



Dorset Council

Date: Thursday, 16 April 2026
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

All members of Dorset Council are requested to attend this meeting of the Full Council.

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services
Meeting Contact susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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Agenda

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1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

5 - 24

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2026.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their decision councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) To receive a short presentation from the Youth Council.
- (b) To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTIONS

A period of 30 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to questions and statements on the business of the Council in the following order:

- (a) Questions and statements from Town and Parish Councils;
- (b) Questions and statements from those living or working in the Dorset Council area;

A person or organisation can submit either 1 question or 1 statement at each meeting.

You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for Full Council this will be circulated to all members of the council in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes of the meeting for the formal record, but it will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received by Democratic Services will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline below:

The full text of the question or statement must be received by 8.30am on 13th April 2026. All submissions must be emailed to susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting;
- A question may include a pre-amble to set the context, each question, including the pre-amble can consist of up to **450 words** and you will be given up to **3 minutes** to read out your question;
- Sub-divided questions will not be accepted;
- When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for, i.e. the name of the Cabinet member;
- You will need to include your full name, address and contact details;
- All questions and statements will be published with the minutes of the meeting as a matter of public record.

Before submitting your question or statement please read the Council's Procedure Rules paragraphs 9.1 – 9.12 to ensure that your question/statement is compliant.

[Part 2 Rules of Procedure - Council and Committee Procedure Rules.pdf](#)

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to petitions in accordance with the council's petitions scheme.

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to deputations in accordance with the council's constitution.

The petitions scheme and procedures relating to deputations can be viewed at:

[Council Procedure Rules](#)

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

To receive any announcements and reports from the Leader of Council and members of the Cabinet.

8. DORSET COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY 2026-2031 25 - 162

To consider a recommendation from Cabinet.

9. FEES FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES 163 - 172

To consider a recommendation from the General Licensing Committee.

10. SHIPTON GORGE AND LODERS COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW 173 - 180

To consider a report by J Andrews, Service Manager Democratic and Electoral Services.

11. REVIEW OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND APPOINTMENT TO ROLES 181 - 182

To consider a recommendation from the Staffing Committee.

12. MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT 183 - 184

To note a report by the Monitoring Officer.

13. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors. The deadline for receipt of questions is 8.30am on 13th April 2026.

14. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

15. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 1 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

16. REVIEW OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM - EXEMPT APPENDIX

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Exempt Appendix for Agenda item 11, for information only.



DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2026

Present: Cllrs Stella Jones (Chair), Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Jon Andrews, Jindy Atwal, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Derek Beer, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Ray Bryan, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Alex Fuhrmann, Barry Goringe, Jill Haynes, Sally Holland, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Robin Legg, Rory Major, Craig Monks, David Morgan, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Jon Orrell, Emma Parker, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Val Potheary, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Jane Somper, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, Chris Tomes, David Tooke, James Vitali, Claudia Webb, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Bridget Bolwell, Dave Bolwell, Piers Brown, Andy Canning, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Simon Gibson, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Ryan Holloway, Cathy Lugg and Julie Robinson

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Sam Crowe (Director of Public Health), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic & Governance Services Team Leader), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Catherine Howe (Chief Executive), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer) and Steven Ford (Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Sustainability)

55. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th December 2025 were confirmed and signed.

56. Declarations of Interest

Cllr E Parker declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 14. Cllr Parker did not take part in the debate or vote and left the room when the item was considered.

Cllr C Monks declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 14. Cllr Monks did not take part in the debate or vote and left the room when the item was considered.

Cllr P Kimber declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Portland foodbank.

Cllr L Beddow declared a pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 14. Cllr Beddow did not take part in the debate or vote and left the room when the item was considered.

Cllr B Ezzard declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8, as a trustee of the Wareham Youth Club and took part in the debate and vote.

57. Chair's Announcements

The Chair of the Council reported the deaths of three former Councillors and paid tribute to their service. Peter Webb had served as a Member of North Dorset District Council and had been appointed Honorary Alderman in 2013. David Barrett had been a Member of West Dorset District Council from 1996 to 2015 and had served as Mayor of Dorchester in 2007. Ian Gardner had served as a Member of West Dorset District Council from 1991 to 2018 and had also been a Member of Dorset County Council. Members paid their respects and acknowledged the contributions each had made to local government and their communities.

Congratulations were offered on two national awards received by the Council. It was noted that Children's Services had won a national award in the category of Violence Against Women, in recognition of their pilot project delivered in partnership with local businesses and volunteers.

