



Christchurch and East Dorset  
**Affordable Housing**  
*Issues and Options March 2008*  
Discussion Paper



Prepared by Christchurch  
Borough Council and East Dorset  
District Council as part of the Local  
Development Framework



*East Dorset*  
District Council





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## Introduction

**The new system of development plans introduced by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaced the old system of Local Plans and County Structure Plans, with Regional Planning and the Local Development Framework.**

The Local Development Framework (LDF) can be thought of as a folder of different planning documents which includes the following:

- Development Plan Documents which contain the main planning policies for the area.
- A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how the Council will engage and consult with the public on its LDF.
- The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which monitors policy performance and other indicators to help identify issues as they emerge.
- The Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the work programme for preparation of the Local Development Framework.



**Affordability of housing is defined in the Government’s Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 in the following terms:**

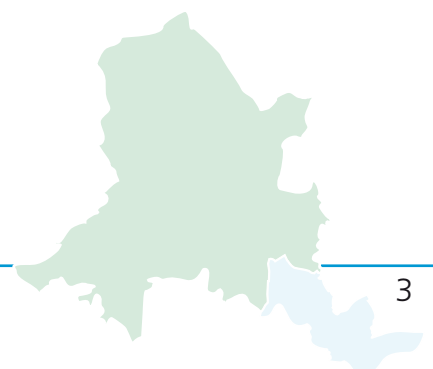
*“Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified, eligible households whose needs are not met by the market”*

The housing provided should be affordable with regard to local incomes and house prices and should remain affordable in the future, or any subsidy used be recycled to provide alternative affordable housing.

Social rented housing is housing owned and managed by local authorities or registered social landlords for which guideline target rents are determined. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements.

Intermediate housing is housing at prices or rents above those of social rents but below market prices or rents. These can include shared equity products (e.g. Homebuy) or other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

## What is Affordable Housing?





## What is the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document?

**Affordable housing is one of the most significant issues faced by Christchurch and East Dorset areas and a review of affordable housing policy has therefore been identified as one of the key priorities in the Local Development Scheme.**

The document will deal with key issues such as the appropriate level of affordable housing, the threshold for seeking contributions from development, as well as the type, size and tenure of affordable housing.

We define threshold as the smallest size of development where the developer is obliged to make contributions to affordable housing. For example, a threshold of 5 dwellings would mean that developments of less than 5 would not be required to contribute to affordable housing.

Once adopted it will set out planning policies for the delivery of affordable housing in Christchurch and East Dorset and will replace the current policies contained in the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan (2001) and East Dorset District Local Plan (2002)

Affordable housing is a priority in both Councils' Corporate Plans. Government guidance suggests that the Local Development Framework should represent the spatial expression of the Community Plan, prepared by the Community Partnerships in Christchurch and East Dorset. As a starting point for identifying issues, the Council has examined the objectives of both Community Plans, including action plans from the two partnerships' "Theme Action Groups". Relevant objectives and actions from these plans are set out later in this document. These objectives have been examined alongside information from the elected Members, Parish Councils and residents associations, all of whom have important local views on this issue.

### **Why we are doing a joint document and what this means?**

Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council are working in partnership to prepare their Local Development Frameworks. This includes a number of documents which will be jointly prepared, of which the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document is one.

The Christchurch and East Dorset Affordable Housing Development Plan Document will therefore be a single document which sets out planning policies across both Council areas.

The plan below shows the local authority areas of Christchurch and East Dorset, covered by the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document.

### **Affordable Housing Development Plan Document Process**

The Affordable Housing Development Plan Document will be prepared through a process of identifying key issues and then refining options to develop draft policies. The preparation of the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document can be broken down into the following stages:



- **Evidence gathering** - work on baseline data and studies which will inform the issues to be addressed in the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document.
- **Issues & Options** - where consultation takes place to identify issues and a range of possible options for addressing them.
- **Preferred Options** - where the Councils identify one or more preferred options for dealing with key issues and publishes them for consultation.
- **Submission** - where a draft Affordable Housing Development Plan Document is submitted to the Secretary of State and there is a period when stakeholders and the public can make **comments and representations**.
- **Examination** - where an Inspector examines the "soundness" of the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document, considers the comments and representations, and provides a report with binding recommendations for changes.
- **Adoption** - where the final Affordable Housing Development Plan Document is adopted as the Councils' policy.

