



Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation August 2025



Dorset is changing – help us shape it.

Dorset Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide development. The consultation explores how much development we should provide and identifies opportunity sites for new homes, employment land and traveller sites. It also identifies areas of opportunity for wind and solar power.

The Local Plan options consultation is available to view at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-is-changing. You can comment on the Local Plan by completing all or part of this survey online or by using this form. You can also view the site options on a map online and make your comments. Alternatively comment on the site options using the site response form. You can view a paper copy of the Local Plan Options Consultation at your local Dorset library or at County Hall, Dorchester.

If you need help with the survey, please contact the Planning Policy team at planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or 01305 838334.

You are able to give your views between 18 August 2025 and 13 October 2025.

**The consultation will begin on
18 August 2025 and end on 13 October 2025**

How can I make a comment?

To give your views, please:

- Make sure you give your name and either postal or email address along with your postcode so that your response can be considered appropriately.
- Use the official form.
- 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 do not accept any responsibility for the contents of the comments submitted. We reserve the right to remove any comments containing defamatory, abusive or malicious allegations.

You can respond:

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 we do not need to use paper or postage
- you will be emailed a copy of your response as confirmation once submitted
- 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 our analysis of the responses, enabling more efficient and effective consideration of the issues raised

E-mail

We can also accept responses emailed to us, preferably using this form.

planningpolicyconsult@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Written responses

There are paper copies of the response form available upon request for those without internet or computer 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**.

Part A

Please complete one part A form

	Individual	Agent (if applicable)
Name*	[Lisa Goodwin - Clerk]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Organisation	[Holt Parish Council]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 1*	[The Annexe]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 2	[Sunnyside Farm]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 3	[Winterborne Whitechurch]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Town	[Blandford Forum]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Postcode*	[DT11 9AP]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Email address*	[clerk@holt-dorset-pc.gov.uk]	[Click or tap here to enter text.]

Client's details if applicable:

Name*	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Organisation	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 1*	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 2	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Address line 3	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Town	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Postcode*	[Click or tap here to enter text.]
Email address*	[Click or tap here to enter text.]

*essential fields

Group representations

If your representation is on behalf of a group, ensure the lead representative completes the contact details box above. Also, please state [here how many people support the representation:

[11 members of Holt Parish Council]

Part B

Opportunity sites

Which site are you commenting on?

151 homes in LA/HOLT/002 Jades Farm
118 homes in LA/COLE/019/023/024a Land south-west of Smugglers Lane
82 homes in LA/COLE/018 Walford Farm & Longhow (West)
163 homes in LACOLE/020 Walford Farm & Longhow (East) Horns Inn, Burts Hill

What are the main considerations for this site?

- a. Specific design requirements ☐
- b. Natural environment and ecology ☒
- c. Landscape and visual ☒
- d. Heritage ☐
- e. Flood risk ☒
- f. Amenity, health, education ☒
- g. Transport (access and movement) ☒
- h. Green Belt (if applicable) ☒
- i. Other issues ☒

Please provide further details on these considerations, and how they might be addressed:

Objection by Holt Parish Council:

Following the publication of Dorset Local Plan Consultation 2025 on the 18th August and whilst recognising that Dorset Council has to set out the ways it proposes to meet the development needs across the area for new homes, employment land and traveller sites, Holt Parish Council wish to express their objections to the proposals and outline the basis of their objections below:

Consultation Requirements

Within the Consultation main pack, the document outlines at Figure 3.2 those Settlements within Tier 3 of the hierarchy. Paragraph 3.2.8 of the consultation document refers to *'All other areas are either rural in character or comprise small villages/hamlets that do not have sufficient services or facilities for everyday needs to be met locally. These areas are unlikely to be suitable for growth in line with National Policy'*. Holt is not mentioned at all within the settlements covered within Tier 3 of the hierarchy. Appendix A contains the list of those sites which have been identified as proposed opportunity locations for housing. Pages 2 and 3 of the contents section, detail these locations. Neither Holt nor Furzehill (or the Parish of Holt) are mentioned on these pages

According to the Dorset Council Settlement Boundaries layer on the Planning Public Layer of Dorset Explorer, there are multiple places within the Parish of Holt which have Settlement Boundaries:

- There is the Gaunts Common Settlement Boundary;
- There are three individual areas shown for Holt village itself;
- There is the one for Furzehill

Furzehill is a recognised settlement by Dorset Council within the Parish of Holt, as are the three parts of the single Gaunts Common Settlement within Holt Parish. No part of it is within Wimborne Minster Parish or Colehill Parish. This was recognised as part of the Dorset Community Governance Review which was implemented in April 2024 whereby the final recommendation changed the governance arrangements to move “the Lobe” of Furzehill (formerly in the parish of Colehill) to the parish of Holt.

