MINUTES of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 28 September 2026 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Jonathan Bourbon (in the chair)

Cllrs: Sarah Carney
Kelvin Clayton
Anna Killick
Paddy Mooney
David Worthington

ALSO PRESENT: Sally Freemantle (Town Clerk), Jo Hughes (Ward Clerk), Claire Peters-Way (Property Manager), Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer), 18 members of the public, 1 member of the public (online) and 1 member of the press (online).

PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Several members of the public spoke about application A9: (P/OUT/2026/04789) Land North of Orchard Crescent and East of Dottery Road B3162, Bridport (Symondsbury).

A member of the public expressed support for the provision of additional affordable housing in Bridport but raised concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed site. In particular, they considered the access road inadequate due to existing traffic congestion and the restricted width of the surrounding road network. Concerns were also raised about the potential adverse effects of the development on local wildlife habitats, including those of dormice and other protected species, and the extent to which the proposal accords with Dorset Council's environmental policies. Although the development proposes 35% affordable housing, it was noted that this proportion could subsequently be reduced. The member of the public further highlighted that local infrastructure, including the sewerage system, is already under pressure and may be unable to accommodate the additional demand arising from the development. Finally, as the site was described as Grade A agricultural land, they asked whether a previously developed brownfield site could be considered as an alternative.

A member of the public raised concerns about the potential increase in traffic on Court Orchard Road and Parsonage Road should the development be approved. It was noted that both roads are frequently congested, with parked vehicles often restricting traffic flow to a single lane. Two additional members of the public also raised concerns that the proposed development would exacerbate existing traffic congestion.

A member of the public reported that Donkey Lane is designated as a restricted byway and is therefore not permitted to be used by motor vehicles. They questioned whether the public right of way would need to be removed to enable vehicular access to the proposed development. Concerns were also raised regarding water runoff from the surrounding fields.

A member of the public highlighted the existing congestion issues along North Allington towards the West Allington roundabout. It was also noted that a collision occurred along this stretch of road over the weekend and concern was raised regarding the restricted width of the turning into Parsonage Road.

A member of the public expressed the need for affordable rent and questioned the affordability of the properties to local people.

A member of the public noted that the road is not wide enough to allow two heavy goods vehicles to pass safely and that North Allington was resurfaced approximately three years ago. Concerns were raised regarding the capacity of the existing sewerage system. It was noted that Wessex Water and West Dorset District Council had previously indicated that the sewerage infrastructure would be upgraded. It was further noted that the number of doctors at the medical centre has decreased despite an increase in the local population. The Hazelmead development had originally been expected to use a cesspit but is now connected to the main sewerage network. Additional concerns were raised about rainwater runoff from Washingpool towards North Allington.

A member of the public reported that the proposed development site lies within Symondsbury Parish; however, understood that the Parish Council has not been contacted by the applicant. He noted that the site comprises agricultural land currently used for food production. It was also emphasised that transport and infrastructure are key considerations. He referred to recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and highlighted the weaknesses of Dorset Council's current Local Plan. He also noted that relevant NPPF considerations include design, transport provision, and infrastructure capacity.

A member of the public stated that residents had not been consulted by the developers.

A member of the public spoke in relation to application A1 (P/HOU/2026/04476), 8 Seaward Gardens, West Bay. While they did not object to the principle of the proposed extension, they raised concerns regarding its design and appearance. They objected to the proposed use of black sheet-metal walls and a tin roof, noting that the extension would be situated approximately 2.1 metres from the neighbouring property and was considered out of keeping with the character of the area. They also expressed concern that no visual representation of the proposal had been provided by the architect. It was suggested that brick should be used instead, to better match the existing dwelling. Further concerns were raised regarding the environmental impact of the proposed metal roof, which they believed would have a significantly higher carbon footprint than alternative materials. It was noted that timber detailing was proposed only on the front elevation. They also expressed concern about the potential loss of light and increased overshadowing to the neighbouring property. In addition, it was suggested that the metal roof could result in increased noise from rainfall.

A member of the public arrived at the meeting at 6.17pm.

The applicant of application A1: (P/HOU/2026/04476), 8 Seaward Gardens (West Bay). commented that the proposed extension is to be used as a garden room with toilet facilities to accommodate their growing family. He advised that the structure would measure 5m x 4m and is not located within a conservation area. The height of the extension will not cause overshadowing or loss of light, and the metal roof will be coated and insulated which will minimise noise from rainfall. The extension will also not be visible from the road.

The Meeting Commenced at 6.25pm.

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Bark due to personal reasons and Bev Thornton due to personal reasons.

RESOLVED: the apologies for absence be approved with the reasons given.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr David Worthington declared a personal interest in planning application A1 (P/HOU/2026/04476) on the agenda for 8 Seaward Gardens, West Bay due to his acquaintance with the applicant. Councillor Worthington stated that he would leave the meeting during consideration of the application and would refrain from the discussion or voting.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 September 2026 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

37. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members agreed that planning application A9 (P/OUT/2026/04789) Land North of Orchard Crescent and East of Dottery Road B3162, Bridport (Symondsbury) be considered before the remaining applications on the agenda.

The Committee considered the outline application for the development of up to 80 dwellings on land within the Dorset National Landscape. Members discussed the constraints imposed by national planning policy, the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, and the likelihood that Dorset Council would ultimately determine the application in accordance with national policy requirements.

