

Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment Supplement

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Revision History:

Version 1 approved by Joint Councils Committee, August 2025.

Version 2 following public consultation of draft Neighbourhood Plan, clarifying in Sections 1-3 why this document is required and explaining its connections to the AECOM HNA.
Approved by Joint Councils Committee, January 2026.

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Glossary

AECOM	Consultants contracted to compile a Housing Needs Assessment released April 2025
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment, measure of housing need (rather than market demand)
JCC	Joint Councils Committee of Bridport Town Council and Symondsburry Parish Council, overseeing NP process.
NA	Neighbourhood Area – area to which the Neighbourhood Plan will apply
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework – reference document for Planning matters
Affordable Housing	Where the phrase “Affordable Housing” has capital initials, it is referring to housing formally defined as such rather than just lower-cost open-market housing.

1 Introduction

This document is to be read in conjunction with the April 2025 Bridport Area Housing Needs Assessment compiled by consultants AECOM.

The AECOM report determines housing need on the basis of the NA's older demographic continuing to increase and younger decrease. However, AECOM acknowledge that this trend has the potential to undermine the balance and vibrancy of the NA community but viewed such considerations as beyond their remit. Nevertheless, their report acknowledges that a needs assessment that addresses the need for balance and vibrancy as reflected in the aims and policies elsewhere in the NP would be supported.

AECOM HNA Para 5.3.3	<i>"The proportionate decline in the younger population, particularly those aged 0-44 (representing the bulk of working age adults and families with young children), may present a future challenge to the balance and vibrancy of the local community and economy. This trend could certainly present a justification for the NP to encourage new residential development to specifically attract and retain young families to support the continued thriving of local businesses and facilities such as schools, in addition to serving the evolving needs of existing local people."</i>
Para 5.4.4	<i>"This approach has limitations, in that it embeds existing size preferences..."</i>
Para 5.4.7	<i>"...affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the NA ... ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type, and density for local residents' budgets"</i>
Para 6.5.10	<i>"...it may not be considered prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families and others."</i>

Accordingly, Bridport Town Council consider this HNA supplement to be essential for a complete and effective assessment.

The topics itemised as needing further attention by the Joint Councils Committee (JCC) on 25th March 2025 are addressed by this Supplement. These are (in summary):

1) The current housing market in the Bridport Area is particularly harsh and impactful on low income and younger residents. Bridport's location and retail/cultural offer is attractive to people for retirement and/or second homes. This demand pushes up prices for market and rented housing, making access to appropriate housing difficult for younger people and especially those on low incomes.

The HNA states that: "the more urgent and acute need for affordable and social rented housing should be prioritised wherever possible". Yet the significant increase in the 65-84 age group identified shifts the AECOM HNA focus for local housing need toward primarily meeting a growing retirement population.

2) The JCC is concerned that housing provision is driving a significant imbalance in the Bridport community. We are aware that younger people are not all registering their

housing needs with Dorset Council and many are living in insecure rented accommodation or as non-dependent adults at home. We understand that data on young people's housing needs are difficult to find and collate but we do think that the final HNA needs to recognise that the declining numbers of working age residents is partially connected to the failing housing market and that policies are required to re-balance the provision of housing to meet all needs not just the retirement cohort.

3) Table 5.9 of the AECOM HNA indicates that mostly larger (3 and 4+ bedroom) new properties will be needed in the Bridport area in the next 10 years - this runs counter to previous work commissioned from AECOM on Lifecycle modelling (2019) that prioritised an increase in supply of 1,2 and 3 bed units during the neighbourhood plan period up to 2036.

4) The data presented in Table 5.5 of the AECOM HNA showing the pace of ageing of the NA's population is stark:

- The population in the cohort aged 65-84 has expanded by a sizeable 29.6% in the past decade.
- Unlike some areas with a similar pace of ageing, the oldest age group aged 85 and over has not grown.
- There are significant declines to all age groups, other than 65-85, and in particular working age residents.

We feel that this table demands further interpretation which is provided in this supplement.

2 Executive Summary

AECOM acknowledge the need for a housing strategy that is more supportive of the aim of the NA being a balanced and vibrant community. This HNA, endorsed by the JCC, is intended to do this.

In **Section 3** the table contained in the AECOM report that shows a 29.6% inter-census increase in the 65-84 age group and decrease in all younger age groups is analysed. A comparison is made with the country wide age distribution which confirms that the NA has a marked age imbalance. It is further demonstrated that Incomers contribute significantly to the 29.6% increase.

The impact of this age imbalance and its increase over time (as assumed by AECOM) undermines home affordability and would lead to further reduction in younger age groups and hence the NA's economic and social vibrancy.

To address these challenges a mix of new open-market and affordable home sizes is proposed in **Section 4** and **5** respectively. These mixes are identical to the current BANP and take precedence over that proposed AECOM mix (for both open-market and affordable homes) which indicated 90% 3-4 bedroom, 10% 2 bedroom, and no 1 bedroom homes, the latter two types being essential for first time buyers.

Taking AECOM's forecast of the need for Affordable Homes (which excludes affordable older people's homes) of 68-69 per year, **Section 6** shows that given Dorset Council's projection of major developments in the NA, shortfalls are severe in all but three years of the Plan period. No clear alternatives are currently available.

Whilst AECOM have provided forecasts of the need for open-market and affordable retirement/sheltered homes they also advocate that the provision of affordable homes takes priority over open-market retirement/sheltered homes. **Section 6** also reviews AECOM's statements with the conclusion that a new BANP policy is justified that gives priority to all types of affordable housing over open-market retirement / sheltered housing.

