

PIMPERNE HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Whilst there is no specific 'local need' figure in relation to Pimperne in the adopted Local Plan, a relatively consistent method has been used to calculate local housing need in the preparation and examination of Neighbourhood Plans in the North Dorset area. A recent example of this is in the (now made) Milton Abbas Neighbourhood Plan (examined in July 2020)¹.

1.2 The housing targets for settlement such as Pimperne can therefore be based on the "fair share" of the adopted North Dorset Local Plan target that relates to Stalbridge, the 18 larger villages (including Pimperne) and the wider countryside. The policy basis stems from Policies 2 and 6 of the North Dorset Local Plan. Given that the Local Plan is based on early housing needs data, and the recognition that this would need to be revisited through an early review to consider more recent housing need projections, it is then appropriate to look at whether the Neighbourhood Plan can support an uplifted target. The uplifted target would take into account the most recent housing needs projections for the Local Plan area. Finally, other local data can be considered, to see if there is any other evidence that would suggest the housing target or policies should be further adjusted. The most relevant policy extracts from the North Dorset Local Plan are shown below:

POLICY 2: CORE SPATIAL STRATEGY

Stalbridge and the Larger Villages

Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet the local needs outside of the four main towns. These larger villages are: Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch.

The Countryside

Outside the defined boundaries of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages, the remainder of the District will be subject to countryside policies where development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met.

At Stalbridge and all the District's villages, the focus will be on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs.

POLICY 6: HOUSING DISTRIBUTION

At least 5,700 net additional homes will be provided in North Dorset between 2011 and 2031 to deliver an average annual rate of about 285 dwellings per annum. The vast majority of housing growth will be concentrated at the District's four main towns of Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton.

¹ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/north-dorset/neighbourhood-planning/submitted-plans/milton-abbas-neighbourhood-plan-2019-2031>

In the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) the level of housing and affordable housing provision will be the cumulative number of new homes delivered to contribute towards meeting identified local and essential rural needs. At least 825 dwellings will be provided in the countryside (including Stalbridge and the villages) during the period 2011 – 2031.

1.3 It is worth noting that, in a recent appeal decisions², the strategy has been described as being “broadly consistent with the Framework and still of significance”. There is no indication that these policies as they relate to Pimperne and the other larger villages are failing to meet local needs. Monitoring data to end March 2021, as contained in the latest Housing Land Supply report³, shows 539 completions within Stalbridge, the villages and wider rural areas (Table 3.1), 667 extant consents anticipated to be completed in the next 5 years (Table 7.1) and a further 502 consented / allocated dwellings in years 6 – 10 (Appendix 1 of that report), giving a total of 1,708 dwellings, more than double that anticipated in the Local Plan.

2. CALCULATING THE ‘FAIR SHARE’ AND ‘UPLIFT’

2.1 Applying the suggested approach to the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan area gives a local housing need figure of at least 46 dwellings, and then consideration given to an uplift based on the latest standard method and applied to the plan period 2016 – 2031.

2.2 In considering the degree of uplift, data from the published Local Housing Needs Assessment for the emerging Dorset Local Plan⁴ was considered in the first instance. This uses the household growth figure (Table 5.2: North Dorset = 264 dwellings per annum), factors in an affordability adjustment (Table 5.3: North Dorset = 332), and considers whether this exceeds 49% and therefore should be reduced (concluding that it does not). This is similar to the 2015 SHMA assessment of housing need, that was published too late to be considered as part of the Local Plan examination.

2.3 Since the publication of the Local Housing Needs Assessment, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a suite of new housing statistics. This included median house prices, median workplace-based earnings, and the ratio between the two, for current districts and a number of former local authority districts.⁵ This release provides a slightly amended 2020 ratio for North Dorset, and also an entirely new figure for 2021. The new 2021 figure is 11.00. Based on this information, the housing need figure calculated using the standard method figure for 2022 onwards will be 377 homes per annum. It is uncertain whether the