None of the Settlements within Holt Parish are classified as being potentially suitable for development within Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 and Furzehill is definitely not mentioned. Therefore, based upon the Councils definitions, no further development should be considered at the Furzehill settlement because Furzehill is not listed as a settlement for development and therefore, by definition, has been excluded. Neither can it legally be described as being part of the Wimborne Minster and Colehill Settlement, nor part of Wimborne Minster or Colehill Parishes.

This means:

151 homes in LA/HOLT/002	Jades Farm
118 homes in LA/COLE/019+	Land south west of Smugglers Lane
LA/COLE/023, LA/COLE/024/a	
82 homes in LA/COLE/018	Walford Farm & Longhow (West)
163 homes in LACOLE/020	Walford Farm & Longhow (East) Horns Inn, Burts Hill

The above 4 sites, all of which are within the green belt (totalling over 500 proposed homes) were all declared unsuitable within the 2024 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, due to the remoteness and accessibility issues. Inclusion would be contrary to the NPPF.

LA/COLE/018, LACOLE/019, LA/COLE/020, LA/COLE/032, LA/COLE/002 would all be contrary to 143 of the NPPF because it would cause unrestricted sprawl.

LA/COLE/018, LA/COLE/019/LA/COLE/020. LA/COLE/032 would be contrary to 143 of the NPPF as they would merge two settlements.

Note:

40 homes in LA/COLE/002 East Dorset Council Offices

We recognise the 40 proposed homes at the old East Dorset Council offices (a brownfield site) **is valid** as it was included in the 2014 Core Strategy document.

Consultation Stages

It is noted within paragraph 1.4.7 of the Consultation document that after Stage One consultation, there are no further public consultations shown for the later stages. This is unreasonable.

Settlement Hierarchy

The published settlement hierarchy background paper published in 2021 is still valid and utilised as part of local plan consultation (confirmed by a Dorset Council Officer at one of the public drop in sessions). This paper set out that scrutiny of the sustainability of villages with populations in the range 600 to 400 was undertaken when selecting Tier 3 settlements. In order to assess the provision of facilities in villages, Dorset Council sought to identify the facilities which would be most important to a community and suggested that

in order to be included in Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy (i.e. to be identified as a 'larger, more sustainable village'), a village should have at least three or more from the following list:

School;

Shop;

Meeting place (e.g. village hall);

Employment space;

Children's play area or recreation ground;

Doctor's surgery

The village of Furzehill within the Parish of Holt was not listed in this background paper in 2021 and as of today has only one of the criteria listed above contained within the village (the village shop). As such, using the Council's own criteria, it does not meet the requirements to be included within proposed development areas. Clearly, Furzehill is too far from the necessary services to be a sustainable settlement, because of the lack of: any public transport, safe roads, pavements and practical cycle routes in its undulating rural setting.

Impact on Holt Parish

The Rural Parish of Holt extends to an area of 5,500 acres with a population of just over 1200 and is predominantly agricultural, forestry and sandy heathland. The Parish consists of scattered settlements - Holt village, Broomhill, Furzehill, Holtwood, Whitemoor, Holt Forest, Dogdean, Bothenwood, Grange, Gaunts Common, Pig Oak, Mannington, Higher and Lower Row, and Holt Heath - some are mentioned in the Domesday Book. As part of a Community Governance Review, Dorset Council and the Parish Council fully supported the inclusion of the part of Furzehill not already in Holt Parish with an electorate of 200 to be joined to Holt Parish Council as of April 2024 to better reflect its rural identity.

Rural identity and associated needs of such rural communities is a foundational element of the concerns on the proposals and as such why Holt Parish Council is submitting its objections to the proposals. In particular, the extent of proposed development across the Green Belt.

As detailed in the high-level maps contained on the following pages and as compared to the Holt Parish Council boundaries, these proposals would create new dwellings of 711. All of these would be within the 'Furzehill lobe' an area previously recognised by Dorset Council as rural and one which as such was moved within Holt Parish Council due to its rural nature. Development of such scale against the current Furzehill profile which has an estimated 2026 electorate of 321 and estimated population of 481 would be totally disproportionate, it would be unsustainable and would have a significant negative impact upon the wider parish.