Section 7 looks at the numbers of new homes needed in the NA over the Plan period. ONS predicts that despite births being far outnumbered by deaths in West Dorset, and many residents leaving every year, the larger number of new arrivals will result in ongoing growth. It is demonstrated that more open-market homes are not needed, unless to fulfil the wishes of incomers to the area, but they are likely to be imposed as a result of external policies. It is recommended that the new BANP contains wording that the likely substantial over-supply of housing in the NA should be considered when examining planning applications and ensuring (as far as allowed) that these homes are suitable for the proven needs of the Neighbourhood Area.

3 Age Structure of the Neighbourhood Area

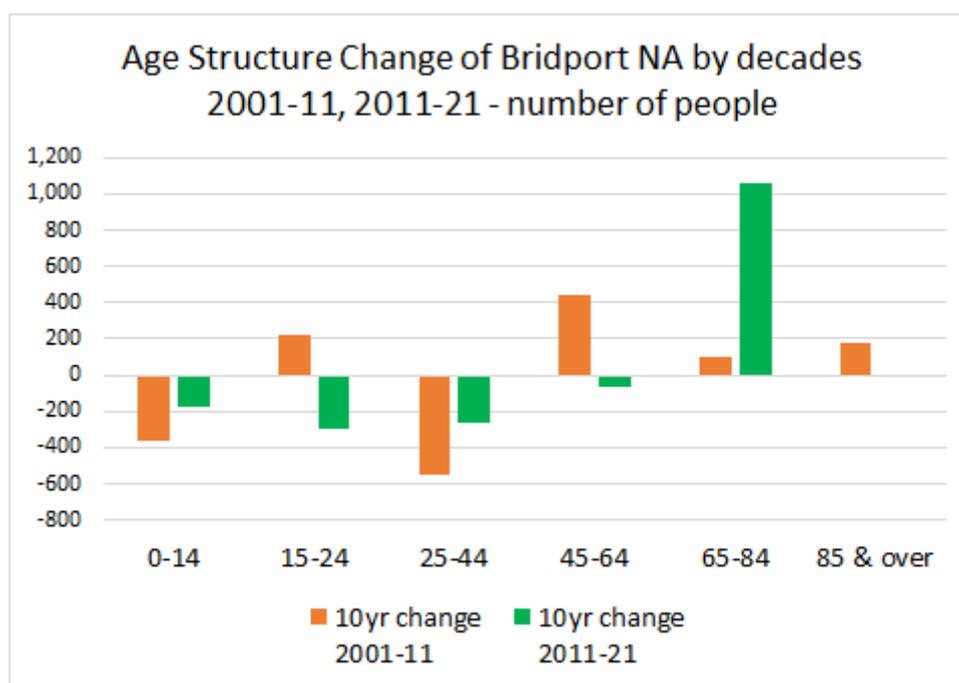
3.1 Interpretation of Data

Table 5.5 of AECOM's HNA records how the number of residents in different age groups changed in the ten years between 2011 and 2021 censuses. The drop in number of younger residents and the sharp increase in the older ones is clear.

Age group	2011 (Census)		2021 (Census)		Change
0-14	2,020	13.4%	1,849	12.0%	-8.5%
15-24	1,509	10.0%	1,213	7.9%	-19.6%
25-44	2,809	18.6%	2,541	16.5%	-9.5%
45-64	4,423	29.3%	4,359	28.4%	-1.4%
65-84	3,583	23.7%	4,645	30.2%	+29.6%
85 and over	766	5.1%	757	4.9%	-1.2%
Total	15,110		15,364		1.7%

The trend becomes clearer still if expressed diagrammatically. Figure 1 shows the same set of statistics as well as those for the previous decade.

To obtain improved insight to the causes underlying this trend and determine the contribution made by incomers further analysis of the ONS data (the same data used by AECOM) is made.

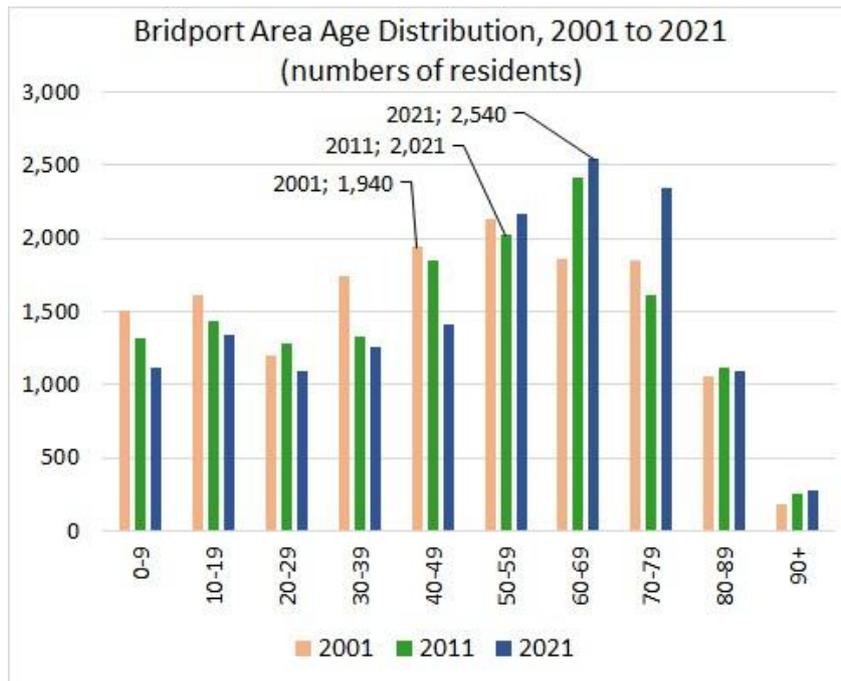


(Source: ONS Censuses. 2001; Table ST001. 2011; Table QS103EW. 2021; Table TS007.)

