

Planning Protocol

for the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

1. Purpose of the protocol

- 1.1 This protocol sets out the process for effective consultation between local planning authorities and the Dorset AONB Partnership to consider planning matters affecting the AONB.
- 1.2 It aims to:
- Clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory spatial planning;
 - Clarify the mechanisms for consultation and communication between the AONB Partnership and local planning authorities;
 - Promote a consistent approach to the application of policies for the Dorset AONB among the different authorities;
 - Identify areas where the AONB Partnership can provide additional support and guidance to assist planners in carrying out their functions in relation to the AONB;
 - Identify the roles of the AONB Team and Partnership Board in relation to the protocol.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Dorset AONB Partnership's primary task is to champion and promote the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB. The Government has confirmed that AONBs are equivalent to National Parks in terms of their landscape quality, scenic beauty and their planning status. All public bodies and statutory undertakers must have regard to the primary purpose of the AONB designation in performing their statutory functions, as required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 2.2 In 2004, the AONB Partnership produced a statutory¹ Management Plan which sets out the overall vision, policy aims and objectives for the AONB from 2004-9 and the actions required to deliver this vision. This planning protocol should be implemented with regard to the agreed and adopted policy aims and objectives. At the national level, planning policy in relation to AONBs is set out within Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which sets the framework for balancing the conservation of natural beauty and the social and economic needs of the area.

¹ The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to act jointly to produce a management plan for an area of outstanding natural beauty within or partly within their administrative areas.

3. Local Authority Planning Responsibilities

- 3.1 County Council planning responsibilities are:
- Preparation of Minerals and Waste Local Development Frameworks
 - To provide advice as a section 4/4 authority in accordance with the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to the Regional Assembly on strategic planning matters and the need for sub-regional studies and guidance.
 - Determining planning applications for mineral extraction and related development and waste management
 - Determining planning applications for the County Council's own development, e.g. roads and schools

- Provision of monitoring and survey information and advice to the regional planning body on strategic issues and the conformity of local development frameworks with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Production of the Local Transport Plan.

3.2 District Council responsibilities are:

- Establishing spatial planning policies and strategies through the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and their supporting documents.
- Determination of the majority of planning and related applications for
 - House extensions and alterations
 - Residential development
 - Employment, leisure and shopping development
 - Engineering operations
 - Telecommunication and energy schemes
 - Agricultural buildings
 - Change of use of land or a building
 - Conservation and Listed Building consent
 - Advertisement consent
 - Work on protected trees and removal of hedgerows
- Determining whether prior notification of design and siting is required for:
 - Telecommunication schemes under part 24 of the GPDO
 - Agricultural buildings under part 6 of the GPDO.

4. The Planning Authority's Role in the Protocol

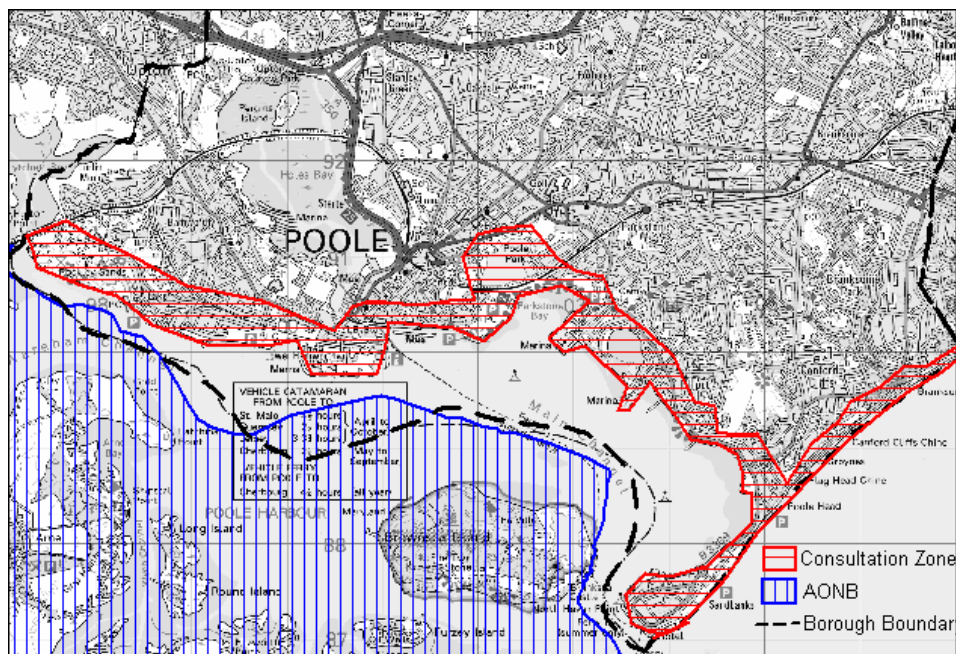
The planning authority will:

- 4.1 Take account of AONB management policies and guidance and where appropriate liaise with the AONB Team on significant planning matters regarding the AONB.
- 4.2 Invite comments and contributions from the team / partnership in respect of all consultations on planning policy documents which may affect the natural beauty of the Dorset AONB.
- 4.3 Publish its weekly list of planning applications online so that it is accessible to the AONB Team / Partnership.
- 4.4 Consult the Dorset AONB team for advice on planning applications where in the opinion of the local planning authority, they may have a significant impact on the AONB and where the provision of advice would assist the decision-making process.