Councillor S Bartlett extended congratulations to the Council's Building Control Service Team, which had been named Best Building Control Team in the country. The judges had commented on the team's hard work and positive engagement. The award had been received shortly after the team had successfully passed a rigorous national assessment. The team was formally congratulated on its achievement.

58. Public Participation - questions

There were no questions from the public.

59. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions and deputations received.

60. Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council discussed the recent severe weather and its impact on residents, acknowledging travel difficulties and the ongoing uncertainty, and recognised the community spirit shown. Cllr N Ireland thanked frontline teams and volunteers for supporting residents and vulnerable individuals. Discussions had taken place on flood mitigation, with a report due to be presented to Cabinet the following month. Cllr N Ireland commended the Climate Panel and noted progress on developing an independent climate strategy, with a full-time officer post under consideration. Commitment to strengthening flood management arrangements was highlighted.

The Leader emphasised the importance of working closely with town and parish councils to ensure local knowledge informed decision-making. Additional funding and revenue opportunities were being explored to assist with damage recovery and practical support for residents. Alongside immediate responses, longer-term measures would be pursued to strengthen communities and enhance resilience.

The Cabinet member for Place Commissioned Services noted the unprecedented rainfall on already saturated land and the resulting road closures. He commended the Greenspace Team for clearing debris, the Highways Team for their work, and Harbours staff for their response. He acknowledged that Waste Teams had initially been disrupted but were now operating as normal. He highlighted the proactive efforts of all teams involved.

Cllr S Bartlett, Cabinet member for Planning and Emergency Planning, referred to the Section 19 flood investigation, noting that officers had been asked to carry out a wider review to ensure accountability and actions were taken. He acknowledged shared flooding concerns and confirmed that the Manager of Emergency Planning had been working with town councils, supported by government grant funding, to understand local resilience. He also noted that site allocations covered broad areas and updates had been provided regularly. The Cabinet member highlighted that emergency planning had been central to the Council's response and joined the Chamber in thanking staff for their support and expertise.

Cllr S Clifford, Cabinet member for Finance advised that the Government had recently announced 90% grant funding subject to an approved submission. He noted that while this would reduce interest payments, the Council would still incur expenditure, with potential implications for local taxpayers, and that the Council was still waiting on further details regarding the scheme.

Members expressed hope the grant would be received and raised concerns about the potential cost to taxpayers if it was not. Councillor Clifford confirmed that a bid needed to be submitted to qualify, acknowledged that many councils faced similar situations, and stated that any contingency arrangements would be shared once known. He added that the Council was engaging with MPs and Government Ministers to lobby for the grant's approval.

Members of the council were given the opportunity to ask questions on any key points.

61. Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Strategy Report

The Cabinet member for Finance and Capital Strategy presented the Budget Strategy and Medium-term Financial Plan (MTPF). Budget speech appended to these minutes.

The Chair invited the Group Leaders to present their replies to the budget proposals, Cllrs A Parry, C Sutton, L Fry, K Wheller. Budget speeches appended to these minutes.

Members debated the item, and the comments included:

- Budget noted as high risk due to reliance on business rates and national financial pressures
- Increased funding for adult social care and vulnerable people
- Dorset's funding considered low; support welcomed for flooding mitigation, housing, transport, and flood resilience initiatives
- Concerns raised that systemic issues, such as flooding, were not fully addressed
- Progress on adult services, transformation, and regeneration commended
- Recurring government-influenced issues and potential impacts on manufacturing highlighted
- Overall, Members acknowledged pressures, responsible allocation, and focus on supporting residents and strengthening Council resilience

Cllr N Ireland stated that the council was taking a different approach, investing in highways, reviewing parking charges and supporting clean green energy jobs. He noted investments in growth, flood management, and improvements to road networks. It was proposed by Cllr S Clifford and seconded by Cllr N Ireland.

In accordance with procedure rule 19.6 (recorded votes at budget meetings) a recorded vote was taken.

