

EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2026

Present: Cllrs David Tooke (Chair), Duncan Sowry-House (Vice-Chair), Alex Brenton, Toni Coombs, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, David Morgan, Julie Robinson and Andy Skeats

Apologies: Cllrs Hannah Hobbs-Chell

Also present: Cllrs Shane Bartlett and Andy Todd

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Elizabeth Adams (Development Management Team Leader), Kim Cowell (Development Management Area Manager), Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Susan Hetherington (Transport Development Liaison Manager), Claire Hicks (Planning Officer), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Clare Marshall (Engineer), Colm O'Kelly (Senior Landscape Architect), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Naomi Shinkins (Lead Project Officer), Alister Trendell (Project Engineer), Thomas Whild (Lead Project Officer), Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice) and Sam Williams (Lead Senior Engineer)

101. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

102. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March were confirmed and signed.

103. Registration for public speaking and statements

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

104. P/OUT/2025/01997 - Land Off Birchdale Road Colehill Wimborne Dorset

The Lead Project Officer presented the outline application for residential development with associated open space and works. Members were advised that, since publication of the report, eight additional representations had been received. These had been reviewed and were not considered to alter the recommendation.

It was explained that the application had previously been refused under delegated powers in June 2024. An appeal had subsequently been lodged but was later

withdrawn following the Council's annual position statement demonstrating a housing land supply of more than five years.

The site context was described, with plans showing the location in relation to Wimborne and Colehill. The site was accessed from the southern side of Granville Avenue and was outlined on an aerial photograph. A site constraints analysis was shown, including contour lines illustrating that the land sloped generally from north to south. Photographs of the site and surrounding area were presented, including the existing access point and views showing the relationship to Old Manor Close.

An indicative masterplan was displayed, showing development concentrated on the western part of the site and public open space to the east. The masterplan illustrated up to 49 dwellings, areas of public open space including Local Area of Equipped Play (LEAP) and Local Area of Play (LAP) facilities, a Heathland Infrastructure Project (HIP) area, and access onto Birchdale Road. It was emphasised that the precise scale, layout and appearance would be determined at a later reserved matters stage.

Members were informed that 362 objections had been submitted in relation to the proposals, with a summary shown on screen and full comments available online. The eight additional objections had also been summarised. Objections had been received from Colehill and Wimborne Town Councils and Dorset Wildlife Trust, while other consultees had raised no objections subject to conditions.

In addressing the principle of development, the Lead Project Officer referred to Policy KS2 of the Local Plan, which identified Wimborne Minster as a main area for development and Colehill as a settlement where some growth was expected. As the Council was currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the tilted balance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) applied.

The site lay within the green belt, with boundaries following the main urban area. It was explained that the proposal did not fall within the traditional green belt exceptions. However, under paragraph 155 of the NPPF, development should not be considered unacceptable where it utilised grey belt land, there was a demonstrable need for the development, it was in a sustainable location and complied with the "golden rules." The definition of grey belt was outlined, including the requirement that the land should not strongly contribute to the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas, the merging of settlements, or the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment. A detailed assessment had been undertaken, concluding that the site made a weak or no contribution to urban sprawl and limited contribution to separation. The proposal was therefore considered to meet the criteria in paragraph 155 and the golden rules, including the provision of 50% affordable housing, infrastructure contributions and accessible green space.

Flood risk and drainage were addressed, with plans confirming that the site lay outside Flood Zone 1. Infiltration drainage had been tested and found unsuitable, and the proposed strategy involved draining surface water to an attenuation basin with controlled discharge to a watercourse. A detention basin was proposed described to temporarily store water during heavy rainfall and slowly drain. Slopes

would be graded at 1:4, with swales connecting to a watercourse draining towards the River Stour.

Highways and access matters were considered acceptable, a Transport Statement had been submitted and Dorset Council Highways raised no objection. Traffic generation was expected to be relatively low. Concerns raised regarding refuse vehicles were addressed, with refuse vehicles able to enter and exit the site in forward gear. The Waste Team had identified the potential need for a larger turning circle, which could be resolved at the reserved matters stage.

Impacts on heritage assets were considered. Two listed buildings were located in the vicinity, including the Grade II* listed Old Manor Farmhouse. It was advised that the scheme would result in less than substantial harm, which would be outweighed by public benefits such as the contribution to housing supply, the provision of 50% affordable housing, and public open space and play facilities.

