



Response to Dorset Local Plan Site Options Consultation:

Burton Bradstock Community Land Trust (BB CLT) recognise that development is necessary to support community growth. However, development should reflect genuine local need as defined by Housing Needs Assessment not an arbitrary central government target.

Dorset has been set an excessive and undeliverable target of 3246 houses per year or 55,000 over the 17 year term of the plan. This is nearly twice the previous target and almost three times Dorset's average rate of house building of around 1,300 houses per year.

BB CLT was established in 2018 to help tackle the chronic lack of genuinely affordable homes in the village for local people. BB CLT focus has been on defining and addressing local housing need during a period that has seen growth in market housing in the village despite restrictive planning policies.

Burton Bradstock desperately needs social rent housing to provide options for local families. The long delay in replacing the current adopted Local Plan (2015) has severely hindered BB CLT in it's search to find a 1 acre plot for 10 to 15 social rent units – Landowners being reluctant to release land for a small financial return when there is the prospect of land outside the existing development boundary might become available for market housing.

The 2021 Options Assessment presented Burton Bradstock as a 'sustainable village' capable of accommodating 45 new homes. In 2025 this has grown to opportunities sites of 130 new homes. If Burton is to be earmarked for significant development , then it demands proper planning policies that deliver on local need and meet requirements of a net zero future. Any development should be informed by understanding of local need and designed to maximise community benefit whilst minimising impact on natural resources.

Developers will simply not build what they cannot profitably sell. Any Local Plan based on unachievable housing numbers would soon fail the government's housing delivery test and result in a planning free-for-all under the so-called presumption in favour of sustainable development. This would allow developers to cherry pick sites throughout

Dorset and severely weaken the Council's ability to control development.

BB CLT is not aware that any of the three sites proposed for Burton Bradstock have undergone proper screening, viability assessment or full modelling of available social or road and services infrastructure.

BB CLT asks “ Where are the social rent homes we need going to come from across the 130 units seen as ‘opportunities’ in the Options Consultation”?

Issue 1 - Flexible Settlement Policy and Rural Exception Sites

Settlement boundaries are often used in conjunction with Exception Site policies to support community led housing developments. It is unclear what impact the flexible settlement policy might have on edge of Burton land prices and how this might impact land access for community led housing development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) provides explicit support for rural exception sites - *“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.”*

Rural Exception Sites, by being outside the Development Boundary, would not normally receive planning permission for market housing. How does this work if there is no Development Boundary and the flexible settlement policy applies around the edge of the village? BB CLT would like to ensure that communities retain a route to deliver affordable housing schemes that does not rely on developer led schemes. The Community Land Trust model can guarantee affordability in perpetuity and alignment with local income levels.

BB CLT is aware that some local authorities propose that small market led schemes must prioritise local people in the allocation of the affordable homes (South Gloucestershire Housing Strategy 2023). We requests that Dorset Council consider similar approaches to help prioritise delivery of affordable homes to local people. To give communities confidence, the Local Plan should set out clearly how rural exception site policy will apply in practice in the absence of settlement boundaries, and how it will continue to support delivery of the genuinely affordable homes that people in Burton Bradstock want and need.

It feels like the flexible settlement policy has been devised in response to the excessive housing targets and the expectation that housing land supply/ delivery rate will inevitably be challenged in the future - opening the door to a ‘free for all’ of sprawling developments built on the edge of villages and towns without any corresponding investment in infrastructure, services or facilities like roads, bus services, surgeries and dentists.

There are issues with replacing the current settlement boundary around Burton, however, in a situation where housing land supply/ delivery is open to challenge the flexible

settlements policy may well be a valuable planning tool to limit the impact of speculative village extension schemes.

Issue 2 - Impact on the Dorset National Landscape

Given that Burton is 'washed over' by the Dorset National Landscape, any use of the flexible settlement policy will run up against duties to 'conserve and enhance' the special qualities of the National Landscape - NPPF190 states:

'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'.

Issue 3 - Active travel and squeezing access to green spaces

Everyday facilities and services should be within cycle or walking distance of any future development. Allowing settlements to grow in a piecemeal fashion could result in linear or 'ribbon' development patterns, which would result in sprawl. As the new developments would be increasingly further from the centre of the settlement (which is typically where the facilities are), it could discourage walking and encourage more vehicle movements, which are more polluting and less sustainable.

Issue 4 - Is Burton really a 'sustainable village'?

BB CLT challenges the premise that Burton is a sustainable location for 130 market houses - What services are provided are very much geared toward the needs of the an null influx of tourists Does the emerging Local Plan take full account of the inflation of the village population during the summer? With the resultant impact on road space and safety.

Infrastructure is inadequate or already struggling with the growth in the visitor population - road congestion, pollution etc is rising. The public bus service is responsive to tourist needs rather than those of a resident community. Running reduced services outside the summer and not operating at night! There is no safe and easy cycling routes to encourage active travel. Bridport is only 5 km away but the majority of everyday journeys are undertaken in cars.

BB CLT believes that Burton Bradstock needs planned development that can deliver affordable housing for local need. Development must understand and respond to capacity issues and recognises the need to provide enhanced infrastructure alongside development.

What Burton Bradstock doesn't need is a nationally generated and excessive housing target that will not be delivered and therefore opens the door to a market house building free for all.