Such applications may include:

- Major planning applications that are located outside, or close to the edge of, built up areas as defined within local plans or development frameworks, and in the rural areas of the AONB. Major planning applications will be defined as:
 - Residential developments involving 10 or more dwellings or (where the number of dwellings is not indicated) where the site is more 0.5Ha.
 - Other development where the floorspace proposed is more than 1000 square metres or where the site is more than 1Ha.
 - Minerals and waste management – applications over 1Ha involving new or extended mineral extraction areas, or restoration of old or existing sites, or any site used for the management of waste.
 - Telecommunication masts, renewable energy developments and other prominent structures within the landscape.
 - Applications where a structure or associated lighting or noise may impact on the character and tranquillity of the AONB.
- 4.5 Where appropriate, the authority may consult the AONB Team during pre-application discussions and in the preparation of development briefs.

- 4.6 Poole Borough Council's administrative area is outside of the AONB but the Council will consult the AONB Team on all developments that its officers consider likely to have an impact on the visual quality and tranquillity of the AONB. These will primarily include major and significant applications (see above) within a mapped zone of the Borough:



5. The AONB Partnership's Role in the Planning Protocol

- 5.1 The AONB Partnership will in most cases make responses and provide input through the AONB Staff Team, the manager of which has delegated responsibility under the terms set out in this protocol to act on behalf of the Partnership. In exceptional cases, for example where an application may result in wide impacts across the AONB, the Team should seek the advice and views of the Partnership Board or relevant steering / working group thereof as appropriate.

The AONB Partnership will:

- 5.2 Review and consider consultation documents prepared as part of Local Development Framework preparation and other relevant documents. Where appropriate the Partnership will undertake further discussion with relevant local authority officers and prepare and submit clear technical advice to the Local Planning Authority within the required time scales.
- 5.3 In consultation with appropriate local planning authority case officers, landscape architects and urban designers, arrange site visits and submit technical advice on planning applications received as described in section 4.3 / 4.4 above within the required time scales. Any comments will generally be discussed in advance with the case officer prior to submission. Comments will normally be submitted electronically.
- 5.4 Where appropriate provide support towards planning appeals and LDF examinations, where there are significant planning issues for the AONB. Where a local planning authority has not consulted the AONB Team on an application or consultation draft, the Team may decline to support appeals and examinations on these cases.

- 5.5 Work with local planning authorities to raise the profile of the AONB designation and statutory Management Plan, for example by assisting with training and through attendance of liaison meetings at the request of the planning authority.
- 5.6 Work with local authorities to provide tools to aid policy formation and decision making, such as landscape character assessment and management guidelines, capacity / sensitivity studies and guidance on topics such as agricultural diversification, rural-urban fringe issues and renewable energy development.

6. Criteria for responses

- 6.1 In considering planning matters, the AONB Partnership will base its responses around the primary purpose of the designation – the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. As such, it will be led by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, relevant national planning policy statements, the regional policy framework in relation to protected landscapes, the Dorset AONB Management Plan and the AONB Landscape Character Assessment and the relevant Development Plan.
- 6.2 Responses will set out the nature of the impacts on the character and qualities of the AONB and whether / how they could be mitigated. From this, the Partnership will provide clear technical advice for consideration by the local planning authority.
- 6.3 The AONB Partnership will submit all input on planning applications directly to the local planning authority and will endeavour to facilitate e-consultation.
- 6.4 The Dorset AONB Partnership comprises a wide range of organisations from private sector to local government and statutory agencies. In submitting comments it will be made clear that, while comments made on behalf of the Partnership are representative of the Partnership's view as a whole, the comments made will not necessarily be consistent with the views of individual organisations represented on the Partnership. Any individual organisation on the Partnership may reserve the right to disassociate themselves from any particular comments put forward, subject to their declared interests.
- 6.5 Comments submitted by the Team will be reported to the Partnership Board at its regular meetings.

7. Agreement

This protocol was approved by the Dorset AONB Partnership Board on 17th July 2007.

Signed

Date

Tim Frost, Chairman, Dorset AONB Partnership

This protocol has been formally endorsed and adopted by:

Dorset County Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

West Dorset District Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

Purbeck District Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

North Dorset District Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

Poole Borough Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

Devon County Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

Somerset County Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

East Devon District Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position

South Somerset District Council

Signed

Date

Name / Position