Evidence gathering studies to inform the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document have been ongoing for some time and are referred to in this Issues

& Options paper. Work on Issues & Options will continue until May 2008. The remaining stages of Affordable Housing Development Plan Document production will be programmed as follows:

- **Preferred Options** - July / August 2008
- **Submission** - March / April 2009
- **Examination** - November / December 2009
- **Adoption** - June 2010

The pressing need to develop up-to-date policy for affordable housing provision means that the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document is running to the same timetable as the Core Strategy. In this way the document can be progressed as quickly as possible, while still being developed in close conformity with the Core Strategy. It may be possible to merge the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document into the Core Strategy, depending on the appropriate timescales for each document being maintained.

### Layout of the Issues & Options Document

The Issues & Options consultation is a discussion paper which sets out the issues and proposes options. To make it easier to deal with the range of issues, the document has been structured in a specific way.

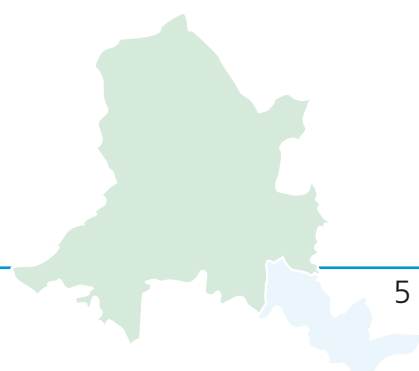
The Affordable Housing Development Plan Document will cover a wide range of issues related to the provision of affordable housing. General housing issues

such as provision of sufficient and appropriate housing and locations for this are dealt with in the Housing section of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper. The Councils have set out several issues which cover the main affordable housing issues identified in the Community Plans for Christchurch and East Dorset. Most of these issues arise from national planning policy and some have been taken forward in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

### How to get involved

The Affordable Housing Development Plan Document will contain major new policies to deliver affordable housing over the next two decades across Christchurch and East Dorset. It is important that we receive your comments on the issues and how to address them.

Issues of particular importance are identified as key issues. These are issues which we would especially like your views on.





## An overview of Christchurch and East Dorset

### How we have identified the issues

The starting point for the Issues & Options paper is to set out the full range of potential issues which the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document needs to address. The Issues & Options paper has been constructed on a series of issues relating to the delivery of affordable housing.

A total of twelve issues have been identified, covering matters such as targets for delivery of affordable housing, site thresholds, percentages of affordable housing on qualifying sites, size and tenure, key worker housing, rural exception sites, and methods of delivering affordable housing.

One role of the LDF is to be the spatial expression of the Community Plan. Community Plans are in place in both Christchurch and East Dorset.

The various action groups of the Community Partnerships are developing a range of projects which aim to address these objectives. In many cases, these projects can also relate to wider work on the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document and Core Strategy.

National policy and emerging Regional Spatial Strategy policies have also helped to identify the relevant issues. National research reports or studies which compare affordability in each district are also relevant. More locally, Housing Strategies for both Councils have formed an important part of the evidence as they draw together information on local housing issues, in particular current housing needs, and set out plans and priorities to improve housing opportunities and services. Recent research as part of the Dorset Sub-Regional Housing Market Assessment has also informed this paper. Local feedback on affordability of housing is also received from Councillors, Parish Councils, residents associations and Housing Associations.

### Sustainability Appraisal

The Councils have prepared a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which aims to test developing LDF policies against a range of objectives.

These objectives stem from an assessment of baseline data across a range of topics for Christchurch and East Dorset.

