



Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031

*Produced on behalf of Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council
by the Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and ECA CIC*

Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

This is the Draft Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan. Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council are the 'qualifying body' for the purpose of producing a neighbourhood plan.

This neighbourhood plan covers the Civil Parish of Okeford Fitzpaine, but as the Parish Survey in 2015 did not identify any housing needs for either Fiddleford or Belchalwell, the housing sections of the plan focuses on the village of Okeford Fitzpaine.

1.2 Meeting the Basic Conditions

When the government introduced the Localism Act in 2011, a significant part of the Act dealt with Neighbourhood Planning. The scope and scale of the Act was significant and was implemented through a substantial update to the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. As a result the implementation of the Localism Act 2011 is often referred to as Schedule 4b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

A separate report titled '*Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 - Meeting the Basic Conditions Report*' sets out how the Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan (OFNP) meets the legal requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan as specified in the above Act and its implementation in the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act.

This is a largely technical document that sets out how the OFNP is in general conformance with the Act, the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016), the retained policies of the North Dorset Local Plan (2003), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The target audience for this Basic Conditions Statement is the Local Planning Authority (North Dorset District Council (NDDC)), the Independent Examiner for this OFNP, and any Public Bodies that are required to review Neighbourhood Plans.

This Basic Conditions Statement may also be read more widely and will be made available to the general public on the Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council website, within the Neighbourhood Planning section.

Having set out how the OFNP meets the Basic Conditions the document concludes that the OFNP is in general conformity with the Local Plan and with national policies and recommends that the Plan: proceeds to Regulation 15 Consultation; is subject to Independent Examination; put to Referendum' by the Local Planning Authority; and if successful is 'Made' by the Local Planning Authority and becomes part of the North Dorset Local Plan.

1.3 Plan Summary

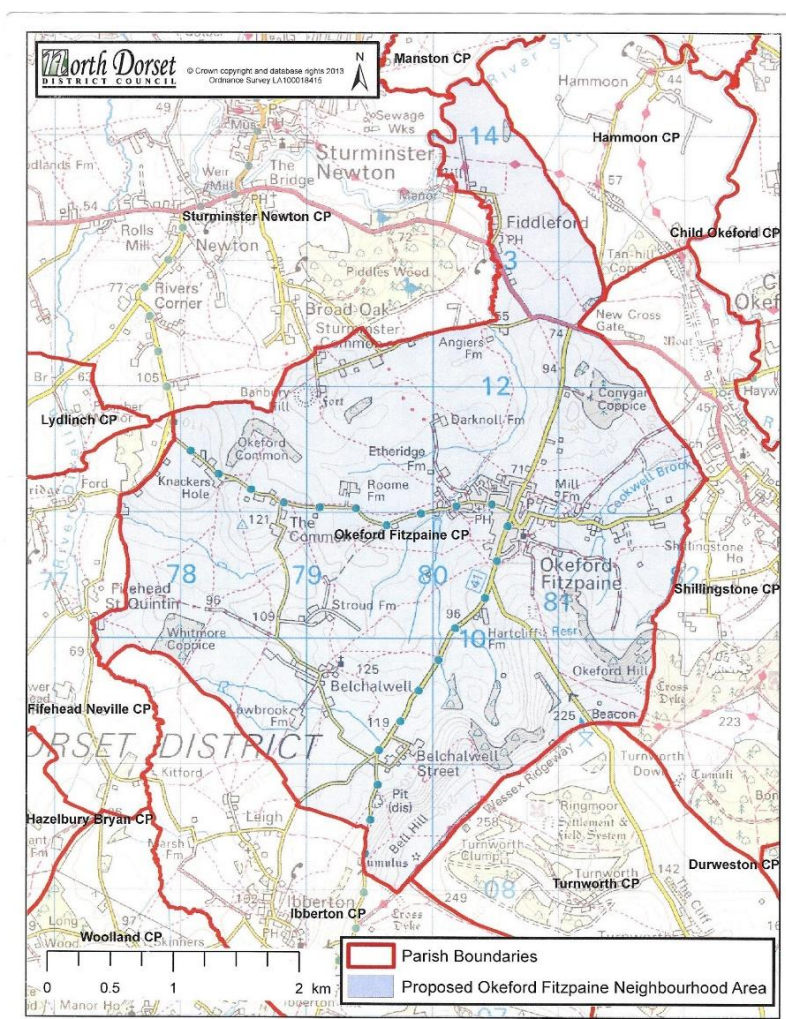
Okeford Fitzpaine has changed in recent years. Food production, construction and agricultural industries have moved away, leaving a community mix of commuters, self-employed and micro businesses owners, and retirees. The Parish population has declined, and as a consequence the sustainability of the key local amenities of local shop (and post office), the two pubs, school and churches have been challenged at various times by these changes.

This Neighbourhood Plan covering the planning period 2011-31 has been produced through extensive consultation with the community, and sets out how the Parish will meet these challenges and prosper by:

- Arresting the decline in the Parish population that occurred between 2001-11.
- Building housing that promotes re-balancing of the demographics of the Parish.
- Creating progressive growth in the community that encourages sustainability of the four key Parish amenities.
- Protecting the heritage assets of the community against this backdrop of development.
- Protecting the natural environment and green spaces, and balancing the bio-diversity of the area with the increasing urbanisation
- Avoiding development in less sustainable locations which are not easy to get to the village centre on foot, minimising car usage.

The Plan proposes that up to 105 new houses will be built between 2011-31. The 37 houses nearing completion at the old Faccenda Chicken Factory site, now known as 'Old Dairy', are the first step to that target and the other preferred sites for the remainder of the development are a portion of Pleydells farmyard and land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine that adjoins the existing village Settlement Boundary. Other than infills within the Okeford Fitzpaine Settlement Boundary, no other dwellings are proposed to be built outside these locations.

1.4 Overview of Okeford Fitzpaine



Name of the proposed neighbourhood area

Organisation applying for the designation

Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Area

Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council

Okeford Fitzpaine is one of 74 Parishes in North Dorset. The Parish consists of the village of Okeford Fitzpaine and the hamlets of Belchalwell, Fiddleford and Okeford Common. For local government administration purposes, the Parish is currently part of Bulbarrow Ward, within Winterbourne Division. The structure of local government in Dorset is changing. The first step has been the merger of North Dorset, West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Districts. The future may well be a single unitary authority for rural Dorset, outside of the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch conurbation.

Geographically, the Parish is located at the south-

eastern edge of the Blackmore Vale, just north of Okeford Hill and Bell Hill which are part of the Wessex Ridgeway. This southern part of the Parish is characterised by chalk downland and is part of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB covers a large section of the south of the Parish extending into the Okeford Fitzpaine village. The remainder of the Parish is similarly rural and consists mainly of arable and dairy farming. Just north of Fiddleford runs the main river in the area, the Stour. This has its source at Stourhead, runs through North Dorset to East Dorset and then to Christchurch where it flows into the English Channel.

The County Town, Dorchester, is about 18 miles south-west and the major conurbation of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch lies on the coast some 25 miles to the south-east. Blandford Forum is the nearest large town, 7 miles to the south-east, with the smaller town of Sturminster Newton 3.5 miles to the north.

The Parish is principally served by the A357, which runs through the North part of the Parish at Fiddleford about 1 mile from Okeford Fitzpaine. But neither Okeford Fitzpaine or the two hamlets of Belchalwell and Okeford Common are served by a main road. The A357 connects to the primary route in the area, the A350 at Durweston Bridge. The A350 provides the main south to north link between Poole and Shaftesbury for the A303, and then further north through Warminster for the M4.

For over 300 years most of the village of Okeford Fitzpaine and surrounding land was owned by the estate of the Pitt Rivers family, members of which still live in the Hinton St. Mary House about a mile north of Sturminster Newton. In 1966 death duties forced the sale of the majority of the estate of tied cottages and farm buildings some of which were in the Parish, mainly within the village.

Many of these structures were old buildings and consequently Listed and thus preserved, giving the village its old world charm with a mixture of thatch, beams, local brick, stone and cob. The attractiveness of the central part of the village was reflected in its designation in 1974 as a Conservation Area, to retain the character, safeguard trees and encourage a higher, sympathetic, standard of design for future development.

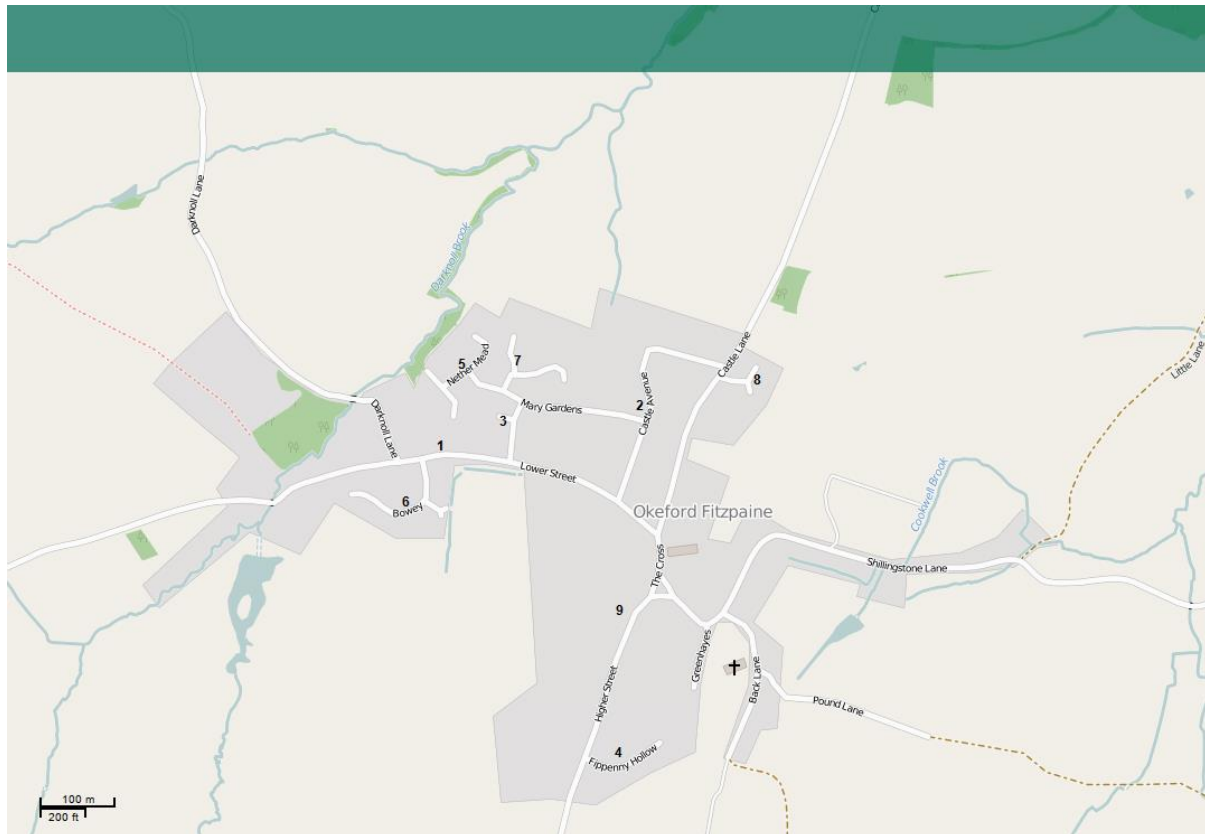
The view from Olde Bell Stores towards the church is of county wide and even national recognition having been featured in several travel guides and publications on village and rural life.



