

**Green Belt**Question 1.

Although in the main the proposal to make limited changes to the Green Belt boundaries can be justified by the need for new housing to meet local need that cannot be developed within the urban areas, particularly where compensating changes can be made to the boundaries, this does not apply in Wimborne/Colehill for the following reasons:

1. The new housing is not required to meet any local need, which can more than adequately be met from within the urban area including affordable housing; the majority of the new housing is required to meet the District's wider requirement.
2. No compensating changes to the boundaries are proposed, as elsewhere in the District.
3. The "*very special circumstances*" (NPPF para 87) that must exist to justify inappropriate building on the Green Belt have not been proven by any objective analysis of the value of the new developments weighed against the potential harm caused by their inappropriateness and any other harm (NPPF para 88).

Concerning WMC3 (Cuthbery) and WMC6 (Leigh Road) it can be argued that both developments will provide long term added value to the community, at Cuthbery due to the release of land for an extension to Victoria Hospital, and at Leigh Road through the creation of a multifunctional sports centre and provision of communal recreational areas.

Concerning WMC5 (Cranborne Road) no such benefits will accrue and the long term harm will not only be very considerable but also irrevocable.

The potential harm is attested by the fact that in June 2009 the Leader of the East Dorset District Council wrote to the Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government stating that the Council did not wish to develop to the north of Wimborne on grounds of rural landscape/green belt, traffic and flooding. This concerned a proposal to build 400 new houses on the eastern side of the Cranborne Road only. The current proposal is for 600 new homes on both sides of the road, together with a new school, retail and community facilities. The potential harm (flood risk, surface water drainage, risk to the groundwater source and to the River Allen, traffic congestion, and loss of rural landscape of great scenic value) will therefore be significantly greater than deemed in 2009.

The rural setting to the north of what the Council state is the historic centre of Dorset (CD28, Chapter 8, para 8.1) would be destroyed forever.

In the shorter term there would be 6 to 10 years of construction mayhem (FD5, page 20, para 2).

The exceptional circumstances quoted by the Council as justification for this development (the need for housing, SD28, paras 4.20 and 9.4 ) equates to the addition of 1½% to the District's housing stock. This relatively small addition to the housing stock cannot justify the irrevocable long term harm that would be inflicted on this historic town when alternative sites exist elsewhere in the area for these additional dwellings.