

Poundbury, Dorset

Key details

Name	Poundbury
Location	Dorchester, Dorset
Number of dwellings	2,200 by 2025
Date first homes sold	1994 (Phase 1 Section A completed 1996)
Homes delivered to date	All but 33 in Phase 2, 70 so far in Phases 3 & 4. By 2015, 2500 people were resident
Percentage of affordable homes	35% in sections built since 2005, earlier phases had closer to 20% affordable homes
Average house price	£368,000
Land dedicated to vehicles	42%
Housing density	Parcel density 33-43 dph
Walking distance to railway station	28 minutes



Background and context of development

In the late 1980's Duchy of Cornwall land at Poundbury, located inside the new Dorchester Bypass, was identified by West Dorset District Council as a site for the future expansion of Dorchester. The Prince of Wales took this opportunity to put his interests in urban planning into practice and work with the council to develop a model for new urban settlements. The architectural and urban design aims are to create "a high-density urban quarter which achieves an attractive, modern and pleasing place in which people can live, shop, work and play." The distinctive architecture involves use of traditional materials and an eclectic combination of styles ranging from the vernacular to the classical, shaped by the architect and urban planner Leon Krier in the context of traditional Dorset towns.

Poundbury comprises a total land area of 400 acres, of which 250 acres are occupied by mixed-use buildings and 150 acres are landscaped. The site is divided into four Phases, the first two of which are largely complete. The housing density in Phases 1 and 2 ranges from 33 to 43 dph. Work on Phase 1 commenced in 1993, with the first section complete by 1996. Progress since then has been slow, with the first sections of Phase 2 finished in 2004. When complete, Poundbury is expected to have 4,500 residents, increasing the population of Dorchester by a quarter.



Each phase of Poundbury contains various landmark buildings and public spaces such as the Brownsword Hall in Pummery Square at the centre of Phase 1, which hosts the community hall and a bi-monthly farmers' market. Phase 2 forms the central core of the settlement, with a series of large classical-style buildings around Queen Mother Square. Phases 3 and 4 will form the North East Quadrant, with an average density of 33 dwellings per ha. This will also include 12,000 sq m of employment space.

The response to the architecture and design of Poundbury has been mixed, but in terms of creating a living community the project seems to have been very successful. Affordable housing is interspersed with market housing, with tenure-blind architecture to promote an integrated, cohesive community.

A particular success of Poundbury is the mixed use approach to development. The number of business at Poundbury has steadily grown from 64 in 2009 to 170 in 2015. By October 2016, there were 2,100 jobs and 185 businesses in Poundbury. Factories and landmark buildings were built first, the lighter industry and workshops integrated within residential development, such as the Dorset Cereals factory shown in the image below, which opened in 2000. This encouraged people to come into the area, keeping the streets busy and enabling other local businesses to thrive.

The UK's first commercial biomethane-to-grid plant, at Rainbarrow Farm, began exporting gas into the National Grid in 2012. The plant generates enough gas to service 4000 houses in midwinter or 56,000 houses in midsummer. Heavier industry is being developed at Parkway Farm, away from residential areas.



Public Realm

Urban trees	In most areas
Grass verges	Some
Front gardens	Narrow private strips on some streets
Back gardens	Yes



Public transport, walking and cycling accessibility

“At Poundbury the entire Masterplan was based upon placing the pedestrian, and not the car, at the centre of the design.” (The Prince of Wales)

The pedestrian-friendly design of Poundbury, the large number of local businesses and its location close to the centre of Dorchester all promote walking. In the 2011 census 26% of people here reported commuting to work on foot¹, far higher than the 2-7% reported in eight other new towns and urban extensions we have studied which were already in existence in 2011. Meanwhile, at 59%, the proportion of Poundbury residents driving to work by car or van is between 12% and 30% lower than in any other of these sites.

A new electric bus service (number 6) connects Poundbury with the centre of Dorchester and Dorchester South railway station. The number 10 bus from Dorchester to Weymouth starts and finishes at Poundbury, and the X51 from Dorchester to Bridport and Axminster also passes through the development. Free car parking is available in the large public squares such as Queen Mother Square. Although the proportion of land dedicated to vehicles (i.e. occupied by roadways, parking and garages) at Poundbury is one of the highest we have come across, in this context it seems to work, since the streets are fairly narrow, pedestrian and bus connectivity is good, and this total includes the attractive ‘town squares’ in which car parking is allowed.