Biodiversity and habitats were addressed in detail. While nearby SANGs at Leigh Common and Bytheway Field lacked sufficient capacity to serve the development, land on the eastern part of the site was proposed to be used for a HIP, which was considered acceptable. An on-site biodiversity plan was shown, including a receptor site, reptile fencing, species-rich grassland management, mixed sward acid grassland and retention of a badger sett. The Natural Environment Team raised no objection subject to conditions, and the applicant indicated an intention to purchase biodiversity credits where required.

In terms of character and appearance, advice from the urban and landscape design officer was that the site could accommodate appropriate development. Images of nearby developments were shown, and a density of approximately 27 dwellings per hectare was considered consistent with surrounding areas. Although detailed assessment was limited by the outline nature of the application, separation distances were shown and considered typical of nearby development. Trees on the site were identified on a plan, with all trees proposed to be retained except those necessary to facilitate the access. The Tree Officer had raised no objection.

Planning contributions were outlined, including financial contributions towards NHS provision, education and public transport to address pressure on local services. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was zero-rated as the HIP would be provided.

Other matters included ground conditions, with intrusive investigations secured by condition and any necessary remediation also to be controlled by condition. An air quality assessment showed background particulate levels below relevant thresholds, with construction-phase mitigation to be secured. Traffic noise was identified as the main potential environmental noise source, with details of mitigation to be conditioned. Further assessment of heat pump noise would be required if such systems were proposed.

In summary, the Lead Project Officer advised that all key planning issues had been considered to be acceptable subject to conditions. The planning balance

gave substantial or significant weight to a number of benefits, with biodiversity impacts identified as a minor disbenefit.

Public representation was received in opposition to the application from Leslie Haskins, Michael Carter and Jill Whitfield. Concerns were raised including; the loss of biodiversity on site, particularly in regard to the loss of wild bluebells and other native plant species; worsened flooding in the area from increased development, particularly affecting Old Manor Farmhouse; and inappropriate use of Birchdale Road as the sole access to the development, due to its narrowness and residential setting.

Beverley Moss spoke as the agent for the application. She noted that the application would make a positive contribution to the housing supply in Dorset, as well as a 50% affordable housing contribution. In addition, the scheme would provide accessible greenspace to the public and make financial contributions to local infrastructure.

Cllr Carol Butter and Cllr Simon Wheeler spoke on behalf of Colehill Town Council and Wimborne Town Council respectively. They stated that they were objecting on behalf of their Town Councils and raised concerns including the merging of the two towns, the decline of the green corridor between Wimborne and Colehill, the unsafe access of Birchdale Road and the harm to green belt land.

The Ward Member for Colehill and Wimborne East, Cllr Andy Todd and the Ward Member for Wimborne Cllr Shane Bartlett, also spoke on the application. Cllr Todd objected to the application on the grounds that it did not meet the high policy tests to be treated as grey belt land and thought that the land remained important green belt land that separated Colehill and Wimborne. He also raised the issue of biodiversity loss and flooding experienced by residents of the area. Cllr Bartlett also objected to the application, noting that there was not sufficient infrastructure in Wimborne to support the new development, in particular current traffic levels were at capacity and could not support additional vehicle movements.

Officers responded to the points raised by the public speakers with the following replies:

- The NPPF stated that refusal on the grounds of an emerging local plan would seldom be acceptable, therefore the emerging local plan was attributed limited weight.
- The site didn't meet the criteria of being a lowland meadow, so was not considered a priority habitat.
- It was the responsibility of the developer to act lawfully in regard to wild Bluebells being located on the site.
- Biodiversity net gain would be dealt with post grant of planning consent and in this case, it was being proposed that biodiversity net gain would be achieved through off site credits.
- The application had been considered by the Environmental Delivery Mitigation Team and Natural England, who agreed that the impact on Dorset Heathlands could be mitigated.
- It was not considered that the application would have a detrimental effect on the nearby village green.

- The Transport Assessment had been reviewed by Highways and was considered acceptable. There was likely to be an increase in trips, however approximately 30 additional trips in the am and pm peaks was not considered an unacceptable impact.
- The Lead Local Flood Authority had not objected to the application and the proposed detention basin was considered appropriate mitigation against flood risk.
- An assessment had been undertaken to determine the grey belt status of the land, which was informed by a previous assessment that concluded that the site contributes little to the separation of the two towns.