There are additionally numerous other historic buildings and sites of archaeological significance distributed throughout the Parish.

In the 20th Century Okeford Fitzpaine village has progressively been developed with the addition of new housing. Initially in the 1930's the former Sturminster Newton District Council developed over 50 new houses to the north west of the village in what is now Castle Avenue and Mary Gardens. This development improved living conditions for many and helped retain the working population.

In summary the main housing developments of the 20th (and 21st) century in the village have been (see map)



		Year
1	Netherway Cottages	1926-30
2	Castle Avenue/Mary Gardens	1937
3	Orchard Close	1947
4	Fippenny Hollow	1984
5	Nethermead	1993
6	Bowey	1994
7	Fairfield Close	1995
8	Ridouts	2008
9	The Old Dairy	2016

Today the Okeford Fitzpaine village benefits from a Parish Church, Village School, Village Hall, Public House and Village Shop and Post Office and Village Allotments. There is also a sports pavilion and football pitches, and additional Local Green Spaces with children's play areas



Belchalwell has its own church, and Fiddleford a restaurant, hotel and pub adjacent to the A357.

A local bus service connects the Parish with local towns.

A number of activities and events held within the village are led by the Village Community Group indicating a strong community focus, and in recent years the village has won awards in the

Dorset Best Kept Village and associated competitions. The most recent innovation has been the establishment of a Community Café (the Mud Pie Café) which opens in the Village Hall on most Saturdays and attracts the support of a wide spectrum of the community.

In addition, there are numerous societies and clubs in the village including; Okeford United Football Club (with a history of more than 100 years) a Short Mat Bowls Club, Gardening Club, Reading Group, Walking Group, Skittles Team, Sewing and Craft Group, Fitmix and Pilates.

1.5 Vision for Okeford Fitzpaine

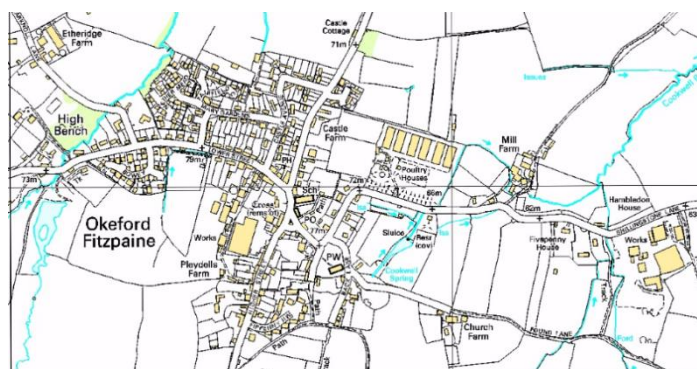
Okeford Fitzpaine is a thriving community led Parish, which seeks to grow progressively through planned sustainable development while offering residents and visitors alike a rural environment of outstanding beauty and remain an iconic conservation area of heritage buildings of the quintessential Dorset village, with both protected and safeguarded for future generations.

1.5.1 Strategic Objectives

- To progressively grow the village through sustainable housing development that meets the needs of all age and social groups, and promotes balance in the Parish demography.
- To ensure that new housing developments are on previously identified potential sites in or adjacent to the existing settlement boundary
- To evolve the Parish infrastructure to support the progressive growth in the community.
- To protect and where possible enhance the built heritage and its surroundings, for the benefit of current and future generations.
- To recognise that our rural environment and greenspaces are highly valued by all the community and to enhance them and protect them from inappropriate development.
- To invest in infrastructure that provides opportunities for more sustainable means of getting about in, around and beyond the Parish, and promotes better health and well-being of all.
- To strive to support the local economy through its existing businesses and encourage new enterprises and facilities, which enhance employment opportunities.

1.6 Parish Demographics

This section deals with the historic changes to the population of Okeford Fitzpaine Parish, and examines the age profile of the population as at the last Census in 2011. A tabular form of the



exact numbers is shown in Appendix 2: 2011 Census Data for Okeford Fitzpaine, North Dorset and England and Wales (combined).

The headline is that the population of the Parish fell between the census of 2001 to the census of 2011. From 980 to 913 (-7.5%). This contrasts with a 10.8% increase across North Dorset. **If**

the population of the Parish had grown in line with North Dorset it would be 1086.

Examining the population by decade: -

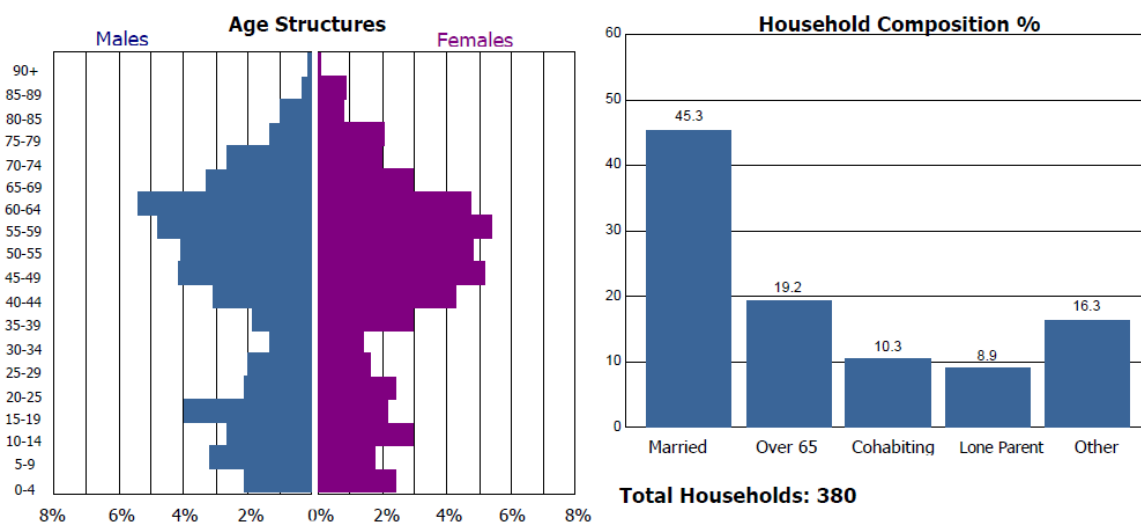
Okeford Fitzpaine Population at 20th (and 21st) Century Censuses

Year	1921	1931	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Population	652	580	625	619	580	630	640	980	913
% change		-11%	8%	-1%	-6%	9%	2%	53%	-7%

The age group 0-15 declined by 57% and the age group 25-44 declined by 66.3%, while the age group 45-64 increased by 26.8%. So the decline in population between 2001 and 2011 is most likely caused by those people moving into the age range 15-24 leaving the Parish for further education or employment. This is a trend for North Dorset where in the year mid-2012 to mid-2013 the estimated increase in population was +280, but for the age range 15-24 the estimated decrease was -200. The decline in age group 25-44 is the cause and effect for the decline in 0-15 year olds, as the former represents the young family age group. The 2000s was a decade of increasingly unaffordable Market housing. And the fact that no new Market housing was built in Okeford Fitzpaine in the 2000s would have inhibited young families establishing their homes here.

The outcome of this young family age group decline had a direct impact on the school by the end of the decade, with minimal numbers entering the school from within the Parish.

The proportion of people by age range at the 2011 census is shown below. The median age of 48 is higher than North Dorset (44) but very similar to the median average for Dorset of 47. Proportionally, Okeford Fitzpaine has more married couples and lone parents than the North Dorset average.



Examining the economic activity and educational qualifications of the Parish, we find that our residents have a slightly higher level of economic activity than the North Dorset norm (73% of our residents are economically active versus 70% across North Dorset). Of the inactive %, the Parish has a similar proportion of retirees to the average for North Dorset, but only 17% of aged 65+, compared with 22% for North Dorset. This would suggest that there are proportionately more early retirees in the Parish, by comparison with North Dorset. The economically active population of the Parish has a higher proportion of self-employed than North Dorset.

Okeford Fitzpaine residents are also better qualified than the North Dorset average. The Parish has about 62% of over 16 year olds with high qualifications, whereas this drops to about 57% in North Dorset. This does not translate to any marked difference in the skill level of jobs where the Parish is in line with the North Dorset norm.

In almost all of the above categories Okeford Fitzpaine exceeds the national average for economic activity, educational qualifications, and skill level of jobs.

Our parishioners are generally healthy, with 85% saying they are in very good or good health. This is better than Dorset at about 80.5% and nationally at 81.2%.

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the 2011 Census are:

- Housing policies need to arrest the decline in population to ensure that the main amenities of the Parish remain sustainable.
- Housing policies need to promote rebalancing the demographics by providing housing that is attractive to young families in the age group 25-44, where the Parish has a smaller proportion of the population than North Dorset.
- Housing Policies should lead to the provision of housing that is attractive to people in the upper quartile of the age group 45-64 who may seek to downsize and remain

within the Parish for family (or other) reasons. The Parish has a disproportionately high percentage of parishioners in this age group, compared to North Dorset.

- Okeford Fitzpaine is a healthy place to live, and this needs to be supported in offering increased levels of amenity which promotes well-being.
- Economic activity, educational qualifications, the percentage of self-employed, and the skill levels of the employed are all positive, suggesting the basis for a thriving economic community.

2 OUR POLICIES

2.1 Sustainable Development in the Right Place.

The NPPF provides a policy presumption in favour of sustainable development which is the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a valued landscape of conservation interest and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

But this is also a progressive plan which is a powerful tool that can be used to get the *right types of development for the community. It proposes allocating a number of housing sites for development. However, these are located very close to the centre of the village as these are the most sustainable location. Development here will reduce the need to travel by car as it is within an easy walk to existing shops and services and also has the potential to provide a cohesive community.*

Paragraph 16 of the NPPF states that through neighbourhood planning, neighbourhoods should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development. This Neighbourhood Plan positively supports North Dorset's planning policies for the area, including revising the settlement boundary (NDLP Part 1 Policy 2) and supporting the development of identified sites for additional homes, which will enhance the area's economic prosperity and make it a more attractive and vibrant place to live and work. This Neighbourhood Plan is pro-sustainable development and provides clear, detailed policies on how the Parish would like to encourage positive change resulting from the development of some of the previously developed sites within its plan area.

