



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*	Mrs Sandra Hillier (Parish Clerk)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Organisation	Bradford Abbas Parish Council	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 1*	3 The Bungalows	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 2	Beer Hackett	Click or tap here to enter text.
Address line 3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Town	Sherborne	Click or tap here to enter text.
Postcode*	DT9 6QR	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Client's details if applicable:

Name*	Parish Clerk
Organisation	Bradford Abbas Parish Council
Address line 1*	As above
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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*	As above

*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:

7 Parish Councillors

Part B

Consultation questions

Section 2: Vision and Strategic Priorities

2.1. The Local Plan Vision

Question 1: Do you have any comments on the proposed vision for Dorset?

It is important that the nature of the County is maintained and does not disappear under a mass of building and concrete. All laudable visions, but infrastructure before homes, particularly in the Northern Area.

2.2. Strategic priorities

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategic priorities for the Local Plan?

Affordable (?) high quality homes for local people. There is a real need for a Neighbourhood Plan which is in consultation phase at the moment. To ensure that these homes fit with the nature of the village.

In Bradford Abbas there is scope for more local businesses and jobs at Babylon Hill (Peel Centre) this would encourage local people to work and live in the Village.

Efforts to halt nature's decline is laudable, but not at the expense of removing valuable agricultural land, agriculture is the main activity in the northwest corner of the County.

Public transport in the north west area encompassing Bradford Abbas, Thornhackett and Yetminster has a two hourly Heart of Wessex train, and a bus one day a week, a more commercial bus services would require subsidy, None of which are suitable for commuters.

Section 3: The strategy for sustainable development

3.2. The Strategy for Dorset

Question 3: The proposed settlement hierarchy lists the towns and villages that will be the focus for new homes. Are there other settlements where we should plan for new homes? Do you have any comments on whether a settlement is in the right Tier or not?

The tiers and hierarchy lists seem to be correct. Care should be taken that an future development does not 'swamp' the tier 3 villages, No more than 20% of the existing population .

3.3. South Eastern Dorset area

Question 4: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the south eastern area?

None

3.4. Central Dorset area

Question 5: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the central area?

None

3.5. Northern Dorset area

Question 6: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the northern area?

Some of the Tier 3 villages have allocations of 200+ houses with no improvement to infrastructure. Improving the access to the larger towns is all very well, but there is a need for improved access to the towns, not just between them. The A30 is particularly problematic as there is a bottleneck at the western end as it enters Yeovil. The Blackmore Vale is highlighted as a developing corridor 3.5.2 and it is an important landscape and that its nature is preserved and does not become an area to dump extra houses. It is important that the nature of historical tourist venues 3.5.4 like Sherborne are not overdeveloped and lose their intrinsic character that attracts visitors.

There is no mention of the Heart of Wessex line and its connections used by some residents in Bradford Abbas.

3.6. Western Dorset area

Question 7: Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for the western area?

None

3.7. Infrastructure Delivery

Question 8: Is there any important infrastructure that needs to be delivered alongside new homes in the Western/Central/South Eastern/Northern area?

A CIL type levy on business, factory development could assist in funding infrastructure improvements. There is no mention of using brownfield sites which should come first. Infrastructure as presented in the plan is inadequate, there needs to be discussion on health provision, education provision at all levels, if they are not addressed there will be poor housing provision and resident dissatisfaction.

Section 4: Housing Delivery Strategy

4.2. Local Housing Need and Housing Delivery

Question 9: The Local Plan sets out a strategy to meet the area's housing needs through allocating sites for new homes, the flexible settlements policy, new settlements and the efficient use of land. Are there any other measures could help to meet housing needs?

There is a need to define affordability more clearly, social or assisted developments, every property is affordable to someone! Many sites are already permitted but not yet developed, is there evidence of need? There is not sufficient emphasis on using brownfield sites.