Those who voted in favour:

Cllrs J Andrews, J Atwal, M Baker, S Bartlett, B Bawden, D Beer, M Bell, R Biggs, L Bown, A Brenton, W Chakawhata, S Clifford, R Crabb, N Eysenck, B Ezzard, S Florek, L Fry, A Fuhrmann, S Holland, R Hope, R Hughes, N Ireland, J Jeanes, S Jones, p Kimber, C Kippax, R Legg, R Major, D Morgan, D Northam, J Orrell, S Robinson, P Roper, D Sowry-House, A Starr, C Sutton, R Tarr, D Taylor, G Taylor, A Todd, D Tooke, C Webb, K Wheller, S Williams, B Wilson and C Woode

Those who voted against:

Cllrs L Beddow, R Bryan, S Christopher, P Dickenson, B Gorringer, J Haynes, S Jespersen, C Jones, N Lacey-Clarke, C Monks, S Murcer, L O'Leary, E Parker, M Parkes, A Parry, V Potheary, B Quayle, B Rideout, D Shortell, A Skeats, J Somper, G Suttle, C Tomes and J Vitali

Those who abstained:

Cllr S Flower

Following the recorded vote of 46 for, 24 against and 1 abstention the motion was CARRIED.

Decision

- 1) That the revenue budget summarised in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet of 29 January 2026, be agreed.
- 2) That the increase in general Council Tax of 2.9985% and 1.9919% in the Social Care Precept, providing a Band D Council Tax figure for Dorset Council of £2,205.90; an overall increase of 4.9904%, be agreed and that the Council Tax resolution in Appendix 2 be agreed.
- 3) That the Council Tax base of 163,765.1 and Band D equivalents (188,374 households in total) agreed by the Section 151 Officer earlier in this budget setting process, be noted.
- 4) That the continuation of the unchanged scheme of Local Council Tax Support, and the revised income tables following the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) uplift of benefits by 3.8%, be noted.
- 5) That the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 7, be agreed.
- 6) That the “standing items” included with the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 3 to be report, be agreed.
- 7) That the introduction of three formal gateways for capital projects: (i) Business case approval, (ii) Budget allocation, and (iii) Procurement approval by Cabinet or delegated authority, set out in the capital section of the report to cabinet be agreed.
- 8) That the Treasury Management Strategy set out in Appendix 8 be agreed.
- 9) That the assumptions used to develop the Budget Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as set out throughout the report to Cabinet, be noted.
- 10) That the recommended balances on earmarked reserves and on general funds, including the minimum level of the general fund, be agreed.
- 11) That the responses to the recommendations and comments made as part of the budget scrutiny process, as set out in Appendix 9, be agreed.
- 12) That the recommendations 2.1.1 and 2.2.2 from 3 December 2025 Harbour Advisory Committee meeting regarding fees and charges, budget and asset management plans, as set out at Appendix 6, be agreed.
- 13) That the fees and charges for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 10, be agreed.

62. Electoral Review of Dorset Council - Council Size Submission

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland seconded by Cllr L Fry

Decision

That the Council Size Submission, recommending a council size of 82 Members, to be forwarded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for consideration.

63. Shipton Gorge and Loders Community Governance Review - draft recommendations

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr S Holland.

Decision

That the draft recommendations regarding the parish boundaries for Shipton Gorge and Loders and publication for public consultation from 23 February 2026 to 27 March 2026 be approved. The results of the consultation to be reported to Full Council on 16 April 2026.

64. Statement of Licensing Policy 2026-2031

It was proposed by Cllr G Taylor and seconded by Cllr D Beer.

Decision

- a) That the draft Licensing Policy 2026-2031 be approved.
- b) That the Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety, in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee, be given delegated authority to amend any identified minor typographical errors as necessary.

65. Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

It was proposed by Cllr B Wilson and seconded by Cllr N Ireland.

Decision

- a) That the provisions of the Localism Act and content of the Pay Policy Statement for the 2026/27 financial year, be noted.
- b) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27, be approved.

66. Calendar of Meetings 2026-2027

The Leader of Council presented the calendar of meetings for 2026/27 and proposed its formal adoption. The recommendation was seconded by R Biggs.

Decision

- a) That the calendar of meetings for the period May 2026 to May 2027 be approved.
- b) That, to ensure effective political management, authority be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make any necessary changes to the calendar, in consultation with the appropriate Chair and Vice-Chair

67. Motion on Notice - Social Housing

Cllrs S Flower, L Beddow, E Parker, C Monks and S Christopher left the room at 20:48.

Cllr L O'Leary presented the motion on notice which was seconded by Cllr C Tomes.

"We call on all registered providers of social housing operating in the Dorset Council area to review their disposal policies, with a renewed focus on regular,

long-term maintenance of properties to prevent them deteriorating to a level that leads to disposal.

The disposal of social housing in rural and semi-rural areas can be highly damaging to communities and force local people out of their home neighbourhoods.

Registered providers, when established, were given a duty to look after these properties on behalf of the people of this county.

We ask that they set out long-term plans to maintain their existing housing stock in Dorset's communities, through early intervention and sustained long-term investment".

