Dorset Council

Housing Needs Assessment
Update: Sub-area Information

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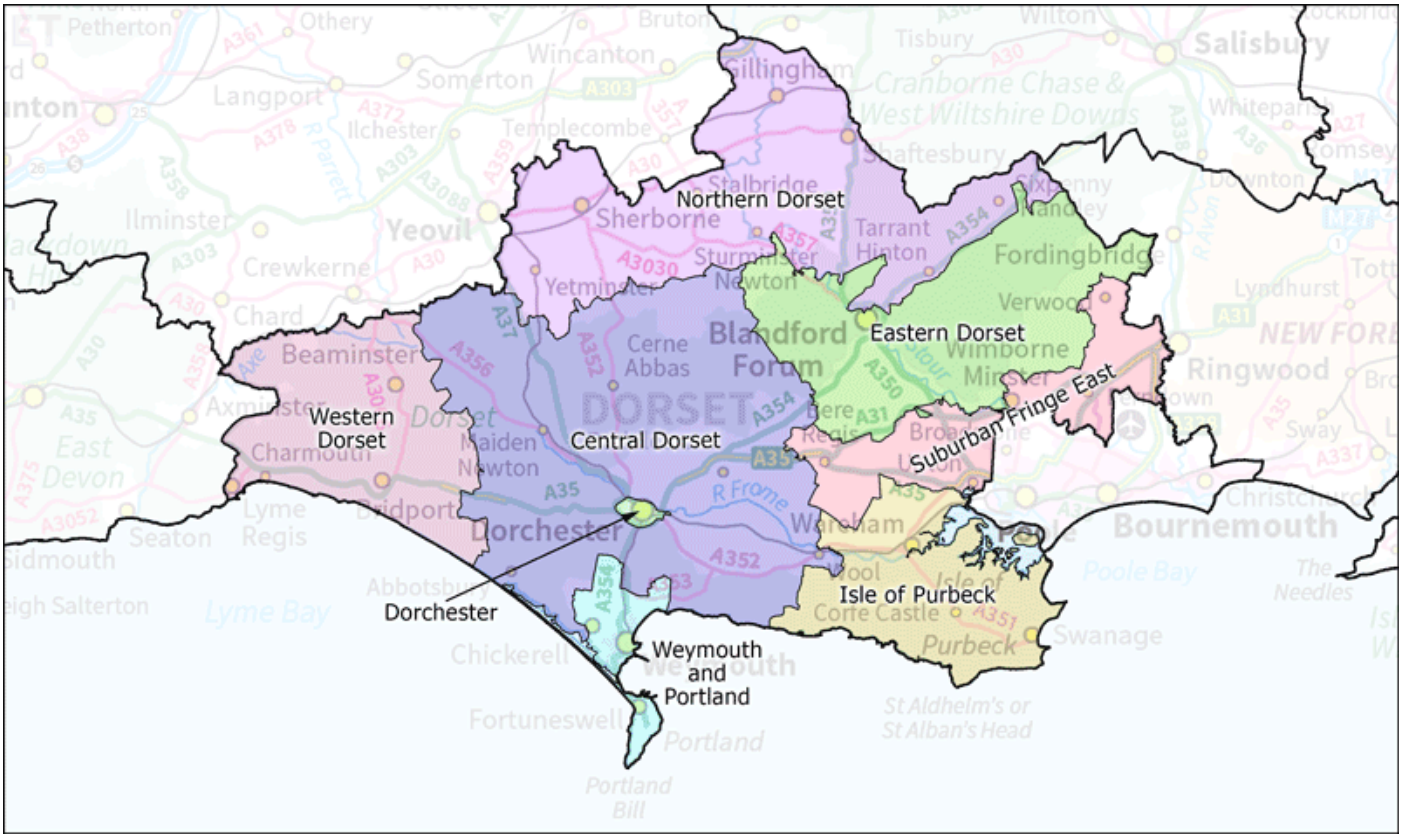
Sub-area Information

Sub-area Level Data and Housing Need

1. The main study only considers the housing needs for the whole of Dorset. However, in order to look at a finer grain of housing markets, information relating to housing needs has been split (where possible) into a number of distinct sub-areas which are informed principally by house prices and, to a lesser degree, the built form and area function.