Page 512, Walford Farm & Longhow West	proposal for 82 houses
Page 514 Land South-West of Smugglers Lane	proposal for 118 houses
Page 516 Walford Farm and Longhow East	proposal for 163 houses
Page 518 Old East Dorset Council Offices	proposal for 40 houses
Page 522 Land to the West of Cranborne Road	proposal for 157 houses
Page 527 Jades Farm	proposal for 151 houses

To illustrate this further, the village of Furzehill within Holt Parish is an area with:

- no pavements requiring existing residents to walk along the busy roads which run within the village
- village roads which are already busy and increasing in volume and speeding vehicles (as detailed by a previous traffic counter survey conducted as part of Community Speed-watch). Other smaller lanes within the Furzehill lobe are single track in places, twisty, unlit and unsuitable for volume traffic and have no pavements
- limited street lighting
- an inadequately maintained road which has been formally raised as an issue with the Council

- no public transport with the exception of, a twice a week Community Bus which takes residents from surrounding villages into Wimborne.

The size and scale of the proposals within Holt Parish Council are totally inappropriate in terms of density and impact upon a village community and the impact to the broader villages within the Parish.

Impact on Green Belt

All of the proposed developments outlined in Appendix A on pages 512, 514, 516, 518, 522 and 527 are locations within the Green Belt. Within the Councils documents supporting the Local Plan Consultation and as displayed in the public drop-in sessions it states that *'Some of the opportunity sites for housing are located in the Green Belt. National policy means we must consider reasonable options for growth when considering whether to take land out of the Green Belt. This includes ensuring development pattern are sustainable – creating places that are **well served by public transport and have enough facilities**'.*

Paragraph 9.2.1 of the Consultation document refers to

'making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites'. LA/COLE/022 the old East Dorset Council Offices, is such a site and should be redeveloped. This is the only brownfield site in the settlement of Furzehill or in Holt Parish.

'maximising the density of development in town centres'. None of other sites around the settlement of Furzehill or in Holt Parish can be described as part of a town centre.

'locations well served by public transport'. None of the sites within or around the settlement of Furzehill or in Holt Parish can be described as being well served by public transport. There are no daily bus routes in any of Holt Parish or the settlement of Furzehill.

None of the sites around the settlement of Furzehill or in Holt Parish have been defined as Grey Belt.

The implementation of such development proposals would be a significant loss to Green Belt land across the Parish. The proposals are not supportive of one of the 3 pillars of the Councils Sustainable Development Objectives. *The Environmental Objective protecting and enhancing our natural and built historic environment, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources wisely, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.*

Within section 9 of the Consultation document 'Review of Green Belt', none of the sites around the settlement of Furzehill or in Holt Parish can be defined as sustainable. They are all remote from the necessary facilities and services, they lack bus routes, pavements, safe roads and cycle routes.

The Green Belt boundaries are intended to be permanent and not to be altered as explained in paragraph 145 of the NPPF so they can endure beyond the plan period. The Green Belt was significantly changed in 2014 at and near the settlement of Furzehill and consequently should not be adjusted again at this time.

Looking at the broader local areas outside of the Parish where new developments are being proposed, the impact upon the Green Belt land is vast and it would seem this has been taken as a standard approach, without extensive efforts to identify other reasonable options.

The map contained at Figure 4.2 of the consultation document would seem to indicate that the Green Belt area around the Parish of Holt has been declared as 'not rural' when much of it is very rural. This is misleading and should be corrected.

Flexible Settlements Policy

Whilst it is recognised as only a proposal at this stage, it is important to note of the 6 development proposals that are within Holt Parish Council boundaries, none of these would meet the criteria for inclusion within the Flexible Settlements policy as it is stated it should not be applied to the Green Belt and they are all greater than 30 dwellings.

A flexible settlements policy as detailed should not be applied to the Green Belt. Introduction of a flexible settlement policy brings a risk of such a policy being abused with only market housing being built.

Impact on road network within the Parish and broader

Once exiting off the Cranborne Road (B-road), the parish is very rural in nature, with the road leading through Furzehill to Holt being a C classification and in a very poor state of repair and the remaining roads being D roads. They are unsuitable for high volumes of traffic and are frequently utilised by farm vehicles accessing the agricultural land and premises across the Parish. Such proposed development as outlined in the locations referenced above would have a significant and unsustainable effect on local road infrastructure. At least one of the areas identified has no safe access point to an existing lane, so development in these fields would create an immediate high risk road safety issue.

The Parish is already experiencing a negative effect on the rural roads and traffic congestion, due to the substantial development of the town of Wimborne Minster, with more development for both Wimborne Minster and Colehill outlined in this consultation. There are already bottlenecks as vehicles come along the Cranborne road towards Wimborne Minster on a daily basis, due to the additional housing development creating long queues approaching Walford Bridge and the junction just beyond. Clearly, the likelihood of additional vehicle traffic created by the proposed developments would only add to the issues already experienced at the A31 / Canford Bottom junction. Inclusion of development sites as being proposed does not align with paragraphs 115, 116, 117 of NPPF.