Cllr G Taylor proposed the following amendment, and this was seconded by Cllr B Wilson.

"That:

This Council recognises that Registered Providers may, in some circumstances, need to dispose of housing stock. However, we will continue to rigorously scrutinise all proposed disposals to ensure they are genuinely necessary and in the best interest of Dorset's communities.

Where disposal is unavoidable, we call on Registered Providers to offer first refusal to local residents who intent to live in the property, rather than pursuing routes that may increase the number of second homes or holiday lets.

Furthermore, this council requires that any disposed housing stock is replaced with equivalent homes within the same community, ensuring that local housing capacity is maintained".

Members debated the amendment proposed.

Cllr G Taylor, Cabinet member for Health and Housing addressed the Council and responded to the comments before it was put to the vote. On being put to the vote the amendment was CARRIED.

In accordance with procedure rule 8.1, members of the council voted to continue the meeting beyond 3 hours until the business on the agenda was concluded.

The Chair of the Council invited Members to propose any further amendments. Cllr L O'Leary proposed a further amendment requesting that all registered providers review their policy on property disposals. Cllr K Wheller seconded the amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and was CARRIED

The substantive motion was put to the vote

Decision

That:

This Council recognises that Registered Providers may, in some circumstances, need to dispose of housing stock. However, we will continue to rigorously scrutinise all proposed disposals to ensure they are genuinely necessary and in the best interest of Dorset's communities.

Where disposal is unavoidable, we call on Registered Providers to offer first refusal to local residents who intent to live in the property, rather than pursuing routes that may increase the number of second homes or holiday lets.

Furthermore, this council requires that any disposed housing stock is replaced with equivalent homes within the same community, ensuring that local housing capacity is maintained.

That we call on all Registered Providers of social housing in the Dorset Council area to review their disposal policies.

68. Questions from Councillors

There were 6 questions from councillors and a copy of these, along with the responses, are set out in Appendix one to these minutes.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor S Flower, the Cabinet Member for Planning advised that any substantive changes to the planning framework would require amendments to national legislation by the Government.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor R Bryan regarding response times, the Cabinet Member for Planning advised that he would meet with Cllr R Bryan outside of the meeting.

Cllr R Bryan raised a supplementary question, stating that the additional highways funding announced that evening was no more than expected. He noted that it did not resolve ongoing issues relating to road sweeping and suggested that consideration be given to how Waste Services could contribute to this work. He emphasised the importance of clearing gullies to prevent further damage.

Cllr J Andrews, Cabinet member for Place Services, responded that further discussions on the issue would take place.

Councillor Questions and Responses

69. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

70. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 10.01 pm

Chair

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Full Council – 10 February 2026

Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr J Somper

Hate crimes continue to be reported across Dorset on multiple strands, including antisemitism, racism, disability-related hate, sexual orientation, and religion. In August 2025, antisemitic incidents were reported in neighbouring Bournemouth, including the ultimate alarming symbol, a swastika graffitied on to the walls of the home of a religious leader and an assault on a Jewish teenager with an air weapon, following which Dorset Police increased patrols and reassurance for Jewish communities.

There has been a deeply concerning escalation in antisemitic hate crimes in the UK and internationally, including the fatal attack in December at Bondi Beach in Australia and an attack at a synagogue in Manchester, occurring as Jewish people were travelling to worship or to celebrate. These events have understandably heightened anxiety within Jewish communities.

Members of Dorset Council were contacted by Dorset Police seeking information about any Jewish community events during Hanukah in December. This was done to provide reassurance and ensure appropriate safeguarding. While welcome, this highlights the ongoing and immediate nature of the risk faced by some communities at moments of religious and cultural significance.

Dorset Police data shows that hate crime continues to be recorded across the county, including racially motivated offences, disability-related incidents, and religion-based hate crime.

Given the urgency of these developments, will the Cabinet Member commit to asking the Dorset Community Safety Partnership to designate hate crime prevention as a specific priority within its Community Safety Plan, including improved reporting, victim support, community engagement, and visible reassurance for communities at increased risk?

Response by Cllr G Taylor

Thank you, Cllr Somper, for your question and for highlighting this important issue.

A hate crime is when any criminal offence, for example, an assault or harassment, is perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice. Reports of hate crime in the

Dorset Council area are low but when it does happen it has a devastating impact on victims and communities.

The Council and its partners are committed to supporting victims and preventing hate crime from happening in the first place. This includes raising awareness, helping people report issues and signposting victims to support services.