1. Figure 1 shows the eight sub-areas of Dorset, and all subsequent data in the Appendix relates to these areas.

Figure 1: Dorset Sub-areas (Source Dorset Council)



Population, Households and Dwelling Stock.

2. Figure 2 to Figure 5 provide a range of background information for each of the sub-areas and consider the property type, tenure, number of bedrooms, and overcrowding levels. Noticeable features include the fact that Dorchester and Weymouth and Portland contain a much higher level of terraced properties and flats, a higher rate of social rent housing, and lower number of bedrooms on average. These areas are the most urbanised of the identified sub-areas in the Dorset Council area. Overcrowding levels are relatively low and evenly spread.

Figure 2: Dwelling Stock by Property Type by Sub-area 2021 (Source UK Census Of Population 2021)

	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flat	Caravan/Other	Total Dwellings
Central Dorset	43.6%	31.5%	16.5%	6.7%	1.6%	15,593
Dorchester	16.8%	20.9%	30.4%	31.3%	0.6%	10,001
Eastern Dorset	42.4%	27.0%	18.1%	11.1%	1.4%	13,202
Isle of Purbeck	39.1%	22.4%	16.9%	19.3%	2.3%	10,606
Northern Dorset	40.0%	29.9%	19.6%	9.9%	0.5%	27,263
Suburban Fringe East	57.1%	16.0%	11.4%	13.2%	2.3%	41,025
Western Dorset	43.0%	23.6%	18.3%	14.8%	0.3%	17,486
Weymouth and Portland	25.4%	22.9%	28.5%	22.7%	0.5%	34,095

Figure 3: Dwelling Stock by Tenure by Sub-area 2021 (Source UK Census Of Population 2021)

	Owned	PRS	Social Rent	Total Households
Central Dorset	70.9%	17.1%	12.0%	15,594
Dorchester	64.6%	17.7%	17.7%	10,001
Eastern Dorset	67.2%	19.4%	13.4%	13,207
Isle of Purbeck	70.3%	16.5%	13.2%	10,603
Northern Dorset	70.2%	16.8%	13.0%	27,257
Suburban Fringe East	79.8%	11.5%	8.7%	41,015
Western Dorset	70.2%	16.0%	13.8%	17,489
Weymouth and Portland	66.8%	20.0%	13.2%	34,098
Total	**71.4%**	**16.3%**	**12.3%**	**169,264**

Figure 4: Bedrooms by Sub-area 2021 (Source UK Census Of Population 2021)

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed	Total Dwellings
Central Dorset	4.8%	24.9%	41.9%	28.4%	15,594
Dorchester	15.9%	28.8%	36.5%	18.8%	10,001
Eastern Dorset	8.4%	23.9%	40.6%	27.1%	13,204
Isle of Purbeck	8.6%	29.5%	40.3%	21.7%	10,601
Northern Dorset	7.7%	25.9%	40.6%	25.8%	27,259
Suburban Fringe East	6.6%	26.4%	39.3%	27.6%	41,026
Western Dorset	9.1%	27.2%	40.6%	23.1%	17,487
Weymouth and Portland	12.3%	29.6%	40.7%	17.4%	34,095
TOTAL	**8.8%**	**27.1%**	**40.2%**	**24.0%**	**169,267**

Figure 5: Level of overcrowding by Sub-area 2021 (Source UK Census Of Population 2021)

