

# DORSET COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN OPTIONS CONSULTATION

A briefing note for the Parish Council by  
Cllr Mark Pemberton  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - DETAIL ON FOLLOWING PAGES

### ISSUE

1.1. Page 539 to 561 of Annex A<sup>1</sup> to Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation<sup>2</sup> describes an option to put 40 houses in the field stretching along the C53 from the Park Farm Close development to Bats Lane. We have until 13 Oct 2025 to respond.

1.2. Key sub issues, well-rehearsed in the publications, are the need for affordable<sup>3</sup> housing that meets the local<sup>4</sup> need. These phrases are key to the debate.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3. That the Parish Council debates the issue, determines its position and writes to Dorset Council. Too my mind the comments should include:

1.3.1 The scale of the proposal, representing a 20% increase in housing, is disproportionate to the existing village – **see page 2.**

1.3.2 The Local Infrastructure and Services are not suitable for such expansion – **see page 2.**

1.3.3 Dorset Council's own supporting documents, often quoting the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>5</sup>, and the relationship of the proposals to the National Landscapes, are contradictory and often argue against such a development - **explored from page 4.**

1.3.4 "Local need" is not adequately defined, and affordability is not properly addressed - **explored on page 7.**

1.4. That the Council should commit to drafting a formal position statement relating to development in the Parish – Note, the PC's previous position on development generally, and some comment on previous applications, **is at Page 3.** And my personal perspective/declaration of interest **is at Page 8.**

### KEY CONSIDERATION

1.5. Dorset Council's proposal to switch to Flexible Settlement Policy, in essence removing all settlement boundaries in order to permit building around Dorset's Tier 1-3 settlements, which it lists - Martinstown is not listed. Additionally, much of the discussion refers to 30 houses per settlement, rather than 40 proposed for Martinstown. **This is explored throughout pages 4-7.**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/appendix-a-opportunity-sites-for-housing>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/dorset-council-local-plan-options-consultation-document-2025-printweb-final>

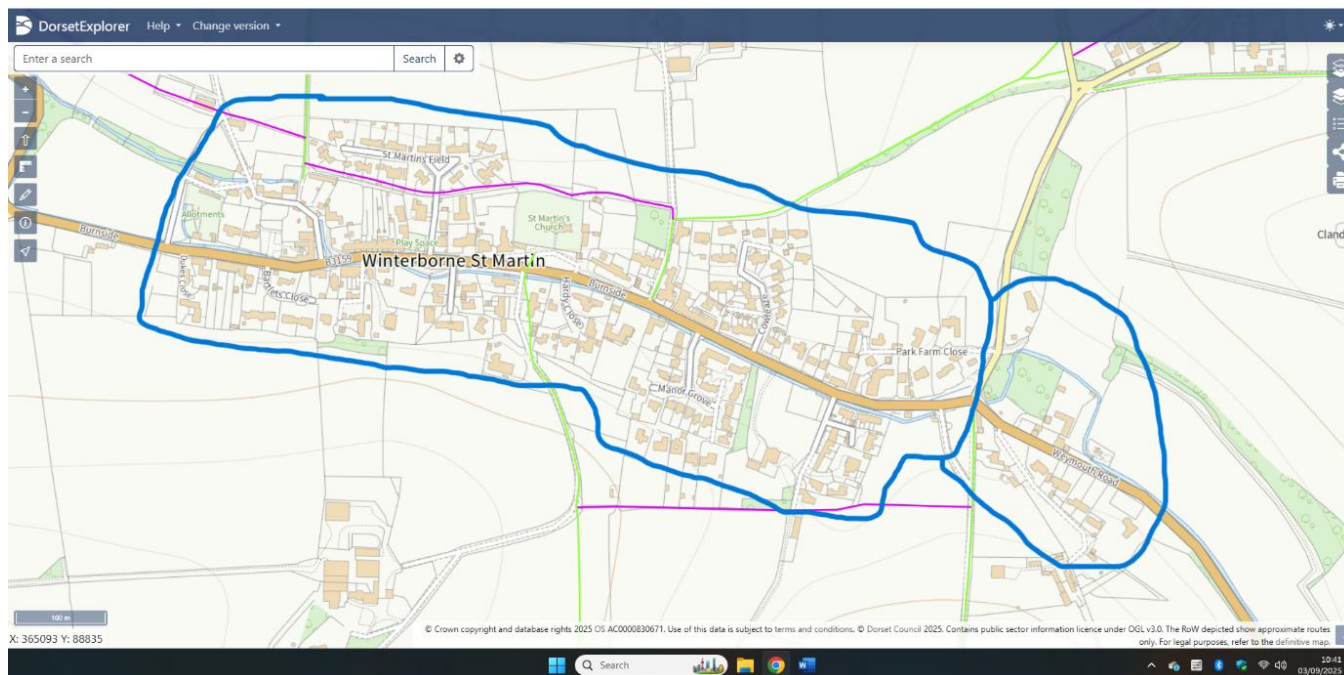
<sup>3</sup> See *inter alia* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-fact-sheet-9-what-is-affordable-housing/fact-sheet-9-what-is-affordable-housing>

<sup>4</sup> I have asked the authors/point of contact how "local" is defined in the context of this situation.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

## SCALE OF PROPOSAL

2.1 Within the larger envelope below (contiguous Martinstown) there are roughly 194 residences (map count plus physical cross check as Magna Housing did not respond to a request for information concerning their property on Manor Grove) including the 5 not yet sold or completed on Horseshoe Lane, with a further 11 in the small disconnected circle. In either case the addition of 40 residences would represent an increase in housing stock of around 20%.



## LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

2.2 Martinstown is a delightful place to live, thankfully separated from the pastiche sprawl of Poundland (sic): rural, agricultural and distinct. However, it's attractiveness and separation mean that it can appear to be a cross between a dormitory and an old people's home. The lack of "local" employment means that those who do work must, in the main, work further afield, and the irregularity and unreliability of bus services means that the majority of trips to work, shops, hospitals etc must be undertaken by car, which in turn defeats any Green or Climate emergency considerations let alone NPPF para 129 which in this vein states: *the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*

2.3 This car-based requirement would fuel further delays on C53, particularly at the Scottish restaurant and at Monkey Jump roundabout, and require careful assessment of how access can safely be achieved to the proposed site.

2.4 Access to village centre (utilities) would be via East Lodge where the existing verge is probably not wide enough to permit wheelchair or pushchair access thus requiring either (compulsory) purchase or works to further narrow the C53.

2.5 To be fair, many of these issues are touched upon within the Opportunity analysis at LA/WSTM/002 (Footnote 1 repeated here<sup>6</sup>).7.3

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/appendix-a-opportunity-sites-for-housing>

**PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL PERSPECTIVE.** The Parish Council had previously decided that we would oppose any substantive development until satisfied that the sewage system specifically, and infrastructure leading to flooding more generally, was dealt with. Our history with sewage leaking from drains has previously been evidenced to both Wessex Water and the Local Authority. As has the flooding at the both ends of the village which have as their source in surface or groundwater run-off, and at the eastern end of the village (specifically the junction of Burnside (B3158) with the Bridport Road (C53 from Monkey Jump)) surface flooding from both the Winterborne at the bridge to Eweleaze farm when that cannot manage the Winterborne's flow, plus flow on the C53 (surface and drains) which adds surface water run off to its apparent source in the spring at the junction of the Bridport Road and Batts lane. To my mind these issues have not been resolved.

**PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS.** It should be noted that a previous application for this site was withdrawn after the case officer noted the impact on the AONB and the risk of flooding. **P/OUT/2021/03095** – the document can be viewed at <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=289317>. Similarly, an application for an expansion West of Dukes Close was refused partly because of its impact on the aspect of the village, and partly for flood concerns. See **P/OUT/2022/02496** and the decision notice and report at: <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=381495>. Similarly see various applications relating to Rylestone and stabling, some of which were refused as they were outside the development boundary of the village.

## CONTRADICTION IN PUBLISHED PAPERS

As mentioned, the key consideration is the Flexible Settlement Policy - all that follows relates to pages 539-541 of the document at Footnote 1 – where possible I have italicised direct copies from external sources though the highlights are my own. Numbering is then from the original sources.

**4.1 Flexible Settlement Policy.** The key baseline of the proposal is the “Flexible Settlement Policy” described at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#4-new-approach> some of which is shown below for convenience (with my highlights). Key to the debate must be the statement in the main consultation paper (Footnote 2) which states: *3.2.7. Tier 3 – Larger Villages: These are typically larger villages which generally have a population of around 500 and a reasonable level of facilities enabling some day-to-day needs to be met locally. These are listed in the Figure 3.2. **Note: Martinstown is not listed.***

### **4.1. Flexible Settlement Policy<sup>7</sup>**

*4.1.1. We are suggesting that the current approach of limiting the identification of windfall sites to within settlement boundaries is revised to help support the delivery of more homes. **We are proposing to remove all settlement boundaries and instead introduce a new Flexible Settlement Policy.***

*4.1.2. Providing the necessary criteria are satisfied, the policy would support the delivery of small to medium sized housing development schemes around the edge of Dorset’s Tier 1, 2 and 3<sup>8</sup> settlements (the policy would not apply in the South East Dorset Green Belt). So rather than the default answer of no, **this policy may allow schemes of up to 30 dwellings provided certain criteria are met.** The new homes would contribute to the supply and make a positive contribution towards meeting local housing needs. The approach also provides greater flexibility for private, and community-led housing in more rural areas, allowing existing villages to grow and thrive. **Note: 30 not 40.***

But this is contradicted in <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#4-new-approach> :

*3.2.8. All other areas are either rural in character or comprise small villages/hamlets that do not have **a (sic) sufficient services or facilities for everyday needs** to be met. These areas are unlikely to be suitable for growth in line with National Policy.*

*4.2.10. We are proposing a new policy framework for the delivery of homes on small to medium sized sites at the more sustainable settlements (those in Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3). This approach could enable incremental, organic growth of these settlements without having a significant impact on their character. It would also support smaller, local builders, enabling a new stream of housing supply. Details of this proposed flexible settlements policy are included in Section 5.*

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#6>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/dorset-council-local-plan-options-consultation-document-2025-printweb-final> for definition of these sites see pp 18+19.