There is a commitment in the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to put in place a strategy to strengthen community cohesion.

The Council also undertakes work to prevent violent extremism including assessing and responding to risks, raising awareness, providing training for officers and members and leading preventative work including in relation to individuals who are at risk of becoming radicalised.

The Dorset Community Safety Partnership brings together the Council and organisations including the Police, NHS Dorset, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority and the Probation Service to work together to understand and tackle community safety issues in our area.

Each year, the Partnership must use information and data to complete an objective assessment of issues. This assessment must then be used to determine priority areas that are set out in a three-year community safety plan.

The Partnership is in the process of writing its next Community Safety Plan and I will discuss the inclusion of hate crime prevention with partners at our next meeting in March.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr S Flower

Material Planning Development Management Considerations – Viability

One of the key material considerations currently is scheme viability. This council and predecessor councils have experienced post planning application approval, submissions by developers claiming that the approved housing development would no longer be viable if the obligation for social housing allocation for rent or shared equity is retained in the scheme.

With the support of a spreadsheet, it is possible for developers to 'prove' that the site is no longer viable. This results in the loss of much needed housing for local people, something I am aware has cross-party support in this chamber.

The imposition of yet another non-negotiable levy of £400 per dwelling to cater for the New Forest Recreational Mitigation Strategy adds another cost burden, which could well further impact on the viability of schemes, which are within the designated zone, whilst bringing no direct benefit to the people of Dorset.

When the New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy was brought to the 9 December Cabinet, I asked a question concerning the impact on scheme viability. The response was that any financial impact would be discounted from the land value. This is interesting in as much as another application came back to the 19 November Eastern Area Planning Committee [one of several cases in the past] with a spreadsheet claiming that the scheme was no longer viable. I do not recall that discounting of the land value was a factor in this case. The question was asked whether there was a difference between the land value when permission was originally granted and the figure quoted on the spreadsheet; unfortunately, this information was not available.

So, my question is in two parts:

1. Will officers commit to a piece of work to analyse the impact of developer contributions and deliverability of schemes, with a clear link to the provision of social housing in accordance with the aims and aspiration of this council's legacy Local Plans, the Dorset Local Plan once adopted and the Dorset Plan which has housing as a key feature.
2. In future can Area Planning Committees be made aware of the viability, of development schemes, which include a percentage of social housing, beyond just words. Planning Committee reports should include a detailed spreadsheet setting out the financial considerations, when planning applications are submitted in the first instance. This would ensure that scheme viability is established [with contingencies] prior to the granting of planning permission.

Thank you, Madam Chairman

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

Q1: Work on development viability to support the new Local Plan has already been commissioned. This will consider the impact of developer contributions and affordable housing provision, to inform policy decisions in the new plan and make sure that they are backed up by sound evidence.

Q2: Thank you for your question. While the National Planning Policy Framework expects financial viability to be tested at the plan-making stage, it recognises that there may be occasions where costs or material changes in circumstance occur. In Dorset, much of the Council area relies on local plans that were adopted prior to a series of known changes affecting viability, including global economic impacts, inflation, nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain costs. As such the Council cannot prevent the submission of viability evidence at the decision-making stage.

National policy guidance sets out a recommended approach for viability assessments, including the use of standardised inputs. These assessments are then independently reviewed on behalf of the Council (at the applicant's cost) and made publicly available. However, national policy guidance does not require or encourage full financial spreadsheets so we cannot insist on these. Nevertheless, reports to committee set out gross development value, costs, profit levels, and the justification for any deviation from policy expectations in accordance with national requirements. This approach ensures robust and transparent decision-making.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr S Flower

Dorset Local Plan – Regs 19 draft plan preparation

I refer to a recent Parliamentary Question to the Planning Minister from a Dorset MP, which elicited, what could be taken as an important clarification of national planning policy. The Minister confirmed that Local Authorities should, and I quote: ***“make an assessment of the number of new homes that can be provided in their area... justified by evidence on land availability, constraints on development such as National Landscapes and areas at risk of flooding, and other relevant matters. Local Plans must be deliverable, based on proportionate evidence, and consistent with national policy, whilst taking the views of local people into account.”***

At face value, this response could be seen as giving encouragement for Dorset Council to push back on the rather simplistic aim of meeting the imposed massively increased housing targets set by Government. These arbitrary targets don't in any way relate to the needs and aspirations of the people of Dorset.

The major constraints in the Dorset Council area must surely be flooding risk, 400m habitats zones, green belt and National Landscapes, which is clearly why certain sites have to be excluded. As Members in this chamber will be aware there are huge community concerns regarding these matters, which surely have been expressed in responses to recent Regs 18 Land Allocations public consultation.

