

Cabinet – 9 October 2025

Questions from the Public

1. Question from Mr Geoff Chopping

I am Geoffrey Chopping and although I am a Holt Parish Councillor, I am not asking this question on behalf of Holt Parish Council.

Following a Community Governance Review, all of the Furzehill Settlement and its surrounding area is now part of Holt Parish and therefore the Furzehill Settlement, with its defined settlement boundaries within the Green Belt, can neither be legally described as being part of the Wimborne Minster and Colehill Settlement, nor part of Wimborne Minster or Colehill Parishes.

In the current Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation, some settlements are listed for Tiers 1 and Tiers 2 within the text, whilst Tier 3 Settlements are listed in Figure 3.2. Furzehill is not included among those settlements.

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

This is consistent with National Policy, as although Furzehill has a village store it is generally remote from existing infrastructure and facilities in Wimborne.

However, 4 sites (totalling over 500 homes) that appear in the subordinate Appendix A, touch or are very close to the Furzehill Settlement boundaries. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment confirm the unsuitability of these 4 sites because of the remoteness and accessibility issues. All four also happen to be within the Green Belt, although that was only mentioned for one of the four.

CONCLUSION: The exclusion of the legally recognised separate Furzehill Settlement from Tiers 1, 2 and 3 as listed within the Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation 2025, automatically excludes the Furzehill Settlement from significant development other than that proposed in the 2014 Core Strategy document.

QUESTION: Will Dorset Council please confirm the above Conclusion or supply its legal reasoning for rejecting it?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning

Thank you for your question.

To date we have received over 5,000 submissions in response to the consultation and Cllr Chopping's concerns will be considered as part of the development of the local plan along with all the others and not singled out for response outside the formal consultation.

2. Question from Karen Tippins

It is now clear from this report that the Shaftesbury Town Council proposal has changed materially since the original approved in Oct 2024. The project costs has risen from £876k to approx. £1.44 million, an increase, as I stated back in July, of £500,000 and several key conditions set by Cabinet in Oct 2024 have only partially been met. The report in agenda 12 states now that the STC proposal is only 78% funded; this proves that the decision made in Oct 2024 by cabinet was based on a flawed s106 submission - that claimed 100% funding. The proposal now includes, as I stated in July, a requirement to resubmit a new planning application to Dorset Planning which complies with Building and H&S regulation and revised parking (due to residents complaints).

Importantly on 11th March 2025, Full Council, STC passed a resolution formally requesting that Dorset Council reconsider the basis of the STC proposal, and instead switch to the STC award to the tried and tested Stourpaine Hall tried and tested proposal lead by Barry Coupe. This concept has a 700 signed petition with parking arrangement already endorsed by local residents. This alternative scheme was fully costed and deliverable, no shortfall of funding and would fulfil the s106 purpose of providing a community facility located in the East of Shaftesbury.

To date there has been no evidence that Cabinet were consulted the 11th March 2025 STC resolution states..., 'submit a request to Dorset Council to advise how they would consider adopting the Barry Coupe design for Mampitts Hall', as it was known and published by STC that the STC proposal was not Building Control and/or Health and Safety compliant from the tender responses plus all tenders stated the s106 estimates submitted by STC were flawed and shortfalls of £500,000 quoted.

The Cabinet paper also introduces using the halls first floor for employment purposes; stating DC are to use this hall and s106 contributions for a Dorset Council Family Hub. No resident has asked for this and to be used for employment by DC is inconsistent with the developer contribution contractual terms.

In addition, the cabinet paper proposes early draw down of 10% of s106 funds before conditions of the award have been satisfied. This weakens the financial safeguards and exposes the Council to avoidable risks, particularly when the proposal already faces a funding deficient and untested delivery model. The cafe element also mirrors Newton Abbot Community Hub cafe which closed after only five years, demonstrating how fragile such operating assumptions can be.

My question is therefore as follows:-

Given that the STC proposal is now significantly over budget, under funded, and dependent on revised planning consent, including Dorset Council Family Hub tenancy inconsistent with community use requirements and ignores STC own resolution FC134 to ask Dorset Council to adopt the architect Barry Coupe design - modelled on the Stourpaine Community Hall - why is DC Cabinet not acting on the Shaftesbury Town Council resolution and formally re-evaluating the allocation rather than extending milestones and approving early drawdown for a project whose costs, scope and purpose have materially changed?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning

Thank you for your question.

Section 106 funding for the delivery of community facilities at Mampitts Green was conditionally awarded to Shaftesbury Town Council in October 2024. Agenda item 12 provides an update in respect of all funding conditions and is based on information provided by Shaftesbury Town Council. Section 4 of the report sub titled 'Alternative options considered' addresses the option of withdrawing the funding offer. The report states that [withdrawal] *would reset the process for applying for s106 causing significant delay to the delivery of development. Given the already prolonged history to this project, further substantial delay would have knock-on implications for build cost and other associated cost increases, adding further risks associated with delivery.*

The report demonstrates that progress made in lots of different areas, but several key conditions including those associated with budget and project delivery remain partially completed, therefore failing to meet in full the milestones that were set. The milestone extensions proposed in the report recommendation serve to provide further time to enable key stages in the project to be addressed, improving the likelihood of delivery.