**A business plan for Upper Marshwood Vale**

This aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan may seem less important than people and homes, yet in the long term it may prove to be the single most important consideration for the future of our community.

Without jobs for all sections of the community we face a sterile existence with nothing for the go-getters amongst us to keep our lives fulfilled and valuable - a dormitory for many who have to travel to get and sustain jobs.

Far better to develop local work for those that need employment or indeed employees for a genuine future.

Clearly there will be many who chose to go into work in the more remote businesses, large or small, but UMV needs a more balanced approach to employment with opportunities for local work.

It is for this reason that we envisage two parts to our business plan; short and medium tern procedures for existing and new plans, often involving Planning; and on-going work, and supportive actions to continue the development for new businesses.

Strictly speaking this latter aspect is outside the remit of Neighbourhood Plans so this must be seen as a complimentary but equally important effort for our community to provide.

**Local Plan context**

*The Strategic Approach to business and employment:*

A continuing supply of land and premises suitable for employment uses is needed, of a type and scale appropriate to the characteristics of the local area, to provide sufficient opportunities for employment needs to be met locally, to reduce the need to travel and promote economic growth and social inclusion. This will be delivered through the allocation and provision of new sites (with the greater proportion of development at the towns), the suitable protection of existing employment sites (taking into account their significance), and flexible policies to allow development to come forward on other suitable sites.

The development of new retail and town centre uses will be directed to the town centres of Weymouth, Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne and Lyme Regis. Outside the town centres, smaller scale development of shops, financial and professional services, food and drink, office, leisure and community uses will be directed towards local centres. Development should not undermine the functioning of any centre, or adversely affect its vitality or viability.

*The main Local Plan policies on business and employment:*

**ECON1** allows employment development:

* within or on the edge of a settlement;
* through the intensification or extension of existing premises;
* as part of a farm diversification scheme;
* through the re-use or replacement of an existing building; or
* in a rural location where this is essential for that type of business

**ECON2 and 3** protects employment sites across the area, however there are no key (strategic) employment sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area

**ECON4** allows for small-scale rural development of retail and town centre uses appropriate in type and scale to the local area

**ECON5** (not a strategic policy) deals with proposals for new, or extensions to, tourism attractions and facilities, supporting these where they would:

* enhance an existing attraction or facility; or
* provide wider environmental or community benefits; or
* increase the quality and diversity of the tourism offer in the local area and benefit the local economy.

It suggests that such development should, where possible and practicable, be located within or close to established settlements, or make use of existing or replacement buildings

**ECON6** (not a strategic policy) deals with proposals for new built tourist accommodation, which in the Neighbourhood Plan area should be through the improvement or expansion of existing accommodation, or the re-use of existing buildings.

**ECON7** (not a strategic policy) deals with proposals for new caravan and camping sites, and states that these should be well located in relation to existing facilities or make appropriate provision for facilities on site, and must not have a significant adverse impact on the distinctive characteristics of the areas landscape, heritage or built environment.

**ECON8** (not a strategic policy) broadly supports the diversification of land-based rural businesses that would help sustain that enterprise, and **ECON9** (not a strategic policy) allows the development of new agricultural buildings, provided that there are no existing buildings on the unit which are capable of re-use. The scale, siting, design and external appearance of the buildings should be designed to minimise adverse impact on the landscape character and residential amenity.

**Dorset AONB Management Plan**

*Employment-related objectives:*

Objective LM1: Maintain and promote the skills, practices and businesses that deliver sustainable management of a changing countryside, coast and sea

Objective LM2: Support the development of, and market for, local products that deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes

Objective E1: All people are able to explore, enjoy, experience and benefit from the special qualities of the AONB in a sustainable way

Objective E2: Access and travel in the AONB are managed to avoid, reduce or prevent damage to the AONB

Objective E3: The special qualities of the AONB underpin a vibrant and distinctive sustainable tourism sector

Objective PH2: Impacts of development and land use damaging to the AONB’s special qualities are avoided and reduced

Objective PH3: Reduce the negative impacts of traffic and its management on the AONB

**A - Growing business - agriculture and smaller units:**

In a rural area such as UMV traditional farms are the main business but huge changes in agriculture have wrought even greater changes in farms and farmers. Some farmers have chosen to expand and acquired new, neighbouring pastures but there are few farmers left who have not added other trades, often as builders, as a side-line.

This trend is well established but pressure from growing families will set a demand for new and innovative ideas for crops, land use and projects.

**B - Working from home:**

Superfast broadband may have been delayed in reaching Upper Marshwood Vale but we have benefitted from the Fibre to-the-Premises approach since this is not inherently speed limited.

All businesses will be improved by FTTP, some far more than others; it will depend on the actual communication needs of each business. But in general it is the home business environment that will gain most from FTTP; we have an almost unique opportunity for new local businesses to thrive.

**C - Tourism, pubs, bed and breakfast, campsites and holiday lets:**

Long a vital part of our community, these vary from well-established operations to ad hoc and occasional lettings to produce a small but important boost to income. This represents a recognised service for visitors with a wide variety of marketing opportunities often internet based.

No action required from NP

**D - Workshops/communal offices**

Probably the largest need is for small groups of open workshops or separated offices to be available on low cost rentals and short leases. These important projects are considered essential for the development of Marshwood as a business -friendly place. It represent an important step from home-working towards running a company.

Mending and manufacturing is usually best performed from such premises, while local, often ad hoc, services are an important extra feature for such communities.

In this area no such operation yet exists but not far away are 2 such units, Pineapple and at Sadbarrow.

**E - Retail shops**

Within the Upper Marshwood Vale just 2 centres of our population could sustain a village shop, Stoke Abbott and Marshwood.

Marshwood Stores & Garage: with a suitable site now offered this project could well go ahead in a short term. By and large the ideas behind this scheme are well-known.

**F - Small Industrial estates**

Taking into consideration the rural aspect of our Vale, inherently UMV does not favour these larger developments. They are best sited in or around surrounding towns drawing on local populace for both employees and the sites to allow them to thrive. As such they are needed for local employment and should be encouraged to establish in the vicinity, but not in our Vale. Should a new start-up project become successful then it would grow without help from the NP.

**Services and support**

Receptionists, call and message handling, office & computer skills, provision of copiers, book-keeping, training and wide gamut of other occasional service will be needed, another opportunity for part-time work. From occasional help for home workers to serviced offices and workshops, many parents would find this a useful route back to work so would the active elderly while a younger person might well find permanent employment via such relationships.

**Transport and Environmental Constraints**

Some communities have chosen to limit business development due to the impact of large lorries or heavy traffic to the site. It is agreed that unwanted traffic in narrow lanes must always be a constraint, but a glance at the urban traffic chaos of all cities and too many of UK ‘s towns, does go some way to rebalance this perspective.

Marshwood has 2 main roads that could better deal with some increase in traffic, whereas the narrow lanes of the Vale itself could prove an absolute restriction on certain business opportunities.

The AONB designation also limits the type of development that may be located in the area, as development is expected to protect the important landscape characteristics which include factors such as tranquillity, unspoilt panoramic views and dark skies. The AONB Management Plan’s emphasis is on supporting those businesses that contribute to the management of the countryside and deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes.