

Making the case for Zero Carbon in Dorset

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Setting the scene

- Why zero carbon matters now for two imminent **Local Plans**
- Huge **new housing targets of 80%** not reflecting local needs
- The cost, delay and failure of national policy, a missed decade
- Developers building for super profit not for people
- The need for **LOCAL Regulation** now to facilitate change
- A construction revolution using **modern methods**
- Council and local community role in **shaping the future**



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What is zero carbon?

- **No legal** or clearly understood definition
- Embodied materials carbon and operational emissions carbon
- Complex and difficult to **measure and regulate**
- Need to **balance regulation** against cost of homes
- Debate on concrete, heat pumps, triple glazing, solar panels
- Need for research and clear concise **local design guidance**
- Need for **construction revolution** using modern methods
- Scalability = reduced cost (e.g. solar panels)



Housing targets in BCP Council area

- BCPs original plan of **24,000** protecting green belt and habitats
- To be delivered through densification of the settlement areas
- This constraint approach rejected by Inspectors at 2025 Hearing
- BCP new target **42,000 homes (85% increase)** based on debatable affordable housing algorithm, not local need (social housing)
- BCP narrow **Green Belt** will be devastated
- Hearing could be a dry run for the Dorset Local Plan

Housing targets in Dorset Council area

- Dorset Council's new housing target is **48,000 homes**
- An **80% increase** on the 2021 draft local plan
- Could be much more through **duty to co-operate** with BCP
- Introduction of Grey Belt in the existing Green Belt (NPPF)
- **Little spare space** in Dorset beyond the settlement areas
- Swallowing up of farmland and Green Belt is likely
- The 8-week consultation starts on 18 August
- Hopefully a “target” for **social homes** is included

WHY DORSET IS UNDER THREAT

with its vulnerable environment from massive new housing targets



PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Harm to Dorset AONB and Jurassic Coast



RICH BIODIVERSITY

Destruction of SSSIs, nature reserves



FRAGILE INFRASTRUCTURE

Strain on roads, water, services



TOURISM ECONOMY

Erosion of unspoiled character



CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

Increased risk of flooding, erosion



MISMATCH WITH LOCAL NEEDS

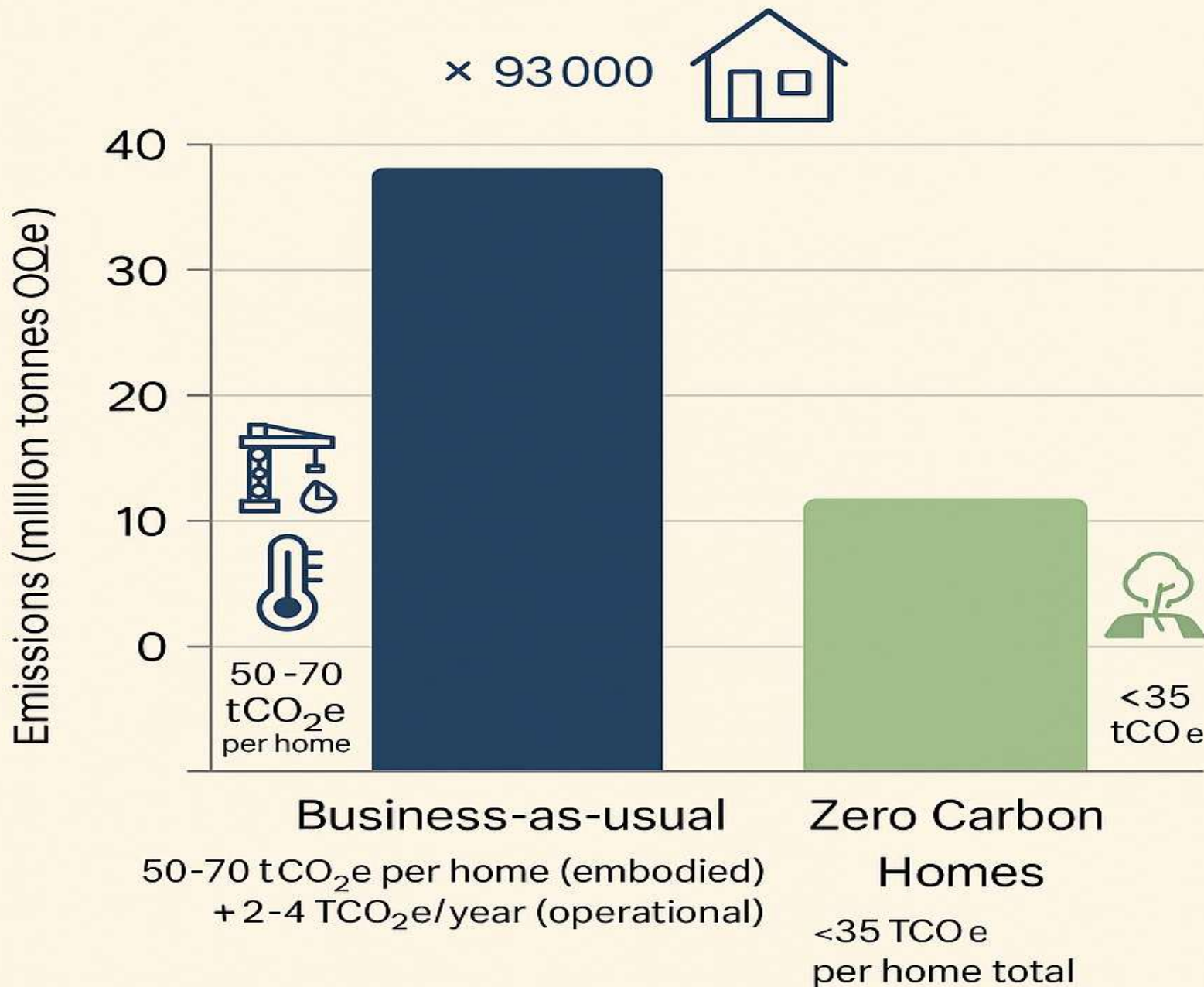


CHARACTER OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

Loss of traditional character

Does not address affordability

93,000 New Homes in Dorset



These calculations are based on data from RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge, LETI Embodied Carbon Primer, UKGBC Housing Carbon Reports.