4.3. Housing supply

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Plan including a lower housing target for the first few years and a higher figure towards the end of the plan period to meet housing needs?

a. Agree ☐

b. Disagree ☒

c. I have another suggestion ☐

If there is a need it needs to be met now. Why should there suddenly be a need for more houses later?

4.4. Meeting housing needs of specific groups

Question 11: Where should a policy allowing sites for only affordable homes apply?

a. All of Dorset ☐

b. Only around those towns and villages listed in the proposed settlement hierarchy ☒

c. Only in the Green Belt ☐

There is a difference between social and affordable. There is a need to maintain access to schools, health facilities and a scattergun approach across the whole of Dorset will not help this, by the very nature those living in 'affordable/social' housing are on lower incomes and so access to shops, schools etc is a greater problem, and so there is a need to access public transport which the rural areas do not have. Blanket figures of say 30% 'affordable housing' cross all development sites can lead to problems of integration.

Section 5: Flexible Settlements Policy

5.2. Proposed approach – Flexible settlements policy

Question 12: We have suggested that the Local Plan will not include clear boundaries to define the edges of towns and villages. Instead, the flexible settlements policy would allow new homes to be built around certain towns and villages. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☒
- c. Neutral ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

If the policy is adopted, with no clear development boundaries, it is important that developments are small scale in order that the residents are fully assimilated into the community. The number should be constrained to approximately 30 per site. Strict boundaries can constrain growth and village viability in particular. However, this policy could lead to an uncontrolled spread of the village and perhaps a redraw of boundaries would be better.

There is no mention of 'infil', which in many cases would be preferable..

5.3. The scale of development

Question 13: We propose that the flexible settlements policy will include a limit of 30 homes per site. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this threshold?

- a. The limit of 30 homes is about right ☒
- b. There should be less homes ☐
- c. More homes per site should be allowed ☐

Please explain your reasoning

Up to 30 will allow for growth but also allow for integration within the existing community

5.4. Number of sites at each settlement

Question 14: At a town/village, should one flexible settlement policy site be started, before another one is permitted?

a. Yes ☒

b. No ☐

Please provide any further comments

We would expect that no new site would start until the present one is completed along with associated infrastructure. Too many houses at once can deplete resources and put unnecessary strain on roads, doctors surgeries, schools etc.

However with a site deemed to have been started when the site is cleared this could lead to stagnation of development, a site should be deemed to have been started when houses have actually been built.

5.5. Settlements where the flexible settlements policy would apply

Question 15: We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy will only apply to the areas around certain towns and villages, these are those ranked as 'Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3' in our settlement hierarchy. What do you think about the locations where we have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should apply?

About right bit in proportion, smaller villages have smaller developments.

There are a number of Tier 3 settlements where there is no public transport such as Bradford Abbas, Thornford and Yetminster if the policy in 5.5.1 is strictly adhered to there would be no development

if a regular bus service were available the residents would be very happy!

Compliance to 5.5.1. should apply County wide.

5.6. Continuous built-up areas and edge of continuous built-up areas

Question 16: We have suggested that the flexible settlement policy should only be applied around the 'continuous built-up areas' (i.e. 'densely populated areas with high concentrations of buildings, infrastructure and paved roads') of certain towns and villages. Do you have any comments on our definition of this 'continuous built-up area'?

New developments need to be properly connected to existing settlements with roads, footpaths etc. where relevant. Many parts of the rural village have no footpaths.

5.7. Green Belt

Question 17: We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should not be applied in the Green Belt. What are your thoughts on this?

There is no green belt in our area, green belt has a specific definition as opposed to green field, However where there is green belt that should take precedence over Flexible Settlements Policy

5.8. Approach to countryside development and urban intensification

Question 18: Away from the towns and villages listed in the settlement hierarchy, there may be types of development that we could support. Do you have any comments on this approach and on the types of development that could be supported in the countryside?

Again there is this term affordable housing other than this the items in the list would not alter the intrinsic nature of the countryside, but building affordable/social housing in areas without good transport links (in particular) could generate problems of integration.