2.2 Settlement Policies

Settlement Boundary Policy S1

WITHIN THE REVISED SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Provided that it is in compliance with national and local plan policies, residential development within the revised Okeford Fitzpaine Settlement Boundary, will be allowed :

- on allocated housing sites, as set out in policy HP1;
- on sites for limited residential infilling and extensions in accordance with North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Policy 7;

OUTSIDE THE REVISED SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Any development outside of the revised settlement boundary is subject to Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Policy 20 The Countryside.

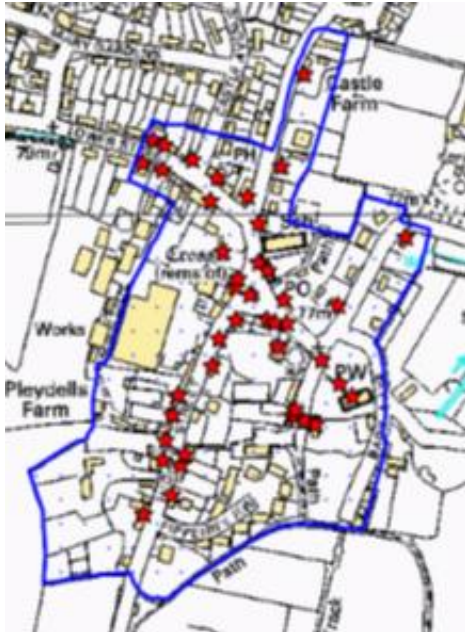
2.2.1 Settlement Boundary Revision

Neighbourhood plans have the power to vary settlement boundaries as defined in the North Dorset Local Plan (Policy 2) and the Okeford Fitzpaine boundary has been changed to encompass the former Pleydells farmyard site (part) and the Land to the north of Okeford Fitzpaine which have been previously submitted by their owners to NDDC as potential development sites. The Pleydells farm site is in the village centre adjacent to the Conservation Area and the recently developed Old Dairy site and forms a natural extension within walking distance to the centre of the village while the Land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine site is adjacent to the 1930s Castle Avenue development with an existing footpath linkage to the village centre.

The plan has not identified any further countryside developments that would fall within the definitions contained in Policies 28-33 of the NDLP Part 1 and that it believes would meet any of the tests of an overriding need for a countryside location.

2.3 Heritage, Design and Open Space

2.3.1 Heritage and Design



The unique character of Okeford Fitzpaine Parish is determined by its many individual 'heritage assets' reflecting the age and function of the village and the 3 hamlets, and the locally available building materials. The main concentration of these heritage assets can be found in the designated Conservation Area within Okeford Fitzpaine village whose settlement boundary is focused around the centre of the village.

This unique character includes the iconic view from the centre of the Conservation Area past quintessential Dorset thatched and timbered cottages and houses, towards the slightly raised position of the church of St. Andrews. The church is then sited against the backdrop of the AONB of Okeford Hill.

This Plan sets out a progressive approach to enabling development, whilst setting clear objectives and policies for the protection of the heritage assets of the Parish.

Okeford Fitzpaine Parish has a total of 57 listed buildings all of which are Grade II. In addition to the buildings are various listed barns, walls, tombs and a telephone box. Included in the total of 57 listed buildings are 2 churches, a shop, a pub and an inn. The latter 2 are examples from the heyday of Okeford Fitzpaine as a coaching stop on the route from Poole to Bristol, as it would have been 1 day out of Poole.

The greater concentration of listed buildings is within Okeford Fitzpaine village revised Settlement Boundary (Appendix n) and its immediate environs, where a total of 46 can be found. 16 of these are designated farmhouses, reflecting the history of numerous smallholdings bringing the rural farming countryside right into the historic settlement. Specific policies are documented in both this section and section 2.4 Housing, which will lead to the protection of this rural backdrop to the village.

The Conservation Area of Okeford Fitzpaine village is shown above.

This pinpoints the location of the 37 listed buildings (and other listed assets) in the Conservation Area. Up to the development of the 37 new houses at the Faccenda Chicken Factory site (which is wholly within the Conservation Area), the Grade II listed buildings were in the majority. Most of the remainder are in keeping with the listed buildings, with only a minority in the contrasting styles of the 60s, 70s, and 80s. A more detailed description of the heritage assets within the village can be found in the OFNP Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Opinion and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report. In addition, a detailed

description of the impact assessment of this Plan on the heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development sites can be found in the OFNP Heritage Assets Report.

National policy indicates that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. Also, any positive strategy to secure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (Paragraph 126, National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012))

Section 69 of the Planning (Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the District Council to consider the designation of 'Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest', known as Conservation Areas. This can be seen in the Local Plan Policy 5 and taken up in the Objectives, Policies and Principles of this Plan.

Furthermore, the government has made it clear that designation is worthless without adequate policies of enhancement and protection. In this respect this Plan sets out Policies and Principles for the avoidance of ill conceived, poorly designed or sited new development.

In relation to heritage assets, significance (as above) is defined as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.

For this reason, the Plan considers the effect of views into, out of and within the Conservation Area and not just the effect on immediate surroundings, and through HP1 identifies development sites that will have a positive impact on this aspect of the setting of historic assets, or places the development away from those assets.

Heritage Policy CP1:

Development within and adjacent to the Conservation Area should reflect the scale, massing, density and building materials of the heritage assets of that part of the Conservation Area in accordance with North Dorset Local Plan Policy 5 and the 'Guidance on alterations to historic buildings in North Dorset' October 2007.

Okeford Fitzpaine has become a quite different Parish during the 21st Millennium. The decline of the industrial scale manufacturing, food processing and farming provides a key opportunity to revitalise the Parish as a progressively growing sustainable rural community.

The Faccenda Chicken Factory development sets the direction to be followed throughout this Plan. The development is the replacement of an increasingly derelict, unsightly, and at times unsavoury industrial poultry processing plant by modern residential properties using modern day comparable building materials and in scale, character and distinctiveness of that part of the Conservation Area. This represents a good example of heritage-led regeneration, in conformance with the Local Plan.

The Sustainability and Housing Policies build on these heritage-led regeneration principles and when implemented will provide a homogenous residential environment in keeping with the Vision for the Parish.

The Heritage Policies are intended to be read in conjunction with the Natural Environment EP1 Policy. Together they set out to protect the AONB, the other sites of national significance, and the Countryside land surrounding the revised Village Settlement Boundary (shown in Appendix 1 Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Proposals Map). Okeford Fitzpaine is a rural Parish set in the Blackmore Vale at the foot of Okeford Hill. The scene approaching the village from roads and rights of way should be protected and enhanced, and where necessary 'softened' through landscaping that blends a new development into the prevailing landscape. Ecological plans should protect and enhance the natural habitats of wildlife to mitigate the impact of development (see EP2).

Similarly, the views out of the Conservation Area into the rural surroundings should through design, density, massing and material seek to maintain this rural aspect.

For any areas of a site which are greenfield, or have never been built on areas should be set aside for strategic landscaping and amenity space. New landscaping schemes should be specified with associated maintenance and management plans which include a net gain in native species of trees, and burying utility supplies underground (see HP3). For any development of a site that is not designated as 'brownfield', additional habitat mitigation measures will be required to be set out in a Habitats Mitigation Plan. This will set aside a part of the development area as an ecological asset supporting the 'green corridors' (see below) within the revised Settlement Boundary.

Heritage Policy CP2

The regeneration of sites within or adjacent to the Okeford Fitzpaine Conservation Area which enhance the existing character and appearance of the area through sensitive design will be encouraged.

2.3.2 Open Space – Local Green Space

It is recognised that the small and larger open spaces within the village make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the village and Conservation Area. They are valuable therefore for their contribution to the visual amenity of the village, and also as amenity space for residents. It is therefore considered essential that these spaces are preserved and enhanced.

In the separate document titled ‘Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Report’ an analysis has been undertaken of the open spaces that had been identified in the 2003 Local Plan and categorised as Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWA). In 2003 it was intended that a subsequent Local Plan would review the IOWA designations, particularly their contribution in visual or amenity terms to the public areas within a town or village, with a view to deleting those which did not require complete protection. This review has been undertaken through this Neighbourhood Plan, while at the same time determining which areas should be designated as Local Green Space – which provides greater protection (Green Belt equivalent) than the original IOWA.

The review of Important Open or Wooded Areas resulted in 3 of the Areas being granted the higher protection of Local Green Space.

Heritage Policy CP3-

No development will take place within the settlement boundary in areas designated as Local Green Spaces listed below (see Appendix 1 OFNP Proposals Map) except where such development demonstrably enhances the use of the space:

- (1) Playing Field to the rear of 34 Lower Street
- (2) Land to the rear of 29 Nether Mead
- (3) Land adjacent to 11 Mary Gardens

2.3.3 Open Space – The Green Infrastructure

Local Green Space is part of the overall Green Infrastructure asset created as part of the development of the village and surrounding area which plays an important role in blending the built infrastructure with the surrounding countryside. It provides sustainable support for the health and wellbeing of the community.

Types and Function of the Okeford Fitzpaine Green Infrastructure Assets

Outdoor Recreation facilities	Recreation Ground	Okeford Fitzpaine Football Club, Children’s play area, possible extension for further sports e.g. tennis courts and a Multiuse Games Area
Amenity Greenspace	Bowey Field	Young children play area, outdoor play, informal sports, picnics etc.
	Mary Gardens	Informal play area for younger children in sight of parents
Green Corridors	Rights of Way	A circuit of easily accessible footpaths around the village. A network of footpaths and bridleways for access to the surrounding countryside and AONB. Areas of Green Infrastructure that are set aside to support wildlife through being retained in their natural form.
Local Character Areas	St Andrews Churchyard	Provides the setting for the listed building church and the focal point of the village
Little Lane		Provide a linkage to the North Dorset Trailway

Neighbourhood Plans should consider measures that assist in delivering key green infrastructure benefits and the objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, including the designation of Local Green Space where appropriate. The re-designation of Mary Gardens from a potential building site to Local Green Space complies with that strategy.



Okeford Fitzpaine village has mainly developed as a compact urban entity which is well served by the Rights of Way which provide access to the surrounding countryside (Wessex Way, SSSIs e.g. Piddles Wood, the AONB etc.) and nearby towns and communities (Sturminster Newton, Shillingstone, Belchalwell).

In parallel to the production of this Plan the Parish Council is

investing in improvements to a circuit of footpaths around the village which link up with the footpaths, bridleways etc., giving access further afield as above and shown in the above map.

