



Dorchester Civic Society

An Independent Voice

Registered Charity No. 268636

PRESS RELEASE

Dorchester Prison: A unique opportunity for the town

Background

Following the announcement of the imminent closure of the Prison, Dorchester Civic Society has established a working group, including an architect, a surveyor, a town planner and an urban designer, to develop a vision for the future of the site. The group has benefitted from guided tours of the prison.

The Site

- A prominent five acre site with landmark buildings at the heart of Dorchester's Northern Quarter
- 2000 years of Dorchester's history including the alignment of part of the town's Roman wall; the site of a Norman/medieval castle; and the site of two of Dorchester's several prisons
- Located in the Conservation Area, at present only the 18th century prison gatehouse is listed: English Heritage are currently reviewing the listed building and scheduled monument status of the site
- Limited vehicle access

Dorchester Civic Society's Vision

- Research into and interpretation of the site's archaeology and history as a basis for planning and redevelopment
- A residential-led redevelopment including affordable homes
- Integration of the site with Dorchester's Northern Quarter and its heritage assets (e.g. Dorset County Museum, Colliton House, the Roman Town House and Shire Hall)
- Creation of a distinct sense of place
- Retention and conversion of some of the Victorian prison buildings subject to viable uses being identified
- Continuation of Dorchester's Walks linking Northernhay with North Square
- Creation of a small public park with views over the Frome water-meadows and beyond
- Minimising traffic generation
- Preparation of a planning & design brief for the site by West Dorset District Council in consultation with local people and groups

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Dorchester Civic Society exists to stimulate people's interest in the town and its setting; promote high standards of architecture, urban design and planning; safeguard buildings and areas of historic interest; and promote civic pride.

