

# YETMINSTER & RYME INTRINSECA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

produced March 2018 and updated June 2021  
by the Yetminster and Ryme Intrinsic Neighbourhood Plan Group

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment of housing need for the combined parishes of Yetminster and Ryme Intrinsic forms part of the evidence base for the Yetminster and Ryme Neighbourhood Plan. It was prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan housing working group and was checked by Planning Consultant Jo Witherden BSc(Hons) DipTP DipUD MRTPI.

The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan and cannot disregard the local authority's housing target. The West Dorset Local Plan was adopted in October 2015 and extends to 2031.

The Local Plan is being reviewed, and some of the emerging evidence is also relevant. A Joint Local Plan Review for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland commenced with the specific objective to 'identify additional housing land capable of meeting housing need to 2036' and a draft plan was published for consultation in August 2018 (following an Issues and Options consultation in February 2017). More recently the first draft of the Dorset Local Plan has been published, which will be adopted by 2023 with an end date of 2038.

The Neighbourhood Plan area does not constitute a housing market on its own and the Local Plan does not identify a specific housing need at a village level. At the time of producing the initial housing assessment report there was no indicative housing target agreed with the Local Planning Authority. This Housing report was therefore produced to consider data from a range of sources in order to determine an indicative target for the amount of housing development that the Neighbourhood Plan area can contribute (i) within the wider context of the strategic housing market area, (ii) in relation to the emerging Local Plan Review housing target up to 2036, and (iii) in the light of local constraints and objectives.

### *Purpose*

The document has the following aims:

- a. To establish how much housing is required in Yetminster and Ryme in the plan period;
- b. To identify what type of housing is required and where it could be located and what form it should take.

## 2. PARISH PROFILE

The villages of Yetminster and Ryme are close together and are about 6 miles from Sherborne by road which has a population of about 9,500 and is identified in the Local Plan as one of the towns to which housing development should be directed.

Yetminster and Ryme Intrinsic are also about 6 miles from Yeovil by road in the adjoining county of Somerset. Yeovil has a population of about 45,000 and is a major source of employment for people in the town and the surrounding rural area. Yeovil is outside the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Strategic Housing Market Area, but is recognised to be a major influence on demand in the area around Sherborne.

Home ownership and average house prices in West Dorset as a whole are above the national average and this holds true of house prices within the Neighbourhood Plan area.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the 2011 census the population of the combined civil parishes of Yetminster and Ryme Intrinseca was 1,220.

Yetminster has grown at an average rate of around 3 dwellings per year over the past 20 years and below about 6 dwellings per year over the past 60 years. The difference between these averages reflects a period of intense development from 1969 until the mid-1970s when groups of dwellings were built at St Osmond Close, Stonyacres, Bucklers Mead, Uplands and Shearstones. Recently planning permission has been given for 85 dwellings adjoining Folly Farm on land off Thornford Road<sup>2</sup> (including 30 affordable dwellings<sup>3</sup>) which will introduce the largest single group of homes ever to be built in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

At the time of the 2011 census there were 555 dwellings in the combined civil parishes comprising the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the period April 2011 - March 2017 there were a further 21 completions, with 2 further dwellings built in 2017/18, 3 in 2018/19 and 15 in 2019/20 (which includes the commencement of the large site adjoining Folly Farm).

About 30% of people in the Neighbourhood Plan area are 65 years or older and a further 16% are children and young people under 18 years of age (2011 Census). The parish has an ageing population profile – with the proportion of those aged under 45 dropping more significantly in the last inter-Census period than West Dorset.

	Yetminster			West Dorset		
	2001	2011	% change	2001	2011	% change
Aged up to 19	21.5%	18.9%	-2.6%	20.5%	22.1%	-1.6%
Aged 20 to 44	23.6%	19.2%	-4.4%	23.3%	26.4%	-3.2%
Aged 45 to 64	29.3%	32.9%	3.5%	29.8%	27.0%	2.8%
Aged 65 plus	25.6%	29.0%	3.5%	26.5%	24.5%	2.0%

About 20% of local resident's day to day activities is limited due to health (which is broadly the same as for West Dorset), and about 4.5% consider themselves to be in poor health. The amount of residents providing unpaid care is slightly higher than for West Dorset, at about 15% of residents (compared to 12% for West Dorset).

