

Dorset Local Plan Consultation 2025

Advisory Note for Furzehill Residents

Foreword

The recent Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation Document 2025 has raised many concerns and questions. This advisory focuses specifically on the suggested 'Housing Opportunity Sites' for the Furzehill Area.

The Furzehill Residents Association Committee sees the need to advise you of the **Key Issues** surrounding the suggested developments in Furzehill by giving you an informed list of areas of concern that you may wish to use if you decide to declare your views and concerns/comment to Dorset Council.

Key Information: Deadline to Comment: 13th October 2025

Ways to Comment

- Complete On-line Survey:
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-local-plan-options-consultation-2025
- E-mail your Representation to:
planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Write to: Spatial Planning Team, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

Please see Appendix 1 for more detail.

FRA Committee assessment

- Currently, the FRA Committee views the Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation document as flawed, with conflicting statements and misinformation. Some of this is technical in nature and refers to developments in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 * category settlements. Furzehill is none of these.
- **Don't assume the Green Belt around Furzehill is immutable.**
Please see Appendix 2 for the Response Statement from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning on Wednesday 10th September 2025.
- For a Local Plan to be 'sound', its policies, including housing opportunity sites, need to be consistent with policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

We believe that if Dorset Council pursues the stated housing developments in Furzehill it will be in contravention of the NPPF.

* For further information on Tiers please Dorset Council Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper 2021 click on [Settlement hierarchy](#).

What you can do

Although not essential, it may help if you make yourself familiar with the NPPF (2024):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

To give your views or comments maximum weight, it is advisable to provide detailed evidence and observations to support what you write - facts and figures, photos etc. Back up what you say. Then, if you can, identify the statement in the NPPF that further supports what you are saying.

For your convenience, we have listed in Appendices 3 to 6, the related statements in the NPPF which correspond to the key issues we have identified.

Make sure you:

- Identify your main considerations / issues.
- Try to include some evidence / observation.
- Check if it complies with the NPPF? If not, quote the paragraph.

If you can show that the suggested developments which appear in the Local Plan Consultation document are not compliant with the relevant paragraph within the NPPF, then the inclusion of that development would make the Local Plan unsound.

Please don't specify 'decrease in property values', 'loss of a private view' or 'motives of a developer or landowner' (i.e. to make money etc.) as these are not relevant planning considerations. Facts will influence the County Planners. Supposition won't.

Key Issues

The following are the key Issues you may wish to consider and include when submitting your views to Dorset Council:

Issue 1 - Green Belt

Specifically:

The urban sprawl creeping from Wimborne and eroding the Green Belt.

Five of the six sites identified for possible development are in the Green Belt within the Parish of Holt – a non-tiered settlement:

- LA/HOLT/002 151 homes - Jades Farm
- LA/COLE/019+ 118 homes - Land south west of Smugglers Lane
- LA/COLE/018 82 homes - Walford Farm & Longhow (West)
- LACOLE/020 163 homes - Walford Farm & Longhow (East) Horns Inn, Burts Hill
- LA COLE/032 157 homes - Land west of Cranborne Road

Please Note:

- LA/COLE/022 40 homes in East Dorset Council Offices.
We recognise the proposed number of homes at the old East Dorset Council offices is valid as it was included in the 2014 local plan.

(The references are those in the Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation document 2025).

Dorset Council recognises the Furzehill settlement as entirely within the Parish of Holt. It is not within the Colehill or Wimborne Minster parishes. The Dorset Community Governance Review in April 2024 changed the governance arrangements to move "the Lobe" of Furzehill, previously in the parish of Colehill, into the parish of Holt.

When we surveyed opinion in 2020 the majority answered as follows:

- *Do you want the green belt around our neighbourhood to be preserved? **Yes***
- *Do you want large developments in the green belt, such as the 45 dwellings suggested for behind the Stocks Inn or the 200 dwellings suggested for Jades Farm north of our telephone box? **No***
- *Assuming the council offices are redeveloped, do you want any further multiple dwelling development within the existing village envelope? **No***

Notably, the most recent planning application to build in Green Belt outside the Furzehill village envelope (in Dogdean) was rejected by Dorset Council, the Parish Council and, on appeal, to the Secretary of State.

The relevant NPPF references are shown in Appendix 3

Issue 2 - Highway access / transport access

Specifically:

- Heavy traffic on the A31 and B3078 Cranborne Road
- Increased traffic already on Furzehill, Furzehill to Holt, Smugglers Lane and Grange, from recent housing development - becoming 'rat runs, to avoid congestion on A31.
- These roads are narrow, have no pavements and are maintained badly.
- No safe routes for cyclists or pedestrians.
- Effect on Walford Bridge bottle neck.
- No daily public transport in Furzehill.

