Lytchett Matravers Parish Council – Neighbourhood Plan 2 Working Group

Monthly Report – May 2026

Working Group Objective:
To prepare a new Lytchett Matravers Neighbourhood Plan (LMNP2) with a target to have the plan ratified and adopted by the end of 2027.

Working Group Participants:
Rob Aspray, Jackie Baker, Alf Bush, David Ireson, Ken Morgan, Ralph Watts (Chair), Peter Webb

Background:
The Lytchett Matravers NP (LMNP1) was adopted in 2017. A review of the effectiveness of NP1 in Dorset Council Planning Decisions in 2018 (the first full year after adoption) identified a number of areas for improvement. In addition, there have been a number of significant changes since 2017 in local government in Dorset and in the National Planning Framework.

The Purbeck Local Plan was adopted by DC in 2024, identifying 3 allocated sites in Lytchett Matravers, which will deliver a total of 150 new homes. The emerging Dorset Local Plan is expected to deliver a further 500 to 600 new homes in addition.

Dependencies:
- Planning Policies in the emerging Dorset Local Plan – Draft due to be published in August 2026
- New Design Code for Dorset, expected to be adopted at the same time as the Local Plan
- New CIL Schedule for Dorset, expected to be adopted at the same time as the Local Plan

Conflicts of Interest:
- Two participants live adjacent to Housing Opportunity Sites in the Local Plan
- One participant is a Trustee of the Village Hall

Status/Next Steps:
1. Jo Witherden continues to provide advice, subject to funding by LMPC.
2. A Set of Objectives has been developed for NP2 from which policies will be derived.
3. The Neighbourhood Plan is now available as a 3rd Draft, with much of the context for Development Management Policies now prepared.
4. Agreement in principle has been reached with the DC for transfer of the Youth Hall/ACF sites and the field behind the Primary School to LMPC. Legal agreements and formal DC approval now required.
5. A new Project Plan is in place, setting a target for a Regulation 14 consultation in January/February 2027 followed by submission to the DC (in preparation for a Referendum) in August 2027.
6. A number of tasks have been assigned to NP2WG members to develop policies in different areas (eg Heritage, Employment, Climate Change, Nature Recovery, the Built Environment, Travel, Village Centre, Sports & Recreation) together with supporting evidence by the end of July.
7. Discussions are underway with the DC with the aim of securing Section 106 contributions towards Village Centre developments
8. Continue to engage with local developers, with an aim to influence designs for Housing Opportunity Sites.

Financial Forecast: **(£000's, excluding VAT)**		**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**
Expense to date		5		
Forecast	Local NP Consultant Sundries		10	10
Total		5	10	10

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Notes of Meeting on 21st May 2026 **Held in the Sports Pavilion**

Those Present
Ken Morgan – LMPC
Ralph Watts - Resident
Peter Webb – LMPC
Jo Witherden - Dorset Planning Consultant

Apologies
Rob Aspray, Jackie Baker, Alf Bush, David Ireson, Rachel Noke

Notes of Last Meeting

The implied action on Jo to distribute examples of statements of modifications had been completed.
In relation to the discussion at the last meeting on Affordable Homes, Ralph noted that National Planning Regulations set out 4 different types of Affordable Homes, including Houses for Rent, Discounted Market Sales Housing, Starter Homes, and Other Affordable Routes to Home Ownership. There is a local preference in Dorset for Affordable Houses for Rent, due to concerns about sustaining affordability of Market Sales Housing through subsequent house sales. He also noted that the level of delivery of Affordable Homes was agreed between the Local Planning Authority and the Developer as part of negotiations for Section 106 Agreements, and was subject to viability considerations.

Project Plan Review

Ralph suggested that in addition to Tasks 14, 17, 18, and 21, it would be useful for Jo to also participate in Tasks 1, 2, 15, 24, and 30.
Jo suggested that Tasks 31 and 32 needed to say that the NP was to be Submitted to Dorset Council to arrange a Referendum rather than a Consultation.

Update on Transfer of Assets from the Dorset Council

Ralph reported that the legal agreements for transfer of the Youth Hall/ACF site to LMPC were making progress, and also that at a recent meeting the Dorset Council had agreed in principle that the field behind the school should also be transferred to LMPC for development of a Sports Complex. This agreement was made taking into account an expectation that any likely future extension of the school could be constructed within the existing registered educational site (which does not include the field). It was noted that the field was covered by the same Land Registry title as the school, so the plot would have to be severed. A title search would also be carried out to identify whether any covenants existed in relation to the field, and a valuation of the field would need to be obtained (which would dictate whether the decision to transfer to LMPC needed Dorset Council Cabinet approval or could be taken by the relevant Director).