In response to questions from members officers provided the following replies:

- As the site was subject to the golden rules, the applicant would not be able to undertake a viability assessment to reduce the affordable housing contribution.
- The grey belt assessment was informed by the 2021 green belt Review that was prepared as part of the Dorset Local Plan and concluded that the application site made a weak contribution to the green belt and was given weak to no weight in preventing neighbouring towns from merging.
- The 2021 Local Plan consultation, which recommended additional access into the site was considering a development larger than the one proposed, while the proposed single access has been considered acceptable by the Highways Authority.
- The public benefits of the application were the 50% affordable housing contribution, the contribution to the supply of housing, the provision of accessible public greenspace and financial contributions to local infrastructure.
- A condition was included in the recommendation requiring the submission of a protected species monitoring plan.
- The site was considered a suitable location to walk and cycle to local amenities.
- Three plots were allocated on the illustrative layout for self-build properties and any self-build proposals would require permission at the reserved matters stage.
- A swept path analysis had not been undertaken, due to being an outline application with the final layout yet to be confirmed.

The committee agreed to extend the meeting beyond 3 hours.

Cllr Robinson left the meeting at 13:11.

Concerns were raised by members primarily about the classification of the site as grey belt land. Members noted that they had the opportunity to assess whether the site was grey belt and they did not agree with the officer assessment that the site made a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. They considered that the application site was important part of the separation of Wimborne and Colehill and that the application represented urban sprawl and would contribute to the merging of the two towns, so the site did not accord with the definition of grey belt.

The meeting was adjourned 13:16 – 13:30.

It was proposed by Cllr Flower and seconded by Cllr Brenton that the application be refused, as they considered the application to be inappropriate development in the green belt as it would erode the separate identity of the individual identities of Wimborne and Colehill and result in a reduction in the open area around the conurbation. Therefore, the public benefits of the application were considered sufficient to outweigh the inappropriate development in the green belt.

Decision: That the application be refused for the reasons set out in the appendix to these minutes.

105. **P/FUL/2025/01365 - Rogers Hill Farm, Rogers Hill, Briantspuddle, DT2 7HJ**

The meeting adjourned from 13:39-14:30.

Cllr Morgan left the meeting at 13:39.

The Development Management Team Leader presented the application for the replacement of an existing wind turbine with a larger turbine. It was noted that the application had been brought to committee because of the finely balanced recommendation to approve.

It was explained that there was no site-specific planning policy allocating the land, but the proposal would replace an existing turbine and generate sufficient renewable energy to supply the equivalent of up to 1,288 households. It was acknowledged that the increased height of the turbine would result in visual impacts, but officers considered that these impacts had been carefully assessed and that, on balance, the benefits of the application outweighed the harms identified.

The site context was shown on a map of the surrounding area. The existing turbine benefitted from a 25-year planning permission. The proposed replacement turbine would be located approximately 250 metres to the south of the existing turbine and would sit around 15 metres lower in ground level. Permission was sought for a 30-year operational period. Although the proposed turbine would be almost twice the height of the existing structure, it was described as being of relatively modest size in modern terms, given that turbines of 150–200 metres in height were now common. The blades would rotate more slowly than those of the existing turbine, which was considered to help mitigate visual effects.

The Development Management Team Leader referred to Renewable Energy Policy E3 and advised that the technology was considered suitable for the location. The surrounding land was currently used for motorcycle training and competitive events. The site lay approximately 4.4 kilometres from the National Landscape to the north and around 9.5 kilometres to the south. At these distances, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concluded that the turbine would give rise to moderate adverse impact, and members were reminded that great weight must be given to any harm to the National Landscape.

A series of photographs from the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) were shown from various viewpoints, illustrating how the existing and proposed turbines would appear. It was clarified that the accuracy of the

representations as presented to the committee via projector was limited and Members had been encouraged to familiarise themselves with the LVIA. Views demonstrated that major and moderate adverse impacts would be limited to the immediate setting of the turbine. Specific viewpoints were shown, including from Wetherby Castle, Milborne St Andrew, Woodbury Hill, Winterborne Whitechurch, East Luscombe, Fishmore Hill, Rosehill Farm and Greenhill Nature Reserve. It was noted that under clearer sky conditions the turbine would appear more prominent. Remaining viewpoints in the LVIA within the National Landscape were further away, where impacts were assessed as negligible or low.

Members were advised that in order to accord with National Landscape policy compensation was. The proposal included a landscape enhancement scheme to help offset the moderate harm to the National Landscape. This would be secured through a contribution linked to gross revenue, as the level of harm would be linked to operation of the turbine subject to minimum and maximum values, would be allocated to landscape enhancement projects by the Council, informed by a panel for the purposes of strengthening the surrounding landscape character, improving rights of way or enhancing local facilities.

Temporary access would be constructed to facilitate the development and would be restored once the development ceased. Subject to appropriate conditions, no harm to highway safety was anticipated.