There are relatively limited employment opportunities within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The travel to work data for Yetminster in the 2011 census showed that 15% of workers worked at or mainly from home, 10% worked within 5km, 65% commuted over 5km to work and the remainder had no fixed place of work.

### 3. ASSESSING HOUSING NEED – CONTEXT OF THE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN

The adopted Local Plan identified a need for 15,500 new homes across the plan area with the majority of development concentrated in and around the main towns. Policy SUS2 states that development in rural areas will be directed to settlements with a Defined Development Boundary such as Yetminster and will take place 'at an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement.' The Local Plan does not define what is meant by an appropriate scale.

<sup>1</sup> The Land Registry House Price Index (February 2017). England =£234k; West Dorset = £268k; Yetminster £280k.

<sup>2</sup> Application No. WD/D/16/000642. The original outline application was for up to 87 dwellings (approved 23 September 2016), but this was refined through the reserved matters application to provide 85 dwellings (approved on 15 November 2018)

<sup>3</sup> See section 7 for the definition of affordability.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan work has begun on the Joint Local Plan Review. National policy requires planning authorities to assess the need for housing in their area. In calculating the need the approach used for the adopted Local Plan was to take average annual growth figures for the period 2001-2007, a period of economic growth which in turn led to a significant additional allowance for housing growth. The Council favoured a similar approach in the Review in order to ensure that the local economy was not constrained by a lack of suitable housing – and the figure aligned with that produced using the proposed standard method in national planning guidance. This would require provision for a deliverable supply of housing land to accommodate 775 dwellings per annum – a total of 15,500 new homes over the plan period 2016-2036.<sup>4</sup>

In February 2107 the Government published a Housing White Paper and in September this was followed by an Open Consultation entitled ‘Planning for the right houses in the right places.’ As part of this consultation an indicative assessment of housing need for the Joint Local Plan Review area proposed an annual requirement for 780 dwellings – very close to the Councils’ own assessment.

The strategy proposed in the Local Plan Review was to continue to direct the majority of housing development to the main towns together with the market and coastal towns<sup>5</sup>. Significantly, the issues and options report stated that it is unlikely that rural settlements like Yetminster would be required to contribute to meeting ‘strategic’ development needs.<sup>6</sup>

The National Planning Policy Framework also highlights the importance of planning in recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The Joint Local Plan Review endorses this by stating that it is important ‘to recognise that whilst an individual development at a particular village may be at an appropriate scale, in combination with other similar schemes it may have a cumulative impact that is detrimental.’<sup>7</sup>

### *Pro-Rata Estimate Of Housing Allocation*

The following table provides pro-rata estimates for the period to 2036, as calculated in March 2018:

		<b>Plan Period 2011-2036</b>
A	Population of Neighbourhood Plan area (2011 census)	1220
B	Population of LP / JLPR area (2011 census)	164,431
C	A divided by B	0.74%
D	Annual housing target for LP / JLPR area (dwellings per annum)	775dpa
E	D multiplied by C (dwellings per annum)	5.75dpa
F	Total for plan period in NP area (to 2036)	144
G	Housing completed 2011-2017	21
H	Housing approved but not built	87
I	Additional housing to be allocated for plan period	36

Note that applying 780dpa in line D as proposed in the Government’s current open consultation would make no practical difference to the end result for the neighbourhood plan area in line H.

This analysis does not take account of:

<sup>4</sup> West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Review: *Issues and Options* (2016) p21

<sup>5</sup> The Local Plan and the Joint Local Plan Review are based on a hierarchy comprises three tiers. Tier 1: the main towns are Dorchester and Weymouth (including Chickerell and parts of Littlemoor) Tier 2: the market and coastal towns are Beaminster, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Portland and Sherborne and the village of Crossways. Tier 3: development in rural areas, including settlements with defined development boundaries.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p20

<sup>7</sup> Ibid p25

- environmental constraints within the Neighbourhood Plan area;
- the availability of suitable land;
- the needs, size and role of other settlements in the wider housing market area;
- the implications of the strategic benefits identified in the Local Plan and Local Plan Review of concentrating the majority of development in the towns.