2.4 The calculations are set out in the following table:

'Rural' element of growth for Stalbridge and the villages for the Local Plan period 2011 – 2031	= 825 over 20 years
Proportion of dwellings in Pimperne parish (based on 2011 Census) [503 in 2011] of the total dwellings in Stalbridge and the villages [9,045]	= 503 / 9,045 = 5.6% of the 'rural' element of growth
Apply the 'fair share' proportion of the rural area target to Pimperne	= 5.6% x 825 = 46 dwellings for the period 2011 – 2031
Deduct any completions prior to 2016 as the start of the plan period [0 completions 2011-2016]	= 46 – 0 = 46 dwellings for the period 2016 – 2031

² para 87 of [APP/D1265/W/20/3265743](#) relating to Land South of Lower Road, Stalbridge, Dorset, issued 12 November 2021

³ As published in [Housing Land Supply report](#) for North Dorset, Dorset Council, 1 March 2022

⁴ [Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment](#), Icen Projects Limited on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Dorset Council, November 2021

⁵ Available from

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian> and
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningsforformerlocalauthorities>

Uplift the housing target based on standard method [332] included within the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment compared to Local Plan assessed need [285]	= 46 x 332 / 285 = 53 dwellings for the period 2016 – 2031
Uplift the housing target based on standard method based on the more recent ONS housing statistics [377] compared to Local Plan assessed need [285]	= 46 x 377 / 285 = 61 dwellings for the period 2016 – 2031

2.5 On this basis, it would appear appropriate to adopt a housing target of at least 53, and preferably the higher figure of 61 dwellings, for the period 2016 – 2031.

TESTING THE FIGURE

2.6 Against this uplifted housing target, the need for further adjustments has been considered, looking at past build rates, records of affordable housing need and the opinions of the community:

Past build rates

2.7 Past build rates for Pimperne were previously obtained for the period 2000/2001 to 2013/14 from information provided by Dorset County Council at that time. The average annual housing completion figure for Pimperne over that period was 3.5 dwellings per annum. This included a “spikes” of development connected to the Manor Farm and Willows Park developments which were not considered to be representative of the typical windfall rate which was generally lower. Over a 15 year period this would equate to 53 dwellings, equivalent to the uplifted target based on the Local Housing Needs Assessment.

Affordable housing need

2.8 At the time the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, the affordable housing register indicated a local need for affordable housing of 8 dwellings (based on those living in or with a connection to Pimperne as recorded in February 2016). In July 2021, following the commencement of the review, the level of registered need was recorded as 25 homes, of which 13 required 1 bedroom dwellings, with the remainder needing 2 or 3 bedroom homes. However, by March 2022, following the refresh of the Housing Register, this figure had dropped back to a local need for affordable housing of 8 dwellings, of which 2 required 1 bedroom dwellings, 1 required a 4 bedroom dwelling, the remainder needing 2 or 3 bedroom homes.

Local Resident's views

2.9 The survey of local residents undertaken in Spring 2015 showed that the residents are in favour of some growth, up to 5 dwellings a year, with a weighted ‘average’ of 3.3 dwellings per annum. This would equate to a housing target of 53 dwellings, and a maximum of 75 dwellings.

2.10 In the Autumn 2021 household survey local residents were informed that the plan was on track to meet the housing target of at least 45 additional homes plus infill sites in Pimperne between 2016 and 2031, and were asked whether further land should be identified for development given the national housing shortage and need for affordable housing. The general consensus of local residents responding to the survey was that there was no need to identify further land for development at this time.

3. HOUSING SUPPLY

3.1 The following table records the completions and extant consents as of 1 April 2021, together with the allocations included in the existing made Neighbourhood Plan. Altogether these form the anticipated housing supply for the plan period based on the latest available monitoring data.

Completions 2016 – 2021			Homes	AH
2016/17	2/2015/1365/REM	The Little Thatch, 50 Salisbury Road	1	