Residential amenity impacts were addressed. Rogers Hill Cottages were identified as the closest dwellings, located approximately 1 kilometre from the turbine. Shadow flicker could potentially occur within 900 metres, but it was explained that a condition would be imposed; if shadow flicker were to arise, the turbine could be shut down at certain times of day to prevent harm. Photographs of and from nearby dwellings were shown, indicating that while the blades might be visible from some houses, the impacts would be limited by topography and screening.

Noise impacts were also considered. The predicted noise levels would remain below 35 decibels, comparable to the sound of rustling leaves. Properties to the south had initially been excluded from the noise assessment, but further information had since been submitted demonstrating that noise levels at those properties would also remain within acceptable limits.

Heritage impacts were then addressed. It was explained that there was a wealth of heritage assets in the wider area. Historic England had raised concerns about the impact on the Grade II* registered park and garden at Milton Abbas. The applicant had provided additional visual material showing that the visual impact would be modest and that the Grade I listed house would remain the dominant focal point within views across the park. Historic England nevertheless considered the turbine would be visually conspicuous. The proposal was assessed as causing less than substantial harm to these heritage assets, to which great weight must be given. Concerns were also raised in relation to Wetherby Castle and Woodbury Hill Fort Scheduled Monuments, and less than substantial harm was identified to the Milton Abbas and Bere Regis Conservation Areas. It was advised that, taking these matters together, the development could not be viewed as causing no harm to the significance or setting of heritage assets.

Members were informed that the turbine would be removed within 12 months of decommissioning or cessation of operation. It was confirmed that the development could be safely accessed. From a biodiversity perspective, the site, being an established motorcycle track with an existing turbine, was assessed as being of limited ecological value. Additional mitigation was proposed through a condition requiring an active bat curtailment system to protect bat populations.

The economic benefits were outlined, which included the provision of the equivalent of approximately one full-time job supported through the development. In setting out the planning balance, it was explained that significant weight was attributed to the identified heritage harm, but also that substantial weight was given to the renewable energy benefits.

The headings of the 21 recommended conditions set out in the report were shown to members, with updates including an amended condition relating to the temporary permission in the event of cessation of electricity production, and additional conditions relating to road surfacing and turbine height.

Sylvia Messent, Richard Messent and Catherine Langham (on behalf of the Dorset CPRE) spoke in opposition to the application. They raised concerns including: the impact on nearby residents from the new larger turbine due to the low frequency noise with impacts on health; the negative impact on the habitats for birds, bats and other mammals; the significant impact that the new turbine would have on the landscape and on the setting of heritage assets, in comparison to the existing smaller turbine, due to increased visibility; the ineffectiveness of the proposed compensation; and the impacts on tourism. A concern was also raised about aviation safety and the change in comments from Bournemouth Airport.

John Zamick spoke as the applicant for the application. He highlighted that the application would contribute significant renewable energy production and generate 6 times the amount of energy when compared to the existing turbine. In addition, the turbine would be located at a lower elevation and the speed of the turbine would be less than the existing turbine, thereby lowering its impact.

In response to the public speakers, the Development Management Team Leader clarified that following a meeting between the applicant and Bournemouth Airport the objection had been withdrawn.

In response to technical questions from members officers provided the following answers:

- An objection had been raised by the Dorset Council Conservation Officer as the development would cause less than substantial harm to significant heritage assets and there was no heritage benefit of the proposal.
- It was considered that flicker effects from the proposed turbine could be mitigated.
- Government guidance stated that audible sound from the turbine should not exceed 35db and the noise assessment confirmed that none of the nearby properties would experience sound above that level.
- No precedent would be set for approving turbines at future applications, as each application was considered on its own merits.

Having had the opportunity to debate the merits of the application, several members expressed support for the proposal, considering the turbine to provide significant benefits from renewable energy production outweighing any additional harm caused to the landscape over the existing turbine. While, one member raised concerns about the visual impact of proposed turbine, considering the larger turbine to be too imposing on views.

It was proposed by Cllr Sowry-House and seconded by Cllr Ezzard, that the application be granted.

Decision: That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Planning, the Service Manager for Development Management & Enforcement or the Development Management Area Manager Eastern Area to:

- A) grant planning permission subject to conditions as set out in the appendix to these minutes and the completion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (S106 agreement) to secure a contribution of up to £120k to National Landscape enhancement.

Or

- B) Refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in the appendix to these minutes if the S106 agreement is not completed by 23 October 2026 or such extended time as agreed by the Corporate Director for Planning, the Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement or the Development Management Area Manager Eastern Area.