### *Affordable Housing*

The National Planning Policy Framework definition of affordable housing is ‘social, affordable rented and intermediate housing’ (the term ‘intermediate’ is used to refer to arrangements such as shared ownership.) This definition focuses on tenure but does not directly address the question of what people can afford to pay for housing. In December 2015, and again in March 2018, the Government consulted on changes to the Framework including a proposal to broaden the definition of affordable housing to include a range of low cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home, including starter homes.

Due to viability concerns, the Government has also made clear that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought on developments that are under 10 units (or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> total floorspace). However, this does not apply to rural exception sites that provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, which can either be for 100% affordable homes or include some market housing to help to facilitate the development.

Typical ‘sold’ house prices in 2016 in the Neighbourhood Plan area (based on Land Registry recorded data median sale price values) averaged £275,000 (21 sales), compared to £240,000 across the South West. More recently (2018-2020) house prices have increased further, averaging £327,500 (66 sales over 3 years).

The West Dorset District Council’s housing register was examined in March 2017 as it gives an indication of interest in affordable housing in Yetminster and Ryme. This can only be a snapshot in time and will not necessarily translate into demand. The figures may also fluctuate during the Neighbourhood Plan period depending on social and economic change.

<b>Housing Requests</b>	<b>Ineligible<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Eligible</b>
Single person requiring studio or 1 bedroom		7
Couple requiring studio or 1 bedroom		4
Family requiring 2 bedrooms	1	6
Family requiring 3 bedrooms		3
Family requiring 4 bedrooms		2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>

Notes:

- Those eligible for affordable housing are not all in equal need. Only 2 are in the highest category of need, 11 in the mid-category and 9 in the lowest category.
- 30 of the 87 dwellings approved on land off Thornford Road are to be affordable which is significantly more than the current level of interest arising from the Neighbourhood Plan area.

### *Local Estate Agents*

In August 2016 informal discussions took place with some local estate agents to gauge their perception of the housing market in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The main themes to emerge were:

- The popularity of family homes (including 3 bed roomed houses) in small groups with moderate sized gardens and good views;
- The popularity of bungalows with small gardens

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<sup>8</sup> That is those who do not meet the District Council’s criteria for accommodation of type requested

- The attractions of small development typically undertaken by local builders rather than larger estate-type developments typical of national volume house builders
- The importance of sufficient parking and storage
- The importance of a genuine mix of housing with affordable housing located appropriately to integrate it successfully within the overall development
- The benefits of local materials and harmonious design
- The desirability of consolidating Yetminster rather than simply extending it further to the east or west.

### *Public Perception Of Need*

Good planning depends on community engagement and proposals in the draft Neighbourhood Plan have to gain public support to pass the final referendum stage.

In September 2106 seven public discussion evenings based on geographic areas each covering between 70 to 100 households were held to gauge the views of local residents. The evenings were publicised by leaflets distributed to every house and business, posters around the village and an article in the Wriggle Valley Magazine. Attendances varied considerably; from 4, 5 and 7 to 17, 23, 25 and 26 with a total attendance was 107 together with members of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and the local district councillor. A high proportion of those present took the opportunity to join in discussion and in this respect the discussion evenings achieved their objective.

Much of the discussion on each occasion revolved around the issue of housing. Some residents were unwilling to countenance any further development but a majority agreed that limited additional housing of an appropriate kind could add to the diversity of the housing stock and help to bring further life and vitality to the community.

Within this context there was particular support for affordable housing for people with local connections but a recognition that this requires careful control if it is to fulfil the objective. There was also a general recognition that the preponderance of retired people points to the desirability of providing suitable dwellings (including sheltered housing) for those wishing to downsize. This would in turn release some family homes, though it was recognised that the market price might be beyond many younger families.