Section 2.9 Infrastructure Investment sets out some of the improvements that may be made using S106/Community Infrastructure Levy(CIL) monies for the enhancement of these Green Infrastructure Assets. These improvements have a focus on how the Assets may provide opportunities to benefit the health and well-being of most parishioners.

2.4 Housing

2.4.1 Housing Objectives

Objectives specifically relating to housing have also been developed to complement the main objectives of the plan and provide a basis for the housing policies:

1. To identify the location(s) for the progressive addition of housing stock within the Parish.
2. To provide a circuit of easily accessible footpaths around the village and bridleways for access to the surrounding countryside.
3. To ensure that housing is built in keeping with the rural character of the Parish.
4. To ensure that local needs are fully considered, and given priority in the provision of affordable rental and shared ownership scheme housing.
5. To ensure that the density of development of new housing reflects the rural character of the Parish and adequately accommodates the parking needs of residents and visitors.
6. While meeting a diverse range of market housing needs, priority should be given to housing that will be attractive to: younger families in order that a more sustainable demographic balance is facilitated within the Parish; older residents with bungalow style housing that will enable older residents to downsize without leaving the Parish.
7. To support the conversion of barns and redundant farm buildings into holiday accommodation and small business units to facilitate growth in the local economy and employment. (see also EN1)

The North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 was adopted in January 2016, but on the condition that an early review, based in part on the Eastern Dorset SHMA October 2015, starts no later than March 2016 (the adopted plan is based on a 2012 SHMA before it had been updated with the most recently-available household projections). The NDLP Part 1 covers the planning period 2011 to 2031. Specific policies and provisions of the adopted Local Plan, with relevance for housing provision at Okeford Fitzpaine include:

- Policy 2: Core Spatial Strategy, which provides for Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages, including Okeford Fitzpaine, as the focus for growth to meet local needs outside of the four main towns.;
- Policy 6: Housing Distribution, which gives a total allocation of a minimum of at least 825 new dwellings for all nineteen settlements within the category of Stalbridge and the larger villages;
- Policy 7: Delivering Homes, which states that all housing should contribute towards the creation of mixed and balanced communities. In the period to 2031, the Council will support the delivery of about 40% of market housing in North Dorset as one or two bedroom properties and about 60% of market housing as three or more bedroom properties. Over the same period, the Council will support the delivery of about 60% of affordable housing in North Dorset as one or two bedroom properties and about 40% of affordable housing as three or more bedroom

properties. The Council will support the provision of age-restricted housing for the elderly and will usually seek to control its occupancy by planning condition or planning obligation;

- Policy 8: Affordable Housing, which states that development that delivers eleven or more net additional dwellings and which has a maximum combined gross floor space of more than 1,000 square metres, including housing on mixed-use sites, will contribute to the provision of affordable housing. On schemes of six to ten in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including housing on mixed-use sites, financial contributions to the provision of affordable housing will be sought. Such development will contribute to the provision of 40% affordable dwellings in the District (outside the main towns). 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. The remaining 15% to 30% should be provided as intermediate housing; and
- Policy 9: Rural Exception Affordable Housing, which states that rural exception affordable housing schemes will only be permitted within or adjoining the built-up area of the District's smaller villages. In Stalbridge and the larger villages rural exception sites will be permitted adjoining the settlement boundaries.

2.4.2 Housing Policies

To develop a set of Housing Policies that will enable the above Housing Objectives to be met an evidence based approach has been adopted based mainly on quantitative data, but further informed by qualitative data.

1. The main evidence on housing need has been established by commissioning a separate in depth Housing Needs Assessment, conducted by the consultancy AECOM completed in June 2016.
2. The AECOM study derived multiple projections for the 2011-31 housing need, but recommends one based on the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015). This projects a total of 105 houses, or 5 per year on average. This forms the basis for the housing policies below.
3. The plan section 'Parish History and Demographics' showed that between the Census of 2001 and 2011 there was a nearly 7% decline in the parish population (from 980 to 913). This is set against a 10.8% increase in population across North Dorset. No single factor can be identified that caused the decline, but the availability of development sites identified in this Plan provides the opportunity to address the decline in a proportionate and appropriate manner. The average household size in the Parish is 2.4. So to address the falling population of the Parish and to keep pace with the average growth across North Dorset, an additional 72 dwellings needed to be built by 2011. This is a significant shortfall that can be addressed by this Plan.
4. This reversal of population decline is identified in the AECOM Housing Need Analysis (see separate document) and contributes to the conclusion that an increase of 105 houses is required to meet local needs in the Plan period 2011-2031.

5. The Local Economy Section deals with the economic impact of the changes that have taken place in the Parish in the last decade or so. Those changes have threatened the existence of the services that contribute to the Larger Village status associated with Okeford Fitzpaine. So, these Housing Policies are concerned not only with sustainability of development but also sustainability of the Large Village status and services such as the local shop (and post office), the pub, the local school and the church. Whatever measures that each of those independent entities take to ensure their future, this Plan can make a major contribution by ensuring sufficient houses are built to potentially address the decline in population and place it back on an upward path.

2.4.3 Site Selection

A review of potential housing sites (see separate document - Assessment of Potential Housing Sites for Okeford Fitzpaine Parish) identified 6 potential sites that could be used to meet the need identified in the AECOM HNA study:

- Ref 1 Faccenda Chicken Factory (Old Dairy), Higher Street
- Ref 2 Pleydells Farm, Lower Street
- Ref 11 Land adjacent to 11 Mary Gardens
- Ref 7 Land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine
- Ref 4 Faccenda Chicken Farm, Shillingstone Lane
- Ref 6 Wessex Park Homes , Shillingstone Lane

2.4.3.1 Faccenda Chicken Factory

The Old Dairy is planned to complete in parallel to the production of this Neighbourhood Plan, with the addition of 37 new houses, - 19 Market Houses and 18 Affordable of which 9 are Social Rental and 9 are Shared Ownership. Sovereign Housing Group are the lead Registered Social Landlord for the Affordable Properties. This exceeds the NDDC policy for 40% of new housing builds to be in an 'affordable' category.

2.4.3.2 Pleydells Farmyard



This site is immediately adjacent to the village centre giving full pedestrian access will ensure that priority is given to the removal of unsightly and increasingly derelict redundant farm buildings from the proximity of the central part of the Conservation Area (CP2).



There would be an apparent conflict between this allocation and the Okeford Fitzpaine Parishioner Survey Q4 2015, regarding the Pleydells Farm Site. This has been resolved by firstly separating the two Pleydells sites as shown on the SHLAA (see separate document - Assessment of Potential Housing Sites for Okeford Fitzpaine Parish). This separates the Pleydells Farm (Ref 2) from the land to the Rear Pleydells Farm site (Ref 3) (see Policy S1 Sustainable Development regarding development on Countryside sites). And then secondly the Pleydells Farm Site has been redefined to

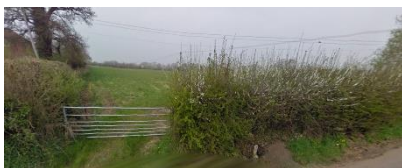
separate the previously developed portion of this site from the Countryside element.

2.4.3.3 Land adjacent to 11 Mary Gardens



This is a small area of open space, currently used as an informal play area for children from adjacent housing. It is owned by NDDC and has been subject to a number of planning applications in the past, all of which have been refused based on its amenity value to the village and were vigorously opposed by the community and the Parish Council. Accordingly, the site has been designated as Local Green Space by this plan with a view to ultimate acquisition by the Parish.

2.4.3.4 Land to the north of Okeford Fitzpaine



This site has been the subject of previous development proposals and is immediately adjacent to the current settlement boundary, it provides direct access to Castle lane for its vehicle traffic to exit, avoiding the village centre and can be connected to the village centre by an existing footpath for pedestrian access.

2.4.3.5 Faccenda Chicken Farm, Shillingstone Lane



While the Okeford Fitzpaine Parishioner Survey Q4 2015 showed a preference for this site it is currently designated as an employment site in the North Dorset Local Plan 2016 retained policy OF1 (from the 2003 Local Plan) which predicates its use as a replacement site for the former Chicken processing factory which was located in the village centre, and was therefore included within the settlement boundary. Further, it does not have a suitable pedestrian access to the village centre and the adjacent footpath would need to be upgraded and/or rerouted to provide a safe access. The site exits onto a narrow section of Shillingstone Lane which would need to be significantly widened or reengineered to provide safe vehicular entry and exit.

2.4.3.6 Wessex Park Homes, Shillingstone Lane



The redevelopment of the Wessex Park Homes, Shillingstone Lane site, which currently remains an employment site, presents a planning challenge. The NPPF (Paragraph 55 March 2012) states that 'new dwellings should be located where they will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and new isolated homes should be avoided unless there are special circumstances'.



Wessex Park Homes is adjudged distant (1/2 mile) from the centre of the Okeford Fitzpaine village (lying almost midway between the village and Shillingstone village). There is poor connectivity to the village by sustainable means making walking to the village school, shop, church and pub difficult. The safest pedestrian route along Pound Lane is hampered by extremely muddy conditions, and additionally the outflow from a spring below Okeford Hill results in water flowing across the Lane for the majority if not all of the year.

Furthermore, the Lane is regularly used by off road motor vehicles. A very significant upgrade would be required to enable the site to be fully accessible to local amenities by everyone. The sites development potential is severely limited by its distance from the centre of the village and the distinctive lack of safe, attractive and well-lit walking and cycling routes. There is also a portion of the site that is an AONB, and a further portion on Greenfield Land. The special circumstances and more advantageous employment use of this site are discussed in section 2.8 The Local Economy below.

