policy 10. Business strategy	This policy seeks to positively identify opportunities for economic growth to meet local needs, whilst ensuring that the nature and scale of development is appropriate to its rural location and access to appropriate infrastructure. Given that such economic growth may include main town centre uses, the impact on nearby town centres is also covered, drawing on recent evidence regarding appropriate thresholds. Both national and local policies on this topic include emphasis on development meeting local needs. The policy therefore has had regard to national policy (in particular NPPF 85 and 94) and in general conformity with NDLP Policy 11.
Policy 11. Supporting community facilities	This policy identifies the existing facilities that are important to the community and contribute to the sustainability of the village, and seeks to ensure that these are retained insofar as possible, and that their appropriate expansion / improvement is supported. The policy also recognized that further increases in housing will put additional pressure on facilities, and secure appropriate contributions and reserve sites for this. The policy has had regard to NPPF 96-105 and is in general conformity with NDLP Policies 13-15. The policy does not duplicate Policy 27 on the Retention of Community Facilities (which is a generic development management policy).

Chapter 9	Highway Safety, Traffic and Transport
Summary of national policy and guidance noted	<p>NPPF paragraph 109. Transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making , using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places; identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use, taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 111. Planning policies should be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, and provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.</p>
Summary of most relevant development plan policies	Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure The adequacy, availability and provision of grey infrastructure will be key considerations when planning applications are considered. Development will be expected to maintain, enhance and provide grey infrastructure, as appropriate to the particular development, by way of direct (on/off site) or indirect (by way of financial contribution) provision. A more sustainable approach to transport will be developed by a range of measures including: the use of Transport Assessments and Transport Statements; seeking improved scheduled bus services between the main towns, providing and enhancing walking and cycling facilities in the main towns and in rural areas, particularly between villages and nearby towns, and developing and enforcing parking standards and guidance both for residential development and other uses and the development of a strategy for off-street parking.
Neighbourhood Plan	Policy overview and assessment of conformity

Policy 12. Highway Safety, Traffic and Transport	The policy is based on a review of the issues and opportunities for encouraging / achieving more sustainable patterns of transport, which involved liaison with the local highways authority. It also takes into account the design guidance on transport infrastructure highlighted in the design codes and guidance. The policy therefore has had regard to national policy (in particular NPPF 111) and in general conformity with NDLP Policy 13. The policy does not duplicate Policy 23 on Parking (which is a generic development management policy).
Chapter 10	Flooding
Summary of national policy and guidance noted	<p>NPPF paragraph 181. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Such an assessment should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. In Flood Zone 1, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving: sites of 1 hectare or more; land which has been identified by the EA as having critical drainage problems; land identified in a SFRA as being at increased flood risk in future; or land that may be subject to other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 182. Applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.</p>
Summary of most relevant development plan policies	<p>Policy 3 Climate Change Development should seek to minimise the impacts of climate change overall through incorporation of measures to reduce water consumption and avoidance of areas at risk of flooding from all sources and the incorporation of measures to reduce flood risk overall. Neighbourhood plans will be required to consider local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure The adequacy, availability and provision of grey infrastructure will be key considerations when planning applications are considered. Development will be expected to maintain, enhance and provide grey infrastructure, as appropriate to the particular development, by way of direct (on/off site) or indirect (by way of financial contribution) provision. The Council will work with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies to make provision for dealing with flood risk, the transfer and treatment of wastewater and the introduction of sustainable drainage systems. Sustainable drainage solutions appropriate to the development and underlying ground conditions should be incorporated into all new development of ten dwellings or more and connect with the overall surface water management approach for the area.</p>
Neighbourhood Plan	Policy overview and assessment of conformity
Policy 13. Flooding and flood mitigation measures	This policy considers in particular the local flood risk issues that are prevalent in the parish, in particular highlighting localized issues that require proper scrutiny instead of being conditioned (given that this precludes the opportunity for consultation on the proposed drainage measures). The policy is considered to remain in general conformity with NDLP Policies 3 and 13 and have regard to national planning policy (in particular NPPF 181).

Conformity conclusions

The analysis of the plan proposals in relation to national planning policy and guidance and the strategic policies of the local plan, as shown in the preceding tables, does not highlight any fundamental conformity issues.

The NPPG makes clear that in considering whether a policy is in general conformity with strategic policies, a view should be taken on whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with and the degree, if any, of conflict and the rationale and evidence to justify that approach. As such, even where there is a degree of conflict, if the changes are considered to be relatively minor in nature and justified by locally-specific evidence, they should still be considered as being in general conformity.

On this basis, there are no apparent reasons to conclude other than the Neighbourhood Plan as modified would meet the basic conditions of having regard to national policy and guidance from the Secretary of State and being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.

5. EU and sustainability obligations

The ‘making’ of the Neighbourhood Plan must not breach or conflict, and must be compatible, with EU obligations, must not have a significant effect on a European site, and must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It must not breach human rights, within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Plan has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which has considered the policies and their cumulative impact in relation to biodiversity; climatic change (including flood risk); community wellbeing; historic environment; landscape; land, soil and water resources; and transportation. The assessment concluded that:

- Long-term significant positive effects are expected in relation to community wellbeing, through the delivery of local housing; the safeguarding and expansion of existing community services, facilities, and employment areas; and the designation of Local Green Spaces.
- Minor positive effects are considered most likely in relation to biodiversity, climate change (including flood risk), and land, soil, and water Resources. This reflects the avoidance of impacts expected by the spatial strategy (site allocations), and additional policy measures which seek to protect and improve biodiversity, increase climate resilience, and limit the loss of productive agricultural land as a result of the housing allocations.
- Mixed effects are anticipated for the landscape and heritage themes. Whilst high-quality is encouraged through the site allocation policies, there is potential for negative effects from one site allocation on an important view (although the policy seeks to reduce the impact of this), and there are potential adverse effects associated with developing within a conservation area (although the setting of key heritage assets is addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan policies).
- Neutral effects are anticipated for the transportation theme. Whilst new development is likely to result in an increased number of vehicles on the road network, the plan includes a suite of policies that aim to facilitate (and encourage) the uptake of public transport and active travel.

On this basis it would seem appropriate to conclude that the overall the plan should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Natural England also confirmed as part of their Regulation 14 response that “It would be appropriate for a conclusion of no adverse effect on the integrity of the designated habitats and International sites to be reached”.

No issues have been raised in relation to the possible contravention of Human Rights in the preceding consultations, and given the conclusions on the plan’s general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and regard to National Planning Policy, it is reasonable to conclude that the making of the plan should not breach human rights.