Proposed response from Arne Parish Council to the Dorset Council Local Plan.

This has not been an easy exercise. The Dorset Council Local Plan is lengthy, repetitive and hard to negotiate. Response on line has been made particularly troublesome.

After hours of discussion, Cllr Sim, Cllr Duckworth and I want to outline some of our concerns with the Local Plan.

1.The Plan begins with an introduction that makes reference to Neighbourhood Plans. Disappointingly, there is no mention of our emerging Neighbourhood Plan, into which went years of work.

2. We find excessive the number of additional houses- 30,481- seen by Dorset Council as needed over the next 17 years. They are following the housing target set by Central Government using a Standard Method which we suspect is based on an algorithm- rather than the real needs of the county. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England challenges the Government’s calculation for Dorset as 47% above actual need.

3. We do not accept that Dorset should fulfil the unmet and unquantified housing needs of neighbouring local authorities, in particular Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch.

4.While acknowledging the constraints on availability of building land in Dorset, we would resist the release of Green Belt land as unnecessary. Encroachment on the Green Belt is contemplated in the Plan for around a dozen villages.

5.The proposed status of Neighbourhood Plans is unclear. They are “ to sit alongside” the Local Plan but they cannot offer to build fewer houses than the Local Plan.

6. The proposed large development at Wool-770 new houses on agricultural land-would have an impact on our area. There would be an increase in traffic to provide necessary infrastructure as well as houses. There would be more commuting traffic as there are few employment opportunities in Wool.

7.We are concerned about the trend for more second homes in Purbeck- their occupancy is amongst the highest in Dorset. We would want all new-builds to be available only to those working locally, a condition to be protected by a covenant.

8. We are concerned for the environment in the context of so much new construction. The new Building Regulations that require high standards of environmental performance will not be in place until 2025 and the crisis is now.

9.We would want to see specific commitments to carbon neutrality with regard to features and designs to be incorporated in new buildings. Such technology exists but it may not be adopted by builders until imposed by legislation.

10. We are concerned about the Housing Mix proposed. Do we need 20% of new houses to be adapted for the disabled? Is the most needed type of house that with 1/2 bedrooms?

11, We think there is insufficient provision of affordable homes. It appears that the amount provided ultimately depends on the developer’s view of the viability of the whole project.

12.We are concerned about town centres and want to see proposals regarding the increasing number of shops and buildings that stand empty for long periods. Should we be encroaching on the Green Belt when these are potentially brownfield sites?