2.4.4 Site Selection Summary

- The Site review, based on criteria from the NPPF and the NDLP Part 1 of those sites recorded on the North Dorset Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2012 (see separate document - Assessment of Potential Housing Sites for Okeford Fitzpaine Parish) and the Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Call For Sites (May 2016) concluded that the Settlement Boundary should be modified accordingly to allow housing development. The revised Settlement Boundary for Okeford Fitzpaine village is shown in Appendix 1 OFNP Proposals Map
- The local housing needs from the AECOM HNA for the Plan Period could entirely be met through three of the most sustainable sites
 - Ref 1 Faccenda Chicken Factory;
 - Ref 2 Pleydells Farmyard (as redefined);
 - Ref 7 Land to the North of Okeford FitzpaineAll of which are within the revised Okeford Fitzpaine Settlement Boundary.
- The following Potential Housing Sites will not be developed during the Plan period.
 - Ref 4 Faccenda Chicken Farm, Shillingstone Lane

- Ref 6 Wessex Park Homes , Shillingstone Lane
- Ref 3 Land to the rear Pleydells Farm
- Ref 5 Land at Castle Farm
- ref 12 Land at the Cross Belchalwell
- Ref 13 Land at Stroud Farm
- Ref 14 Land at Small Acre

The sustainable phased growth objective set out in HP1 for Okeford Fitzpaine village **only** has been illustrated in the table below:

Year		No. of dwellings	Total dwellings	% Increase
2015	Baseline for the village		335	
	<i>Additional sites 2016-31</i>			
2016-21	Old Dairy/infills	47	382	14.0%
2021-26	Pleydells Farm	27	409	7.0%
2026-31	Land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine	31	440	7.5%
2016-31	Total Increase	105		

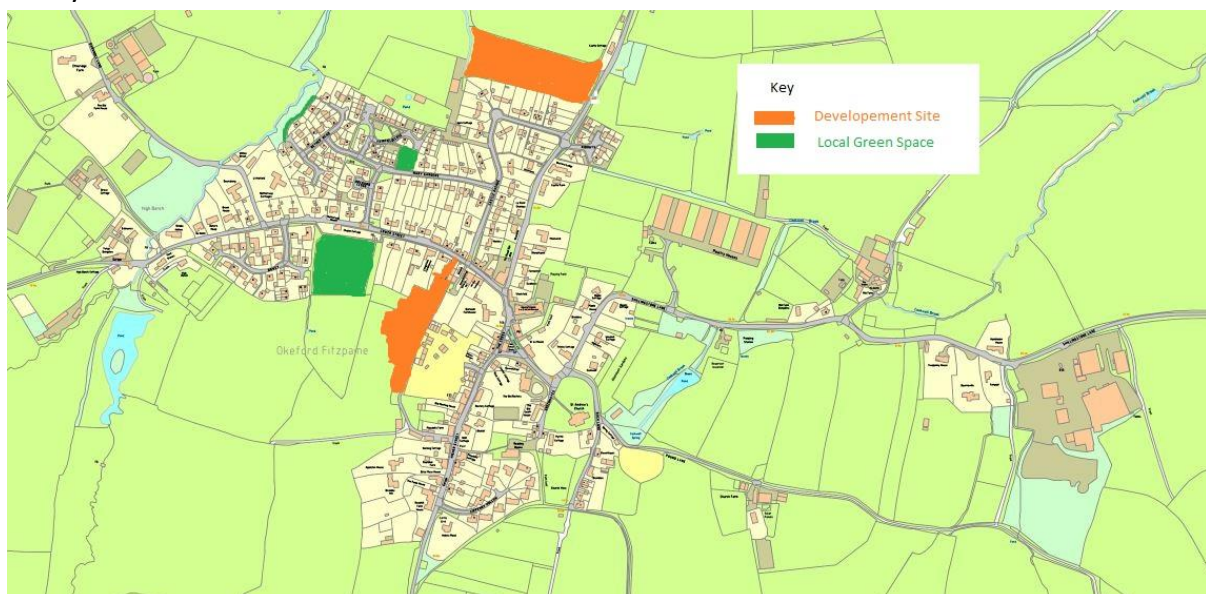
Including assumed infills the number of dwellings in the Village will increase by just over 31% between 2011-31.

Housing Policy HP1:

The Okeford Fitzpaine Housing Needs Assessment confirms a need for 105 additional dwellings during the plan period between 2011- 2031. In order to facilitate sustainable phased growth, the following sites are allocated for development during the plan period:

- (Site 1) Faccenda Chicken Factory: 37 (2015-2020) at 47 Dwellings Per Hectare(DPH) [planning permission already granted and in build]
- (Site 2) Pleydells Farm: Up to 27 (2020- 2025) at 38 DPH (site area comprises 0.78 hectares)
- (Site 3) Land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine : Up to 31 (2026-2031) at 35 DPH site area comprises 1.065 hectares)

There are significant numbers of houses being built in the Blandford to Sturminster Newton area that includes Okeford Fitzpaine. This will have an impact on infrastructure and services, which may struggle to keep pace with the developments and increased population (North Dorset forecast increase in population is: 2013 69,883 growing by 2033 to 75,070 (a 7.4% increase)). Locally within Okeford Fitzpaine the impact of development will be most noticeable on roads (average 6-7 additional car movements per day per additional household), health care and in particular local GP services, and the school. There will be a balance to be struck between maintaining the sustainability of amenities of local shop, pub and church with ensuring there are sufficient school places and GP services in the area. For this reason the development of sites in this small rural village will be phased, as set out in PolicyHP1.



Housing Policy HP2:

All new housing development will provide an adequate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and tenure in accordance with the findings of the Okeford Fitzpaine Housing Needs Assessment. Development will be expected to provide:

40% to be either two bedroom houses or one or two bedroom flats subject to the design of the flats being wholly in keeping with the character of the village

45% three bedroom houses OR two-bedroom bungalows

15% four-bedroom plus houses OR live-work unit OR three-bedroom bungalows

Affordable Housing in accordance with North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 and any future adopted Local Plan Policy.

The Parishioner Survey Q4 2015 showed a preference among parishioners for entry level housing for young families and newly formed households, typically 2-3 bedroom terraced and semi-detached housing. To complete the range of entry level housing, 1-2 bedroom flats will be allowed subject to their style, materials and character being wholly in keeping with the character of the village (as set out in Policies CP1 – CP2

The Parishioner Survey Q4 2015 included a specific question for residents of the 3 hamlets (Belchalwell, Fiddleford and Okeford Common) that sought to establish the need for Social Housing in these rural areas. This elicited a nil requirement. Taken in conjunction with HP2 above, Social Rental Housing needs should be capable of being met by the proportion of the 105 new dwellings in HP1 and conformance with Local Plan policy.

The second category of housing preferred in the Parishioner Survey was for a proportion of 2-3 bedroom bungalows to be included in the future development mix. This is to facilitate downsizing by parishioners seeking to remain within the parish, and often close to their support networks in later life stages.

The AECOM HNA similarly indicated a requirement for housing that would facilitate downsizing, potentially releasing housing that is currently under occupied for larger household unit occupation.

HP2 will deliver the proportions of different categories of housing identified in the AECOM HNA and meet the preferences of local people.

The AECOM HNA, in conjunction with the number of entries in the NDDC Housing Register for Okeford Fitzpaine Parish 2016 identified less than 10 instances of potential households seeking Social Rental Housing.

[Note: The above number of less than 10 does not include those potential households from outside the Parish seeking Social Housing within it.]

Okeford Fitzpaine currently (2016) has 19% of Social Rent housing which along with Stourpaine and Shillingstone (20%+) have the highest % of this type of housing within Stalbridge and the Larger Villages . **For the above reasons no specific recommendations are made for increasing Social Housing over and above the proportion of Social/Affordable Housing for any new development that is Local Plan policy.**

Outside of Social Rental Housing, the remaining types of Affordable Housing are

Shared Ownership, where the property is jointly owned by a RSL and the resident.

Affordable Rental, where the property is owned by an RSL and offered at reduced rental based on the tenant meeting lower income criteria to the average for North Dorset.

Intermediate Rental, somewhere between Affordable Rental and Market Rental.

Of the 3, Shared Ownership is the preferred category as it provides that important first step onto the Housing Ladder that is so highly valued within the 20-40 age group.

In conclusion, the 18 Affordable Rental or Shared Ownership properties currently included in Phase 2 of the Faccenda Chicken Farm development, in addition to up to 40% of any future large development (greater than 10 dwellings) being in the Social/Affordable Housing category, will adequately meet local requirements for this type of housing.

The HNA illustrates that the largest age group in Okeford Fitzpaine is ages 45-64, at 38%. This is much higher than the figures for Dorset (28%) and England (25%). The proportion of all age groups younger than 44 is lower than both the Dorset and England averages. The proportion of people aged 65-84 is lower in Okeford Fitzpaine (16%) than in Dorset (21%) and the proportion of people aged 85 and over is also lower in Okeford Fitzpaine (1%) than the local (3%) and national (2%) averages.

The rate of change of the population by age band shows that the proportion of people in the 45-84 age groups has undergone a considerable increase in Okeford Fitzpaine between 2001 and 2011, but with no growth in the 85 and over age group (in contrast to the local and national trends). The below average proportion in the 0-15 age group is also in stark contrast to the trend in North Dorset and England, alongside the lower than average 16-24 age group.

It is important to plan for balance across the whole population and therefore the plan proposes a specific mix of housing types on all its development sites as set out in this policy HP2.

Housing Policy HP3:

New development within the Settlement Boundary of Okeford Fitzpaine should deliver high quality sustainable design in accordance with National and Local Plan Policy. In addition, it must adhere to the following development principles:

Contribute positively to the areas character, scale, layout, height and form and conform with national and local plan design and heritage policies as well as other policies in this neighbourhood plan;

Provide an adequate amount of car parking spaces within the site to ensure that there will be limited additional on-street parking on the adjacent highway network, in accordance with The Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residential Car Parking Study, 2011 or any subsequent adopted policy documents;

Incorporate landscaping schemes with associated maintenance and management plans which include a net gain in native species of trees, and burying utility supplies underground;

Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems within each site and make provision for their ongoing maintenance ;

Set aside areas for strategic landscaping and amenity space on any areas of the site which are greenfield, AONB or have never been built upon;

Any infilling within the settlement boundary must be in strict accordance with the layout and density of the immediately adjoining properties especially in relation to density, front, rear and side garden areas size and character and appearance and sufficient gaps should be left between buildings;

Full detailed planning applications will be encouraged in preference to outline planning applications due to the environmental and heritage significance of the parish and the need to consider detailed design and layout issues at an early stage;

HP3 is intended to retain the character and distinctiveness of each part of the Village. In general, this is for a higher concentration of building at the centre of the Village, becoming lower density and more rural as it spreads to the Settlement Boundary. The mass of the village is now contained within the newer developments that have taken place to the West and North

of the village which the Housing Policies in this section seek to build upon, especially where they offer greater sustainability through connectivity to the village amenities.

Car Parking was identified in the Q4 15 Parishioner Survey as an issue:

- In the village centre at school start and finish times.
- In those parts of the settlement that had been developed before the proliferation of the motor car.

In policy HP1 the Pleydells Farm Dwellings per Hectare (DPH) has been set at 35. This partly reflects that it is further from the centre of the Settlement than the Faccenda Chicken Factory (Old Dairy), but also that provision can be made for some additional public parking to help to address the first car parking issue.

Because Okeford Fitzpaine is a rural settlement, it is difficult to be reached without the use of motor transport. 75% of parishioners considered that any new development site should make provision for visitor car parking, in addition to residents parking. Taken in conjunction with the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residents Car Parking Study, this Plan proposes additional parking for visitors to avoid compounding the issues created by bullet point 2. above, as part of each development site design.

As part of this Plan production both developers have been requested to provide an additional 6 public parking spaces over and above those required under HP3.