So, given the Minster's response, my question is whether this was simply a re-quote of the NPPF or is this cause for optimism. Does this Council still need to take account of the critical part of the sentence in para.62 of the NPPF, which includes reference to the local housing needs assessment quote '***should be conducted using the standard method for calculating housing numbers***'.

Can members in this chamber and the communities of Dorset be reassured that due weight will be applied, and consideration given, when taking account of local views and concerns during the sifting process, regarding which sites will be included or excluded during Dorset Council Draft Local Plan preparation.

Thank you, Madam Chairman

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

The Local Plan must take account of the National Planning Policy Framework, including the reference in paragraph 62 to using the standard method for calculating housing needs. If we are unable to meet the standard method numbers in our plan due to the constraints, then we would need to be able to demonstrate this with robust evidence, and would need to show that we had considered all other options including asking if adjoining councils were able to meet any of our need. Following the local plan consultation, we are assessing all the consultation responses and undertaking further work on the site options in order to inform these decisions. Any planning considerations raised by communities will be taken into account as will other issues, in preparing the plan. Once the plan is submitted, the plan will be examined at publicly accessible hearing sessions where the balance of planning considerations will be weighed up by an independently appointed inspector.

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr R Bryan

My question is for the Cabinet Member for planning

On the 14 January I attended the Eastern Planning Committee and had the opportunity to speak to the Corporate Director for Planning about a local planning issue.

I requested details of existing planning and any extant planning permissions on the site in question, which is causing significant issues for my residents; Having already sent emails requesting this information.

With the investment in a new planning system following the formation of the unitary council I am surprised just how long it has taken to even get an acknowledgement of my request.

As recently as Monday 2nd February I was told that I should receive an email with the details of planning permissions, both current and historic and if not received a written response I was to inform the writer as to the failure to deliver the details I had requested.

As from today the site in question is running yet another business that does not have planning permission.

My question is, what does the Cabinet Member feel is a reasonable time for an elected member to receive acknowledgement of their request for information, bearing in mind the officer member protocol.

Thank you, Madam Chairman,

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

Thank you for your question and I am sorry that you experienced a delay in your response. I understand that the Corporate Director has apologised to you separately for this, and that the information has since been provided to you. While it is unfortunate that there was a delay, I am informed that this arose from a miscommunication in relaying the request to officers. The request for information related to a site with a detailed planning history and officers will be happy to speak with you directly about any specific queries you have in relation to this.

Regarding any allegations of breaches of planning control, these can be reported directly using the online enforcement portal on the Council's website as this will ensure the case is logged, prioritised and investigated accordingly.

Question 5 – submitted by Cllr R Bryan

Can I ask the Cabinet Member for Place what plans are in place to clear the drains and gullies to allow for the dispersal of the huge amounts of ground water we have experienced during the last week.

I requested information as to how much we spend on road sweeping and drain clearance; I did receive that information within 36 hrs. This information worryingly demonstrated that we do not have separate budget for this important front-line service. It also revealed that staff employed to deal with drains and road sweeping are often transferred to waste collection when there is a short-term lack of drivers for the HGV waste collection vehicles.

During my time as Portfolio Holder for Highway put forward a suggestion for an Edge-to-Edge review, with the sole purpose of keeping roads and walkways clear of debris that blocks the drains, which would also have the benefit of reduce highway maintenance costs.

During the last few days, the weather has been exceptionable wet to say the least, but unless we keep drains and roadside gullies clear then flooding and the subsequent highway damage will always be an issue.

Under the previous Dorset County Council, the decision was made to reduce the budget on highways maintenance by circa £183 K by reducing the road sweeping and drains clearance. The outcome of this rather short-sighted decision was damage to highway surfaces. I am aware that this incurred a cost of over £1 million to remedy. Hence my request for a full review.

Without the budget to clear drains and gullies the situation will only get worse. In the 2026/27 budget I cannot identify any financial committed to clear the roads of the weeds and get the drains and gulleys clear, which would therefore avoiding costly highway repairs and ensure roads kept open for the motorist.

So, my question is, what plans are in place to deal with the issue I have outlined.

Thank you, Madam Chairman,

Response by Cllr J Andrews

Thank you Cllr Bryan. Keeping our roads clear of water is vitally important to maintain connectivity, support our communities and enable our economy to grow. Good drainage also helps our roads to last longer, reducing the amount of work we need to do fixing and replacing roads. In the budget that we have put forward, we have increased the amount we will be spending on highway maintenance. This will further increase our resilience when we see exceptional storms like Chandra.