Figure 1. Decade by decade age structure change 2001-2021

Note how in the decade 2001-11 there was a decrease in younger adults 25 to 44, though an increase in adults 45 and older; ten years later, this trend has become embedded as a large upsurge in people of retirement age but a decrease in every one of the younger age bands.

The shift in the age profile of residents can be seen in the alternative view of the same original data shown in Figure 2, this time in 10-year age bands.

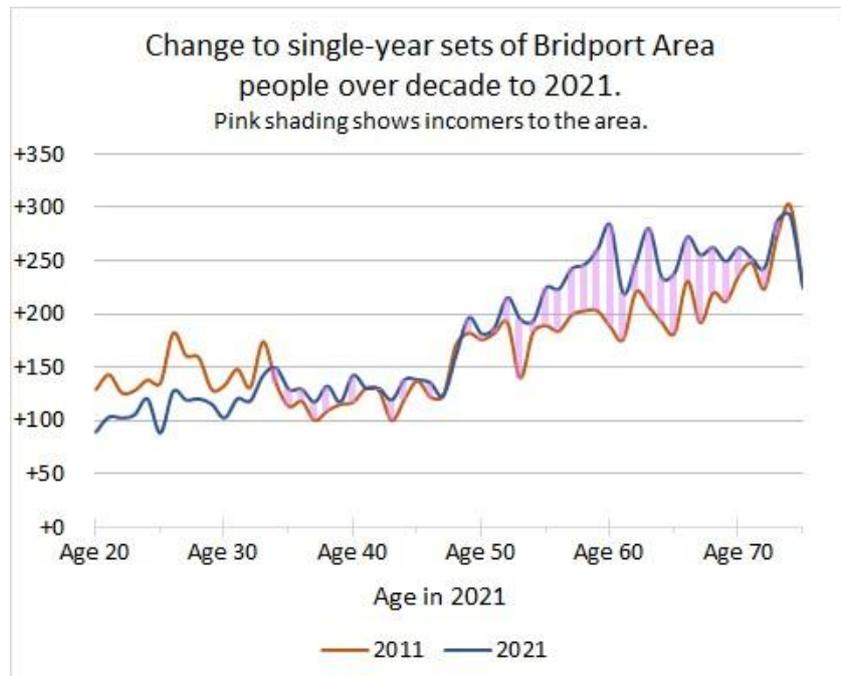


(Source: ONS Censuses. 2001; Table ST001. 2011; Table QS103EW. 2021; Table TS007.)

Figure 2. Age structure, 2001-2021

Generally, in previous decades the number of people in each of the “younger” age groups (up to 50-59) has been higher than it is now; recently the groups 60-79 have increased rapidly.

Note (for example) in Figure 2 how 1,940 people who were 40-49 years old in 2001 have become 2,540 aged 60-69 in 2021 – they have increased in number by 600. The conclusion to be drawn is these are incomers to the NA. This conclusion is further demonstrated by Figure 3 below.



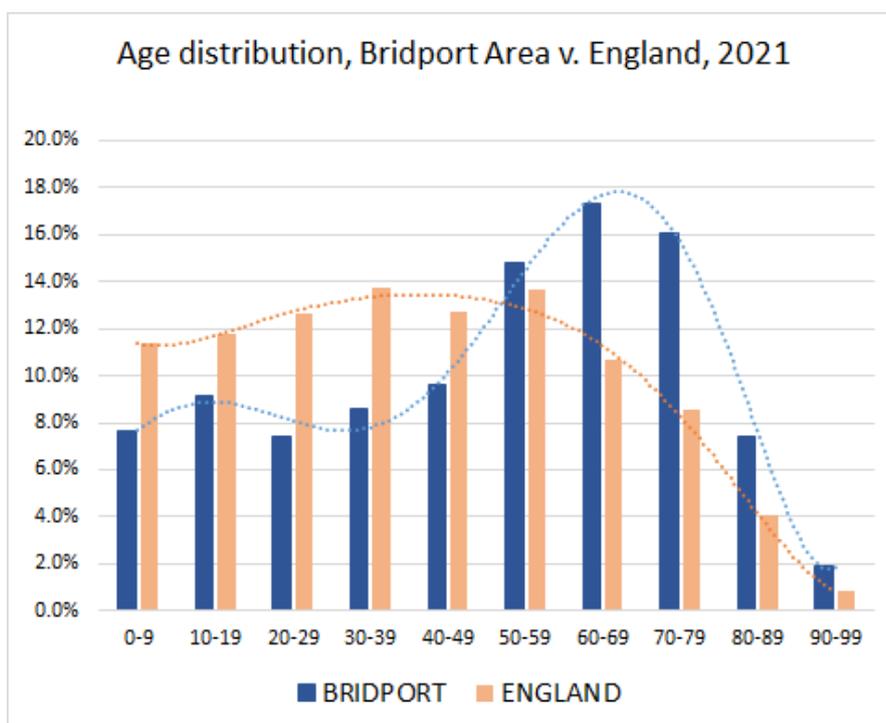
(Source: ONS Censuses. 2001; Table ST001. 2011; Table QS103EW. 2021; Table TS007.)

Figure 3. Change to groups of people of the same age, 2011-2021

This graph shows clearly the effect of incomers to the area; the pink shaded area represents the increase to the number of people of the same age, as they grew older over the period 2011-21. Given no incomers their numbers would have stayed exactly the same except for a slight drop due to anyone who left; instead, there is strong growth centred around people of about 60 in 2021. There's also a noticeable drop in young people.

3.2 Comparison with UK wide age distribution

It is important to demonstrate that the age-distribution within the NA is not typical of that country-wide. Although the country generally has an ageing population, Figure 4 clearly shows how the age distribution within the NA is skewed towards older age groups compared with England's overall distribution – ours has become an abnormally aged community, and the difference from the norm is increasing.



(Source: ONS Census 2021; Table TS007.)

Figure 4. Comparison, Neighbourhood Area age distribution with England

3.3 The Impact of an ageing population

The above conclusion that incomers to the NA drive the exceptional ageing of the resident population has relevance to housing need inasmuch that a majority of incomers will have been relatively wealthy retirees who are readily able to purchase open-market homes in a limited availability market. This pushes up house prices, making it even harder for those living in the area to purchase properties (e.g. as first homes or to house larger families), some inevitably being obliged to move away to more affordable areas.

People from elsewhere who make a choice to move here should not be the driver for influencing the type and size of new homes built.

This demographic imbalance of the NA community is of significant concern, after all, one of the main reasons for having a Neighbourhood Plan is to assure the future wellbeing of the Bridport Area community.

As discussed above, the older age group incomers impact the housing market prices and availability in a harmful way. It will be difficult to recover from this, since the higher prices become embedded as the new norm.

AECOM have applied a simple extrapolation of the present age structure data which leads to a future demographic of ever increasing 65+ age groups and decreasing under-64 groups. As is shown in Section 4, the consequences of this approach in terms of new home size calculations expressed would lead to a need for 0% 1 bed, 10% 2 bed, 48% 3 bed, and 42% 4+ bed homes. Such a distribution would cement in place the increasing age imbalance as new homes would be unaffordable for younger and less wealthy, members of the community, refer Section 3.4.

AECOM's adopted approach would also create a housing stock of large new homes intended for older people without taking account of any need or wish for older people to live in smaller homes by downsizing.

AECOM's approach to estimating new home sizes is reviewed further in Section 4.

3.4 Affordability of Local Housing

To further emphasise the inaccessibility of housing and the need for maximising the build of affordable housing, especially Social Rented Housing, Figure 5 below has been developed as a more expressive view of Table 4.4 of the AECOM HNA. It shows what level of household income is needed to access different categories of housing in the Bridport Area.

The message from the figures is that all open-market homes, whether new or not, require the buyer to have above-average household income. More damagingly, this applies to almost all private rented properties too, which comprise half of the rented property stock of the NA (AECOM HNA Table 4.2).

In particular, it illustrates that in order to retain young, single people starting out on their own on a low to modest income, social rented homes are likely to form part of the solution.



Figure 5. NA Affordability chart

Note that AECOM assume that to be able to afford rented property, one-third of a household's income will be committed to rent or equivalent. In reality this may need to be higher. For home purchase, the assumption is that a 90% mortgage is taken out, at a maximum loan of 3½ times the household income.

4 Open Market Home Size Mix

4.1 AECOM suggested mix

AECOM's HNA [Section 5.4] provides a method of estimating in what relative proportions new homes of different sizes (number of bedrooms) should be built during the plan period, but it is geared towards an assumption that 70% of the households by 2036 will be over 65 years old. The results of the calculations are in their Table 5.9.

This is not a viable or sustainable population bias and is tantamount to accepting that the neighbourhood becomes a place for wealthy retirees. (They would need to be wealthy to afford a 3 or 4+ bedroom home). Furthermore, the need for smaller affordable homes to house the less wealthy of all ages, and crucially those key workers providing essential support services for such an aged population, would not be met.

The AECOM HNA states [Para 5.3.3]

"The proportionate decline in the younger population, particularly those aged 0-44 (representing the bulk of working age adults and families with young children), may present a future challenge to the balance and vibrancy of the local community and economy. This trend could certainly present a justification for the NP to encourage new residential development to specifically attract and retain young families to support the continued thriving of local businesses and facilities such as schools, in addition to serving the evolving needs of existing local people."

It is noted that AECOM also urge caution about possible unwanted effects of implementing their suggestion literally, such as:

- Para 5.4.4 "This approach has limitations, in that it embeds existing size preferences..."
- Para 5.4.7 "...affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the NA ... ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type, and density for local residents' budgets"
- Para 6.5.10 "...it may not be considered prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families and others."

The AECOM HNA's suggested home sizes calculation, while providing useful context, is therefore set aside.

4.2 Adult children living in parental home

Adding to the case for an increase in supply of smaller, cheaper properties is the relatively large number of nominally independent young adults still living in the parental home. The 2021 ONS census identified these households, making it easy to calculate how many there are in the Neighbourhood Area.

Household composition	2021	
	number	%
Total: All households	7,181	
Single family household: Married or civil partnership couple: All children non-dependent	322	4.5
Single family household: Cohabiting couple family: All children non-dependent	38	0.5
Single family household: Lone parent family: All children non-dependent	245	3.4
Total, households with all children non-dependent	605	8.4

Source: ONS Census 2021, Table TS003

Of these 605 households there is, or course, no measure of how many contain a child (or multiple children) who would rather be living independently, but their presence represents an additional pressure on the need for smaller, cheaper new homes. If they are unable to find somewhere locally, then the likelihood is increased that they will leave the Bridport Area and further depress the number of residents in the younger age groups.

