

Full Council – 23 October 2025
Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 - submitted by Cllr K Wheller

Over my time as a councillor the subject of the increasing number of second homes in Dorset has been a perennial problem. Highlighted increasingly by our housing shortage and the burden being placed on us to find more and more sites on which to build houses. Not all, but some second homeowners and their families do become welcome additions to the communities in which they buy homes. Attending events, local churches and shopping locally. And these are distinct from buy-to-let owners who one hopes will be providing private long-term rental homes to local families. However, in recent years there has been a much more pernicious problem. That of Airbnb and short let holiday homes. We are frequently told by planners that we can do nothing to prevent this. I don't believe this is true. There are clauses in a Section 106 agreement that can be imposed, use class 3 I think but may now be use class 5. Town and Country Planning (use classes) Order 1987 defines a dwelling house as occupation by a single person, family or up to six individuals living together as one household.

Short-term lettings to a succession of paying guests **do not** constitute occupation by a single household. Each change of guest represents a new occupancy, which takes the use outside of class 3 and amounts to a material change of use to commercial (sui generis) letting.

The inclusion of the 'single household' clause strengthens the often-stated wish in planning committee that members do not wish to see new build properties become short-term holiday homes. Often sitting empty for six or more months of the year. Why is not imposed more frequently, or even routinely?

I will give examples which are specific to my own Ward but since this problem is County wide, I am sure members will know of properties in their Wards, too. The Groves Brewery redevelopment in Hope Square, Weymouth completed some twenty plus years ago is subject to a Class 3 clause, and indeed estate agents point this out to prospective buyers. A newer development part of the Devenish new build Malthouse etc. also in Hope Square, and I believe the regeneration of the Devonish scheme known as Brewers Quay are also subject to Class 3 conditions. In the case of the Malthouse Town Houses buyers were required to sign a covenant between themselves and the developer agreeing to Class 3. However, the developer has reneged on this covenant.

Request for action to the planning authority has been unsuccessful since owners are told this is a civil matter and does not fall within the planning enforcement remit. Whilst the Covenant is a civil agreement between builder and buyer the breach of a

planning condition is surely a Council matter? The phrase 'residential occupation by a single household' provides clear evidence that when this clause is breached the developer and Dorset Council are disregarding a binding obligation agreed to at the planning stage, it's not merely a private covenant between residents. Dorset Council should take the necessary enforcement action against the developer, and any owner in breach of the condition Class 3 not only in these dwellings in Brewers Quay / Hope Square but any others across the County.

Legal Precedents:-

The following case law supports the argument that short-term lettings breach both residential use clauses and planning control. :-

- Nemcova v Fairfield Rents Ltd. (2016) UKUT 303 (LC) – occupation by temporary guests was not occupation as a private residence.
- Bermondsey Exchange Freeholders Ltd. V Koumetto (2018) EWHC 816 (ch) - Short- term occupation incompatible with residential use.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr V Pothecary

Recently a resident in my ward received a Fixed Penalty Notice in the post from Waste Investigations Support & Enforcement (WISE) on behalf of Pembrokeshire County Council, for dropping litter in Pembrokeshire. He was wrongly accused as he had never been to this location and could prove that he was in Dorset at the time.

He understands that WISE is being contracted by many County Councils in outsourcing certain enforcement functions. This includes Pembrokeshire, and he now understands Dorset Council.

Clearing his name and getting an adequate explanation as to how this mistake occurred from WISE was exceptionally difficult, and they cited the Data Protection Act as one of the reasons why.

It was only as a result of requesting Pembrokeshire County Council to assist him in the matter that he discovered what had occurred.

He hoped that I may be able to help alleviate this stressful situation by raising a question at our Council Meeting in order to answer his concern regarding this explanation.

The explanation given was:

"In this case WISE wrote to the address given by the individual, at the time of the offence. The correspondence was then returned back to WISE. A trace was then made and High match was found to your details – name and date of birth".
(Marc Owen, Public Realm Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council).

Whilst we understand that outsourcing can offer operational efficiencies. It has to be a requirement that the third-party provider upholds the Council's standards of accuracy, transparency and ethical conduct. But more importantly respect the data held by the respective County Councils and not utilise it for their own benefits.

