

**North Dorset District Council
Local Development Framework**

**Regulation 18 Consultation Statement
Iwerne Minster Village Design Statement (VDS)**

September 2011

Introduction

1. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 a Local Planning Authority shall not adopt a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) until:
 - (i) they have considered any duly made representations in respect of the draft SPD;
 - (ii) they have prepared a statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised in those representations,
 - (iii) and explained in the statement how these main issues have been addressed in the SPD which they intend to adopt
2. This document provides a summary of the main issues raised as a result of the formal consultation process and ensures that the Iwerne Minster VDS complies with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. It also shows how the Council has addressed these issues.
3. A full schedule setting out all the comments made, examining the issues in more detail and how those issues have been addressed can be found as Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report dated 5 September 2011. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the responses to the formal public consultation on the draft Iwerne Minster VDS and to recommend the adoption of the revised document as a SPD to Council.
4. This is not the only consultation statement associated with the VDS. In February 2011 a consultation statement in accordance with Regulation 17 was prepared providing a summary of the main issues raised during the early evidence gathering stages of the VDS. It explained how the initial issues raised had been addressed. This document titled 'Regulation 17 Consultation Statement – Iwerne Minster Village Design Statement (VDS)' formed part of the SPD documents that the Local Planning Authority were required to prepare for consultation purposes.
5. The Regulations also specify what SPD documents need to be published, where and how they are published and what specific and general bodies need to be consulted prior to the adoption of the VDS as a SPD
6. The formal consultation on the Iwerne Minster VDS was carried out accordance with the Regulations between 22 April and 3 June 2011. Eleven people commented on the VDS and in total they made 48 separate representations.

Main Issues Raised

7. As set out here in the summary and in the full schedule of responses (Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report dated 5 September 2011), the responses have been grouped into the section headings of the VDS with the more general comments about the document listed first.

General Comments

8. Three respondents specifically supported the production of the Iwerne Minster VDS. One commended the parish on its work and described the VDS as informative and helpful with the sections on building detail and character of the

local roads as being particularly enlightening. One person praised the quality of the public exhibition display and the ability of those present to answer the questions that they raised.

Introduction

9. Only one comment was made in relation to this section that outlines the reason why the residents of Iwerne Minster decided to prepare a VDS, the methodology used and how the VDS compliments the local planning context and that was more of a technical correction than a criticism of the section. The main road through Iwerne Minster, the A350, is a 'primary route' not a 'trunk road' according to the Transport Policy Manager at Dorset County Council. This description of the road has been amended in the VDS.

Context

10. The Context section of the VDS describes the historical background of Iwerne Minster and the current environmental policies that seek to protect it. The main issue raised in relation to this section was by the AONB. They were pleased that the AONB designation that covers almost the entire village had been recognised but they were concerned that the AONB had not been involved in the production of the VDS itself. The recently updated guidance on 'Adopting Village and Town Design Statements as Supplementary Planning Documents (April 2011)' seeks to address this issue as it requires groups intending to prepare VDS's to contact the Council for a preliminary meeting before embarking on the VDS process. At this time Planning Policy officers will be able to inform the group of any designations and organisations that may help or be able to contribute to the VDS.
11. In fact the AONB are currently working with a second village in the District on a pilot project to help local communities to understand their landscape setting and historical context. This is a vital element of any VDS and it is the aim of the project to create a series of guidelines to help local communities to access and understand historic data. Although it is too late for the Iwerne Minster VDS the final guidance will help other local communities located in the AONB to prepare VDS in the future.
12. The AONB also requested that in this section reference was made to the AONB Management Plan, the planning protocol and AONB position statements. A web link to the AONB has been inserted in Section 2.2 – Current Environmental Policies. Links have now been inserted into the VDS.
13. Within the Context section a number of Local Plan policies that cover the village are shown on a Map 1. One local resident asked the question - what is the archaeological importance of the site on Preston Hill to the south of the village? Following further investigation it was discovered that all the sites of archaeological importance in the Local Plan were based on the Historic Environment Record (HER) at that time. The site in question is identified as showing mediaeval and later earthworks and cultivation remains (strip lynchets). This information has been added to the VDS as an example with a note referring people to the Senior Archaeologist at Dorset County Council if they would like to know more about any of the other sites in the village.
14. The final comment in relation to Context section of the VDS was once again raised by the AONB who felt that there was some tension in the section as to whether it should cover the village as a settlement or the village as a parish.

The decision in relation to the VDS boundaries is clearly explained in Section 1.3 the Methodology. This is later reinforced in Section 2.2 where the settlement boundary is described as the predominant edge between the built form and the countryside. No changes have been made to this section of the VDS.

Landscape Setting

15. The main issue in relation to the Landscape Setting section was raised by the AONB who considered this section to 'lack detail'. Although they considered the aerial photograph to be helpful they did not feel that the supporting text picked up on or sufficiently assessed the landscape setting in detail. Following these comments the Historic Environment Action Plan Project Officer from the AONB kindly provided two extensive sections on the landscape assessment of the area in general and more specifically the setting and historical background to the village. These two sections have been added to the section replacing the original text and they are the most significant amendments to the VDS following the consultation process. The Planning Policy team and the VDS Working Party thank the Historic Environment Action Plan Project Officer for providing this detailed information.
16. The Environment Agency were pleased to note that the stream was seen as an attractive and particularly valued village feature.