4.3 Revised Open-market Home Size Mix Proposal

As stated above, the AECOM HNA suggestion for new home sizes is not to be taken forward, and this section sets out an alternative.

In an earlier project, “Life Stage Modelling” (March 2019) for Bridport Town Council the same consultants carried out a project to define future home sizes and this, while using the same method, came up with an altogether different proposal. Unlike the AECOM HNA which forecasts an ongoing downward slide in the number of younger residents, the 2019 study allowed for a small increase and the proposal for new home sizes is markedly different, with a significantly larger proportion of smaller homes.

Having an increased supply of small homes will facilitate retaining young adults, will provide extra opportunities for ageing residents to downsize if they wish, and will not add to the pool of larger properties which appeal to second and holiday home owners.

This table shows the mix of sizes which the Life Stage Modelling report advocated.

Number of bedrooms	Life Stage Modelling proposal
1	29.2%
2	36.8%
3	34.0%
4+	None

This distribution is identical to the recommendation of the first edition of the Neighbourhood Plan, even though that stemmed from different data, and should continue to be used as the goal for new developments of open-market housing and *not* the ratios of Table 5.9 of the AECOM HNA.

The table is shown diagrammatically in Figure 6.

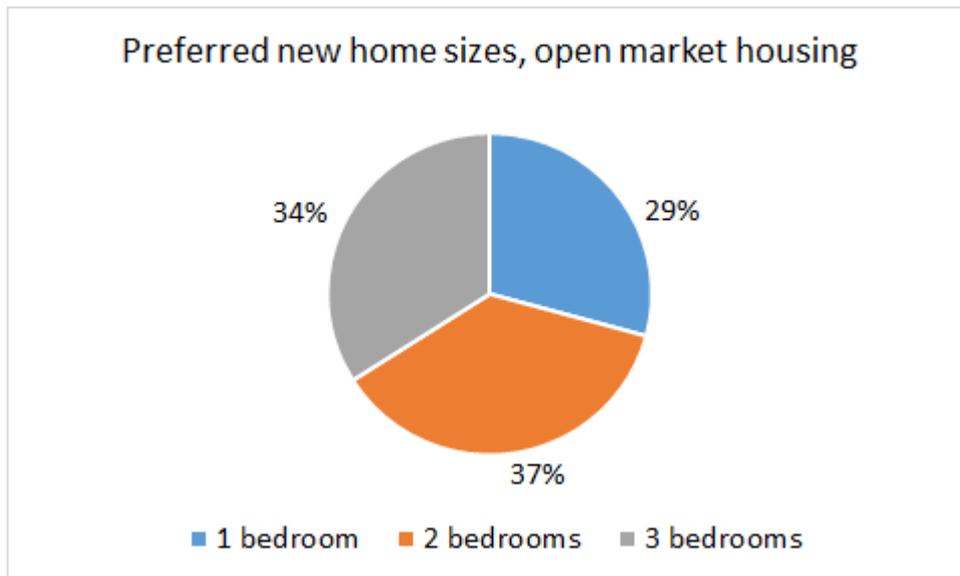


Figure 6. Preferred ratio of numbers of bedrooms for new Open Market Housing

5 Affordable Housing Home Size Mix

For Affordable Housing provision, which applies to a specific sector of the population, the latest Housing Register figures for the Neighbourhood Area are the best guide to the preferred number of bedrooms. Whilst AECOM do not provide a housing size and type proposed mix for affordable housing their HNA does provide the data in their Table 5.11 [written in error as 5-101], from which the following table is extracted.

Number of bedrooms	Number of Housing Register applications, April 2025	Percentage
1	460	60%
2	164	21%
3	106	14%
4+	40	5%

These figures are very similar to those used in the first edition of the Neighbourhood Plan (a drop of 5 percentage points in 2-bedroom property demand balanced by smaller increases in the other sizes). The Housing Register no longer distinguishes between 1-bedroom flats and houses, so these two categories are now merged.

The content of the table is shown diagrammatically in Figure 7.

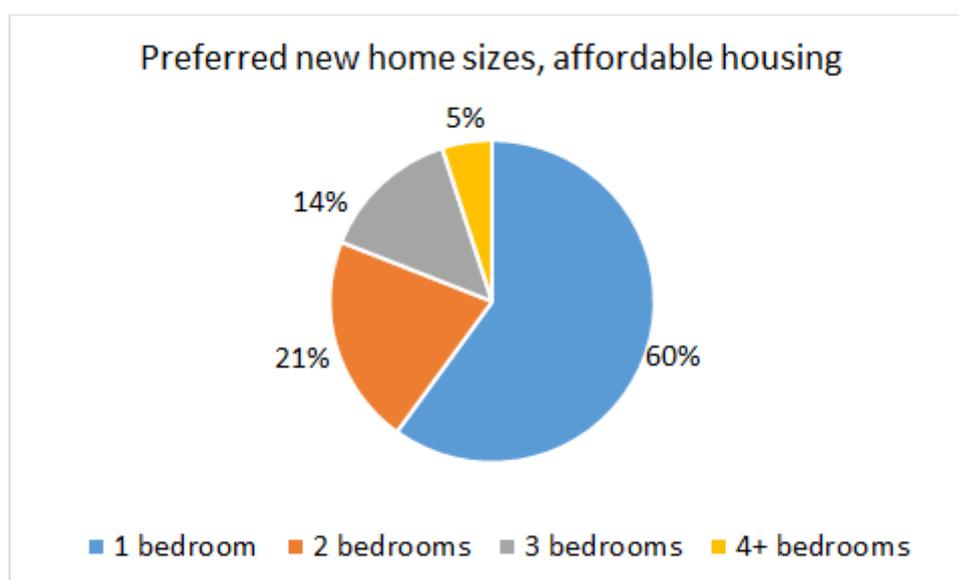


Figure 7. Preferred ratio of numbers of bedrooms for new Affordable Housing

6 Prioritising Affordable Housing

6.1 Affordable Homes Shortfall

AECOM's HNA [4.5.14] estimates the need for Affordable Homes of all types is 68-69 per year.