Sustainability Appraisal objectives include:

- Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everybody
- Create places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look well.
- Reduce the need/desire to travel by car, lorry, or air by making public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive.

## Where are we now?

### National Priority

Affordable housing is a national issue and the Government has emphasised its commitment to tackling housing supply and ensuring more affordable housing. The Government announced in February 2008 that it would invest £8.4 billion, £711 million of which is allocated to the South West to increase the amount of affordable housing over the next three years. Nationally by 2010-11 the aim is to deliver more than 155,000 affordable new homes. The wider aims are for 2 million new homes by 2016 and 3 million by 2020

### National research identifying high house price to income ratio for Christchurch and East Dorset

More locally affordable housing has been identified as a Corporate key priority for both Councils. Recent research (Hometrack Report 'Can't Buy, Can Rent: The affordability of private housing in Great Britain',

published Nov 2007) into house price to income ratios identifies Christchurch as the least affordable area in the South West with a house price to income ratio of 6.96 to 1. East Dorset's ratio is 6.57 to 1. To put it into context, Christchurch is ranked as the 6th and East Dorset as the 10th least affordable area in Great Britain.

The report highlights in particular the problems of affordable housing need from the perspective of young working households trying to access property at the bottom end of the market. The proportion of younger working households in the intermediate market (i.e. able to pay more than a social rent, but still unable to buy even at the low end of their housing market) in Christchurch and East Dorset is high compared with other areas in Great Britain. In Christchurch, 46.6% of households fall into this category (the 7th highest total in the country) while in East Dorset the comparable figure is 45.7% (the 10th highest).

### Rising house prices

The rate of increase in property prices in Christchurch and East Dorset over the past few years has been significant. Information from the Land Registry shows that between 2001 and 2006 property prices rose in Christchurch by 61% and East Dorset by 63.7%.

Table S2 and S3 (page 8) summarise results from a survey of local estate and letting agents in 2006. This identified that:

- For Christchurch entry level

prices for one bedroom properties ranged from around £124,000 up to £323,000 for a 4 bedroom property.

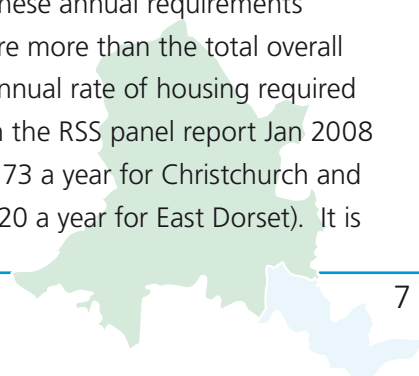
- In Christchurch weekly rents varied from £125 for a one bedroom property to £230 for a 4 bedroom property.
- For East Dorset entry level prices for one bedroom properties ranged from around £142,000 to £318,000 for a 4 bedroom property.
- In East Dorset weekly rents varied from £133 for a one bedroom property to £254 for a 4 bedroom property.

### Housing Need for Christchurch and East Dorset - new research

Housing needs assessments have been completed for all Boroughs/Districts in Dorset. A key part of the study was to look at affordable housing requirements, following Government guidance. Using the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) needs model the total net annual need for affordable housing was calculated by adding the net current need to the difference between the future need and supply. The study concluded that:

- There is a net annual need for 243 affordable units for Christchurch and 440 affordable units for East Dorset.

These annual requirements are more than the total overall annual rate of housing required in the RSS panel report Jan 2008 (173 a year for Christchurch and 320 a year for East Dorset). It is



**Table S2 Entry-level market costs in Bournemouth & Poole HMA (to buy)**

Bedrooms	Bournemouth	Christchurch	East Dorset	North Dorset	Poole	Purbeck
1	£110,000	£124,000	£142,000	£81,500	£110,000	£132,000
2	£159,000	£180,000	£190,000	£135,000	£176,000	£178,000
3	£281,000	£251,000	£243,000	£170,000	£220,000	£229,000
4	£290,000	£323,000	£318,000	£247,000	£285,000	£309,000