Housing Policy HP4

The requirement for Rural Exception sites within the Plan period 2011-31 will be monitored against a nil requirement as at 2015.

The Parishioner Survey Q4 2015 Included a specific question for residents of the 3 hamlets (Belchalwell, Fiddleford and Okeford Common) that sought to establish the need for Social Housing in these rural areas. This returned a nil requirement. Taken in conjunction with HP2 above Social Rental Housing needs should be capable of being met by the proportion of the 105 new dwellings in HP1 and conformance with Local Plan policy. However the NPPF and NDLP Part 1 require that this be kept under review during the Plan period in case there is a change of circumstances.

2.5 Getting Around

The focus of this Plan is on how we might use the development land during the Plan Period 2011-31. To meet the vision for progressive growth in our use of the land we also have to consider how we get around within, into and out of the Parish.

In this context consideration needs to be given to:

1. The suitability of the Parish road network to support increased housing
2. How more sustainable means of movement around the Parish can be promoted

2.5.1 Roads

The Parish has generally C or D Class narrow rural roads serving the village centre and the hamlets. In many places the roads are insufficiently wide to enable 2 vehicles to pass, and are often hazardous to walk or cycle along. This is a characteristic of rural road networks that will by necessity remain unchanged during the Plan Period, and may be an inhibitor on housing growth.

The main road in this area of Dorset is the A357, which passes through the northern part of the Parish. Okeford Fitzpaine village has 2 main access points to the A357:

1. Castle Lane to New Cross.
2. Shillingstone Lane to Shillingstone village.

Neither of these access roads are entirely satisfactory:

1. Castle Lane has a narrow section at the approach to New Cross which is too narrow to allow larger vehicles to pass, and dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians.
2. Shillingstone Lane has several narrow sections and blind bends which are similarly unsuited to pedestrian and cycle use. A significant increase in traffic movements may require traffic controls at the junction to the A357 in the future.

Each of the 2 additional main housing developments shown in HP1 will need to produce a Traffic Plan for assessment by Dorset County Council. A Traffic Plan is a comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

The results of these assessments will determine what improvements are required to these 2 access roads (if any), and what changes are required to the parish road network impacted by these 2 developments. For instance, the Traffic Plan for the land to the North of Okeford Fitzpaine could be asked to consider how pedestrian connectivity to the Recreation Ground can be improved, and in

particular if this should be combined with a suitable traffic calming scheme around the entrance to Castle Lane.

In the NDDC Local Plan 2003 provision was made for a strategic road connection from Castle Lane to the Faccenda Chicken Farm (2003 Retained Policy OF1) specifically to allow the relocation of the Faccenda Chicken Factory from its site in the centre of the village to the site occupied by the Chicken Farm as the site is designated for employment use. The development of OF1 was specifically to mitigate the need for large commercial vehicles to exit the Chicken Farm into Shillingstone Lane or transit the village centre. The Policy was not specific as to the route of such a connection and also required the improvement and widening of the lower portions of Castle lane to its junction with the A357. While this is a retained strategy from the 2003 Local Plan and hence within the 2016 NDLP Part 1, this plan recommends its deletion as part of the ongoing review of the NDDC plans given that the Faccenda Chicken Factory is no longer in existence.

2.6 More Sustainable Means of Getting Around

No proposals are made in this Plan which seek to improve the bus services that support the Parish. While the current bus services do not meet all community requirements, they are realistically what can be achieved in the present economic environment and given their usage patterns. Current changes by Central Government to Local Government funding can only result in reduction to bus services for the rural community. This will continue to be monitored by the Parish Council.

The commercial bus service is augmented by the Community Bus Service which provides access to various county amenities, on a pre-booking basis.

The nearest rail station is Gillingham(Dorset) - 12 mile distant which provides services to London and the West of England. There is no direct bus link to the station from the village.

2.6.1 Cycling and Walking

The Parishioner Survey Q4 2015 contained a number of questions about improving movement in and around the Parish by more sustainable means. The public rights of way are particularly valued by parishioners as they provide access to the surrounding countryside including the AONB at Okeford Hill, and beyond to the Dorset Downs. These are mainly rural rights of way which would fail the full accessibility test that was applied in the assessment of housing sites. However, they meet the needs of walkers, and provide excellent opportunities to promote

health and well-being while being accessible to most age groups in the community (see 2.3.3 . Open Space – The Green Infrastructure)

The public rights of way around the village are actively managed, and a circuit of paths around the village has been established to encourage as wide a range of people as possible to use them for getting around the village. Improvements to the circuit around the village are being made by investment by the Parish Council, making it more accessible through the introduction of ‘Kissing Gates’ – see also Infrastructure Investment.

The Q4 2015 Parishioner Survey strongly supported a pedestrian and cycle link to the North Dorset Trailway which currently runs from Sturminster Newton, through Shillingstone to Spetisbury. The Trailway is an excellent local amenity which provides safe opportunities for walking, running, cycling and horse riding. In the Survey:

- 73% said they would use such a link for leisure.
- 73% said they would support investment in this link.
- 25% said they would use the link to get to work or education.

There are currently 2 main alternatives to provide this link. They are little used public highways and bridle paths, which are in poor condition for walking and impassable by cycle:

1. Little Lane, which runs from Shillingstone Lane to the A357, at the western end of Shillingstone village.
2. Darknoll Lane, which runs from Lower Street to Angers Lane, and then to Sturminster Newton on public roads.

In parallel to the production of this Plan a project to bring Little Lane back into use has been started. This is being done initially through volunteer resources with support from local businesses and landowners.

Little Lane has public highway status, the main use has been for farm vehicles, cattle and horses, with the occasional motor vehicle. This usage will continue in the future.

The project is initially improving drainage, clearing mud from hard surface, and laying down additional hard surface. Grant funding has been sought to take this project forward from the initial pilot study work. This grant funding, along with potential funding from S106/CIL monies is planned to lead to the achievement of the goal of re-opening Little Lane for pedestrian and cycle use, and specifically access to the North Dorset Trailway.

There are 3 main issues that the project has to address:

1. The junction of Little Lane with the A357 is outside the 30mph speed limit of Shillingstone, and at a dangerous bend with de-restricted speed vehicles travelling east. A similar attempt to re-open Little Lane in the last decade reportedly foundered on this point.

2. Part of the reason that Little Lane has fallen into disuse is the incompatibility between use by farm vehicles and cattle, and use by walking and cycling. The project will need to make an assessment of the feasibility of establishing a hard surface capable of being used by cyclists which is sustainable against the present type of farm use, which of course must continue.
3. Safe access to Little Lane from the village centre.

The project will also need to establish:

1. The ongoing organisation structure to manage the Little Lane capability for pedestrian and cycle usage.
2. The annual maintenance costs to keep this community asset in good order, and how this will be funded.

Infrastructure Policy IP1:

The provision of a viable safe and direct route for pedestrian and cycles (all ages and abilities) to the North Dorset Trailway is a priority improvement project which may be funded from S106 money received from the Old Dairy Development together with grants from other organisations in order to mitigate against any potential impact on the existing highway network and ensure that the village is developed in a sustainable manner. The following issues should be addressed as a priority:

- The provision of a safe route to Little Lane
- Upgrading of Little Lane
- The provision of a safer crossing across the A357 at the junction with Little Lane

The alternative but less direct route to connect to the Trailway via Darknoll Lane will not be progressed. It is recognised that this is a less satisfactory solution as it uses public roads, and the route from the A357 to the North Dorset Trailway in Sturminster Newton is narrow, used by HGVs and as a consequence is dangerous in parts. Proposals in the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan may improve the access to the town centre. And a future extension of the Trailway from Sturminster Newton to Stalbridge may provide additional opportunities for a safer connection. These changes will be monitored during the Plan period to establish opportunities for improving sustainable transport to Okeford Fitzpaine's nearest town.

2.7 The Natural Environment

Okeford Fitzpaine benefits from a high quality natural environment. It is characterised by the dramatic landscape to the south of the Parish where Okeford Hill rises to 246 metres. This is the Northern scarp of the North Dorset Downs, an area of chalk downland running approximately east-west across the south of the Parish. The scarp drops down to the north into the Blackmore Vale of woodland and rolling pasture land, which constitutes the remainder of the Parish. In the very north of the Parish there is a small spur through which the River Stour runs. The Vale has the primary focus of arable and dairy farming, which is generally of small scale.

Approximately 25% of the Parish is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which starts within the southern end of the village settlement boundary and rises up Okeford Hill. The AONB covers the south east of the Parish.

Within the AONB is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) known locally as *The Merridge*. An SCNI is a locally important wildlife site designated by the Dorset Wildlife Trust in partnership with the local authority, for the conservation of locally and nationally threatened species. The Merridge is designated for its assemblage of species associated with unimproved chalk downland, largely on the slopes where it has not been fertilised. These include plants that make up the particular downland community such as special grasses like sheeps fescue, sweet vernal grass, quaking oat grass, orchids such as bee orchid, common spotted orchid, pyramidal orchid and the occasional fragrant orchid. Many other plants are part of this community including cowslips, scabious, knapweed, agrimony, birdsfoot trefoil, common catsear, lady's bedstraw etc. In addition the habitat attracts downland butterflies such as marbled white, small, large and grizzled skippers and common blue as well as birds of open country such as skylark, stonechat and linnet. This relatively small section of the AONB provides a good example of the importance of protection of the natural environment and the richness of species within it. The designated SCNIs are material considerations in planning application and should not be harmed by development.

There is a plethora of international, national and district regulation and policy covering the Natural Environment. In conforming with the Local Plan, they are adopted by this Plan.

Examples of how they have been adopted include:

- Having regard for the landscape character (HP3), to ensure that the character of an area is not degraded through incremental development.
- Locating development where local needs can be met locally (S1, HP1), reducing the need to travel.
- Developments looking to go further than the requirements of Building Regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

- Development should be utilised to enhance environmental assets (CP1, CP2) and increase biodiversity EP2).

The challenge for the Neighbourhood Plan of a rural community is that distance and sparse population inhibit policies to provide a neighbourhood design and transport system that encourages sustainable transport i.e. walking and cycling as the 1st option in getting around. A walking and cycling connection to the North Dorset Trailway facilitates this objective on a small scale (according to the Q4 2015 Parish Survey). The main gain would be in the conversion of recreational activities necessitating traffic movement by a potentially wide range of age groups taking advantage of the opportunity to walk and cycle along an easy accessible route with almost no motor vehicles.