2017/18	2/2016/0594/FUL	Former primary school	5	
2017/18	2/2016/1261/FUL	Land rear of Shepherds Way, Portman Road	2	
2018/19	2/2014/0064/PLNG	Land rear of 10 St Peters Close	1	
		Subtotal	9	
Extant consents (excluding allocations)			Homes	AH
2011/12	2/2011/0969/PLNG	Woodbury, 10, Chapel Lane	1	
2019/20	2/2019/0125/FUL	Berkeley House, Church Road	1	
2019/20	2/2019/1021/FUL	The Pimperne Shop, Anvil Road	3	
2020/21	2/2019/1828/FUL	Stable Court, Down Road	2	
2020/21	2/2020/0995/OUT	Land rear of The Long House, Salisbury Road	5	
2020/21	2/2020/0729/FUL	Land At 1 Wellow Cottages Salisbury Road	1	
2020/21	2/2020/1024/FUL	The Lodge, Church Road	2	
		Subtotal	15	
Allocations			Homes	AH
Permitted	2/2019/1494/FUL	HSA2 Land north of Manor Farm Close	14	5
Pending	P/FUL/2020/00411	HSA1 Land east of Franwill Industrial Estate	15	6
Post 2026		HSA3 Land west of Old Bakery Close	15	6
		Subtotal	44	17
TOTAL			68	17

3.2 This gives an anticipated housing need supply totals 68 dwellings. In the last year (for which monitoring data has not yet been produced), the online records of planning applications indicates that the extant supply has been supplemented by a further permission for 5 dwellings on land at Franwill House Down Road (P/FUL/2020/00415), granted 17/12/21. Other applications for windfall development within the settlement boundary have also been put forward but have yet to be determined, including 7 dwellings on land at The Long House, Salisbury Road (P/FUL/2021/05709) and 1 dwelling on land at 1 St Peters Close (P/FUL/2021/02760).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Council's Core Spatial Strategy, Policy 2, follows national planning policies, which seek to:

- focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable (NPPF para 105),
- respond to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs in rural areas (NPPF para 78) and
- recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (NPPF para 174).

The basis of the Local Plan (and Neighbourhood Plan) housing targets reflects the importance of carefully managing development in the countryside and villages and places significant emphasis in its policies on meeting local rather than strategic needs. The Local Plan (paragraph 3.40) explains that in the past housing development has “significantly exceeded planned rates, yet did not always enable rural facilities to be retained or enhanced”, and the Council did “not want to see this unsustainable spatial distribution of development repeated”. Any further increase in the housing target can only be justified if it would meet a clear local need in line with the Local Plan strategy.

4.2 The above housing need and supply figures have been discussed with the Community Planning Manager (Economic Growth and Infrastructure) at Dorset Council, who advised that it would make sense to use the latest ONS data in the report so that it reflects the latest position. As such, it is proposed to update the housing need figure to ‘at least 61 dwellings’.

4.3 It is clear from the above analysis that the revised housing target in the Neighbourhood Plan would remain in line with the provisions of the adopted Local Plan. The supply of 68 dwellings (as at 1 April 2021), exceeds the Neighbourhood Plan target of 'at least 45' as well as the 'uplifted' housing target of 61 dwellings that would factor in the latest housing need target based on the Government's standard method if this were to be applied to the North Dorset area. Further windfall development within the settlement boundary is likely to increase this figure further, and the Neighbourhood Plan will also continue to support additional housing development through:

- Conversion of existing redundant buildings outside the settlement boundary
- Rural Exception Sites outside the settlement boundary specifically to deliver affordable housing.

4.4 The testing indicates that, other than the possible need to accommodate affordable housing (which has fluctuated significantly), there is no clear local need to increase the housing supply further to reflect local needs. The allocations are likely to deliver some 17 affordable homes, which will meet existing registered need, and may be further supplemented by a rural affordable housing exception site if the amount of need were to exceed the supply.

4.5 The emerging Dorset-wide Local Plan does include an indicative housing target for Pimperne, looking ahead to 2038. This is based on extant consents and allocations, projected windfall development and proposed strategic allocations. This approach has yet to be tested at Examination and, in the case of Pimperne, includes the potential for a large strategic allocation that straddles the parish boundary with Blandford. The proposed strategic allocation is subject to unresolved objections, and at this stage can only be accorded limited weight. It is accepted that should the Local Plan (and this strategic allocation) be adopted, it would take precedence over the Pimperne Neighbourhood plan (as it would as the most recently adopted). That milestone has not yet been reached (and is still uncertain) in the timescale of this review, and it would be premature to predetermine that decision.

4.6 *In light of all of the above factors, the recommendation is that the housing target is adjusted to 'at least 61 dwellings' based on the current plan period, recognising that this may need to be revisited again in the next review following the adoption of the Dorset Local Plan. No additional site allocations are needed in order to meet this target.*

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