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*Calling for better and
cleaner transport in
and around
Dorchester*



Date: 27th August 2026

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION P/OUT/2026/03215

Location: Land North of Dorchester, Stinsford Neighbourhood (Phase 1)

Proposal: Outline application for Phase 1 development of up to 500 dwellings, a mixed-use neighbourhood centre, and associated infrastructure.

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing on behalf of the Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG) to submit our formal objection to planning application **P/OUT/2026/03215**.

Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG) objects to this application because it fails to demonstrate that the proposed development would deliver a genuinely sustainable pattern of transport and movement, as required by national and local planning policy.

In principle, DTAG supports the delivery of new housing where it is genuinely sustainable and where future residents are provided with realistic alternatives to private car use from the outset. Our comments therefore focus on the transport, accessibility and connectivity aspects of the application. Although this application relates only to the first phase of a wider area of proposed growth, it cannot be assessed in isolation from the transport network on which it depends. The key consideration is not simply whether vehicles can access the site, but whether future residents will be able to conveniently and safely access employment, education, healthcare, shopping, leisure and public transport using a range of sustainable travel options from first occupation. It is against these principles that we have assessed the application and identified the following concerns.

Procedural Objection: Prematurity of the Application

It is well known that this planning application is the first phase of a much larger development of the North Dorchester Area which has been widely advertised by the developers (Grangers and Wyatts) and by Hyas on behalf of Dorset Council. As such, it is premature to the 'proper planning' of any phased development at this location without consideration of its relationship to the whole development. Therefore, the outline planning application for the whole development should be considered first.

A fragmented, "Salami-sliced" approach where one small part of the development with more favourable characteristics is considered first is just a well-known tactic by the developers and one which does not lead to a considered, integrated or optimised development of the area.

It is also noted that development of this area is not part of the current local plan and, while various proposals have been considered previously North of Dorchester, none has ever passed viability tests for the implied infrastructure that would be required to make it a modern, sustainable development with the necessary associated facilities and services (roads, schools, public transport, water management etc.). On both counts, this planning application should be refused until the Local Plan

and the outline planning permission for the whole area is in place and the viability of the development has been clearly demonstrated.

1. Sustainable Travel

The Transport Assessment (TA) does not prioritise sustainable transport in accordance with national and local policies such as NPPF25 para 115 where “Sustainable transport modes should be prioritised.” High quality access for residents to public transport and active travel as realistic alternatives to using cars needs to be provided. Parking can be restricted to encourage more sustainable modes and the active travel infrastructure should be put in place from day 1 to provide high quality access to facilities services without the need for using a car.

Sustainable transport is all the more crucial because of the increasing impacts of climate change and its threat to the natural world, food and national security. In addition, sustainable travel also encourages healthy lifestyles and supports a stronger community and place-making.

2. Car-Led Out-of-Town Development

This first phase of 500 dwellings tries to be two types of development at once, both a ‘well connected neighbourhood of Dorchester’ (para 1.5) and a ‘fully serviced, standalone development (para 2.3). Unfortunately, development fails on both counts lacking crucial day-to-day services of a stand-alone development and amenities, while attracting at least 800 to 1,000 private cars to the local area which is not the signature of “well connected” neighbourhood of Dorchester. In particular:

- No primary or secondary schools are included.
- No supermarket.
- No medical practices or dental surgeries are planned.
- No railway stations or direct rail links exist on site.
- Table 5.1 in the Planning Statement makes provision for a neighbourhood centre to include “unit shops, public house, health hub/nursery, incidental community building”. However, the plan only makes ‘provision’ for land to be set aside for these uses. No evidence is provided that the development would be able to support these services or if any form of financial support short/long term would be given.

Residents will be forced to use private cars to access to most basic services which will be provided by Dorchester approximately 2.5km away. This dynamic completely contradicts central government recommendations to design walkable communities and reduce vehicular dependency.

3. Parking

If the developer is serious about active and sustainable travel, parking should be offered at a very low level to encourage sustainable transport for example 1 space per dwelling, with a percentage for visitors and support for a car club. Furthermore, in a “Dutch” style arrangement, these parking places could be provided on the edge of the development further encouraging active travel within the residential areas. The BCP and Dorset parking policy quoted in the report is now very old and not reflective of current practice (for example at the Builder Development site in Dorchester - P/OUT/2026/01872).

Cycle parking should be plentiful, covered and separate from a garage. Cycle charging points need to be available for public use. Provision for bike rental schemes can be included (as they are with Beryl Bikes in Dorchester). There should be electric car charging points at the car parking areas which are accessible for flat dwellers. Cycle parking for apartment blocks should be at ground level or in a basement.

4. Inadequate Road Infrastructure and Severe Traffic Congestion

The application includes no direct access routes to the A35, forcing all vehicular traffic onto the local road network of Slyer's Lane, Cokers Farm Road and London Road. The impact of so many additional cars on these narrow roads is wholly underestimated. For example, Paragraph 4.37 states the developer expects the volume of pedestrian and cyclists to be relatively low in peak hours. Therefore, high volumes of car trips are expected through London Road to the centre of Dorchester and across the Stinsford roundabout to Poole, Bournemouth and Weymouth.

