



Holt Parish Council

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Planning Policy Team
Dorset Council Local Plan
South Walks House
South Walks Road
Dorchester
DT1 1UZ

Dear Planning Policy Team,

Holt Parish Council (HPC) is pleased to respond to the draft Local Plan prepared by Dorset Council (DC).

HPC recognises and supports the objectives being set by DC in trying to implement the National Policy and the challenges that this presents.

HPC also understands that the Local Plan must have regard to National Policy taking into account:

- The Dorset housing target of c30, 000 new homes over the next 17 years.
- Environmental restraints.
- The Green Belt.
- Sustainable Development (as defined in the National Policy and Local Plan) balancing economic, social and environmental objectives.

Whilst taking these overarching considerations into account, HPC has considered the local impact and risks delivering these objectives would have on the Parish and the communities who live and work there.

As it stands the draft Local Plan appears to have overlooked the impact of the proposed development sites on the rural Parishes in close proximity.

Holt Parish is particularly vulnerable and at risk given it's location within this complex development region of Dorset and close proximity to the major 'Tier 1' sustainable development conurbations of Poole and Bournemouth. The Parish also borders the 'Tier 2' development locations of Wimborne and Colehill.

As they stand, although the draft proposals do not identify areas of development within Holt Parish, they create a risk to the unique rural heritage of the Parish with its SSSI's and areas of rural conservation.

Whilst recognising the challenges of balancing the objectives within the Local Plan and protecting Holt Parish, the Plan, as it stands, could inadvertently have lasting and adverse consequences on its rural heritage.

Specifically, we would like to draw your attention to the SE Dorset development presentation (including reference to Section 17 covering Wimborne and Colehill).

Growth and large scale housing is proposed around the Parish including:-

Wimborne (Tier2) - South of the Parish. Proposed 500 new homes from the Green Belt, in addition to the East Dorset core strategy developments already underway.

Verwood (Tier2) - North of the Parish. Proposed 100 new homes from the Green Belt.

West Moors (Tier2) – East of the Parish. Proposed 170 new homes from the Green Belt.

This proposes a total of approximately 770 new homes all from the Green Belt, in addition to those already under construction in areas surrounding Holt Parish.

Whilst these are not within the boundaries of Holt Parish, it will be more greatly affected by the movement of traffic to and from these locations.

Holt Heath (SSSI) has always been used as a ‘rat-run’ to avoid the already overloaded A31. Traffic volumes are already of serious concern and this will be exacerbated by the increase in population and employment. Protecting Holt Heath is paramount.

The draft Plan specifically addresses protecting the environment (ref 7.1.3, 7.2, fig 7.2 & 7.3), but these proposals will place enormous pressure on the Heath and its wellbeing (e.g. impact of vehicle nitrate pollution). The Heath will also be under pressure by the increased nearby population venturing out of the towns and villages using the Heath for recreation. Periodically, car parks are already full to capacity.

The unintended consequence of the proposals is for the Parish to be ‘squeezed’ and ‘marginalized’ bringing in the surrounding pressures of development. This puts at risk the character, heritage, environmental wellbeing and way of life of the Parish.

HPC is, therefore, seeking the support of DC to recognise these issues and take tangible steps within the Plan to mitigate and reverse the impact of the Plan as it stands.

Within the sustainable development framework, examples of mitigation could include the following:

Economic:

- Commercial planning applications are considered without a “presumption of sustained development”.
- Encourage small rural industry and locate large scale operations with HGV’s in appropriate industrial locations.
- Improved provision of full fibre Broadband. This will support working from home and reduce commuter traffic (ref 1.3.26).

Social:

- Residential planning applications to reflect the housing under proposal and construction and are also considered without a “presumption of sustained development”.
- Tighter planning restrictions in place to prevent ‘planning by creep’ (ref Chapter 7 & policies Dev. 7 & 8).
- Restrictions on the number of exemption sites within the Parish.
- Strict recognition and enforcement of the remaining Green Belt.

Environmental:

- Recognition of the pressure on roads, traffic and infrastructure is given high priority. The rural network of roads within the Parish is unsuitable for any increases in traffic, which should be deterred and reduced.
- Selective and appropriate road maintenance. Improving rural roads to support these housing and economical developments will encourage rather than discourage their use.
- An enforceable traffic management plan is required as a matter of priority. This will ensure that appropriate roads are used rather than the unsuitable rural roads (e.g. the introduction of weight/width restrictions, traffic calming, single track with passing places, routing schemes).
- Conserve and enhance the Parish’s rural characteristics, particularly bearing in mind complex constraints such as the Green Belt and SSSI’s.
- Implementing the objectives contained in the Dorset Heathland Air Quality report. This report has been accepted by DC Cabinet and includes a broad range of environmental measures with various stakeholders improving the resilience of Heathland and addressing air pollution.
- Priority is given to the provision of Cycle routes and making the Parish pedestrian (and equestrian) friendly.
- Notwithstanding provisions for reducing traffic, the suggested Wimborne Town Centre redevelopment of the Allendale includes sufficient parking and electric charging points to enable the local residents to access facilities in the town centre (ref 17.4.5).

Summary

The proposed draft Local Plan presents unprecedented opportunities but also real and significant threats. We would ask that these risks be taken into serious consideration and acted upon.

Section 17.2.1 of the draft plan sets out a 2038 vision for Wimborne and Colehill. This includes a vision to “maintain their rich historic character that can be treasured and enjoyed by the residents”. That also applies to Holt Parish, now and for the future.

Yours faithfully,



Lisa Goodwin

Clerk to Holt Parish Council