The main thrust of this Plan is what can be done locally in support of the natural environment and biodiversity

- Achieve a gain in biodiversity by ensuring each new development results in an increase in native species of trees and shrubs (see HP3).
- Stop any further development on the AONB within the Parish. Ref 6 Wessex Park Homes has a section of the site that crosses the boundary of the AONB. This should be set aside from the remainder of the site and any development would then be contingent on this becoming a wildlife sanctuary, with targeted support for a defined species.
- Produce a Wildlife Plan for the community that for example, identifies further areas that can be set aside to encourage wildlife, encourages the adoption of Dorset Wildlife Trust Wildlife Gardens etc.

In these ways the progressive urbanisation of the village can be balanced by gains in biodiversity across the community.

Environmental Policy EP1

The Parish will continue to adhere to the relevant European, national and local environmental policies.

The provision of new ecological features, including the connection of the existing ecology, are equally important in the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment. The use of land for development can put pressure on wildlife, harm historic assets and increase flood risk. Development in inappropriate locations and of poor design can harm the landscape and erode the character of an area. Development should therefore be utilised to enhance environmental assets and increase biodiversity, offering gains in biodiversity where opportunities exist. Development should also contribute to the establishment of Green Corridors that link habitats for species across the increasing urban area (see also Green Infrastructure Assets).

Environmental Policy EP2

For any development of a site that is not designated as 'brownfield', additional habitat mitigation measures will be required to be set out in a Habitats Mitigation Plan. This will set aside a part of the development area as an ecological asset supporting the 'green corridors' within the revised Settlement Boundary.

Further opportunities to support indigenous flora and fauna should be sought within the Local Green Spaces and other Green Infrastructure Assets to support these 'green corridors'.

In technical Neighbourhood Planning terms, to be 'made', a Neighbourhood plan must meet certain Basic Conditions (see 1.2) and these are set out in the separate document - Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Meeting the Basic Conditions Report. These Basic Conditions include that the making of the plan "does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations." One of these obligations is Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'.

This is often referred to as the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) Directive. The SEA Directive "seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes." The SEA Directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that this plan will need to be compatible with.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites.

The HRA looks at whether the implementation of the plan or project would harm the habitats or species for which European wildlife sites are designated. European wildlife sites are:

- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

In addition to SPAs and SACs sites, Ramsar sites are designated under the Ramsar Convention (Iran 1971 as amended by the Paris Protocol 1992). Although they are not covered by the

Habitats regulations, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites should be treated in the same way as European wildlife sites. European wildlife sites and Ramsar sites are collectively known as internationally designated wildlife sites.

European wildlife sites and therefore internationally designated wildlife sites, are offered the highest level of protection under European legislation. This legislation sets out a process to assess the potential implications of a plan for internationally designated sites. The first stage of this process is a “screening” exercise where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the designated site.

The OFNP Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Opinion and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report (separate document), in consultation with North Dorset DC, Natural England, Historic England, Environment Agency and Dorset County Council concludes that the Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on the Heritage Assets or the Environment, and does not impact sites covered by the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

2.8 The Local Economy

There has been a dramatic change in the local economy in the 21st Century. The main construction (Wessex Park Homes) and industrial food production and processing (Faccenda) have moved away, leaving a number of small and micro businesses, and the continuing mainly small scale arable and dairy farming. This has resulted in job losses within the Parish, and also the loss of daily incoming labour to work in the industrial units. The knock on effect to local businesses, including the pub and the village shop has been significant.

Many of the economically active residents commute to larger towns such as Blandford, Poole, Bournemouth, Dorchester, and Yeovil for work (as described in the Eastern Dorset Strategic Housing Market Assessment). The section Parish Demographics also highlighted that a higher proportion than the norm for North Dorset of the economically active are self-employed.

So where are the opportunities? Commuting to the larger towns for employment will continue to be the main source of employment. However, there are a number of opportunities to enhance the availability of local employment and grow the local economy:

- Okeford Fitzpaine is located in very attractive countryside, including an area of outstanding natural beauty. The Parish remains under the radar as a tourist destination however there are several natural assets such as horse riding, walking (Jubilee Way and other rights of way) and cycling routes (National and North Dorset Trailway routes) and the Bike Park on Okeford Hill that can be marketed to attract tourism. This will support local retail and catering businesses and encourage new ones such as holiday accommodation.

The Parish Council can play an important facilitator role in the establishment of a local tourism group to promote this as a long term and sustainable strategy. The planning application process also has an important role to play in facilitating the stated strategic aim of the Plan, but at the same time protecting the area from inappropriate business exploitation of the Parish to the detriment of the environment which currently exists.

Economy Policy EN1 –

The conversion of barns and redundant farm buildings for business and tourist related uses only, will be supported. Suitable uses include holiday-lets, office, light industrial (B1) and live-work units.

- The arrival of Superfast Broadband to the centre of the village supports the expansion of “home based” activity, which can be further facilitated by the creation of community hub networks for the sharing of technology capability and enterprise ideas.
- Housing Policy HP2 allows for the development of a site to include live/work units, which would similarly benefit from the arrival of Superfast Broadband.
- Stimulate farm diversification where appropriate
- Wessex Park Homes site was identified as a planning challenge for housing development because of the perceived distance (1/2 mile) from the village centre and the difficult pedestrian and cycle links to the centre. However, it currently has employment use status and requires no re-designation to continue to be used for this purpose. Presentations of future development for the site have included mixed employment and residential use, but these proposals have not been adopted by this Plan for the reasons set out in section 2.4.2 Housing Policies. The proposed approach is based on successful developments based closer to the major conurbations to the east of the county, where multi-use offices are constructed and remain in ownership of a property company, who then markets and manages the commercial premises. The arrival of Superfast Broadband in the area would be a major facilitator for this type of operation, assuming the distance from the broadband hubs can be overcome. The commercial viability of this proposal will be dependent on many factors including:
 - Further growth in the value of office space versus residential space
 - A move from employment use land being in surplus in the area to it being in demand
 - The logistical disadvantages of the Parish (roads, rail links etc.) being offset by the economic advantages of the office space
 - The availability of true Superfast Broadband at the site
 - The perceived availability of other services that businesses need locally
 - Competition with other sites locally, in particular the Rolls Mill Business Park in Sturminster Newton

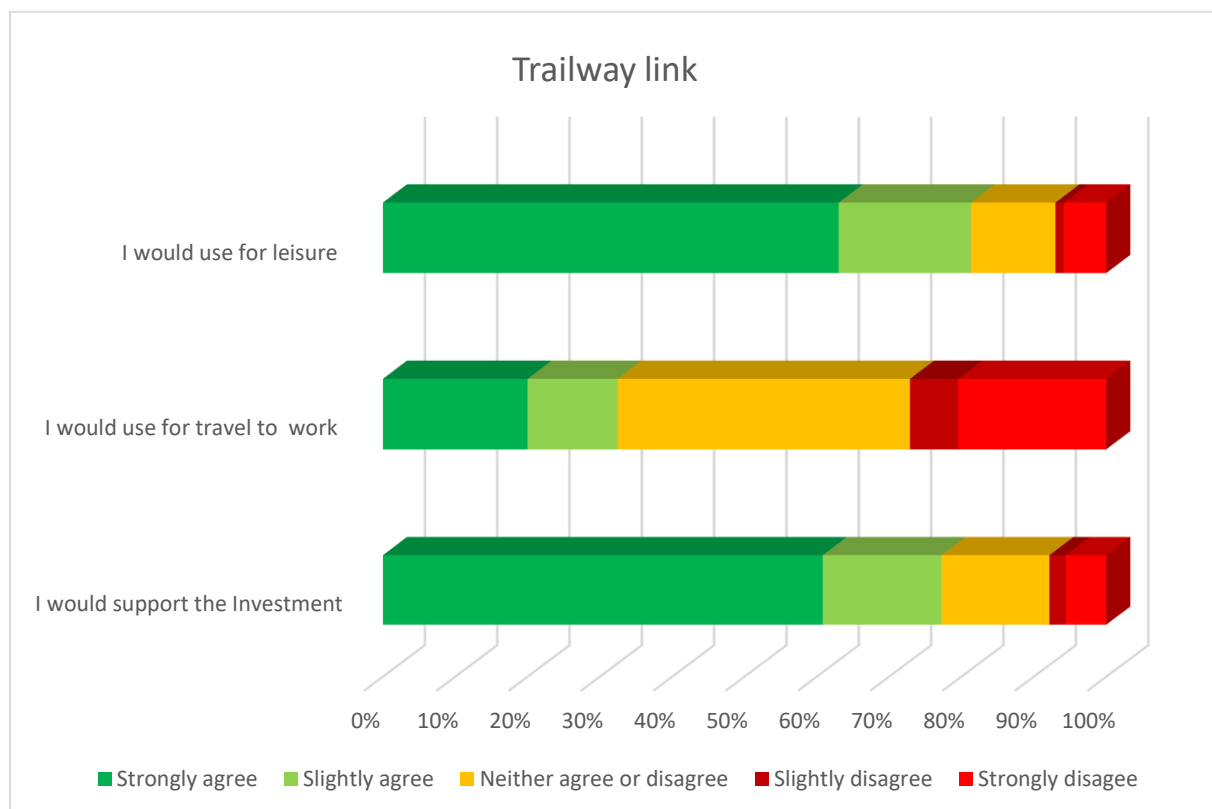
2.9 Infrastructure Investment

There are 2 types of infrastructure investment that can result from a Neighbourhood Plan

1. Infrastructure investment that results from the direct development of new housing. This will include new roads and road improvements.
2. Infrastructure investment that is aimed at increasing and improving the amenities that can be enjoyed by all of the growing community.

In the Neighbourhood Plan Parishioner Survey Q4 15, there were a number of questions about infrastructure investment based mainly on ideas from the questionnaire from earlier in the year. The list was not intended to be definitive, but to gauge opinion on the type of infrastructure or amenity that parishioners would favour. Selection and actual expenditure will be determined by the Parish Council, based on detailed business cases for each proposal. This will take place in parallel with the Neighbourhood Planning process as Section 106 monies are released from the Ref 1 Faccenda Chicken Factory Development.