Smaller development of 5 or 6 homes may be more desirable if the proposed development is not in the Tiered structure.

5.9. Neighbourhood plans and the flexible settlements policy

Question 19: We have suggested that the flexible settlements policy should not be applied in places with a recently made neighbourhood plan which includes allocations for new homes. What are your thoughts on this?

Agree, the Neighbourhood Plan will have already looked at housing allocation and identified possible sites.

Section 6: Employment Strategy

6.3. Employment allocations

Question 20: The Local Plan will retain and protect existing key employment sites, identify new employment sites at locations close to more sustainable settlements, allow for expansion of existing employment sites and allow for new employment sites in suitable locations. Do you have any comments on this approach?

Agree that existing sites are protected but without employment in Tier 3 settlements there will be an increase in traffic movements to work, especially if there is not a regular bus service, on already busy, narrow roads which regularly flood.

6.4. Employment development away from allocated sites

Question 21: The Local Plan will enable employment land to be developed outside identified sites at certain towns and villages, subject to certain considerations. Do you agree with this approach?

Out of town sites should be disregarded as they can affect the sustainability of town and village centres

6.5. Mixed use development

Question 22: We have suggested that larger scale housing sites should be required to provide land for employment uses. Proposals for 300 homes or more would be mixed residential and employment developments, with a ratio of 0.25ha of employment space for every 100 homes. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☒
- c. Neutral ☒
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

This depends on what is already in the locality, a development of 300 or more homes could generate the need for a local general store, or a school but if there is already a local school with spaces, the school would not be viable. Similarly with a food store. Each has to be looked at on its merits.

6.6. Protecting employment sites

Question 23: We have suggested that the Local Plan should include policies to protect the most important existing 'key' employment sites.

a) Do you have any views on the strategy we have suggested for protecting employment sites?

Sites like the Peel Centre could be developed further, but accessibility needs to be reviewed as access from the A30 roundabout is very problematic. Town centres like Sherborne need protection from 'out of town' developments that may detract from the viability of the present town centre. Conversion of too many empty properties in Town Centres into residential could be to the detriment of the Town Centre

b) What criteria should we consider when defining 'key' and 'non-key' employment sites?

- a. Site size ☐
- b. Location ☒
- c. Employment use type ☒
- d. Accessibility ☒
- e. Contribution to meeting economic objectives/needs ☒
- f. Market attractiveness ☐
- g. Opportunities for growth/expansion ☒
- h. The site's status in previous local plans ☐
- i. Other ☐

Section 7: Town centre development

7.1. Town centres

Question 24: How do you think we should plan to support town centres in the future?

Encourage the use of empty units for short term lettings if necessary 'pop-up shops' that would encourage more people into the town. At present there are too many empty Bank buildings that need to be developed and their use encouraged. This would require greater flexibility around Planning Use Classes.

Adequate, cheap parking provision is of vital importance so as to attract people into the centre. If there is free parking provision at an out of town centre people will migrate there

Question 25: What types of use do you think will be most important for the future of our town centres?

- a. Shops ☒
- b. Cafes/restaurants ☒
- c. Leisure (e.g. cinemas) ☐
- d. Offices ☒
- e. Cultural (e.g. museums) ☐
- f. Community (e.g. libraries) ☒
- g. Hotels ☒
- h. Other ☐

No comment

7.2. Managing town centre development

Question 26: We are suggesting that retail impact assessments should be undertaken for retail development proposals outside the town centres defined in the Plan, that are over the size of a small food store (280 square metres net). How much do you agree or disagree with the introduction of a threshold of 280 square metres for retail impact assessments?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☐
- c. Neutral ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☒
- e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning

280 sq m is too large for many, however there are certain businesses that would be better served out of town such as builder's merchants.