Source: Survey of Estate and Letting Agents – 2006

**Table S3 Entry-level market costs in Bournemouth & Poole HMA (to rent, weekly cost)**

Bedrooms	Bournemouth	Christchurch	East Dorset	North Dorset	Poole	Purbeck
1	£114	£125	£133	£104	£114	£104
2	£150	£160	£153	£115	£156	£132
3	£190	£180	£196	£138	£183	£162
4	£242	£230	£254	£173	£230	£196

Source: Survey of Estate and Letting agents - 2006

**Table 11.1 Balancing Housing markets results for Christchurch (per annum)**

Tenure	Size requirement ( No. of bedrooms)				TOTAL
	1	2	3	4+	
Owner-occupation	49	130	60	55	293
Private rented	12	-17	-4	-9	-17
Intermediate	26	38	14	0	78
Social rented	-4	23	57	9	85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>439</b>

Source: Christchurch HNDS Fordham Research 2007

**Table 11.2 Balancing Housing Markets results for East Dorset (per annum)**

Tenure	Size requirement ( No. of bedrooms)				TOTAL
	1	2	3	4+	
Owner-occupation	-4	104	57	46	203
Private rented	34	-13	-7	-23	-8
Intermediate	8	45	0	10	63
Social rented	15	37	28	39	117
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>375</b>

Source: East Dorset HNDS Fordham Research 2007

recognised that it is not possible to meet all the identified need for affordable housing due to the sheer scale of need and economic and environmental constraints. However the Issues & Options document will be looking at setting appropriate targets for numbers of affordable housing.

### Size and tenure of affordable dwellings - recent research

A “Balancing Housing Market” assessment was carried out as part of the recent research. This gives an indication of the number of dwellings of different sizes that would be required to meet the demands of households in and around each District/Borough, by size and tenure. Although it is a snapshot at a particular time, nevertheless it does provide a broad indication of the demands for different sizes and tenures of property. The analysis reveals that across all tenures of housing there is an apparent shortfall. The tables are reproduced to the left, showing numbers of residential units required per year in each tenure and size. The negative figures indicate surpluses. The market housing results (owner occupied and private rented categories) are summarised in the Housing section of the Core Strategy. The affordable housing results (social rented and intermediate categories) are summarised in Table 11.1 and 11.2 for each authority.



## Christchurch

- Looking at just affordable housing, in Christchurch there is more of a demand for 3 bed social rented properties
- The results suggest a small surplus of one-bedroom properties in the social rented sector
- In the intermediate category, the demand is more for 2 and 1 bed properties.
- The split between intermediate and social rented (nearly a 50/50 split) should be taken with caution as more detailed analysis shows that the actual number of households that can afford intermediate housing is well below the numbers seeking intermediate housing. On this basis, a recommended tenure split that is much more heavily weighted towards social rented housing appears justified.

## In East Dorset

- The demand is more evenly split between 2, 3 and 4 bed social rented properties, with most demand for the 3 and 4 bed properties.
- For intermediate housing, the most demand is for 2 bed properties
- The split between intermediate and social rented ( a 35% / 65% split ) should be taken with caution as more detailed analysis shows that the actual number of households that can afford intermediate housing is well below the numbers seeking intermediate housing.

On this basis, a recommended tenure split that is more heavily weighted towards social rented housing appears justified.

## Rules, regulations and advice

The Government believes that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, which they can afford, within a sustainable mixed community. This means providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the community in terms of tenures and price ranges. This should include affordable housing, both social rented and intermediate.

PPS 3 outlines the key role that the planning system has in the delivery of affordable housing. Local Planning Authorities should:

- Set an overall target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided.
- Set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing.
- Specify the size and type of affordable housing that is needed.
- Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required.
- Set out the approach to seeking developer contributions for the provision of affordable housing.

## Draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy

The South West Regional Assembly is preparing a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) to replace the current guidance, Regional Planning Guidance Note 10. A draft RSS was published in May 2006 for public consultation. The public examination took place between April and September 2007 and it is anticipated that the document will be finally approved in the summer of 2008. A Panel Report was published in January 2008

Policy H1 of the Draft RSS sets out a requirement to provide 7,500 affordable homes per annum across the region in 2006 - 2026. Provision should be made for at least 30% of all housing development annually across each local authority and Housing Market Area to be affordable, with authorities specifying rates of up to 60% or higher in areas of greatest need.

The Panel Report amended Policy H1 to set a requirement to provide at least 10,000 affordable homes across the region in 2006 - 2026. Provision should be made for at least 35% of all housing development across each local authority and Housing Market Area to be affordable, with authorities specifying rates of 60% or higher in areas of greatest need.

This would mean that:

- For Christchurch the target would be for 61 - 104 affordable homes built per year from 2006 - 2026 (if the Panel Report's overall housing figure

- of 173 a year is adopted).
- For East Dorset the target would be for 112 – 192 affordable homes per year for 2006 – 2026 (if the Panel Report’s overall housing figure of 320 units per year is adopted)

## The evidence

Christchurch Borough Council’s corporate plan identifies improving prospects for housing as one of its Core Values. **Objective HO1** commits the Council to “develop new planning and housing policies to increase the supply of high quality sustainable housing development.

Christchurch Community Plan 2007 - 2010 identifies affordable housing as a priority. The plan aims to:

- Raise awareness of need for higher percentages of affordable housing in the Borough.
- Comment on emerging housing and planning policies.

East Dorset Draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 identifies affordable housing as a major issue, particularly amongst the young. In the Housing and Development section, the need for affordable homes for local people is a key issue that arises from Parish Plans and other surveys. Relevant action points identified include:-

- Encourage the providing of social housing for people in their local area - **SO5**
- Encourage better inter-agency working to help maximise

opportunities and resources - **SO5**

- Support initiatives which seek to prevent homelessness and improve services to the homeless - **SO5**
- Support initiatives which seek to ensure families are appropriately housed.
- Support the provision of increased affordable housing opportunities for young people in order that they can have the same opportunities to live and work within their own local communities - **SO5**.

The Dorset local authorities are working together to prepare a Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment (HMA) of Dorset. There are 2 Housing Market Areas in Dorset - Bournemouth/Poole and Dorchester/Weymouth. Christchurch and East Dorset fall within the Bournemouth / Poole Housing Market Area. The Housing Market Assessment will look at the supply, need and demand for market and affordable housing in these areas and inform decisions on the amount, type and mix of housing to be provided on future housing sites. The results show that there is a greater demand for housing than the current stock of housing can currently meet across all tenures (owner occupied, private rented, intermediate and social rented) The key findings in relation to affordable housing (i.e. social rented and intermediate sectors) in Christchurch and East Dorset are:

- There is a net annual need for 243 additional affordable

homes in Christchurch and 440 in East Dorset.

- In Christchurch the “Balancing Housing Markets” assessment identifies a particular need for three bedroom social rented units and suggests a small surplus of one-bedroom homes in this sector.
- In East Dorset there is a particular need for two and four bedroom properties, closely followed by two bedroom units, in the social rented sector, with less need for one bedroom properties.
- In Christchurch and East Dorset the main shortfall in the intermediate sector is for two bedroom homes.
- For both areas, the housing market assessment results for social rented / intermediate split should be applied with caution, as other evidence supports a split more heavily weighted towards the social rented sector.
- In Christchurch 23% of all households have one or more members in an identified special needs group, being more likely to state a requirement for more support services. In East Dorset the proportion is 18.6%.
- In Christchurch over two fifths (41.3%) and in East Dorset well over a third (37.1%) of households contain only older people comprising mostly one or two persons.. Within the private sector about half of older person households in

Christchurch and East Dorset reside in accommodation with 3 bedrooms. Under-occupation of housing is an issue. Within the social rented sector 5% of older person households in Christchurch and 2% in East Dorset live in properties with at least 3 bedrooms

- In both Christchurch and East Dorset approximately 9 % of households are headed by a key worker. Key worker households are more likely to be in owner-occupation and record higher than average household incomes than other households in employment

The results of the survey have helped to identify the issues which are developed later in the document.