There was also strong agreement amongst local residents that any new building should respect the historic environment, distinctive character and rural setting of the two villages and make a positive contribution to local identity in terms of scale, design, materials, layout and density. Many residents concluded that these objectives can best be achieved on small sites with the involvement of housing associations, local housing trusts and builders with an appreciation of the local vernacular style and a long standing involvement in the locality.

It is also appropriate to consider public services and the local economy in the context of housing because of (i) the pressure of increased population on existing services, (ii) the scope for enhanced public services as a result of an increase in population, and (iii) the scope for additional local employment supported by appropriate housing provision. The following issues have been identified:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Existing services and facilities</b>	<b>Impact of additional housing</b>
Public transport	Bus services (withdrawn summer 2017) Rail services to Dorchester / Weymouth and Yeovil / Bath / Bristol	No adverse impact. Potential reinstatement of bus services or provision of community bus may be assisted by a population increase.
Health Centre	GP and associated healthcare services There are no local care homes (the nearest being in Leigh and Sherborne)	CCG Review is not expected to have a negative impact on the surgery. Additional housing would

		help the long-term sustainability of the practice.
Retail / local services	Spar shop / post office, White Hart PH Various local services including café, garage, hairdressers etc	No adverse impact. Would benefit from larger customer base.
Education	St Andrews school Montessori pre-school	No adverse impact. Additional pupils can be accommodated at St Andrews school.
Community / recreational facilities	Jubilee hall, churches, sports club and playing field, scout hut, allotments etc	An increase in population may put pressure on existing facilities, particularly the hall and sports facilities.
Local employment	Workshops adjoining railway station	An increase in population may increase out-commuting unless additional employment facilities are provided.

#### 4. HOUSING TYPES / EXISTING STOCK

The supply of new homes often focusses on 'general-needs' housing, but the limited range on offer from volume house builders does not always contribute to the specific needs of the local community. One particular example is the aspiration of people who want homes that will support independence as they age. The provision of some housing of this kind in the Neighbourhood Plan area would help to sustain the vision of local residents expressed at the discussion evenings in September 2016 of a sustainable, mixed-age community.

An analysis of the relationship between the type of housing stock and the population profiles for the Neighbourhood Plan area in comparison with the Local Plan and Local Plan Review area as identified in the 2011 Census shows that there is an imbalance in the area at present. This is illustrated in the following tables that show, for example:

- there is a significantly higher percentages of residents in the 45-64 and 65+ cohorts within the Neighbourhood Plan area compared with the wider Local Plan and Local Plan Review area;
- there is a dominance of detached houses and bungalows compared with the lower percentage of smaller (and therefore generally less expensive) dwellings.

Housing Stock (2011 Census)	Local Plan and Local Plan Review Area		Neighbourhood Plan Area	
	Number	%	Number	%
Detached house or bungalow	23,445	32.2%	281	50.6%
Semi-detached house or bungalow	17,390	23.8%	183	32.9%
Terraced house or bungalow	18,664	25.6%	58	10.5%
Purpose-built flat, maisonette or apartment	9,561	13.1%	26	4.7%
Converted flat, maisonette or apartment	2,458	3.4%	4	0.7%
Flat, maisonette or apartment in commercial building	906	1.2%	2	0.4%
Caravan or other mobile structure	436	0.6%	1	0.2%
Shared dwelling	61	0.1%	0	0.0%
Total	72,921	100%	555	100%

Age Structure of All Usual Residents (2011 Census)	Local Plan and Local Plan Review Area	Neighbourhood Plan Area
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	Number	%	Number	%
0-17 years	30,775	18.7%	196	16.0%
18-44 years	45,552	27.7%	255	20.9%
45-64 years	48,211	29.3%	406	33.3%
65 years plus	39,893	24.3%	363	29.8%
Total	164,431	100%	1,220	100%

Data in both these tables is from Nomis, a web-based database run by the University of Durham on behalf of the Office for National Statistics.