Question 27: Should the threshold also apply to leisure uses that are net 280 square metres?

a. Yes ☒

b. No ☐

Question 28: We are considering whether the Local Plan should include a policy which supports interim or temporary uses pending a permanent use for a vacant town centre building - we have called these 'meanwhile uses'. To what extent do you agree with the introduction of a meanwhile uses policy?

a. Agree ☒

b. Partially agree ☐

c. Neutral ☐

d. Partially disagree ☐

e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning

Landlords could offer vacant units at a reduced rent . Encourage the development of street markets. Vacant building signal dereliction and the town centre could decline further, a vital, vibrant town centre will encourage visitors and viability for the future.

Section 8: Brownfield Land

8.3. Brownfield land delivery

Question 29: How else can we encourage development on brownfield land, whilst also planning positively to meet our needs for homes and employment land?

First claim for development over green fields should be brown field sites. These because of their nature could be more expensive to develop and maybe there could be some form of support to developers to clear such sites. Land owners may hold onto brown field sites hoping for green field prices, in such cases perhaps CPO's could be used to bring brown field sites into use. Brownfield sites should not be restricted to Tiers .1,2 and 3

Section 9: Green Belt Review

9.2. Our approach to Green Belt release

Question 30: To what extent do you agree with taking land out of the Green Belt to help meet our development needs?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☐
- c. Neutral ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Disagree ☒

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

The green belt designation is there to protect green sites for the future, remove that and you get urban sprawl. In areas where there is no Green Belt protection there should be some means of preventing the coalescence of two or more settlements as could happen under the Flexible Settlements Policy. Defined development boundaries help to prevent this.

Section 10: Self-build and custom-build housing

10.3. Self-build plot delivery

Question 31: We have suggested that the Local Plan should include a flexible settlements policy which would allow new homes around certain towns and villages. What impact, if any, do you think the proposed flexible settlements policy might have on opportunities for self-build homes?

- a. High impact ☐
- b. Some impact ☐
- c. No impact ☒

Please provide further comments or reasoning.

The sites identified can be used for self-build anyway. There should be a design code to ensure that self-build homes conform to the local built environment. Neighbourhood Plans may include this.

No comment

Question 32: Is there anything else we should do to increase the supply of self-build plots?

Section 11: Neighbourhood Plans

11.3. Housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plans

Question 33: We have suggested that housing requirements for neighbourhood plan areas should be finalised at the next stage of preparing the Local Plan. This is likely to involve consideration of sites with planning permission, local plan allocations and unplanned development. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☒
- c. Neutral ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

Neighbourhood Plans are important in preserving the nature of the settlement and it is important to emphasise this. With the withdrawal of funding for Neighbourhood Plans it is difficult to see what impact this will have in the future.

11.4. Flexible Settlements Policy

Question 34: Should the housing requirement figures for neighbourhood plan areas outside the Green Belt, include an allowance for sites that could come forward through the flexible settlements policy?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☒

Please provide any further comments or reasoning.

Housing requirement figures for Neighbourhood Plan areas include numbers for flexible settlement sites.

Section 12: Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

12.3. Strategy for meeting Traveller needs

Question 35: We have suggested that our Local Plan objectives for Travellers should be:

- to reduce the numbers of unauthorised sites,
- to provide opportunities for sites to expand,
- to encourage new Traveller sites in sustainable locations, and
- to provide opportunities for Travellers to deliver their own sites.

Do you have any comments on the objectives for meeting the need for Traveller sites?

Agree with the idea of reducing unauthorised sites but not reduce, remove so that they can be regulated properly. Delivering their own sites can be dangerous as it can lead to sites in inappropriate locations (re Basildon in Essex as an example)

Question 36: To help ensure that enough pitches are provided to meet Dorset's needs, Traveller pitches could be delivered alongside homes for the settled community on large scale residential

There can be, if the site becomes over developed, with too many caravans and too many families on one site. There can be tension between the communities because of the differing lifestyles.

development. Are there any issues which you think we need to consider in locating Traveller pitches alongside new built homes for the settled community?

Question 37: We are suggesting that 5 Traveller pitches should be provided for every 500 homes on large development sites. Is this threshold correct?