5.1.1. *The Flexible Settlement Policy is intended to allow schemes of up to 30 homes to be permitted on sites on the edge of existing towns and larger villages (tiers 1, 2 and 3 settlements).*

**Note: As previously demonstrated, Martinstown is not listed, and the proposal is for 40.**

5.1.3. *We acknowledge that without a line on a map there will be some scenarios where it may be unclear if this policy should apply. To ensure consistency in decision making we are proposing the following definitions of built-up area and settlement edge:*

- *A built-up area is a densely populated area with a high concentration of buildings, infrastructure, and paved roads. The built-up areas of Dorset include the Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements. It excludes other settlements (such as smaller villages), clusters of buildings, or isolated farmsteads.*
- *A settlement edge is a clear interface between the built edge of a settlement and open countryside. It is normally delineated by the curtilages of buildings, roads and field boundaries.*

5.5.1. *We do not think that it is appropriate to allow development across the whole of Dorset as this would potentially result in increased reliance on car travel to meet everyday needs. Doing so would not fit with national policy or the strategy for managing travel in the emerging Local Transport Plan. We think that the policy should only apply to those settlements that have a reasonable access to facilities and/or reasonable access to public transport. We are suggesting that it would therefore apply equally to those settlements listed in Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the settlement hierarchy detailed in Section 3 (excluding those in the Green Belt). It would not apply elsewhere in Dorset.*

Additionally, the Annex giving examples<sup>9</sup>, which I suggest is worth scanning, argues against a village such as Martinstown providing more than 5 houses.

#### 4.2. DEVELOPMENT IN NATIONAL LANDSCAPES

I do not believe it necessary to argue beyond the content of the published papers:

From Annex A<sup>10</sup>:

*Recent changes to legislation place a greater emphasis on the need to conserve the areas that fall within the two National Landscape in Dorset. As we move forward with the Local Plan, we will consider the implication of this for the development opportunities identified.*

From NPPF<sup>11</sup>

189. *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.*

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#6-appendix-1-examples-of-flexible-settlements-policies>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/appendix-a-opportunity-sites-for-housing>

<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aaf8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aaf8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf)

190. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and **where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest**. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of: a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

From Flexible Settlement Paper<sup>12</sup> (*inter alia* reiterating NPPF 189):

2.1.11. In terms of development in National Landscapes and Heritage Coast areas, paragraphs 189, 190 and 191 state:

189. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas

#### **National Landscapes / Heritage Coast**

4.3.8. Dorset also has two National Landscapes(13) and two Heritage Coasts(14). National policy is clear that when considering applications for development in National Landscapes, **permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that development is in the public interest**.

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#6>



7.1 **LOCAL NEEDS:** Whilst this is covered in a Dorset Council sense from 4.2 of the Main paper (Footnote 2) this only deals with the “global” Dorset need rather anything in any sense “Local”. Perhaps this is all that they need do, but I would argue that our perspective must be different and that in the extracts that follow it is barely credible to suggest that our Local need must encompass areas such as Lyme Regis or Verwood. Amplification of this issue can be found in a further background paper <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/flexible-settlement-policy-background-paper-2025#2-national-policy-and-guidance> where Dorset Council refers to the NPPF and notes:

*2.1.5. In terms of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, paragraphs 61 to 62 state:*

*61. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area’s identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.*

*2.1.7. In terms of rural housing, paragraphs 82 to 84 state:*

*82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.*

*83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.*

The crux here is: what is meant by Local, in terms of “local need” and appropriate mix of housing types for the Local community. I have not found these addressed in the papers.

7.2 **Affordability:** I cannot find this addressed except with wishful thinking relating to Community Projects. As the land is privately owned this is unlikely to be a factor and developers are likely to push for market price housing (invariably “4 Bed Detached”) to subsidise the affordability of some part of the development.

8. **PERSONAL STATEMENT.** As the option is adjacent to my own property I feel I must make my personal view clear:

8.1 I believe that Martinstown, as opposed to Winterborne St Martin Parish, would benefit from one or more small developments of affordable or first time buyer<sup>13</sup> properties on sites within the Village's current development boundaries, and that is possible to identify possible sites. I believe that this sort of development, deliberately targeted at younger people, would be beneficial in improving our demographic mix and thus the viability of our community. Stating this the opposite way, I do not believe that the Village or Community would benefit from more "4 Bedroom Detached" type properties as there are plenty and these appear to be invariably bought by, err, people like me.

8.2 In principle I have no objection to such a development being adjacent to my own property, and any concerns about my impartiality in this case should also be mitigated by the statement in the Option's "Proposed Approach" which includes: "Sensitive design to respect the character of the National Landscape, potentially through locating development towards the lower slopes of the site" which I interpret as being an extension Northwards of the current development and therefore having little impact on my property.

---

<sup>13</sup> See *inter alia* <https://www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme>