



Campaign to save Dorset from over-development

Dorset Council's draft Local Plan proposes that 39,000 new homes be built in the county by 2038, plus matching amounts of new workspace, roads, car parks and other infrastructure.

This scale of growth would cause grave damage to the county's unique heritage of landscape and wildlife, heavy incursion on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, breach of the Green Belt, and further pressure on infrastructure. It would directly conflict with the aims of Dorset Council's own Climate Strategy to cut carbon emissions and protect wildlife.

Dorset CAN is campaigning to change the Local Plan – to spare our landscape, heritage, wildlife and residents from damaging impacts, while meeting local needs for housing and workspace.

The changes we want

We are calling for three main changes to the Local Plan:

1. Reduce from 39,000 to 20,000 the number of new homes to be built – while fully meeting the need for affordable housing

As a direct result of that change :

2. Reduce the number of new workspaces, roads, car parks and other infrastructure required to service those homes
3. Avoid major new development in the AONB; avoid all encroachment on the Green Belt; and substantially reduce the scale of new greenfield housing estates elsewhere.

Supporting argument

Dorset Council states that it is required to use the Government's standard method for calculating housing need, which points to 30,000 new houses; and that a further 9,000 new houses should be added in order to meet possible unmet need for housing from neighbouring local authorities. But in fact:

- Dorset Council is under no obligation to use the Government's standard method. The Government itself, in its National Planning Policy Framework, allows Local Authorities to use reasons such as exceptional heritage and pressure on infrastructure to take an alternative approach to calculating the scale of development that is needed.
- Government guidance clearly states that the Council is under no obligation to accept unmet need from neighbouring authorities : moreover, no request to do so has been received.
- Government guidance also clearly states that calculations of housing need should not be used to justify building houses on greenfield sites in the AONB or the Green Belt.
- The Council's main duty is to ensure that local needs for housing, including truly affordable homes, can be met. This points towards a total of about 20,000 new homes over the 17 year period, which can be accommodated without the damage that we describe.

We therefore urge the Council to think again, cut its new homes target and save the county from the impact of a serious and un-necessary over-estimate of housing need.

Your role in the campaign

We can win this campaign if you, your organisation and your friends flood the in-boxes of Dorset Councillors with urgent messages stating your version of the three things that we are calling for. Give the message a strong personal and local twist if you can.

Find your Councillor at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/councillors>

Dorset CAN's response to the draft Local Plan can be found at www.dorsetcan.news