Cllr Sarah Carney advised that the application was supported by an evidence base and contributed towards housing delivery targets. She noted that the proposal included 35% affordable housing and that the developer had indicated an aspiration to provide a higher proportion of affordable housing, potentially up to 100%, subject to the availability of funding. She explained that, whilst members could express their views on the application, Bridport Town Council's role was limited to commenting on material planning considerations, including highway safety, environmental impacts and residential amenity.

Members acknowledged the significant need for affordable housing within Bridport and the surrounding area. Cllr David Worthington commented that brownfield sites alone were unlikely to meet identified housing needs and that the scheme could make a positive contribution towards the provision of affordable homes for local people.

Cllr Paddy Mooney noted that, whilst affordable housing remained a priority, concerns had been consistently raised by local residents regarding the specific development proposal.

The Committee discussed whether to support the application with conditions, object to it, or adopt a neutral position. Significant concern was expressed regarding the proposed access arrangements and highway implications of the development. Members considered that the application should not proceed in its current form and

felt that changes to the proposed highway access arrangements would be required. Particular concerns were raised regarding:

- Highway safety and site access.
- The impact of additional traffic on the local road network.
- The absence of detailed consideration of farm and agricultural vehicle movements.
- The timing and adequacy of traffic surveys submitted in support of the application.
- Public transport provision and sustainable transport links.
- The capacity of sewage and drainage infrastructure.
- Surface water drainage and flooding issues.
- Impacts on wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.
- The loss of agricultural land.
- The need for an appropriate housing mix to meet local needs.

Members agreed that these concerns should be clearly communicated to Dorset Council through the planning consultation process.

A proposal was made that the Town Council adopt a neutral position whilst submitting a detailed response identifying the potential benefits of the scheme, particularly the provision of affordable housing, together with the Committee's concerns regarding highways, access, transport, flooding, infrastructure, wildlife and other planning matters. Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was supported by 4 votes in favour and 2 against. Cllr Jonathan Bourbon requested that his objection be formally recorded in the minutes.

Members were advised that the Council had until 14 October 2026 to submit its formal response.

18 members of the public and Caroline Pearce (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer) left the meeting at 7.07pm after planning application A9 was considered and did not return.

Cllr David Worthington left the meeting at 7.07pm and returned at 7.15pm.

2 members of the public left the meeting at 7.15pm and did not return.

Sally Freemantle left the room at 7.08pm and returned at 7.16pm.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in column 4 of the attached Schedule A be forwarded to Dorset Council.

39. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Chair reported for information, the planning decisions received relating to applications previously considered by the Committee, ENCL: 4177.

RESOLVED: that the planning decisions be noted.

40. NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DORSET COUNCIL – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Cllr Paddy Mooney reported on the electoral review being undertaken by the Boundary Commission noting that the three principal considerations of the review are:

(i) Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents;

(ii) Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity; and
(iii) Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

Cllr Paddy Mooney advised that Symondsbury Parish Council had objected to the draft recommendations. He explained that the existing Bridport ward includes Symondsbury, Broadoak, Dottery and other surrounding areas. Under the draft proposals, the Bridport ward boundary would be amended to align more closely with the Bridport Town Council boundary and would incorporate the Foundry Lea development.

Members noted that the electoral review is expected to conclude early next year. Once completed, Dorset Council would have the opportunity to undertake a Community Governance Review. It was further noted that the draft proposals would place Watton, Watton Park, West Mead and Lodge Lane within the Marshwood Vale ward. Members considered that, as these areas form part of the town, they should remain within the Bridport ward.

Cllr Sarah Carney noted that Symondsbury Parish would also be included within the Marshwood Vale ward under the draft arrangements. Cllr Paddy Mooney reported that the Bridport ward already exceeds the recommended elector-to-councillor ratio. He explained that, should Watton, Watton Park, West Mead and Lodge Lane be retained within the Bridport ward, it may be necessary for another area, such as Pymore or the proposed North Allington development, to be transferred to the Marshwood Vale ward in order to maintain electoral balance.

Members noted that the closing date for comments on the draft recommendations is 9 November 2026.

Cllr Sarah Carney proposed that an objection be submitted to the Boundary Commission on the grounds that there had been insufficient consultation and that the proposed boundary changes would result in Watton, Watton Park, West Mead and Lodge Lane being moved from the Bridport ward to the Marshwood Vale ward. The proposal was put to a vote and agreed by five members of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED: that a draft response objecting to the proposed ward boundary changes be prepared and submitted to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting, or the next meeting of the Planning Committee (whichever takes place first) for consideration and approval.

41. DORSET COUNCIL - NEW LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

Members were made aware of the new Local Plan process.

RESOLVED: that the Dorset Council new Local Plan process be noted.

42. COMMUNICATIONS AND ONGOING ISSUES

Cllr Jonathan Bourbon reported that Dorset Council have not yet provided an update regarding the West Allington pinch point and requested that Cllr Paddy Mooney liaise with Dorset Council officers to arrange a site meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that the site meeting at Miles Cross which was due to be held on the 17 September 2026 had been postponed.

Members thanked the Town Clerk and Officers for their support.

The meeting closed at 7.44pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 2 November 2026