There are two main traditional routes to new Affordable Home delivery, via Exception Sites and as part of a major development.

The potential for Exception Site development is addressed in Section 6.2 below.

In early 2025 Dorset Council issued a Bridport - Symondsburry Housing Projection which lists all foreseen housing developments in the NP area. Whilst this projection may be subject to future amendment it does provide a legitimate basis on which to generate a forecast of Affordable Home delivery. Extracting the major developments (being 5 homes or more homes) from this projection and assuming developments are sufficiently viable to deliver 35% Affordable Homes, the potential delivery via major developments can be seen in Figure 8 below. It shows a severe potential shortfall of projected Affordable Home delivery (note that these figures exclude Affordable Retirement Home need which is addressed in Section 6.3).

Location	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	
Coneygar Lodge, Conygar Park			7										
Rear of Assembly Rooms, Gundry Lane			5										
BRID1: Vearse Farm (Hallam Land)		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	93				
BRID5: St Michaels Trading Estate					9	24	35	24					
BRID1: Vearse Farm (SE - Crammond)							20	40	20				
BRID1: Vearse Farm (Residual)										40			
BRID1: Vearse Farm buildings											25	25	
BRID3: Land east of Bredy Vets Centre						20	25	25					
St Swithins Road, Bridport											12		
Proton Garage, West Allington						7							
Lilliput Buildings								9					
Flood Lane						35	115						
Bradford's Builders Merchants													
St Andrews Trading Estate									40	40			
Rope Walks Car Park, Bridport													
Sidney Gale House Site													
Church Hayes Farm								24					
Land West of Coronation Road							28	20					
Coach Station Square, Bridport												40	
Total New Homes:	0	100	112	100	109	186	323	242	153	80	37	65	1507
Potential AHs as 35% of total:	0	35	39	35	38	65	113	85	54	28	13	23	
St. Michael's Trading Estate AHs					7	7							
Chancery House AHs			8										
Total Affordable Homes up to 2036:	0	35	47	35	45	72	113	85	54	28	13	23	549
Shortfall from AECOM HNA need of	-69	-34	-22	-34	-24	3	44	16	-15	-41	-56	-46	-279

Figure 8. Forecast of Affordable Home delivery based on Dorset Council's projection and assuming developments are viable.

6.2 Exception Site development

AECOM's June 2025 Site Assessment report did not yield any clear candidates for Exception Sites, though some of the sites identified by them might be capable of being developed over time. As development of Exception Sites is one avenue to achieving Affordable Housing without it being tied to provision of open-market homes it is a topic of interest, and a note should be included in the BANP Housing Section text to explain the situation.

Exception site development and pursuing non-traditional opportunities that deliver Affordable Homes, for example, via altruistic provision of land either privately or through Dorset Council, would ameliorate Affordable Home demand and should be supported.

6.3 Forecast for older people’s homes need

(AECOM HNA Section 6 refers). AECOM estimate potential demand using two methods, census-based using AECOM calculations in Table 6.3 and “Housing LIN” method in Table 6.4.

AECOM census-based calculations (“Table 6.3”)			
Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	46	137	183
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	41	184	226
Total	88	321	409

“Housing LIN” Based Estimate (“Table 6.4”)			
Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	36	47	83
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	70	140	210
Total	106	187	293

Based on AECOM’s forecast need, 88-106 home adaptations or new Affordable sheltered / retirement living units are needed over the planning period. (Refer AECOM HNA Section 6.2 where home adaptations are addressed).

Similarly, 187-321 new open-market sheltered, or retirement living homes are needed. These homes may be for purchase or rent and are thus not affordable for many local people; refer Figure 5 above.

6.4 Prioritising competing needs

AECOM HNA [Para 6.2.19] invites consideration of how to address the potential need for older people’s accommodation.

However, it may not be possible or appropriate to deliver this scale of new accommodation. It is proportionally high in relation to the overall housing delivery in the NA..., and therefore should not necessarily be prioritised to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing.

Para 1.4.10 also notes:

However, it may not be considered prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families and others, in order to maintain a balanced and vibrant community.

And AECOM state: [Paras 4.1.1 and 4.1.3]

Neighbourhood plans may include policies that influence the scale of Affordable Housing provision, and the mix of different tenures and products provided through new housing development.

Local Plans typically include policies on Affordable Housing and whilst the Neighbourhood Plan must conform with these policies, there is scope for Neighbourhood Plan policies to adopt some local variety where this is supported by the evidence.

To address the risk that open-market retirement or sheltered home development (unaffordable to most local people) will come at the expense of Affordable Housing development, and given AECOM's advice, a new NP policy is justified that gives higher priority to both general Affordable Housing and Affordable Retirement / Sheltered Housing.

7 Number of New Homes

While it is understood that national policies and targets ultimately influence local targets for number of new homes (expressed through the Dorset Council Local Plan), an important function of a Housing Needs Assessment is to evaluate whether the quantity of homes scheduled to be provided within the Bridport Area matches the need of the NA community. The real requirement for new homes in the NA is shaped by how the number of its residents has changed and is expected to change in future.