Destination	Company	Route numbers	Weekday daytime frequency	Weekday evening frequency	Saturday frequency	Sunday frequency	Travel time	Location of bus/train stop	Last return time
Dorchester town centre	First; Dorset County Council	6, 10, X51	Every 5-10 mins	Every 20-30 mins	6 per hour	Every 30 mins	10 mins	Queen Mother Square or Mansell Square	00:00
Dorchester South station	First; Dorset County Council	6, 10, X51	Every 5-10 mins	Every 20-30 mins	6 per hour	Every 30 mins	12 mins	Queen Mother Square or Mansell Square	23:56



¹ Erratum: This is incorrectly listed at 32% in the Transport for New Homes project summary

Local Facilities

A wide range of local businesses and community facilities can be found within Poundbury. There are flexible spaces in which new enterprises can become established and a series of public spaces such as Queen Mother Square which provides the central focus of Poundbury. Kingspoint House on the square contains a Waitrose supermarket and 20,000 sq ft of office space. Within Phase 1 lies Brownsword Hall, which provides mixed use space and is used as a community centre.

Type of facility	Plans and current state of progress within development	Built yet within site?	Closest example	Estimated time to reach nearest example outside development			
				Walking	Cycling	Driving	Public transport
convenience store	Many shops within Poundbury	Yes					
Café / restaurant	Five within Poundbury	Yes					
Drinking establishment	Two within Poundbury	Yes					
High street shops	Wide range of shops within Poundbury, more in Dorchester	Yes					
Supermarket	Waitrose within Poundbury	Yes					
Nursery	Sunny Days, Poundbury	Yes					
Primary school	Damers First School, Poundbury opened April 2017	Yes					
Secondary school	None (school exists in Dorchester just outside Poundbury)	No	The Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester	16 mins	4 mins	5 mins	No direct link
Park	Small park next to Queen Mother Square	Yes					
Playground	Woodlands Crescent, Poundbury	Yes					
Playing fields	The Great Field, Poundbury	Yes					
Tennis courts	No plans known	No	Borough Gardens, Dorchester	25 mins	6 mins	6 mins	14 mins (incl. 7 min walk), bus no. 6
Leisure centre	None (there is one next to Thomas Hardy School just outside Poundbury)	No	1610 Dorchester Sports Centre	15 mins	4 mins	5 mins	No direct link
Swimming pool	None (there is one next to Thomas Hardy School just outside Poundbury)	No	1610 Dorchester Sports Centre	15 mins	4 mins	5 mins	No direct link
Wildlife area	No plans known	No	Maiden Castle (iron age hill)	38 mins	11 mins	10 mins	No direct link

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Community Centre	Brownsword Hall, Poundbury	Yes					
Daytime / evening classes	Brownsword Hall, Poundbury	Yes					
Medical facilities	Poundbury Doctors Surgery (plus dentists and others)	Yes					
Post office	Buttermarket Stores and Post Office, Poundbury	Yes					
Library	No	No	Dorchester Library	30 mins	8 mins	8 mins	13 mins (bus no. 6)
Co-working space	No	No	The Self-storage company	28 mins	7 mins	7 mins	No direct link



Developer contributions

The situation at Poundbury is very different from most sites, since the development has benefited from greater investment than would normally be expected and owes its form to the landowner, HRH Prince Charles. Nevertheless, the following s106 and s278 contributions had been paid to or were expected by Dorset County Council, as of August 2017:

Obligation	Purpose	Amount	Status
Transport Contributions	Contributions towards transport infrastructure, including town centre cycle way link	£218,982	Paid
Educational Contributions	Financial contributions towards educational facilities	£1,882,296	Paid
Library Contributions	Financial contributions	£288,695	Paid

	towards cultural and leisure facilities (including museums and libraries)		
S278 payments	Project administration costs; assessment and approval of design works; inspection of construction works; contributions towards future maintenance; legal fees.	£411,522.04	Paid
Town centre cycle way link (second instalment)	For cycle route between Poundbury and Dorchester	£65,000	Not yet due
Bus Service Payment	For additional bus services / infrastructure	£325,000 index-linked	Not yet due



Summary

Not everyone appreciates the ‘old world’ architecture and royal overtones of Poundbury, but in terms of creating a thriving town for people to live and work in it has been much more successful than most of the other sites we have visited. The streets are pedestrian-friendly, buses run regularly to local destinations, and most importantly instead of just building a bunch of houses with perhaps a primary school and community centre, there are a wide range of shops, cafes, businesses and other community buildings, making Poundbury a genuinely mixed use community. Workplaces such as the Dorset Cereals factory were also built at an early stage of development of the site, rather than the case in other places where the local centre is often the last major component to be built. The result is that over a quarter of commuters here walk to work. House prices are fairly high, but there is a reasonably good proportion of affordable housing, built to be indistinguishable from the other homes.