- a. Yes ☐
- b. No-it should be higher ☐
- c. No-it should be lower ☒

Please provide any further comments or reasoning.

We would not support this policy

12.5. Criteria based policy for Traveller sites

Question 38: To encourage Travellers to deliver their own sites, we are suggesting that the Local Plan should include a criteria policy which takes account of the site's location, access, neighbouring development, environmental impact and management of the site. Do you think we need to add or change any of the suggested criteria?

Criteria seem to be a starting point.

Section 13: Strategic Heathland Recreation Mitigation

13.1. Background

Question 39: We have identified opportunity sites which could deliver more homes to help meet Dorset's housing needs. Do we need to change the approach to mitigating impacts on protected Dorset Heaths habitat sites as part of planning to meet increased housing needs?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

Please provide further comments or reasoning.

No comment made

13.3. Shapwick, Kingston Lacy and the Stour Valley Park

Question 40: To what extent do you agree or disagree with development at Shapwick to enable the delivery of public benefits from investment in the Kingston Lacy Estate?

a. Agree ☐

b. Partially agree ☐

c. Neutral ☐

d. Partially disagree ☐

e. Disagree ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning

No comment made

Section 14: Onshore Wind, Solar, and Battery Energy Storage

14.2. Identifying suitable areas

Question 41: We have outlined some areas which could be appropriate for wind turbines, ground mounted solar panels and battery energy storage. To what extent do you agree or disagree with identifying broad areas of opportunity for wind, solar and battery energy storage?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☐
- c. Neutral ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Disagree ☒

Please provide any further comments or reasoning

A number of sites are already allocated or are in train locally for solar farms and increasing the number further will reduce the nature of the countryside and the natural environment. Farming will also be massively affected if there too many solar and battery storage areas. The land with Wind turbines, while ugly and altering the physical environment, can be farmed around them. There needs to be a greater emphasis on providing solar panels on new buildings of all types, not just houses and utilising areas that are not farm land such as car park roofs, verges, . They central reservations etc as in other countries They need to be considered on a site by site basis not just because they are in an area that is perceived by planners to be acceptable.

Housing developments should be encouraged to construct houses with south facing roofs for the effective provision of solar panels. Installation of heat pumps in new builds should also ne encouraged, There is no mention of these in the plan

With regards to battery storage areas, there is still too little known and there seems to be a tendency towards fires and so much care is needed in their location, and a need for easy access for emergency vehicles

Section 15: North of Dorchester Masterplan

15.3. Matter 1: Eastern edge

Question 42: Since Roman times, the centre of Dorchester has had a prominent position in the landscape. One of the threats to this identity is at the eastern edge of the potential development area (near the A35). Would you support keeping this eastern area more green and open, even if that means fewer homes, facilities and jobs?

- a. Agree ☒
- b. Partially agree ☐
- c. Disagree ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Neutral ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

Click or tap here to enter text.

15.4. Matter 2: Employment locations

Question 43. Supporting jobs, homes and services all in one place is an essential part of the health of a town. Do you see new workspaces that are integrated into walkable neighbourhoods and local centres as an attractive part of Dorchester in the future?

- a. Agree ☐
- b. Partially agree ☐
- c. Disagree ☐
- d. Partially disagree ☐
- e. Neutral ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

No comment made

15.5. Matter 3: Pigeon House Farm neighbourhood

Question 44: We believe that the valley at Pigeon House Farm can play an important role in encouraging access to nature and celebrating local landscape – What type of development, if any, do you think could help support this in a sustainable way?

- i. A smaller scale of development ☐
- ii. A larger scale of development ☐
- iii. The use of the area as an undeveloped landscape buffer, for recreation, education and nature interpretation, without any housing development. ☐
- iv. A mixture of the above ☐

Please provide any further comments or reasoning...

No comment made

15.6. Matter 4: Main east to west route

Question 45: What are your priorities for a new east–west route?

No comment made