The formation of new households within the Neighbourhood Area may well be being suppressed due to the relative unaffordability of homes (Section 3.4 above). Basing housing need on the changing number of households (rather than the number of people) in the NA is therefore unreliable,

7.1 Number of Residents

ONS censuses for recent decades show an uneven growth in the number of residents from which it is not possible to see an ongoing trend.

Census Year	Number of Residents	Per-decade Change
1991	12,843	
2001	13,720	+6.8%
2011	14,627	+6.6%
2021	14,635	+0.1%

(Source: ONS Censuses. 2001; Table CS001. 2011; Table KS101EW. 2021; Table TS001.)

However, the latest currently available ONS forecast for West Dorset overall, released in 2020¹, provides growth forecasts for every year up to 2043. For the period 2021 to 2036, representing the last census and the end of the Plan period respectively, the change would be 8.0% (representing an average annual uplift of 0.52%).

Taking the West Dorset forecast as applying equally to the Neighbourhood Area and based upon the 14,635 residents recorded in the 2021 census, the population of the Neighbourhood Area in 2036 would thus be 8% greater than in 2021, or 1,175 more people.

7.2 The Area's Future Residents

As documented in Section 3 above, the average age of the Neighbourhood Area has risen sharply, and in a way which if allowed to continue will result in an unbalanced and unsustainable elderly community. It is important to understand why and how this is happening, to be able to manage or reverse the trend.

The ONS projection for West Dorset over the coming years can reasonably be taken as representative of the Neighbourhood Area. They show the main factors which determine the change in the number of residents, year by year, over the Plan period. It is revealing to look at the numbers for the year at time of writing (2025) and also at the end of the Plan period (2036).

¹ 2018-based subnational population projections, Table 5

Factor	West Dorset		Neighbourhood Area	
	2025	2036	2025	2036
Natural change (births minus deaths)	861 decrease	1251 decrease	121 decrease	175 decrease
of which, Births	689	683	96	96
of which, Deaths	1550	1934	217	271
Net migration (in minus out)	1548 increase	1662 increase	217 increase	233 increase
of which, in-migration:	7737	8021	1083	1123
of which, out-migration:	6189	6359	866	890
Net annual population change	688 increase	411 increase	96 increase	58 increase

The first thing to notice is that although well over twice as many people are predicted to die than are born, still the population is forecast to rise though at a declining rate. The decrease of the yearly rate is principally due to a substantial increase in death rate – a gloomy prognosis, indicating an increasingly elderly population. This situation is obviously to be avoided.

Another prominent fact is the number of residents who leave every year, to be replaced by new arrivals in larger numbers. The Neighbourhood Area must somehow absorb the constantly swelling numbers and at the same time ensure that the community retains its character and its vibrancy.

The key lies in ensuring as far as possible that future incoming residents are of a younger generation than the retirees who make up a substantial cohort of today's inward migrants. To do this the Neighbourhood Area must provide jobs **and, especially, housing** which are accessible to them.

7.3 Matching Supply to Need

Section 7.1 explained that, based on ONS forecast, there may be 1,175 more people in the Neighbourhood Area by 2036 than at the 2021 census. Applying the 2021 norm to the number of residents per household in the NA, which was 2.0 (14,635 residents in 7,186 households), an increase of 1,175 residents would justify 588 more homes (39 per year on average, from 2021 to 2036).

This is of course a speculative figure and aside from the obvious uncertainty in the rate of growth, which can only be a best estimate by the ONS, there are other important factors to consider. In particular, is there a means of tailoring these new homes to the needs of existing residents or to ensuring that as many as possible are suited to a wider spread of new residents than wealthy retirees? In addressing this question, the following needs to be considered:

1. In 2025 Bridport Town Council declared a Housing Crisis, with the Dorset Council Housing Register recording 770 eligible households (317 with existing NA connection, the rest stating the NA as their preferring home). Even if all new homes built were to be Affordable Housing it would not eliminate this list.
2. As explained in Section 4.2 above, within the NA over 600 young adults live in the parental home. Many have no opportunity to move out due to the scarcity and cost of suitable accommodation.

3. Within the NA, the natural population change is negative; more people die than are born, in fact, in 2023 there were three times as many (ONS, Bridport Area profile²). Therefore, **no** increase in the number of open-market homes is really required, unless it is to fulfil the wishes of incomers to the area.

As Dorset Council's 2025 "Bridport - Symondsburry Housing Projection" in Figure 8 above shows, the number of new homes already expected to be allocated to the Neighbourhood Area far exceeds the 588 justified by the projected increase in population, totalling 1,479 in the Plan period. It may be that the Dorset Council Local Plan, still in development at the time of writing, amends this figure – this uncertain situation is described in AECOM's HNA Sec.2.5. Whatever the outcome, it is not within the remit of a NP to overturn a Local Plan stipulation.

However, the NP may contain wording that the likely substantial over-supply of housing in the NA should be considered when examining planning applications and ensuring (as far as allowed) that these homes are suitable for the proven needs of the Neighbourhood Area by adopting the mix of sizes spelt out in Sections 4 and 5 above and maximising the Affordable Housing portion.

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/#E05015779>

Appendix: Geographical Areas

All of the new data presented within this HNA Supplement is from an area conforming exactly to the NA unless otherwise stated.

The reference for the area covered by the NP is in the map in the AECOM HNA.