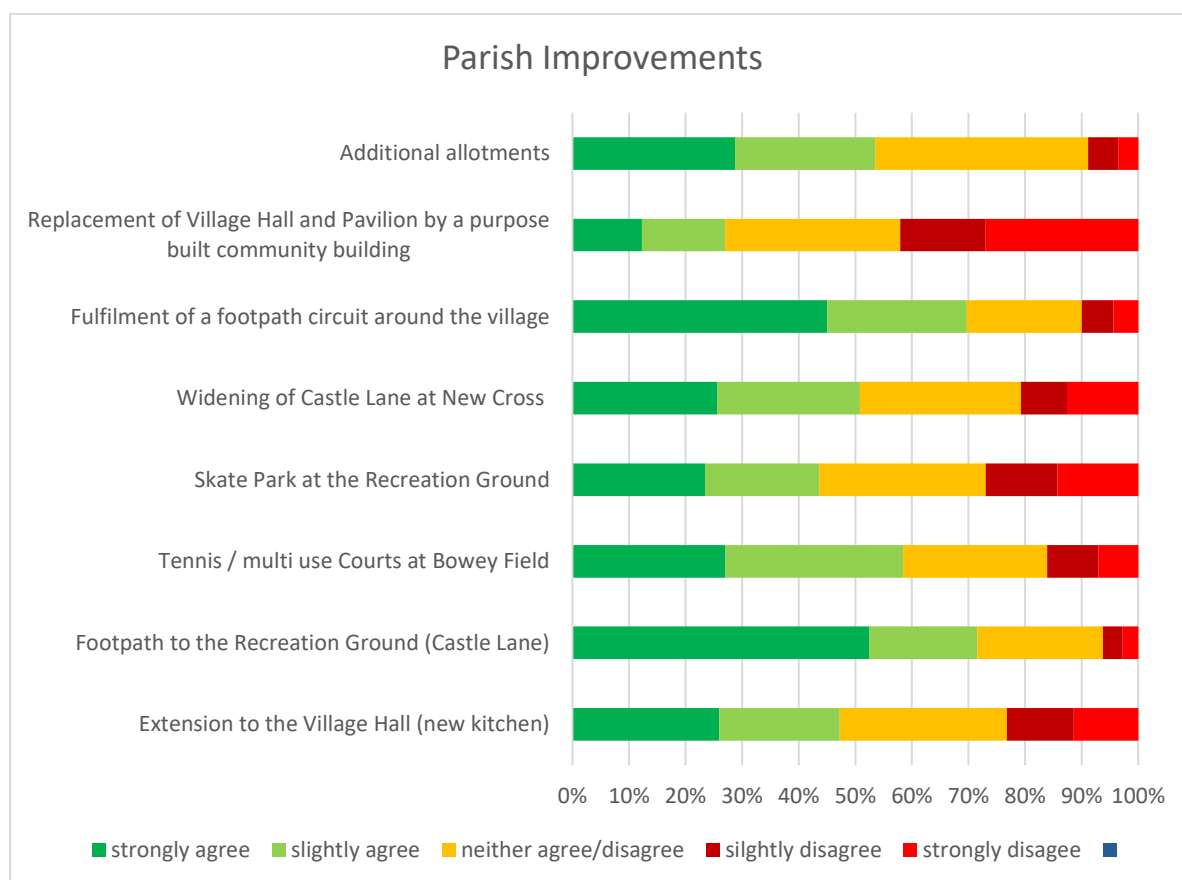
What was clear from the Q4 15 Survey was that the standout preferred investment in infrastructure was for a connection from Okeford Fitzpaine to the North Dorset Trailway that currently runs from Sturminster Newton to Spetisbury. This is shown in the table below and more fully described in Section 2.6 Getting Around. As an amenity, it has the benefit of being accessible by almost all age groups, and is also gender neutral. As a community asset it would have wide appeal for all.



Of the remaining topics shown in the table below, the widening of Castle Lane would occur once the number of traffic movements in and out of Castle Lane at New Cross exceeded a level determined by Dorset County Council Highways, and would be funded by the infrastructure levy on the housing development (category 1 above) that caused the DCC threshold to be broken.

Footpath improvements received the next highest level of support, and again these can be used by all the community. As well as the answers to specific questions, the narrative responses to open questions about ideas for improvements to amenities favoured the public rights of way and access to the countryside beyond. Section 2 describes how in parallel to the production of this Plan the Parish Council is investing in improvements to a circuit of footpaths around the village which link up with the footpaths, bridleways etc., giving access further afield. These rights of way require little specific investment over and above their routine maintenance.

The remainder of the responses received relatively muted support, with the highest being for tennis courts. Although the question was originally for tennis courts at Bowey Field, they would be better based at the Recreation Ground so that advantage can be taken of the Sports Pavilion by the improved community sports facility . This would help to increase usage of this lightly used facility.



2.10 Implementation

Implementing the plan: IM1

In accordance with the Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan, Proposals Map, Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council will work with North Dorset District Council and all relevant partners to ensure that up to 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section.106 monies raised in the Parish is spent on priority improvements projects as follows:

- the creation of direct pedestrian and cycle access to the North Dorset Trailway at Shillingstone including any trail routes.

- Further leisure Facilities projects as determined by the Parish Council

2.11 Plan Monitoring, Maintenance and Compliance

During the life of the Plan the Parish Council or its subcommittee will review and update the Plan at least annually.

2.13 Statement of Community Engagement

A detailed report is produced after each Regulation 14 Consultation period which incorporates all of the comments received on the Plan at that stage of its production, and the responses to each comment. The OFNP Regulation 14 pre-submission Consultation Statement is issued as a separate document. A summary of the consultation throughout the Neighbourhood Plan period is documented below.

The production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Okeford Fitzpaine was first approved by North Dorset District Council in April 2014.

Since then a great deal of effort has gone into the production of this Plan, much of the focus of that work has been on achieving wide engagement with parishioners and partners -consisting of planners within North Dorset District Council and the potential providers and developers of parcels of land for future house building.

Chronologically the engagement with parishioners and partners has included

- An Open Meeting in September 2014 to launch the Plan , present the Vision and Scope and invite participation.
- Issue of a questionnaire in January 2015 to gather qualitative information about parishioners views on the Parish, and how the Parish could be improved.
- A feedback event for all parishioners in the Village Hall to present the findings from the 150+ questionnaires that were returned.

In parallel to this the Parish Council hosted presentations from consultants with their initial proposals for housing and mixed use developments at Parish Council meetings. This included presentations for development at the Faccenda Chicken Farm and Wessex Park Homes on Shillingstone Lane, and the joint Land at Pleydells Farm/Land behind Pleydells Farm sites.

After the Parish Council elections in May 2015 the Neighbourhood Plan was re-launched in July 2016 with the production of a Project Definition Report and Project Plan publicised on the Parish website. There then followed:

- A public presentation of proposed housing developments in the Village Hall by representatives of the above 3 development sites in September 2015.
- A quantitative survey of parishioners' views on how many houses should be built, where and what type, along with views on how the CIL / S106 monies from developments might be invested for the future benefit of the community (October/November 2015). This used Neighbourhood Champions to deliver to, support and gather the survey from parishioners
- A feedback event based on the approx. 300 surveys returned, in the Village Hall (Jan 2016)

By the end of 2015 the Project Group that had been set up to produce the Plan engaged planning consultants (ECA CIC) to help write the Plan. North Dorset District Council were invited to provide input and consultancy to ensure conformity with the emerging NDDC Local Plan 2011-31. This has remained a continuing feature of writing and reviewing the emerging Plan. Regular reporting on Plan

progress was made by the project leader to the monthly Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council meetings, to which members of the public are invited.

Meetings were held in May 2016 with each of the significant land owners and their representatives to review their proposals for development of their parcel of land as recorded on the NDDC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). To ensure that all landowners that wished to offer land for housing development had had that opportunity, a further *Call for Sites* was issued in May 2016, and concluded in that month.

A further series of meetings were held with significant landowners and their representatives at the start of September 2016. This was to provide them with a preview of the content of the Plan and how it affected them. NDDC issued a further Call for Sites in Q4 16, to enable the SHLAA from 2012 to be updated, and the results from this that impact the Parish incorporated in the OFNP

Further comments on the emerging Plan were provided by NDDC in August 2016, prior to the Neighbourhood Planning stage termed Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation. This consultation lasted for 6 weeks.

After the Pre-Submission Consultation period the Parish Council set up a Sub-committee of the Parish Council to review and manage changes to the document based on the feedback received. The Sub-committee held its meetings in public and minutes of the meetings posted on the Parish neighbourhood Plan website.

Issue of this 1st Pre-Submission Regulation 14 Consultation document was to:

- Parishioners, for whom a series of ‘Surgeries’ were held for parishioners to view and discuss the Plan content with members of the Project Team. These were mainly held at the Community Café known as the Mud Pie café
- NDDC for formal review and comment
- Local landowners and developers
- Local businesses and the 4 institutions that define a sustainable village
- Statutory bodies as defined by the Neighbourhood Planning process.

This 1st Pre-Submission Consultation with stakeholders resulted in the production of:

- A Regulation 14 Consultation report that detailed the comments received and their answers, with a comment on how the Plan was updated where appropriate - April 2017
- A Local Green Space report – February 2017
- A Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Opinion and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report – February 2017
- A Heritage Assets Report – April 2017
- An updated OF Neighbourhood Plan – April 2017
- A Basic Conditions Statement Report – April 2017

A further Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation is planned for 6 weeks from 27 May 2017, with a further Pre-Submission Consultation Statement produced. Any final amendments to comments that are received are agreed by the Parish Council prior to Submission of the OFNP to NDDC Planning.

At this point the neighbourhood Planning process proceeds under the control of NDDC, who

- Conduct the 6 week statutory Regulation 15 Consultation
- Appoint an Independent Examiner to conduct an independent review
- Submit documentation including comments from the Regulation 15 Consultation to the Independent Examiner
- Update of the Plan following examination
- Hold a Referendum of Okeford Fitzpaine parishioners in late 2017.
- 'Make' the Plan in 2017.

At this stage the exact timescales cannot be determined as it is dependent on the outcome of the assessment of the Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Opinion and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report in response to a formal Screening Opinion request.

2.14 Contributors

This Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by contribution from a wide group of people without who's input the plan would not have been possible.

The contributors included:

The Project Team – Paul Banning (Project Leader), Beth Fox, Rachael Rowe, George Weeks,

Parishioners - Andrew Vickers, Kevin Cook

Lead Consultants ECA-CIC – Martha Covell, Catherine Bartlett

Consultant -AECOM Housing Needs Assessment – Jesse Honey

North Dorset District Council – Anne Goldsmith Planning Officer

Dorset County Council - Steve Savage Transport Development Manager

Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Champions - who helped to deliver and collect the surveys

Parish Clerk – Sandra Deary

Authors of the Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Plan 2010

And of course, all parishioners that have responded to questionnaires, surveys and attended feedback events and public meetings

Appendix 1: Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan Proposals Map

Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan:

Proposals Map

* as revised 21/04/2017

PROPOSED SITES

Site 1. Faccenda Chicken Factory:
37 Dwellings (2015-2020) at 47 DPH
(Planning Permission already Granted)

Site 2. Pleydells Farm:
Up to 27 Dwellings (2015-2025) at 38
DPH (site area comprises 0.72ha)

Site 3. Land North of Okeford
Fitzpaine Up to 31 dwellings at 35
DPH (site area comprises 1.069 ha)



KEY

- Proposed Settlement Boundary
- Proposed Sites
- Heritage Policy CP3: Local green spaces