



**Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan
2024–2038**

**Regulation 15 Draft
July 2024**

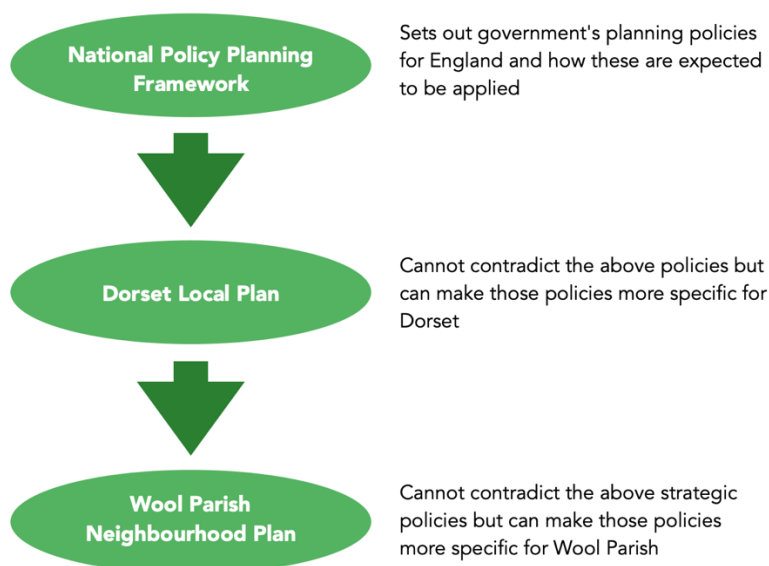
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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Wool Parish Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) on behalf of Wool Parish Council. Let me start by explaining what a neighbourhood plan can do for our Parish and, just as importantly, what it cannot do.

A neighbourhood plan is a community-led initiative which allows local people to shape the future of their area. Once adopted, Wool Parish's neighbourhood plan formally becomes part of the development plan for the area, and its policies take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan produced by Dorset Council.

The relationship between Wool Parish's neighbourhood plan, The Dorset Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is shown in the diagram below.



Regulations do not permit Wool's neighbourhood plan to be a vehicle for opposition to Dorset Local Plan policies. Regulations say that a neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with local plans and national policies. The fact that this applies to housing numbers has created a huge challenge for the NPSG when trying to represent the views of local people. From the feedback gathered during the creation of this plan, and the responses to various Dorset Council local plan consultations, it is overwhelmingly clear that residents of the parish oppose the number of houses being proposed by Dorset Council. They do not believe the number reflects local need; those who do need a house fear that it will be unaffordable anyway; and most are concerned that the existing infrastructure will not cope. Whilst regulations do not allow this neighbourhood plan to reduce the number of houses allocated for development in the area by Dorset Council, it can and does attempt to address the concerns regarding infrastructure and, to some extent, affordability.

Despite the concerns regarding housing numbers, this neighbourhood plan has been positively prepared, and it sets out a vision for the Parish that, as much as is allowed, reflects the views of local people and businesses.

Our Vision: The neighbourhood plan Vision is to ensure that the essential characteristics of Wool Parish which local people value and support are retained and where possible enhanced, whilst

services are improved with better connections between settlements, and local housing needs for all sections of the community are better met.

Extensive consultation was undertaken to produce the plan, including exhibitions, public meetings, walkabouts and surveys covering every household in the parish. A big thank you to all residents who attended the meetings and/or responded to the surveys. The feedback was analysed to identify the key issues, a summary of which was published, and forms the basis of the plan's objectives and policies on subjects such as transport, housing, environment, facilities and community. Not all the issues identified can be addressed in a neighbourhood plan, but Wool Parish Council will ensure that any such issues will be addressed by the appropriate means.

I cannot let the opportunity afforded by this introduction pass without paying tribute to the NPSG, a group of local volunteers who have worked for almost 5 years to produce this plan. We owe a huge debt to Martin Hiles who, as Chairman for several years, led the group with dedication, enthusiasm and commitment. Thank you also to Andrew Wilson who, when Martin left the parish, built on the previous work, showing the drive and focus to get the plan over the line. A big thank you goes to Steve Smith who has been 'the engine room' of the plan in terms of organisation, communication and analysis. The composition of the NPSG has been fluid over the years and grateful thanks are due to each one of them, particularly Chris Yarnold, Robin Thorn and Rod Webb who have been ever-present. Though not technically members of the steering group, thanks must go to local resident Trevor Hayles, who ably assisted Steve with the analysis of the surveys, also to Lee Searles (Andrea Pellegram Ltd) whose support, advice and assistance as a consultant has been invaluable.

It is my sincere hope that this neighbourhood plan will help to take our community in Wool, Bovington and East Burton through the next several years, where widespread development will inevitably bring changes to our parish; and that this plan will ensure that those changes are for the better.



Kim Major, Chairman, Wool Parish Council.