The immediate response to the unprecedented conditions caused by the recent storms is ongoing. The storm water has washed sand and gravel into our drains and we're prioritising the worst affected areas, starting with the main road network. Our own gully emptiers are already working hard on this and we are increasing our resources by bringing in extra drainage crews from our local contractors.

In the longer term, we have already committed to increasing the proactive drainage clearance programme and we are procuring an additional gully emptier to strengthen our resilience to climate change. Furthermore, I would like to thank Cllr Bryan for his work helping to initiate the Hedge to Hedge review. Through this programme we are

introducing better digital management of our highway and greenspace assets as we move to the new Symology system. An integrated asset management plan is being developed encompassing all Hedge to Hedge assets, and a coordinating group has been setup ensuring that programmes of work covering verge cutting, litter clearing, street sweeping and road resurfacing are all interconnected.

Question 6 – submitted by Cllr J Vitali

To ask the Cabinet Member for Property and Assets how Dorset Council proposes to address persistent issues with Shepherd's Close County Farm in Marnhull, and:

- a) To set out what immediate actions are to be taken to reduce agricultural runoff and pollutants from running into neighbouring properties, and the timelines for those interventions;
- b) To set out the longer term plans for investment in the farm and support for the tenant;
- c) To explain why it has taken some two years to address issues raised by adjacent residents and the ward member;
- d) To explain why his department's communications with the ward member have been so inadequate.

Response by Cllr R Biggs

Thank you, Councillor Vitali.

Dorset Council recognises the ongoing concerns about Shepherd's Close County Farm, and we are now taking firm action to resolve them.

First, on the immediate issue of agricultural runoff: an order for the necessary drainage and containment works has been placed, contractors are due to start on site imminently, and the programme is expected to take around six weeks. These works are designed to stop pollutants leaving the farm boundary and provide a lasting solution for neighbouring properties.

Second, on longer-term investment, the holding is being reviewed as part of our wider County Farms Estate programme in line with the Council's Farms Estate Strategy approved by Cabinet in October 2025. A condition survey and planned preventative maintenance report for the asset are informing this review, which includes assessing building, drainage and land-management improvements, and ensuring the tenant has the support needed to operate the farm sustainably.

On the question of delay, the team accepts that the time taken has been too long. Resourcing pressures and competing priorities contributed to this, but residents and members should not have had to wait. Finally, the team also accepts that communication with the ward member has fallen short. This is linked to capacity

challenges within the service, and recruitment is under way to strengthen the team and improve responsiveness.

We are committed to resolving the issues at Shepherd's Close and improving the service moving forward.

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Recommendation to Full Council

16 April 2026

From Cabinet meeting of 3 March 2026

Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy 2026 – 2031

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Hosuing

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report Author: Sarah How

Title: Service Manager for Housing Register and Lettings

Email: sarah.how@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Housing Allocations Policy 2026–2031 be approved, subject to an amendment to section 4.15 replacing the first bullet point with the following text:

- *applicants who own, or part own, or have any legal or beneficial interest in a residential property in the UK or abroad, whether occupied by them or let to others. This includes applicants who hold such an interest directly or indirectly, including through a company, partnership, trust, or other legal entity, where the applicant has control of, or a material interest in, that entity and it owns residential property, or*

Appendices

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy 2026 – 2031 report to the People and Health Overview Committee, which included the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy
Appendix 2 – Consultation response
Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Background papers

[Agenda, decisions and draft minutes for Cabinet on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2026, 6.30 pm - Dorset Council](#)

[Agenda and draft minutes for People and Health Overview Committee on Monday, 2nd February 2026, 6.30 pm - Dorset Council](#)

People and Health Overview Committee

2 February 2026

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy 2026 - 2031

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report author and job title: Sarah How, Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings

Email: sarah.how@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Housing Act 1996, part 6

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

1. Dorset Council's Housing Allocation Policy sets out how social and affordable housing is allocated across the Dorset Council area. The current allocation policy (2020-2026) is due for renewal, and a comprehensive review has been undertaken to ensure the policy remains fit for purpose and aligned with legislative requirements, local housing need, and strategic priorities.
- 1.1 Following a detailed review and a 12-week public consultation. The consultation closed on 24 August 2025, and the feedback received has informed the final proposed version of the policy. In addition to the consultation, engagement took place with:
 - Housing Services
 - Elected Members
 - Registered Providers
 - Homelessness Forum members
 - Internal stakeholders (Adults and Children's Services)

- 1.2 The revised policy aims to ensure fair and transparent access to housing, make best use of available social housing stock, and support Dorset Council's wider objectives around homelessness prevention, community sustainability, and effective management of housing demand.