	2 Under-occupying by 2 or more rooms	Under-occupying by 1 room	Correct	Overcrowded by 1 room	Overcrowded by 2 or more room	Total Households
Central Dorset	49.1%	33.8%	15.5%	1.4%	0.2%	15,594
Dorchester	35.7%	33.1%	29.3%	1.8%	0.1%	10,001
Eastern Dorset	45.5%	32.9%	20.1%	1.4%	0.2%	13,207
Isle of Purbeck	43.1%	34.8%	20.4%	1.6%	0.1%	10,603
Northern Dorset	47.2%	32.8%	18.5%	1.3%	0.1%	27,257
Suburban Fringe East	46.9%	34.3%	17.5%	1.2%	0.1%	41,015
Western Dorset	47.0%	32.1%	19.7%	1.2%	0.1%	17,489
Weymouth and Portland	37.3%	34.4%	25.9%	2.1%	0.3%	34,098
TOTAL	**44.2%**	**33.7%**	**20.5%**	**1.5%**	**0.2%**	**169,264**

3. In terms of population growth, Figure 6 shows that Suburban Fringe East, which borders Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, has the highest population growth between 2011 and 2024. The Isle of Purbeck and Western Dorset have barely seen any population growth between 2011 and 2024.

4. Figure 7 shows that there are not large differences between the areas in terms of the age profile of the population. Meanwhile, Figure 8 shows that a comparatively lower percentage of Central Dorset's and Eastern Dorset's population are single and that comparatively more of their population are couples who have no children.

Figure 6: Population by Sub-area (Source: ONS Mid-year Population Estimates 2024)

	Total Population	Population Change (2011-24)
Central Dorset	39,264	+2,265
Dorchester	22,613	+3,582
Eastern Dorset	33,421	+1,083
Isle of Purbeck	24,467	+93
Northern Dorset	65,104	+4,911
Suburban Fringe East	97,450	+7,599
Western Dorset	32,960	+493
Weymouth and Portland	74,668	+4,024
Total	**389,947**	**+24,050**

Figure 7: Population by Age by Sub-area (Source: ONS Mid-year Population Estimates 2024)

	0-15 Years	16-24 Years	25-39 Years	40-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 Years	75+ Years
Central Dorset	15%	8%	13%	16%	17%	15%	15%
Dorchester	15%	8%	17%	17%	14%	12%	17%
Eastern Dorset	16%	10%	15%	17%	15%	13%	13%
Isle of Purbeck	12%	7%	13%	15%	17%	17%	19%
Northern Dorset	14%	8%	14%	16%	16%	15%	17%
Suburban Fringe East	15%	7%	14%	16%	15%	14%	18%
Western Dorset	12%	7%	11%	15%	17%	18%	20%
Weymouth and Portland	14%	8%	16%	17%	16%	14%	14%
Total	**14%**	**8%**	**14%**	**16%**	**16%**	**15%**	**17%**

Figure 8: Household Type by Sub-area (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)

	Single Person	Couple no Children	Couple with Dependent Children	Couple all children non-dependent	Lone Parent with dependent children	Lone Parent all children non-dependent	Other
Central Dorset	31%	26%	21%	8%	5%	3%	6%
Dorchester	42%	18%	18%	6%	7%	4%	5%
Eastern Dorset	31%	24%	22%	8%	5%	4%	6%
Isle of Purbeck	39%	21%	16%	8%	5%	4%	6%
Northern Dorset	38%	22%	18%	7%	6%	3%	5%
Suburban Fringe East	34%	22%	21%	8%	5%	4%	6%
Western Dorset	40%	23%	15%	7%	5%	4%	5%
Weymouth and Portland	38%	21%	16%	7%	7%	4%	6%
Total	**36%**	**22%**	**19%**	**7%**	**6%**	**4%**	**6%**

Housing Costs and Rents

5. Figure 9 shows that there are considerable variations in housing costs across Dorset. Both lower quartile and median house prices are much higher in Dorchester, with Central Dorset and Suburban Fringe East being noticeably cheaper. However, this is not matched by household incomes, which are similar across much of Dorset, but they are estimated to be highest in Eastern Dorset. Western Dorset has seen the highest rate of growth in house prices since 2020.