### Housing strategy

Both Councils have published Housing Strategies.

Christchurch Housing Strategy 2006 - 2010 identified local priorities as:

- Meeting affordable housing need
- Meeting the needs of the homeless
- Improving private sector stock condition.

### Housing Register

The Councils both operate housing registers. Consideration of these shows that households registered in need of affordable housing have been rising in both Council areas over the last few years. In Christchurch there are approximately 2,900 households registered, and in East Dorset the figure is about 2,200. The greatest need is for 1 bedroom homes, highlighting the need of both the young for their first independent home and that of separated households needing assistance in making a fresh start. Of those who require a transfer from existing housing association property, the need is more evenly split between 1, 2 and 3 bedroom property.

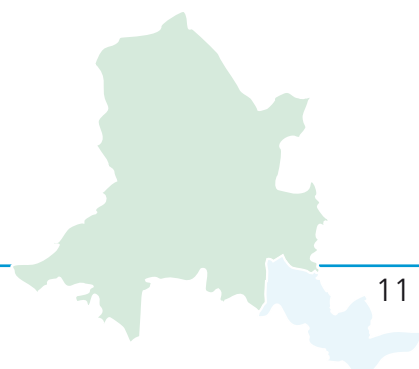
### Benefits and Costs

Provision of affordable housing is one of the most important issues facing Christchurch and East Dorset now and in the future. Rising house prices have made the area one of the least affordable in the country, yet provision of affordable housing falls well below identified need. Nonetheless there are costs to consider in delivering affordable housing:

- Provision of affordable housing imposes costs on developers and may therefore compete with other developer costs such as contributions to transport, open space or community facilities.
- Provision of affordable housing on site helps secure mixed forms of development, but may also lead to complications

where mixed tenures occupy one development, especially in blocks of flats.

- Requiring developers to pay for affordable housing may have the effect of increasing prices of market homes as developers seek to recoup their costs.
- Rural exception policies essentially enable affordable housing to be permitted in areas where it would not otherwise be allowed. This brings much needed housing to rural villages, but may also have significant impacts on the rural landscape.





## Setting targets for delivery of affordable housing

**The 2007 Housing Needs Survey indicates a need of 243 affordable dwellings a year for Christchurch and 440 affordable dwellings a year in East Dorset.**

This equates to 4860 dwellings for Christchurch Borough Council and 8800 dwellings for East Dorset District Council for the period 2006-2026

This is more than the total housing requirement as set out in the Panel Report of the Draft RSS of 3450 for Christchurch Borough Council and 6400 for EDDC for 2006-2026. This would not be economically deliverable. Any target for affordable housing put forward should be achievable.

Draft RSS policy in the Panel Report states that at least 35% of all housing development across the region is to be affordable, with authorities specifying rates of up to 60% or higher in areas of greatest need. This would equate to 61-104 affordable dwellings per year for Christchurch Borough Council and 112-192 for East Dorset District Council.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



***What overall target for delivery of affordable housing should the Development Plan Document adopt?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested KEY Issue AH1



## Site thresholds

In both Christchurch and East Dorset the threshold for requiring a proportion of affordable housing as part of a development is 15 or more dwellings in the urban area and 5 or more dwellings in the rural part of East Dorset. The thresholds were reduced from 25 to 15 in Christchurch in April 2007 to be in line with the national minimum threshold as set out in PPS 3. However PPS 3 allows Local Planning Authorities to set lower minimum thresholds, where viable and practicable, including in rural areas. Indeed current affordable housing policy in New Forest District Council has a threshold of 3 in rural areas, with sites below required to make a financial contribution. Lowering the thresholds will increase the number of sites contributing to affordable housing provision, but we have to ensure that development is still viable. Further evidence on viability testing is to be undertaken. This will inform the development of our Preferred Options, but in the meantime we would like your views on the following options:

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



***What site threshold should the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document adopt?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested KEY Issue AH2



## Issues and Options



## Off-site provision of affordable housing

For sites which meet the threshold for requiring a proportion of affordable housing the expectation is that provision will take place on site. However, we need to decide whether it is ever appropriate to accept a contribution towards off-site provision in-lieu of provision on site.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



***Are there any situations where off-site provision of affordable housing is appropriate?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested KEY Issue AH3



## Proportion of affordable housing required on qualifying sites

Current policy for qualifying sites is to require a proportion of at least 30% affordable housing units (Christchurch Borough Council) and 40% (East Dorset District Council). We need to consider whether this is still an appropriate policy approach. An increased requirement in terms of the percentage required on site could increase the overall amount of affordable housing delivered. Again this will be influenced by viability issues and this needs to be informed by research.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



***What proportion of affordable housing should be required on qualifying sites?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested KEY Issue AH4



## Type and size of affordable housing

The Balancing Housing Market Assessment 2007 results show that for Christchurch the greatest need is for 3 bedroom housing in the social rented sector - over twice as much more than for 2 bedroom properties. Results also suggest a small surplus in 1 bedroom social rented properties in Christchurch. In East Dorset there is more of a need for 2 bedroom and 4 bedroom properties in the social rented sector, but still a substantial need for 3 bedroom properties. For the intermediate sector, there is a greater need for 2 bedroom properties in both Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council. Other evidence of size of accommodation required by those on the Housing Register shows that there is most demand for one bedroom units in Christchurch Borough Council and in East Dorset District Council (source Housing Register 31.3.07).

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



***How should the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document develop policies for type and size of affordable housing?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH5



## Tenure of affordable housing

Government advice advises Councils to provide different kinds of affordable housing. There are two main types - social rented (from a housing association or other social landlord) and "intermediate" housing (between

social rented and market housing where occupiers part rent and part contribute mortgage payments). For Christchurch Borough Council, the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group recommends a 70 / 30 split between social rented and intermediate housing as social rented housing tends to be the only form of housing those in most need can afford. The Balancing Housing Market assessment identifies a clear need for intermediate housing and the results indicate that the split, although still weighted towards social housing is proportionally more for intermediate housing than would be expected, particularly in Christchurch, where there is nearly a 50/50 split. (East Dorset has a 65/35 split). Following more detailed analysis, the study results in this aspect should be taken with caution as this may not reflect households' ability to pay for this type of accommodation.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES



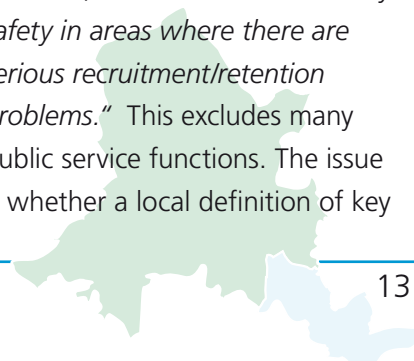
***How can we develop policy for the tenure of affordable housing?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH6



## Key worker housing – definition and provision

The current definition of key worker housing is "people employed by the public sector in a frontline role delivering an essential public service in health, education or community safety in areas where there are serious recruitment/retention problems." This excludes many public service functions. The issue is whether a local definition of key



worker should be adapted for local use in planning agreements, as recommended by the Christchurch Borough Council Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group (Jan 2007). The Housing Needs Survey 2007 identified that 9% of households in both Christchurch and East Dorset are headed by a key worker. They are more likely to be in owner-occupied housing and record higher than average incomes than other households in employment. Issues for the Development Plan Document to address are whether key worker housing is a priority and whether there is evidence of a recruitment problem due to housing affordability. If it is an issue, we need to decide if the definition needs revising and whether we should include a target for its provision.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES

***What should the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document adopt as an appropriate definition of key worker housing?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH7 