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The impact on biodiversity in our area

- Biodiversity matters: in reality *our lives depend on it*
- UK is a nature-depleted country, only half of our biodiversity left
- UK is in the bottom 10% globally for biodiversity
- Dorset is however **extremely rich** in bio-diversity
- We have 450 species listed as rare, threatened or protected
- We have a very vulnerable eco-system that needs protecting
- Millions of tonnes of concrete are not going to save rare species



THE IMPACT OF 90,000 HOMES ON THE DORSET COUNTRYSIDE



1,211 ha
OF GREEN SPACE
LOST

603 ha
OF GREEN BELT
LOST



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Costly delays in Government Regulation

- Stop start approach for last 20 years with policy changes
- 1 million homes built since 2015 Cameron u turn
- Retrofitting will cost £15,000 each = **£15bn**, who pays?
- **80% of homes** will not meet zero carbon standards in 2050 because they are already built
- Every day we are building **non-compliant** homes
- Why increase our **retrofit burden**?
- Why deny utility savings £1500 pa for the average household

Developers Still Blocking Progress

- Currently lobbying to weaken the **New Homes Standard**
- Super Profits could have paid for **proper standards 10 years ago**
- Even more delay in achieving real zero carbon homes
- Local authorities stepping up with **net zero policies**
- **Local leadership is now critical to protect future generations**

Rooftop Solar – Essential Requirement

- ✓ Solar PV panels **must be a standard** in all new homes
- ✓ Solar panels **save money** and provide household income
- ✓ Prevent undersized token systems, aim for **4–8 kw minimum**
- ✓ Policy should include all residential and commercial
- ✓ No need for solar farms if we just cover our roofs
- ✓ Good agricultural land can be preserved

Why are we behind Europe?

- Policy changes and **uncertainty** and **lack of incentives**
- Developer lobbying sticking closely to traditional methods
- Prioritising short-term profitability over sustainability
- Germany, Sweden, France, Netherlands with strong regulations are delivering homes faster
- Regulations also include embodied carbon

Planning authorities + adopted zero policy

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Cornwall Council

Central Lincolnshire

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Lancaster City Council



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Zero policy under examination

Bristol City Council

Ealing Council

Enfield Council

Greater Cambridge

Leeds City Council

Merton Council

Oxford City Council

West Berkshire Council

Wiltshire Council



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Cornwall – on Zero Carbon Planning

- ✓ Declared a climate emergency in 2019 – political will at top
- ✓ **Integrated carbon reduction into Local Plan** via Climate Emergency Development Plan Document to get round Ministerial Statement
- ✓ Adopted in February 2023 after Examination – second of its kind
- ✓ **Mandates net zero carbon** for all new homes & buildings
- ✓ Requires use of renewables, EV infrastructure, fabric-first standards
- ✓ Applies **strict standards** on biodiversity net gain, overheating, and water efficiency

Influencers lobbying for net zero in Local Plans

- ✓ Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
- ✓ Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
- ✓ Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)
- ✓ UK Green Building Council (UKGBC)
- ✓ Friends of the Earth
- ✓ Climate Emergency UK
- ✓ Local Government Association (LGA)
- ✓ CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)

The opportunity for Dorset/BCP Councils

- The pincer: **high housing targets/fragile environment**
- Both have a recently declared “climate emergency”
- Include **new design guides** in Local Plans follow the lead of neighbours
- **Cap** embodied carbon/mandate zero operational carbon
- **Key principles:** insulation, renewables, supply chain and transport
- Modern methods and fast track construction at scale at **reduced cost**
- Dorset/BCP could be an **exemplar for change** in construction sector

Unlocking Innovation & Skills

- **Net Zero Innovation Centre** with local colleges/universities
- **Apprenticeships/training** in modern methods of construction
- Developer contributions for skills and innovation
- Produce **new design**: e.g. Hazelmead and Greencore
- Build a **regional supply chain** for low-carbon construction
- **Apply for funding** through Homes England and capital markets
- Enter JV relationships with developers to build out council assets
- Provide sites and opportunities for **social housing schemes**

'Hazelmead' Bridport Cohousing project

A community cohousing project
53 affordable low carbon homes
A new way of living well together



'Hillbourne' Poole Wates and BCP Council

A community JV project
110 Passivhaus homes
Example of what can be done
£24m in social value



Conclusion – Zero Carbon Homes. Can Dorset Do It? Yes

Challenges:

- National delays left 1M homes needing retrofit
- Developers still resisting progress
- Central government slow to act on regulation

Opportunities:

- Dorset can set the pace with zero carbon regulation in the new Local Plans
- Use Modern Methods, Small and Medium Size builders and apprenticeships to build a cleaner, faster, fairer industry
- Position Dorset as a national exemplar in zero carbon



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