Update on Dorset Local Plan and Other Matters

The following was provided by Rachel Noke as a written update to NPWG

a) **Dorset retail and leisure study -** The Dorset retail and leisure study is suggesting the removal of the designation of Lytchett Matravers Local Centre in the Dorset Local Plan. The document recognises the importance of the area at a Neighbourhood level as being important parade of shops but does not seek to designate it. The NPPF glossary defines centres as follows:
   - Town centre - Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district

centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

- The Neighbourhood Plan has identified the importance of the area as a village centre and outlines the importance of these facilities and seeks to the retain them in Policy 7. The NP policy should be in accordance with any policy that emerges as part of the Dorset Local Plan and so it would be worth reviewing any policies relating to local centre uses as part of the Dorset Local Plan when it is published at Reg 19 stage.

b) **Update on the Dorset Local Plan -** The current timetable is set out in the latest Local Development Scheme (LDS). There are no updates outside what is provided on the website. The Local Development Scheme for Dorset Council March 2025 - Dorset Council

c) **Evidence base update -** All those documents listed in the table below, that are out of date are expected to be with us in draft by the end of the month but will not be published until finalised.

d)

Evidence	Anticipated publication date
Housing Needs Assessment	Late April
Traveller Needs Assessment	Late April
Employment Needs Assessment	Mid-May
Green Belt review	Late May
Ecological baseline data	Late April
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind, solar PV and BESS development	May
Built Facility & Playing Pitch Strategy	Early June

e) This could take longer than initially anticipated due to our work on sites. I would estimate that they would be ready early July for publication. Evidence-based studies that are available to the public can be found on the following link and which will assist you with the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Dorset Council Local Plan evidence and background papers - Dorset Council

f) **Replacement village hall -** I would recommend considering a number of factors when deciding on a suitable replacement building for the village hall. This is mainly in relation to the suitability of a 3-storey building in this location in relation to the design of the village and landscape. It may be that a 3-storey or perhaps 2.5-storey building is considered suitable due to the village centre location and as a way finding position, however in design terms I believe most buildings are 2-storeys. This is something that could be covered in design coding.

Update on Policy Development Tasks

a) **Heritage –** Jackie had distributed an update report – Extensive research has been identified for guidance and information. A meeting with the u3a History Group will take place in June. Further work is planned on Quiet Lanes and Important Views in advance of preparing draft policies.

b) **Climate Change –** Ralph had distributed an update report – Policies, projects, and evidence in 10 other NPs adopted since 2021 in the DC area have been reviewed. A Preliminary list of proposed policies has

been prepared, and the evidence base is being developed. Continuing work in June will be on the evidence base and draft policies.

c) **Nature Recovery** – Ralph had distributed an update report – status and planned work is the same as for Climate Change.
d) **The Built Environment** – Ken reported that progress has been limited in the absence of information on the Dorset Design Code.
e) **Employment** – Peter reported that he was planning to meet with a number of the businesses who responded to the 2025 Consultation to gather more information, including views on policy ideas.
f) **Village Centre** – Ralph had distributed an update report, and Ken had distributed an outline plan showing the main components of the Village Centre. A meeting has been held with Roger Ong to discuss the current status on the Village Hall and Youth Hall and possible future improvements. Asset Transfers covered in Section 3 above. Other NPs adopted in the DC area with Village/Town Centre policies have been identified. Discussions continue with the Dorset Council on inclusion of the Village Centre Development Plan in the Local Plan Infrastructure and Delivery plans. Other meetings with stakeholders are planned to provide input on ideas for improvements that can be used to develop costed outline project plans. A key task is to develop a sequence of projects, taking into account constraints on development, possible timing and extent of funding, and deliverability.
g) **Recreation and Leisure** – Ralph suggested this might be amalgamated with the VC task.
h) **Travel** – David Ireson had advised that only limited progress had been made to date.

AOB

During a discussion of other Neighbourhood Plans that have recently been made in the Dorset Council area, a number included a significant number of maps illustrating the locations of features referred to by policies. In many cases the NP groups had used Parish Online to generate these maps. Jo gave a brief demonstration of Parish Online on her laptop, and suggested that she could provide a session on how to use it at a future NPWG meeting, or by setting up a special MSTeams meeting. Ralph said he would raise these options at the next meeting. Jo added that there are tutorials available on YouTube.

There was a discussion about the possibility that the Dorset Council might not achieve their deadline to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State by the end of December, and in particular what impact this would have on the Neighbourhood Plan. Jo said that the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans had recently changed, and the LMNP would not need to conform to the Purbeck Local Plan, but would need to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance. The new draft NPPF included very clear statements that Plans should not overwrite or conflict with the decision-making policies included in the NPPF. In addition, if the Dorset Council missed the December deadline, the Local Plan would then have to follow the new 30 month process established by the Government (which BCP are now following for their Local Plan), which was likely to lead to a significant delay[i]. In that situation, if the NPWG achieved its target to submit the Neighbourhood Plan to the Dorset Council for a referendum in August 2027, this could put the Neighbourhood Plan in a better position to influence the location and design of Housing Opportunity Sites in the Local Plan, and also in relation to the weight of its' policies. The Neighbourhood Plan might need to be revised in the absence of an adopted Dorset Design Code, although the latter could still proceed ahead of the Local Plan. If the Dorset Design Code was delayed, the LMNP Design Code would need to be more complete, based on local considerations, and would need to follow the National Model Design Code.

At this stage no further meetings with Developers had been arranged, but Ralph indicated that Wyatt Homes had agreed in principle to a further meeting in advance of the Local Plan Consultation due in August. He also intended to contact Bloor Homes in June to explore the possibility of a further meeting with them.

A second meeting was to be held with the Dorset Council in the first week in June to pursue inclusion of the Village Centre Development Plan in the Local Plan, enabling Section 106 contributions towards the costs.

The Dorset Council are organising a further Planning Forum for Town and Parish Councils, to take place in Dorchester on 16th June.

Date and Time of Next Meeting - 6:00 pm on 23rd June 2026

Ralph Watts,
May 2026

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[i] The latest programme for BCP was scheduled for discussion at the Cabinet meeting this month https://democracy.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s65784/Local%20Plan%20process.pdf