

3. Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

48. The parish of Wool faces significant challenges arising from the potential for large amounts of planned housing development proposed in the emerging Purbeck and Dorset Local Plans, which would alter the character of Wool and East Burton. The parish also contains an Enterprise Zone with which it has little contact and connection in terms of employment. It has a major military site and faces challenges to provide transport connections and services so that military families can access services and facilities in Bovington, East Burton and Wool. A legacy nuclear power facility remains actively managed through its decommissioning.
49. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has actively engaged with local people to seek their views on the key aspects of life in Wool Parish which they like and don't like, and to find out the things local people would like to see more of and less of. This simple approach has yielded significant feedback through surveys, consultation meetings, walkabouts and drop-in sessions.
50. The valued aspects of life in Wool Parish are clear. A mix of good access to major towns (by rail) from Wool sits alongside easy access to countryside and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The position of the parish is seen as a key asset, providing access to key amenities whilst being far enough away to provide a relaxed, friendly community environment. The size of the Wool provides just about enough services for people to perceive them to be good for a village of its size (except in relation to access to health services) but some would like a better supermarket, the nearest of which is in Wareham. There should be more for local young people to do (so that anti-social behaviour is reduced).
51. The response to surveys shows that, from what people say, services are clearly on the balance between sufficient and insufficient – the experience can vary. People feel Wool village could be a bit tidier and less scruffy, something they feel is exacerbated by the through-traffic. Local people think the level crossings, which split the parish in two, are a big problem. This is worsened during the tourist season (May to October). They worry how far back the queues would go if planned housing is delivered. No one thinks people will drive a different way avoiding the level crossing, they think there is insufficient parking at the rail station and that there are no bus services to provide an alternative. Some people say that, for a key service village (which how it is categorised in the Purbeck Local Plan), it should have more key services.
52. Local people like where they live. Clearly, they would like some things to be better – bus services and local public services, the quality of local infrastructure. They want to preserve the good things about where they live – village life, quiet environment, beautiful local countryside.
53. The Parish of Wool, as a community, has a say over the planned proposals and options for the development of around 1,000 houses in Wool. It is clear they are not wanted by local people at anything like this scale. Subject to remaining local plan technical matters and related water quality issues being resolved, the 470 houses proposed in the emerging Purbeck Local Plan are highly likely to come forward. In relation to the future options, the voice of the community will be heard in response to the Dorset Local Plan consultations and during its examination. Recently, Dorset Council has spoken of a delay to its plans and a review of its spatial strategy, but what this might mean is not clear at present.
54. Regardless, the neighbourhood plan cannot (by law) be a vehicle for opposition to local plan policies and must be in general conformity with local plans and national policies. Given the neighbourhood plan is the key means by which the local community is expressing what it thinks and wants, this is

potentially frustrating. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood plan can be used to ensure that, where allowed, local people can influence the shape and content of new development, if not the amount.

55. In this context, setting a Vision for the neighbourhood plan is a challenge. In essence, the community would imagine a future Wool which is essentially the same as today, but tidier and with better services (and the level crossing issues are addressed). Some new housing would be provided to meet local needs, much the way it was previously provided, gradually.
56. That future may or may not be possible. In the worst case, new development at the scale currently proposed will bring new communities that will change local character, potentially living in dense development which could be alien to local styles (which are varied but are generally low rise and less dense). They might resemble developments anywhere in the country.
57. Major new planned development may be subject to specific agreements between Dorset Council and developers such that there is little scope to influence affordable housing or provision of infrastructure in line with community requirements.
58. It is likely that an influx of newcomers will generate demand for better services which hopefully would improve over time but will also generate more traffic. More people travelling to work might support a bus service. Issues around the rail station might be resolved in time.
59. In the best case the neighbourhood plan can ensure that the community of Wool gets as much out of new development as it can to tackle the matters raised in consultation on the neighbourhood plan to preserve the essential nature of the community of Wool Parish and to improve life for local people where it can. Through this plan, the local community expresses a Vision and a set of Objectives to work towards the best outcome.

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.

Objectives

60. Based on the Vision, some objectives are identified to help deliver it. The objectives form the basis for the following chapters of the neighbourhood plan which set out specific neighbourhood plan policies

Objective 1 – Through good design, new development should be sustainable, and should respect and enhance the existing character of Wool Parish.

Objective 2 – Housing provision in Wool Parish should be tailored to meet the needs of residents.

Objective 3 – Community infrastructure and services should be protected and improved.

Objective 4 – Active travel and public transport connections between settlements in Wool Parish and with other key towns must be improved.

Objective 5 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity must be protected and should be improved.