The consultation document recognises at paragraph 3.3.4 that traffic congestion is already a major issue on the single carriage way A31 going past Wimborne and Canford Bottom Roundabout. No plans have been suggested for improving the traffic situation, nor improving public transport. As such Wimborne and Colehill would clearly be the worst places to propose significant new development, leading to further congestion in and around these areas and many rural routes. Releasing Green Belt land here would be totally inappropriate. Of the 23 sites proposed for Wimborne Minster and Colehill only 2 are brownfield sites, both are within current settlement boundaries. The other 21 sites were all confirmed as unsuitable by the 2024 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Lack of public transport

Holt is a rural parish and has no public transport across the many villages within the Parish. The only exception to this is the Community Bus which operates twice a week to take residents from the villages into Wimborne. The Parish operates an active volunteer Neighbourcare Scheme which takes residents without a car from the villages to essential appointments such as Doctors, Hospitals etc. but this is reliant upon the goodwill of volunteers. All other residents have to use their own vehicles to get around and access towns such as Wimborne Minster or Poole.

All of the areas of development identified within the Parish identify that suitable vehicular/cycle access would need to be developed. Despite the proposals for inclusion of these 6 areas there is nothing contained within the Dorset Local Transportation Plan Consultation 2025 which addresses improvement to transport links across the Parish, meaning the proposals as outlined are unsustainable, would introduce significant road pressures across this rural area and further risks to pedestrians on roads (due to lack of pavements), cyclists and horses with their riders.

All this is made substantially worse by the number of vehicles which use the local lanes to avoid the regularly congested A31 by cutting across to the north of Wimborne through the parish of Holt and through Furzehill.

Effect on local services

It has been widely recognised and experienced by residents that due to the existing substantial development within and surrounding Wimborne Minster over the last 5 years and continuing to date, it has had a negative effect on accessibility to basic services, such as to Doctors, Pharmacies, Schools etc. The proposed plans will only exacerbate these and heighten the issues already being experienced.

Effect on Environment

All of the areas that have been identified within the Holt Parish Council boundaries are in sites within the existing ecological network, with some alongside river locations, have tree preservation orders either on site or at boundaries. It is documented that there are priority species on the sites contained. All of the locations are within Green Belt and are within 5km of protected Dorset Heathland a recognised Ramsar site and an area of Special Scientific Interest. Paragraph 13 within the consultation document refers to Heathland Mitigation. The easiest way to avoid needing Heathland Mitigation is to choose sites that are far away from heaths. Holt Heath suffered a recent devastating fire. All the sites listed on page 1 of our response are within 3 km of Holt Heath and all of these sites were rejected in the 2024 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Flood and Drainage Risk

There are concerns over flooding caused by such development, particularly as many of the proposed sites would naturally have drainage going into Dogdean. This is an area with a small village track/road which already floods at numerous times every year. This situation has worsened following the developments alongside Cranborne road. The lower part of Furzehill where it reaches the Cranborne Road, also floods during prolonged periods of wet weather, as does Smugglers Lane near to Dogdean Farm. The B3078 has been totally shut because of flooding in 2024.

Sewage Concern

Even based upon current village profile, it is frequently necessary for tankers to pump excessive water at Clapgate sewage pumping site to avoid flooding levels being reached. The sewage treatment works are the opposite side of Wimborne, meaning waste has to be pumped across to this from Furzehill. There is already significant load on this and during 2024 there have been 247 reported spills in or near Wimborne (within 3 miles). Development of the proposed scale would increase the risks and likelihood of greater issues/spills being experienced.

Given the significant environmental impacts of such proposed development this would seem to be contrary to one of the Councils three pillars of Sustainable Development Objectives and the Design Code outlined in paragraph 1.6.3 of the consultation document.

Conclusion

In summary, the Parish Council believe the Parish of Holt and Furzehill (with the exception of the former East Dorset Council Office site) are excluded from proposed development, due to the failure to detail these within Tiers 1,2 or 3 of the local plan consultation document. Notwithstanding this, considering the proposed areas specified within the Parish of Holt, together with the developments being proposed for Wimborne Minster Town and the Colehill Parish areas totalling 3,402 houses, the impact upon such extent of development on these rural communities and limited roads, is entirely disproportionate, it would have significant environmental impact and is not in alignment with the Councils own specification for settlements considered for development or their own criteria for sustainable development. For the negative impact upon the villages within Holt Parish Council and the significant depletion of Green Belt land we wish to formally object to the local plan.