***What categories of key worker should this revised definition include?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH8 

***How can the Development Plan Document develop policy to provide key worker housing?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH9 

### Rural Exception sites

Planning policy allows the allocation and release of sites solely for affordable housing to meet local needs in perpetuity using a Rural exception site policy. This enables small sites to be developed for affordable housing in small rural communities that would not normally be released for housing because they are subject to restraint policies - e.g. green belt. There are currently no Rural Exception site policies in Christchurch because the green belt in the area is not typical of that normally applicable to the policy. The policy would normally apply to extensive areas of green belt away from urban areas with small self-contained villages. There are no such rural settlements in Christchurch Borough as any villages are fairly close to the built up area and cannot be considered to be self-contained. The issue for the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document is whether this is still the right policy stance to take or whether there are any additional areas where the Rural Exceptions policy could apply.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES

***Should the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document develop an Affordable Housing Rural Exceptions Policy?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested KEY Issue AH10 

### Other methods of affordable housing provision

New build is not the only method of providing affordable housing. Other ways of securing additional provision include bringing back empty properties into use, and change of tenure, where a Housing Association purchase market housing for social rented housing. The private rented sector (through the Housing benefit system) is also used to meet some of the needs of households who are unable to afford a market solution. The Housing Needs Survey identifies that there is a significant amount of private rented accommodation supported by housing benefit (for the past 2 years equating to 121 lets a year for Christchurch and 161 a year in East Dorset) The survey also identifies that there is an element of under-occupation of family property by older person households, particularly in the owner occupied sector.

### SUGGESTED ISSUES

***For which other methods of affordable housing delivery should the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document develop policy?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH11 

***Have we identified all of the issues relating to affordable housing policies?***

Go to Response Paper Suggested Issue AH12 



## Response Period

This Issues and Options document is produced for a period of 6 weeks consultation from 25th March 2008 until 6th May 2008.

## Viewing and obtaining the documents

The document can be viewed and downloaded from the Councils' website [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

The document can also be viewed or obtained from the two Councils, and viewed at libraries throughout Christchurch and East Dorset. You can obtain a copy of the Issues and Options document by contacting the Councils' planning policy teams.

### **Christchurch Borough Council**

The Planning Policy Team,  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street  
Christchurch BH23 1AZ

Tel: **01202-495017**

E-mail: [planning.policy@christchurch.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@christchurch.gov.uk)

### **East Dorset District Council**

Policy Planning, Council Offices,  
Furzehill, Wimborne BH21 4HN

Tel: **01202 886201**

E-mail: [forward.planning@eastdorset.gov.uk](mailto:forward.planning@eastdorset.gov.uk)

## Completing your Response

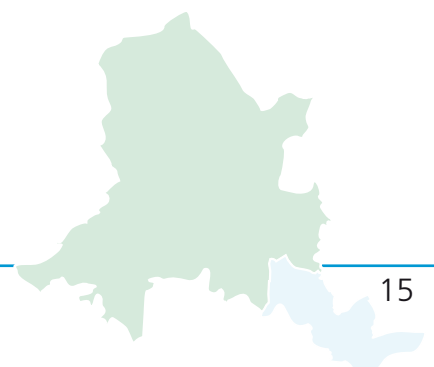
It will help us if you send your comments back to us using the Response form provided.

You do not have to complete a response to every question, only those which interest you. If you do not agree with the issues and options put forward by the Councils, or wish to propose further issues and options, then there is space provided for you to do so.

### **We would particularly like your responses on the Key Issues highlighted.**

You can respond on each of the options given for each issue, and you can suggest further Issues. An opportunity is also provided for you to identify locations where the issue or options for addressing it are relevant.

# How to respond





The Planning Policy Team  
**Christchurch Borough Council**  
Civic Offices, Bridge Street  
Christchurch BH23 1AZ

Tel: **01202 495017**

E-mail: **[planning.policy@christchurch.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@christchurch.gov.uk)**

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