So my question is: Has this third party company, WISE, been given access or utilised any data held by Dorset Council to find personal details: name, date of birth and address in order to carry out this trace on my resident - on behalf of another County Council?

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr S Flower

Dorset Local Plan – Reg18 Land Allocations Public Consultation

Given the magnitude and impact of the Government imposed 80% increase in the Dorset Council housing target during the lifetime of the plan, the recent public consultation on land allocations has caused a significant amount of public unrest.

Sites have been offered for consideration by landowners and developers. However, a number were identified in the local maps without the owner's consent or were clearly contrary to National Policy Guidance and/or the NPPF or had been screened out when the legacy local plans were adopted.

It does seem rather odd that sites which have been through the rigour of a legacy District Council's Local Plan adoption process should be included in the Land Allocations Consultation.

I am aware that following the end of the consultation period officers will be using an established hierarchy to sift out sites which cannot be delivered or are contrary to the NPPF or other National Policy Guidance.

The scheduled date for publishing the next draft Dorset Council Local Plan is August 2026, to be followed by a further period of public consultation, with the intention of submitting a draft Dorset Council Local Plan to the SoS during December 2026.

An appointed Planning Inspector would then carry out an Examination in Public [an EIP] with expectations that the plan would be adopted during late 2027.

So, my question is; waiting until August 2026 to reveal such information would be unfair and hugely concerning for those in our communities who are anxious about the significant loss of green belt, sensitive sites and undeveloped land caused by new housing being 'pepper potted' across the Dorset Council area. What action will be taken ahead of August 2026, to make members, and the public aware, of which of these sites will not be taken forward?

In the interest of transparency will a list of these sites be created with supporting evidence and submitted, along with the draft Local Plan, to the Secretary of State in December 2026?

Thank you, madam chairman

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr M Parkes

Councillor Lugg and I understand from officers that there are plans to build a cycle lane on the section of the A348 Ringwood Road in Ferndown from Penny's Hill to Tricketts Cross.

After around five years of severe disruption caused by the construction of the TCF project, residents have lost patience and are not prepared to put up with further unnecessary roadworks.

Bearing in mind we now have active travel routes from Tricketts Cross through to Wimborne encompassing access to the town centre, schools and the industrial estates we are bemused as to why this route which was removed from the TCF scheme is now back on the agenda.

Mindful of the current financial situation, can the cabinet member responsible for this project explain the rationale as to why it's now felt necessary to build it, the evidence for its need, the timescales for delivery and the costs of the project.

Question 5 submitted by Cllr T Coombs

To the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Cllr Claire Sutton.

Back in May, this Council reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Rights of the Child.

The UNCRC, adopted in 1989, outlines the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. It emphasises the importance of children's voices in matters that affect them and acknowledges their right to a safe environment, education, and health care.

Reference from the minutes:

That this Council: -

1. Affirms its commitment to the principals and provisions of the UNCRC and integrates these into local policies and practices, complimenting the delivery of Dorset Council's 10 yr plan for children, young people and families, aiming to be a Rights Respecting Authority.

2. Establishes a Children's Rights Committee to oversee the implementation of the UNCRC within our authority, ensuring that children's voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes. This will include developing some of our young people as 'Rights Respecting Ambassadors as well as a Children's rights impact assessment.
3. Signposts training and awareness programs for council members and staff on the importance of children's rights and the UNCRC.
4. Engages with local communities, schools, and organisations to promote understanding of children's rights and encourage active participation from children in matters that affect them.
5. Declares that Corporate Parents as duty bearers, capturing all our children and young people, we uphold the United Nations Convention of The Rights of The Child and identify as a Rights Respecting Authority.
6. Requires that all policies, procedures and interactions involving our children and young people are mindful of relevant articles from the UNCRC.

Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on how this is making a difference to the lives and lived experiences of our children and young people in Dorset?

Question 6 submitted by Cllr B Bawden

Residential disabled parking bays

For Cllr Jon Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Place Services

Dorset Council offers Blue Badge holders with additional mobility challenges [Restricted Mobility Permits](#) enabling free parking for up to three hours, once a day.

BCP Council offers the opportunity to apply for a [Residential disabled parking bay](#) which can only be used by the permit holder.

I've asked before whether Dorset Council could consider this option for those residents with additional mobility challenges so that they could park close enough to their home to get there safely. Please could this be investigated again?