Settlement Pattern and Character

17. In relation to the sub section Trees, hedges and open spaces two residents considered the beech tree at the junction of Old School Lane and Church Road to be significant and suggested that it was included as a landmark feature. A photograph and reference have now been made in the VDS to this tree.

Building Form

18. With the exception of one typographical error all comments raised in relation to the Building Form section were made by the AONB. Their comments ranged from a criticism that the section on Building Types was not detailed enough to be of significant value in informing design opportunities to that there seems to be a reluctance to identify the extent and scale of the buildings at Clayesmore School that are less than sympathetic with the historic character. Although constructive comments from the AONB are welcomed, as in the previous section where detailed landscape assessment text was later provided, the Planning Policy team and Conservation Manager feel that the VDS does provide sufficient evidence to guide developers and officers in making design related decisions and that no changes are required.
19. VDS are prepared by the local community to provide a general guide to the various character areas of the village and their distinctive styles and use photographs to show detail. The level of detail suggested by the AONB is more in line with that of a Conservation Area Appraisal and is not considered necessary for a VDS.

Highways

20. In total there were seven comments on the Highways section of the VDS. The main comment that has resulted in an amendment to Map 10 was made by a local resident who suggested that rather than the opaque lines marking the

sunken lanes that these should be transparent so people could read the road names beneath.

21. All other comments on the highway section were made by the AONB. Some of the comments related to highway signage and inappropriate street furniture, but neither of these issues were identified by the Working Party or the local community through the consultation process and as such no changes to the VDS have been made.
22. In other comments the AONB supported the VDS and complimented its assessment of road character and the fact that this is well illustrated. They also support the residents in their concerns about light pollution.

Character Areas

23. Again the main issue raised in relation to the Character Areas section of the VDS was made by the AONB. They raised concern that the character areas identified were too simple and unsophisticated for the amount of survey work and analysis that had clearly been undertaken. In response the Character Areas are an overall characterisation of the village and they offer a brief summary into the design, setting, massing and materials in each area. They are a simple tool to guide developers and residents when considering any form of development rather than being prescriptive requirements.

Guidelines

24. In total there were 8 comments on the VDS guidelines, but only one comment resulted in an amendment to the guideline and that was made by the Transport Policy Manager at Dorset County Council who suggested that a link to the Rural Road Protocol should be included in guideline IM10 Utilities and Street Furniture.
25. The Environment Agency suggested that a new guideline be included to avoid any development proposal adversely affecting the water environment as these were important biodiversity habitats. Guideline IM7 already seeks to protect heritage features and makes specific reference to ponds, wells and streams. The issue of biodiversity habitats is important and is considered in the Sustainable Development Strategy and Policy 1.1 of the Local Plan, however, the VDS is concerned with design related issues and cannot amend or expand on other existing policies. As such no new guideline had been included.
26. One local resident wrote in full support of guideline IM10 especially with its emphasis on street lighting and road names.
27. All other comments on the VDS guidelines were made by the AONB. The AONB in particular were concerned that guideline IM3 did not specifically mention private green space. However, the supporting comment below the guideline specifically mentions that all gardens and formal and informal open spaces are important and that they make a significant contribution to the special characteristics and appearance of the village. As such no changes have been made to the guideline.
28. The AONB also suggested that the wording of guidelines IM4 and IM5 seemed rather similar and that they may benefit from being more clearly drafted to distinguish the differences they were seeking to cover. It is recognised that there is repetition in the text between the guidelines but this is to describe the context in which the guideline should be applied. Guideline IM4 is also

supported by an additional comment, as such no changes have been made to either of these guidelines.

29. The AONB suggested that guideline IM7 should cover the whole parish not just the village core. Guideline IM7 specifically seeks to protect historic assets and these tend to be located in the historic core and Clayesmore School areas of the village. No changes to the guideline have been made.
30. Finally the AONB suggested that guideline IM8 seemed to contain some tension between roadside parking and the control of off road parking. IM8 builds on the analysis in section 6.2 and seeks to protect the sunken lanes. Creating new driveways off sunken lanes was recognised in 1984 as being detrimental to the character of the village and an Article 4 direction was imposed that withdrew permitted development rights in relation to drives and parking. No further changes were considered necessary in relation to this comment.

Other points raised

31. Apart from the above positive enhancements no other officer recommendation resulted in any major change to the VDS wording or content. Indeed many of the representations were in general support or merely highlight typographical or detailed technical errors on Maps that have all been corrected.
32. Two inconsistencies in relation to terminology used throughout the VDS were identified by the AONB in relation to the historic core of the village and the soft green edges. Both have been corrected and a consistent approach has now been adopted throughout the document.

Addressing the Issues

33. The full schedule of representations received was presented to Planning Policy Panel on 25 July 2011 together with a supporting report outlining the formal consultation process. Members raised no concern in relation to the officer responses to the representations or the suggested recommendations. These have now been included in a revised Iwerne Minster VDS to be considered by Cabinet on 5 September 2011. Members of the Cabinet will once again have the opportunity to consider the representations received and assuming that the revised draft VDS is acceptable to recommend to Council that the Iwerne Minster VDS be adopted a SPD.