Local Traffic Queue Data Analysis

- **Stinsford Roundabout (A35/B3150):** Already operates significantly over capacity. At peak morning (08:00–09:00) and evening (17:00–18:00) periods, tailbacks regularly extend up Stinsford Hill by 500 to 1000 metres. This causes systemic delays back toward the Kingston Maurward junction. The TA only models traffic congestion at peak commuting times. In Dorset, heavier congestion is also experienced during holiday periods and weekends when the A35 is extremely busy.
- **Urban Centre Congestion:** Commuters attempting to avoid the bypass bottlenecks take a route directly down London Road, creating a standing queue at Grey's Bridge that regularly stalls vehicle progression back into the town centre. The added burden of 800 to 1,000 new cars has not been taken into account and will cause a total standstill at this critical node.
- **Flawed Main Junction:** The new junction between Slyer's Lane and London Road (B3150) introduces traffic lights and a 30mph speed limit. While the design has merit, it will significantly worsen congestion on a primary route into Dorchester.
- **Dangerous Minor Access:** Many motorists will try to bypass the main junction by using the very minor road (an extension to Cokers Farm Road) located just 30 metres west of the Stinsford roundabout. This lane is entirely inadequate for any significant volume of traffic and, because it is so close to the junction, poses a safety hazard. **This junction has not been modelled and needs to be completely closed off to motor vehicles on safety grounds.**

5. Deficient Public Transport and Unrealistic School Transit

The proposed public transport mitigation, a dedicated bus service modelled after the CR9 Blandford route, is inadequate in its current form. TRICS data shows low bus uptake so the Travel Plan actions should also aim to improve this.

- **Modern Service:** To be a viable alternative to car ownership, this bus route must be an excellent and modern service with electric buses that operates in full as soon as the first house is occupied. The infrastructure should also be modern with new bus shelters and realtime information (RTI). There will be many future residents without cars, children, and parents with prams and people who prefer a bus for a short journey who need an excellent, urban bus service.

- **Service Gaps:** The service requires a minimum frequency of 3 times an hour from 7am (for commuters) to late in the evening 11.30pm (for access to entertainment and restaurants) and funded via section 106 payments. This could be a new service or linked to an existing one. The route should go as far as the large Tesco supermarket off Weymouth Avenue and via both train stations and the hospital. No such commitment exists in the proposal which also excludes a Sunday service.
- **The School Run Crisis:** Local schools are located over 25-minutes' walk away, making walking unrealistic for young children and unlikely for older children and adults. Without a dedicated school bus service, parents will inevitably drive, flooding local roads during peak hours. However with good cycle infrastructure provision (Section 7), this journey could offer an realistic Cycle-To-School option and enable & encourage setting up a parent-led 'Bike Bus'.
- **The Puddletown Illusion:** The transport report states primary school children will fall into the Puddletown school catchment and receive free council-funded transport. This is both unrealistic, as parents will opt for closer schools, and offensive, as it places a massive, longterm financial burden on Dorset Council's budget to provide such a service.
- **Trains.** There is no information on use of trains for long-distance travelling and commuting to surroundings towns and conurbations. As Weymouth/Poole/Bournemouth are important nearby employment hubs, new residents in the development should be encouraged to use the train. A regular, reliable bus service to nearby stations is crucial to reduce car trips. Table 3.4 incorrectly states that Dorchester West to Weymouth service is 3 per hour.

6. Active Travel Shortfalls

DTAG welcomes internal active travel elements, such as the separated pedestrian and cycle path running parallel to Slyer's Lane behind the hedge. We also recommend that instead of routing cyclists through the new vehicle junction, the existing Slyer's Lane route should be converted into a dedicated, non-motor vehicle active travel pathway.

Although we support the introduction of a 30mph limit along the whole of London road, the proposed infrastructure linking London Road to the centre of Dorchester is completely unacceptable:

- **Options along London Road:** The three options presented along London Road —widening the existing pavement or painting a cycleway on the road—are all inadequate since they will not create a safe, convenient and pleasant route for pedestrians or cyclists
- **The Grey's Bridge Pinch Point:** Grey's Bridge is a historic pinch point that cannot accommodate a regulation-width pavement on either side and is therefore totally unsuitable as a main thoroughfare for active travel from the development. It is noted that the bridge has a weight restriction and restricted access for lorries that is not currently enforced.
- **Beyond Grey's Bridge.** Beyond Grey's bridge, facilities for pedestrians, wheelchair users, those with mobility scooters and cyclists stops at London Road. London Road is busy, and full of parked cars and with multiple side access roads which obstruct the highway and make it inconvenient and dangerous for active travel users. The cycle infrastructure plan shows the King's Road as an "Advisory Bike Route". This is unrealistic as it leads nowhere near the centre of town.
- **The Myth of Dorchester's Network:** The transport report falsely claims Dorchester possesses an extensive, safe active travel network. In reality, cyclists and pedestrians are poorly served with few dedicated walking routes or dedicated off-road cycleways. Indeed, the

National Cycle Network routes NCR2 and NCR26 terminate abruptly on the town's outskirts with no safe interconnection.

