

Wimborne Civic Society

Planning Report for the 2023 AGM

For the last year, the planning group has been meeting in person after a period of working remotely during the pandemic. There are currently only three of us, Stephen Protheroe, Bryan Hoile and myself. Since East Dorset stopped making paper plans available for scrutiny we have had to view them on line.

In the last year there have been 570 applications in our area of interest which roughly coincides with BH21. We have looked at the descriptions of all of these and about a third of them in detail.

As in previous years, most of these applications are for extensions and most of them are acceptable. However we do get a few that we consider to be inappropriate in the locality; either because of scale or design. We have generally been supportive of applications to sever land and infill. Any such developments reduce the need to use Green Belt land for the building of badly needed houses. We do, however, object when we consider the proposed density is too great.

There have been a number of applications to change office space into flats. Whilst these conversions do provide much needed additional small dwellings, we are concerned by the reduction in office space and therefore employment opportunities in the town.

Dorset have delayed the production of their Local Plan by two and a half years. It was originally supposed to be adopted in Q4 this year. That is now Q2 2026. The council say "The publication version of the Dorset Council Local Plan will incorporate a wide range of changes made in response to the [previous] consultation, the additional evidence, and the national planning reforms. Depending on how the draft plan advances, it may be necessary to add additional consultation stages to those identified which could have a bearing on the overall timetable, and which would require further updates." - and I suppose further delays!

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole are in the throes of producing a plan for publication in the spring or summer this year and adoption in the winter next year. We will scrutinise these plans when they are available.

At the end of last year, we were approached by Louise Harrison the new Town Clerk inviting the Society to be represented at the Town Council's Planning and Environment Committee. We have now aligned the dates of our planning group to those of the Town Council's Planning and Environment Committee so that we have reviewed the applications and can add our views to those of the councillors. I have been very pleased to be present at recent meetings where we have the right to take part in the discussions but not vote. Our views align well with those of the councillors. As well as reviewing planning applications, the council has been discussing things such as reducing the speed of traffic at the entrance to the First School in Burts Hill and other crossing points. I have been pleased to note that the councillors try to keep developers up to the commitments made when applying for planning permission.

The council are also considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wimborne.

We will continue reviewing future applications and will work with the Council including the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan. Please let us know if you have suggestions of things to include in that Plan. – Thank you.