106. P/FUL/2023/07467 - Land South Of A352, Wareham Road, Binnegar

The Lead Project Officer presented the application for the use of land as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), together with associated landscaping, infrastructure works and alterations to the road. An update was provided, confirming that parking was now included within the scheme. It was also noted that the informative in relation to the legal agreement should have referenced 24 October 2026, and this would be corrected. A further informative would be added to advise that details of the parking provision would be required.

The location plan was shown, and members were reminded that the associated application for housing had previously been resolved to be granted by the committee. The site extended to approximately 5 hectares and lay to the south of the A352. The proposed SANG would provide footpaths, benches, a dog-walking area and on-site parking.

The landscape plan was presented, showing that the proposed landscaping remained largely as previously approved, with the addition of a parking area. Plans showing crossing areas on the A352 were presented, and it was confirmed that Dorset Council Highways were satisfied with the arrangements. A further plan demonstrated compliance with Ministry of Defence requirements in relation to the use of military vehicles on the A352 in relation to pedestrian crossing measures proposed.

Members were reminded that parking provision on site had been requested at the committee discussion in September 2025. The original proposal relied on parking located within 400 metres of the SANG, but the revised application now included five on-site parking spaces, which met Dorset Council parking guidance. The spaces would be marked with timber posts, and their dimensions complied with the relevant standards. Details of the parking would be secured through the SANG management plan. The Highway Authority had raised no objection to the revised parking provision, subject to conditions, and Network Rail had also raised no objections subject to their asset management criteria.

It was considered that the provision of parking did not alter the principle of development and would not give rise to any highway safety concerns. It was not considered to result in any additional harm to the National Landscape, nor were there any further ecological or environmental impacts arising from the amendments. Additional conditions required to address the updates were shown to members.

Public representation was received from Adam Bennet, the agent for the application. He stated that the application had been brought back with the requested alterations to include parking on site. The development would help to mitigate impacts on nearby heathland and provide valuable public open space for use by the local community.

In response to members questions the Lead Project Officer confirmed that there was no proposed gate access into the car park, only into the SANG itself.

It was proposed by Cllr Sowry-House and seconded by Cllr Ezzard, to grant the application with an additional condition requiring a height restriction of vehicles entering the car park and signage discouraging overnight parking.

Decision: That the application be granted subject to the conditions set out in the appendix to these minutes.

107. P/VOC/2025/07207 - Land to the east and west of Cranborne Road, Colehill

The Lead Project Officer presented the application, which sought a variation of condition attached to a previous outline planning permission, specifically to remove Criterion 11 from Condition 9. It was noted that the Town Council had objected to the proposed variation.

The location of the site within Wimborne was shown, with further plans identifying the application site in relation to the Cranborne Road development to the north of the town. Members were shown an aerial photograph and site photographs

illustrating the location of the proposed signal-controlled junction. Reference was made to Policy WMC7, and the policy plan was displayed. The approved outline application plan was also shown. An aerial image illustrated the site as it currently stood, with the northern part of Phase 2 still under construction. It was confirmed that the First School within the development had been completed and was now occupied, the SANG had been completed, and the allotment site remained under construction.

The proposed variation was explained as the removal of the requirement to provide a signal-controlled junction at the Allenvie Road and Hanham Road junction. Consultation responses were summarised, including the objection from Wimborne Town Council.

In considering the principle of development, it was explained that the applicant had stated the crossing was no longer required or deliverable. Dorset Council Highways had been consulted and raised no objection to the removal of Criterion 11, confirming that the variation was acceptable. It was explained that there were constraints preventing the delivery of the crossing, including the proximity of the adjacent fire station and the fact that the associated school crossing patrol was no longer operational.

The approved travel plan referred to highway improvements at Allenvie Road, and the Dorset Council Road Safety Officer had advised that, due to the low level of pedestrian movements, the location did not meet the criteria for a formal school crossing patrol.

Public representation was received from Rob O'Carroll, the applicant. He stated that the controlled crossing was no longer necessary due to the school patrol no longer being operational and could result in queuing vehicles blocking the fire station and increasing traffic accessing the existing roundabout.

In response to technical questions from members the Lead Project Officer provided the following responses:

- The residential development associated with the application was mostly occupied and no viability information had been submitted as part of the application.
- Moving the controlled crossing to a different location had not been explored and was not considered necessary by the Highways Authority.
- Tactile paving and a crossing island were currently in place at the location of the uncontrolled crossing.

It was proposed by Cllr Flower and seconded by Cllr Sowry-House, that the application be granted.

Decision: That the application be granted subject to the conditions set out in the appendix to these minutes.

108. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

109. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Decision List

Duration of meeting: 10.05 am - 4.33 pm

Chairman

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