- **Public Rights of Way and Accessibility.** No Public rights of way are easily accessible around the new development area at the moment (this is part of plans for the broader area).
- **Kingston Maurward.** Although there is an existing right of way across the A35 this has now been severed by the road. It is expected that some students and workers living in the development will need to have this route reinstated. This can only be achieved with an expensive bridge across the A35.

7. Our Alternative Strategic Proposal

Future traffic is likely to increase along London Road especially if the larger development of over 3500 dwellings goes ahead. This will undermine any active travel route along London Road. Instead, increased active travel usage and better connectivity can only be achieved with a new, safe cycleway that is adjacent to but separated from London Road. Such a standalone cycle /pedestrian /wheelchair access route - more Dutch style - would future proof the route into Dorchester for active travel modes and show that sustainable transport is a core part of the developers' plan.

So DTAG proposes the construction of a new pedestrian and cycle route to the north of London Road, raised on a small embankment across the flood plain and with a new bridge across the Frome. This route would provide a safe, separated and pleasant rural route from the development to the centre of Dorchester. This would also link up with the proposed circular ring route (around the old Roman Walls), the river walk (which we hope will be extended to a shared cycle path) and also connecting with the "Lamb Loop" to Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton and so providing a safe active travel route for students living in Dorchester to the Kingston Maurward campus.

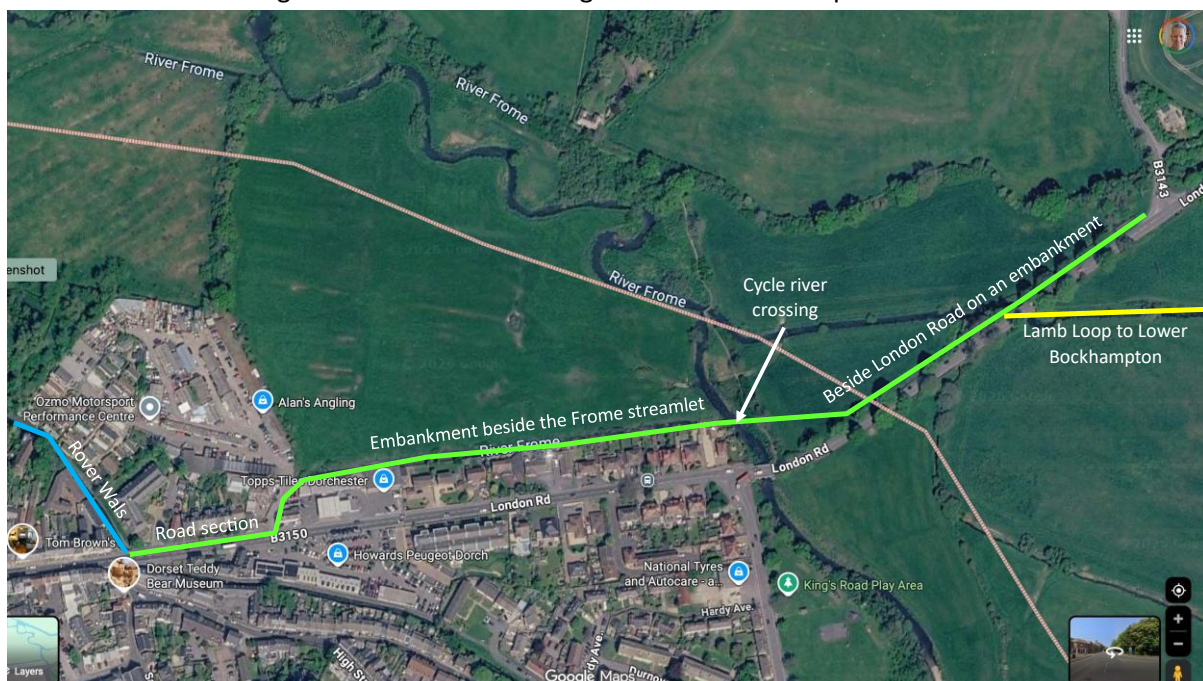


Figure 1. Proposed new pedestrian and cycle access route from the Development to Dorchester

Summary

DTAG strongly objects to this current scheme for 500 houses. This is a stand-alone, car-led, out-of-town development that relies on underestimated traffic impacts, lacks safe active travel connections to the urban core, and offers inadequate public transport. It actively undermines government climate and transport policy. We urge Dorset Council to **refuse** this application.

Yours sincerely,
Giles Watts

Secretary Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG)

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