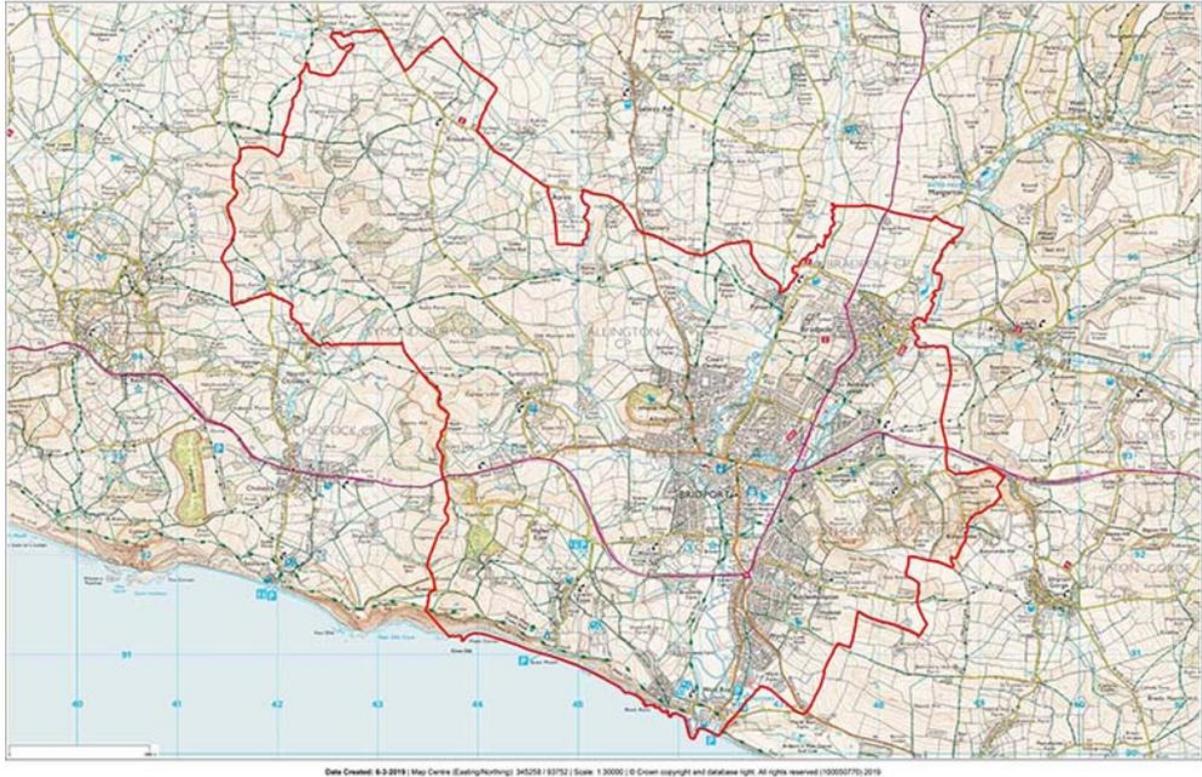


Figure 9. The Bridport and Symondsburys Neighbourhood Area

When collecting new data in support of this HNA Supplement, it was found that several ONS data sources allow localisation of data to the “Bridport Ward” area. This usefully maps exactly onto the Neighbourhood Area, as shown in the following map:



Figure 10. Area defined by ONS as “Bridport Ward”

When extracting data from many other ONS sources, the “Ward” option is not available, and the area has to be constructed from “Output Areas”. 52 of these make up the NA as shown in Figure 11.

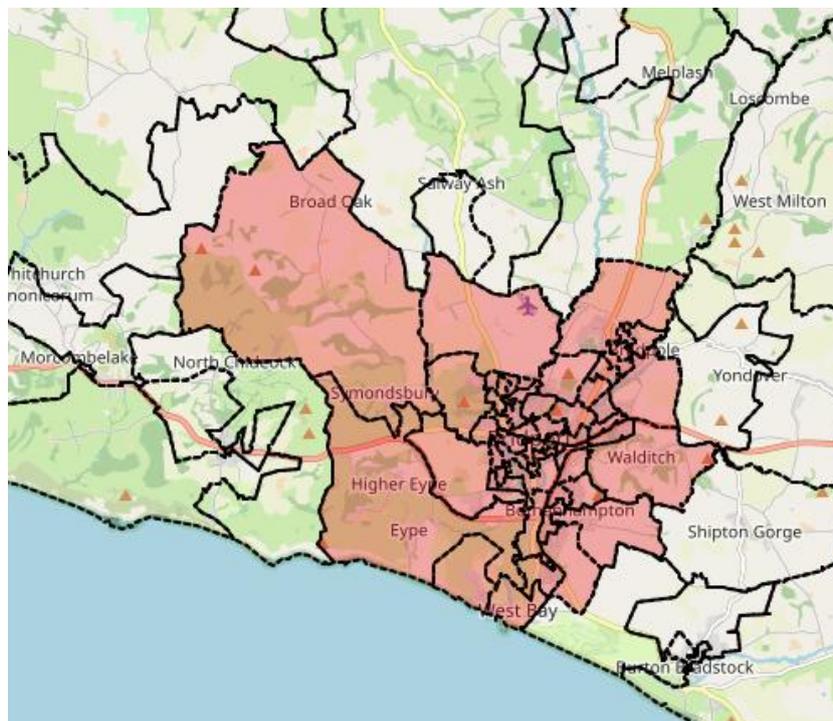


Figure 11. Neighbourhood Area constructed from 52 ONS “Output Areas”.