Figure 9: House Prices by Sub-area (Source HM Land Registry 2025)

	Lower Quartile	Median	Median Change 2020-2025	Median income
Central Dorset	£236,300	£322,800	+£45,100	£55,922
Dorchester	£410,000	£485,000	+£51,100	£53,295
Eastern Dorset	£319,800	£427,000	+£68,200	£58,160
Isle of Purbeck	£270,200	£363,100	+£17,800	£47,202
Northern Dorset	£304,500	£362,000	+£51,600	£51,221
Suburban Fringe East	£243,700	£328,200	+£63,400	£55,690
Western Dorset	£307,400	£387,400	+£102,600	£47,227
Weymouth and Portland	£300,400	£381,800	+£42,100	£48,183
Total	**£277,400**	**£360,200**	-	**£52,124**

6. Figure 10 shows that the difference in house prices are also reflected in the weekly rents in Dorset, with the highest rents to be found in Dorchester.

Figure 10: Weekly Rents and Annual Incomes by Sub-area (Source Valuation Office 2025 and ONS Household Income I estimates for small areas 2023)

	Lower quartile	Median rent	Median income
Central Dorset	£173.40	£206.38	£55,922
Dorchester	£300.86	£310.07	£53,295
Eastern Dorset	£234.67	£272.99	£58,160
Isle of Purbeck	£198.27	£232.14	£47,202
Northern Dorset	£223.44	£231.44	£51,221
Suburban Fringe East	£178.83	£209.83	£55,690
Western Dorset	£225.57	£247.68	£47,227
Weymouth and Portland	£220.44	£244.10	£48,183
Total	**£203.56**	**£230.29**	**£52,124**

7. Figure 11 takes the house prices and rents set out in Figure 9 and Figure 10 and assumes that a mortgage requires a 10% deposit and is worth 3.5 times their income and that households can spend up to 35% of their gross income on

rents. On this basis, no area of Dorset has a median income sufficient to purchase a lower quartile property, whilst the median income in all areas would be sufficient to cover median rents.

Figure 11: Income required to Buy and Rent by Sub-area (Source: HM Land Registry and Valuation Office)

	Home Ownership	Market Rent
Central Dorset	£60,800	£30,800
Dorchester	£105,400	£46,200
Eastern Dorset	£82,200	£40,700
Isle of Purbeck	£69,500	£34,600
Northern Dorset	£78,300	£34,500
Suburban Fringe East	£62,700	£31,300
Western Dorset	£79,000	£36,900
Weymouth and Portland	£77,200	£36,400
Total	**£71,300**	**£34,300**

Older Persons

8. Figure 12 shows that around a third of all households containing someone aged 65 years or older will have someone with a long-term limiting health condition. Therefore, given the growing population there will be a high need for adapted homes and other support for households.

Figure 12: Limiting Long-term Health Issue for Those Aged 65+ Years by Sub-area (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)

	Population	Household
Central Dorset	18.3%	33.0%
Dorchester	21.2%	34.8%
Eastern Dorset	17.5%	32.7%
Isle of Purbeck	20.9%	35.1%
Northern Dorset	18.7%	32.2%
Suburban Fringe East	18.7%	32.9%
Western Dorset	20.6%	34.7%
Weymouth and Portland	22.5%	37.5%
Total	**19.8%**	**34.2%**

9. Figure 13 shows the projected changes in older person households by tenure, with the overwhelming majority of the growth for all areas being projected to be in owner occupied properties.

Figure 13: Projected Changes in Tenure for Those Aged 65+ Year 2026-2046 (Source: ORS Modelling)

	Owned	PRS	Social Rent	Total Households
Central Dorset	2,294	240	262	2,796
Dorchester	1,256	92	218	1,566
Eastern Dorset	1,691	210	243	2,145
Isle of Purbeck	1,551	137	182	1,870
Northern Dorset	3,800	352	472	4,624
Suburban Fringe East	5,848	287	402	6,536
Western Dorset	2,008	185	240	2,433
Weymouth and Portland	4,302	484	518	5,304
Total	**22,750**	**1,987**	**2,539**	**27,276**