The relevant NPPF references are shown in Appendix 4

Issue 3 - The Environment

Specifically, effects on:

- Local water courses
- Sewerage issues in Grange and pumping to Wimborne
- Flooding in Smugglers Lane, lower Furzehill and Dogdean
- Overloaded local green spaces, including SSSIs and Holt Heath

The relevant NPPF references are shown in Appendix 5

Issue 4 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

Specifically, effects on the following in Wimborne:

- GP surgeries
- Schools
- Car parking
- Shopping

Without a dramatic change in infrastructure there is no chance that the thousands of extra homes in Colehill and Wimborne (and Furzehill?) can be considered 'sustainable'.

Dorset Council's Settlement Hierarchy paper determines that Tier 3 describes a 'larger, more sustainable village' with at least three from the following list: School; Shop; Meeting place (e.g. village hall); Employment space; Children's play area or recreation ground; Doctor's surgery.

Furzehill has only one of these - the village shop. It therefore does **not** meet Dorset Council's own definition of a settlement suitable for the suggested developments - on sustainability grounds.

NB Although Furzehill is within Holt Parish, the Furzehill sites noted for potential development (and therefore mistakenly presumed to be within Tiers 1, 2 or 3) are wrongly listed as within Wimborne/Colehill. Furzehill itself is not mentioned.

Based upon Dorset Council's definitions, it is our belief that no further development should be considered at the Furzehill settlement because the village itself is not listed as a settlement for potential development and therefore, by definition, has been excluded.

The relevant NPPF references are shown in Appendix 6

Appendix 1

How can I make a comment?

To give your views, please:

- Use the official form.
- Give your name and either postal or email address along with your postcode so that your response can be considered appropriately.
- Make your comments within the consultation period to ensure they are considered.
- If you are part of a group that shares a common view, please include a list of the contact details of each person (including names, addresses, emails, telephone numbers and signatures) along with a completed form providing details of the named lead representative.
- Continue on separate sheets if necessary.

Please note

- Representations cannot be treated as confidential. By completing a representation, you agree to your name (but not your address) and comments being made available for public viewing.
- The council does not accept any responsibility for the contents of the comments submitted. It reserves the right to remove any comment it considers defamatory, abusive or malicious.

You can respond

1. Online

View the consultation and submit your response online via the following link:

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-is-changing

The benefits of providing your response this way are as follows:

- less impact on the environment as you do not need to use paper or postage
- you will be emailed a copy of your submitted response, as confirmation
- you will be able to start your response, save it, and return to it at a later date - a confirmation email will send you a link to where you left off
- using the online survey greatly assists analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of the issues raised.

2. By e-mail

Using: planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

3. By post

- There are paper copies of the response form available upon request for those without internet access. Please telephone **01305 838334** to request a copy.
- Responses returned by post should reference the **Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation 2025** and be sent to the **Spatial Planning Team, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ.**

Appendix 2

To the question on the Green Belt issue asked of the Dorset Council Cabinet on Wednesday 10th Sep 2025, the response from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning was as follows:

“Changes to Green Belt boundaries can only be made through the adoption of new Local Plans. The current consultation process is an early step towards the preparation of a new Dorset Council Local Plan, and we cannot confirm where changes to the Green Belt will or will not take place, until we have considered all the evidence and the consultation responses, and taken the plan through further stages of its preparation, which include a public examination.

The consultation document identifies settlements that are potentially suitable for development, classified as Tier 1, 2 or 3 depending on their size and level of facilities. This is for the purpose of considering options for development around the edges of those built-up areas, that would function as an extension of that built-up area, regardless of whether it is in the same parish.”

Appendix 3

Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expressly refers to retaining Green Belt land in several places. The key section is Chapter 13: Protecting Green Belt land.

The key paragraphs:

- **142** “The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”
- **143** Sets out the five purposes of Green Belt designation, such as checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, preventing neighbouring towns from merging, preserving the setting and special character of historic towns, etc.
- **147-148** Sets out how Green Belt boundaries should be treated in plan-making. When boundaries are reviewed, they should be considered with the “essential characteristic of permanence” in mind, and “green belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.”
- **148** (specifically) says that where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land and lower performing (“grey belt”) Green Belt land before higher-value Green Belt land. So the NPPF does require retention of Green Belt in principle, emphasising permanence and protection, and only allows alteration of boundaries in very limited, justified circumstances. See Chapter 13 “Protecting Green Belt land”:

Green Belt permanence and retention

- **144** New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, and strategic policies must demonstrate the need for Green Belt and its consistency with other strategic policies.
- **145** “Once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period.”

- **149(b)** “When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should ... not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open.”
- **149(e)** “When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should ... be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period.”
- **151** “Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use...” So the NPPF explicitly requires that Green Belt boundaries be permanent, only changed in exceptional circumstances, and should not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open

Appendix 4

Highway access / transport access

In the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”), December 2024 version, the important references to highway access / transport access are in the chapter on “Promoting sustainable transport”.

The key paragraphs:

- **115** “In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:
 - (a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;
 - (b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
 - (c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code;
 - (d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost-effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.
- **116** “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.”
- **117** “Sets out the priorities for layouts, emphasising giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movement, facilitating access to high quality public transport, and access for emergency and service vehicles. These together show that the NPPF expects development to achieve safe and suitable access, to consider transport impacts (including highway safety and transport network capacity), and that refusal of development on transport/ highway grounds should only happen where impacts are unacceptable or severe after mitigation.