The only older persons housing recorded in the area<sup>9</sup> is The Meadens which provides 24x1 bedroom flats for rent.

The general need identified in the 2012 SHMA<sup>10</sup> (the latest published evidence) suggests that about 40% of the open market homes should be 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings, which broadly aligns with the Neighbourhood Plan findings.

Bedrooms	Open Market	Affordable	Total
1 bed	4.9%	28.3%	12.9%
2 bed	35.7%	34.4%	35.3%
3 bed	42.7%	30.0%	38.8%
4 and 5 bed	16.7%	7.3%	12.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## 5. HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS: CONCLUSIONS

The erratic pattern of past building rates provides little guidance to future need. A continuation of the long term pattern of growth of 6 dwellings per year would point to a demand for 42 dwellings (over and above the 87 already approved) by 2036. If growth were to follow the pattern in the last 20 years there is already more than sufficient provision to 2036.

The housing register currently includes 22 eligible applications. The approved development at Folly Farm, Thornford Road includes 30 affordable dwellings, and it is unlikely that further provision will be necessary particularly in the short term.

On the basis of the analysis in section 3 (written at the time this plan was drafted), there was no justification for the provision of more than 5 - 6 new homes per annum in the period to 2036.

The first draft of the Local Plan (January 2021) proposed that the indicative housing target for Neighbourhood Plans areas such as Yetminster and Ryme Intrinseca should be based on the existing commitments (76 dwellings as of 1 April 2020) plus a windfall allowance based on past trends, which for our area would be 1.6 dwellings per annum (for the period 2024 – 2038). This would therefore equate to a 'pro-rata' housing requirement of at least 115 dwellings for our plan period (taking into account completions since 2017 and the shorter time period). This equates to 6 new homes per annum.

The Local Plan target does not require neighbourhood plans to allocate sites or identify any additional land to meet the overall Local Plan housing need figure. Nevertheless, it recognises that "there may well be a strong basis for neighbourhood plans allocating sites particularly if there is evidence of local housing need in the neighbourhood plan area that exceeds the requirement figure set out in the Local Plan." It goes on to

<sup>9</sup> <https://housingcare.org/housing-care/facility-info-3176-clovermead-clovermead-england>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/west-dorset-and-weymouth-portland/evidence-base/pdfs/housing/dorchester-weymouth-strategic-housing-market-assessment-shma-update-final-report.pdf>

states that “Allocations proposed in neighbourhood plans should be in accordance with the thrust of the spatial strategy set out in the Local Plan and of a scale appropriate to the settlement at which they are located.”

It is therefore recommended that the indicative housing target contained in the emerging Local Plan is used – this may be revisited through a future review of the Neighbourhood Plan following the adoption of the Local Plan.

The provision of affordable homes should be maximised subject to viability, with the emphasis for open market homes also being for smaller, more affordable house types and sizes. The provision of housing for downsizing<sup>11</sup> should also be considered to be a high priority. The provision of some form of sheltered housing should also form part of the overall housing mix if practical.

The proportion of larger, family homes with the equivalent space for four or more bedrooms should not exceed that envisaged in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

When affordable housing becomes available, priority should be given to people with a strong local connection who have registered a wish to remain in, or move back to, the area. Ways of achieving this will be set out in the forthcoming plan.

Other factors to take into account are:

- The importance of integrating new housing development into the existing fabric of the villages, which is seen as one of the keys to maintaining a strong and unified community. In order to maximise the benefits of new development the plan should seek to avoid further self-contained peripheral housing estates in favour of consolidating the existing village core.
- Good housing design and building should set the standard for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area, having regard to the need to respect the historic built environment and the rural setting of Yetminster and Ryme Intrinsic.

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<sup>11</sup> The term ‘downsizing’ can be misleading and can mean different things to different people but common characteristics are a wish for housing that is rooted in a familiar social and physical location, easily accessible, conveniently located and within easy reach of essential facilities, energy efficient and easy to maintain, adaptable but not necessarily significantly smaller than existing accommodation.