Question 7 submitted by Cllr B Bawden

Cross-departmental working group on surface water management

For Cllr Nick Ireland, Portfolio Holder for Climate and Nature, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Emergency Planning and/or Cllr Jon Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Place Services.

Understanding the need to adapt to known climate impacts, including more extreme heat, drought and surface water flooding, could a cross-departmental, cross-party

member working group be set up to help co-ordinate Dorset Council's responses on surface water management.

We passed a motion in July 2023 promoting the use of sustainable drainage systems ensuring the separation of surface water and sewage; the use of permeable surfaces where possible through the planning system and the Local Plan; and engagement with the water companies to focus their investment plans on the drastic reduction in sewage discharges needed to restore the health of our rivers and sea.

I'm happy to report that South West Water has announced major investment plans for the storage and separation of the sewage and surface water network in Lyme Regis. This is in no small part due to the proactive engagement between the River Lim Action team of river monitors, the Environment Agency, Dorset Council and the town council over the past three years.

There are Citizen Science river monitoring groups providing similar water quality and ecological monitoring services throughout West Dorset, including in Charmouth, which are working together with Wessex Water through CROWD, Clean Rivers of West Dorset.

A cross-party working group could help co-ordinate responses from planning, highways and the climate and nature adaptation teams,

Notice of Motion for July 13th Council 2025

The heavy rain parts of Dorset experienced last month once again resulted in sewage being discharged into the sea – this time at West Bay, Lyme Regis, and seven locations across Weymouth and Portland. As a result, people were advised not to bathe on certain polluted beaches.

The main reason this occurs is our antiquated sewage system – a single system that has to deliver both foul water and surface water to the treatment plants, a system that is unable to cope with sudden large amounts of surface water.

Whilst the investment and determination to upgrade this system is largely outside the remit of this Council, there are three things it can do. This Council, therefore, resolves to:

1. Engage positively with central government in implementing Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Act 2010 (and any subsequent changes in national planning guidance) to ensure sustainable drainage systems are designed, constructed and adopted to national standards for the lifetime of the development, securing the separation of foul water from surface water.
2. Through both its new local development plan and any associated guidance, promotes the use of permeable surface treatments where this is achievable.
3. Engages with Wessex Water and South West Water to focus their investment plans on reducing sewage discharges by the substantial amount needed.

Question 8 – submitted by Cllr L O’Leary

After reversing the plan to abolish the cabinet system, the administration has fully used the executive powers of the cabinet, which they are entitled to do. However, other actions raise concerns. These include setting up an unelected citizens’ panel on climate change to advise the cabinet on what, that isn’t clear and I believe the panel to have been selected without any clear transparency. What happened to the Climate EAP made up of elected member? The Seeking to hand power to the first tier of local government, towns and parishes under the banner of “devolution,” bypassing elected ward members for insight and finally pushing the questions of democratically elected councillors to the end of the agenda. These actions suggest a worrying trend of sidelining elected, accountable councillors in favour of unelected bodies and executive members.

Will the council leader confirm that he is committed to keeping all members, especially opposition and backbench councillors, fully informed about matters in their wards and ensuring that elected councillors have priority in decision-making and policy over unelected bodies?

Question 9 – submitted by Cllr L O’Leary

Many of the bus routes and timetables in area south of the Ridgeway around Weymouth are now out of date. They don’t take into account new communities in Curtis fields, Chickerell, and Bincombe. They neglect many villages such as Broadmayne, Nottingham, and Sutton Poyntz. There is great potential for more imaginative, update to date and profitable routes that would serve more people and areas and bring the routes up to date with the needs of communities. Will the council work with providers, communities and elected members to carry out a review of these routes?

Question 10 submitted by Cllr C Monks

Following the recent loss of broadband in Beaminster due to a vehicle fire, I would like to thank the portfolio holder and officers for their prompt response in ensuring the vehicle was safely removed. Could the portfolio holder please outline what steps Dorset Council can take to review the resilience and security of our current broadband infrastructure, and what lessons or actions might be considered to help prevent similar service disruptions in Beaminster and across the wider county?

Question 11 submitted by Cllr C Monks

How can we better engage with local residents to ensure they understand what a Community Resilience Plan is, and how can we work together to identify the specific needs and strengths of our communities to make future planning truly effective and inclusive to those at the coal face as and when local events take place?