Appendix 5

The Environment

The key chapter and paragraph references found in the NPPF:

- **Ch 15** “Conserving and enhancing the natural environment” sets out multiple duties: safeguarding landscapes, biodiversity, ecosystem services; preventing pollution; conserving soil; etc.
- **Pr 187** Planning policies and decisions should *contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment* by:
 - (a) protecting & enhancing valued landscapes, biodiversity or geological sites, and soils;
 - (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, natural capital and ecosystem services (including best & most versatile agricultural land, trees & woodland);
 - (c) maintaining character of undeveloped coast & improving public access;
 - (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, establishing ecological networks, including features to support priority / threatened species.
- **Ch 16** “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment” – requires planning policies to set out positive strategies for heritage assets, conserving them appropriately, considering their significance, etc.
- **Ch 14** Requires planning to meet the challenge of climate change: mitigation and adaptation (including flooding and coastal change). Updated NPPF also more explicitly refers to a *net-zero future*.
- **Pr 161** Says the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050, taking into account all climate impacts (overheating, water scarcity, storm & flood risk, coastal change).
- **Pr 162** States that plans should proactively mitigate and adapt to climate change, considering long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes.

Appendix 6

Promoting healthy and safe communities

The key paragraph references are found in chapter 8 of the NPPF:

- **96** Planning policies and decisions should aim to create *healthy, inclusive and safe places* which:
 - (a) promote social interaction (e.g. via mixed-use development, strong neighbourhood centres, layouts that allow pedestrian & cycle connections, active street frontages)
 - (b) are safe & accessible so that crime, disorder, or fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion (e.g. using well-designed, clear & legible pedestrian/cycle routes, quality public spaces, continual use of public areas)
 - (c) enable & support healthy lives, promote good health and prevent ill health—especially addressing local health & well-being needs and reducing health inequalities. Examples include provision of safe & accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments, layouts encouraging walking & cycling.
- **97** Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways / fast food outlets:
 - (a) within walking distance of schools or other places where children/young people gather (unless in designated town centre)
 - (b) in locations where there is evidence a concentration of such uses is having adverse impact on local health, pollution or behaviour.
- **98** Social, recreational and cultural facilities & services:
 - (a) plan positively for shared spaces, community facilities (shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, open space, pubs, places of worship)
 - (b) take into account and support delivery of local strategies to improve health, social & cultural wellbeing for all
 - (c) guard against unnecessary loss of valued facilities/services especially where they help meet day-to-day needs
 - (d) ensure established shops, facilities & services are able to develop/modernise and retained for community benefit
 - (e) ensure integrated approach between housing, economic uses, community services/facilities.
- **99** Consider social & environmental benefits of estate regeneration, and use planning powers to help deliver it to a high standard.
- **100** Ensuring sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places for existing/new communities:
 - (a) give *great weight* to need to create, expand or alter these facilities in plans & in decision-making
 - (b) work with promoters, delivery partners, statutory bodies to identify & resolve key issues before applications submitted.

- **101** For other public service infrastructure (health, blue light, library, adult education, university, criminal justice etc):
 - (a) Authorities should work proactively/positively with partners to plan required facilities and resolve key planning issues early.
 - (b) Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering development proposals.
- **102** Public safety & security:
 - (a) Anticipate & address possible malicious threats & other hazards (natural or man-made), especially in locations where large numbers of people congregate (e.g. transport hubs, night-time economy venues, theatres, stadia etc). Layout & design etc should be informed using up-to-date information from police and other agencies. Also consider safety of children / vulnerable users near hazards (open water, railways etc).
 - (b) Recognise / support development needed for defence / security and ensure operational sites are not adversely affected by other development.
- **103** Open space, sport & recreation:
 - (a) Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport & physical activity is important for health & well-being, also delivering wider environmental benefits and helping climate change.
 - (b) Planning policies should use up-to-date assessments of need (quantitative & qualitative deficits/surpluses) and opportunities.
- **104** Existing open space, sports & recreational buildings/land (including playing fields & formal play spaces) should *not* be built on unless:
 - (a) Assessment shows it's surplus; or
 - (b) Loss would be replaced by an equivalent or better provision in quantity & quality in a suitable location; or
 - (c) If development is for alternative sports & recreational provision that clearly outweighs loss of current use.
- **105** Protect & enhance public rights of way and access, including adding links to existing networks (e.g. National Trails).
- **106** Local Green Spaces:
 - **106** Designation of land as "Local Green Space" via local/neighbourhood plans, to allow communities to identify & protect green areas of local importance; must complement sustainable development.
 - **107** Criteria: proximity, demonstrably special to local community (beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, wildlife richness), character local and not extensive tracts.
 - **108** Policies & decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space consistent with national policy for Green Belts (Chapter 13)