2. Recommendation(s)

That the People and Health Overview Committee:

- a) Endorses the proposed changes set out in the report and the draft policy (Appendix 1)
- b) Notes the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy 2026 – 2031
- c) Recommends to Cabinet that the Housing Allocation Policy 2026 – 2031 be approved and adopted by Full Council

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To ensure Dorset Council has a clear, fair, and legally compliant policy governing the allocation of social housing, consistent with the Council's statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 considering the needs and priorities of Dorset residents.

4. The report

- 4.1 The current Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy (2020-2026) was adopted following Local Government Reorganisation to create a single, consistent approach to managing housing allocations across the Dorset Council area.

Since its adoption, several factors have prompted the need for review, including:

- Continued pressure for social and affordable rented housing, with increasing numbers on the Housing Register and sustained enquiries from households following an effective early homeless prevention information and advice campaign as well as the continued cost of living crisis.
- The changing needs of Dorset Council residents
- A need to improve clarity, accessibility, and administrative efficiency.

- Updates to Government guidance and case law, decisions and advice relating to the local government and social care ombudsman relating to allocation schemes.
- 4.2 Dorset Council has benefitted from the support and advice of an external expert, Neil Morland, to review and revise the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy, the Nomination Agreement with the Registered Providers and the Data Sharing Protocol.
- 4.3 The revised policy (2026 -2031) maintains the core principles of the existing scheme but includes several updates following the review and consultation. Key proposed changes include:
 - Simplification of banding framework – the existing banding structure has been simplified by reducing the number of bands and revised band names. Each band now contains clearer categories making the policy easier to understand, ensuring greater alignment between housing need and priority awarded.
 - Consistent local connection requirements – a standard two-year local connection requirement has been applied across all relevant criteria, including residence, employment, and family connection. This provides a consistent and transparent approach to assessing qualification.
 - Revised savings and earnings thresholds – the policy replaces the previous combined income, savings and capital threshold of £60,000 gross: with separate limits of savings up to £16,000 and earnings up to £60,000 gross.
 - Removal of age-based banding without local connection – this policy no longer proposes allowing applicants aged 55 and over to qualify without a local connection to Dorset Council.
 - Assessment of overcrowding – the policy proposes using the bedroom standard, rather than the local housing allowance standard, when assessing overcrowding. This aligns the policy with a widely recognised and consistent measure of housing need.
 - Qualification requirements for households owed a homelessness duty – the policy proposes that those applicants owed a homeless duty must meet the qualification criteria in the same way as anyone else applying to the housing register.
 - Removal of housing related-debt – the banding has been removed as a qualification or prioritisation consideration within the policy, simplifying assessments and supporting access to the housing register.
 - Additional reasonable preference given to Service personnel in urgent housing need.
 - Recognition of the Armed Forces community – a new banding category has been introduced for members of the Armed Forces community, including spouses and adult children of serving or former personnel.

- Use of quotas – the policy introduces the ability to use quotas to manage allocation across different categories of housing need.
- 4.4 The final policy ensures compliance with statutory requirements and equalities considerations.

6 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 As part of the policy review, consideration was given to replacing the current Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) approach with a point-based system, which remain permissible under the Housing Act 1996. This option was not progressed for several reasons. Point-based systems are generally more complex and less transparent for applicants, who often find it difficult to understand how their points translate into the likelihood of being rehoused. In contrast, CBL provides clearer expectations by enabling applicants to view available properties and their bidding position. Furthermore, implementing a point-based system would require significant redesign of IT systems, allocation workflows, and communication processes. Retaining CBL therefore maximises the use of existing digital infrastructure and avoids unnecessary disruption.
- 5.2 The review also examined whether changes should be made to the qualifying and disqualifying criteria. Following detailed consideration, it was agreed that the existing criteria should be retained to ensure consistency and fairness. However, the draft policy has been amended to provide greater clarity on specific aspects, including definitions of local connection, income thresholds, and circumstances where disqualification applies. These refinements are intended to improve transparency, support consistent decision-making, and enhance confidence in the allocations process.

6 Legal considerations

- 6.1 The policy ensures compliance with the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 (as amended), Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and relevant statutory guidance on social housing allocations.
- 6.2 Legal services have reviewed the draft policy to confirm its compliance and robustness.

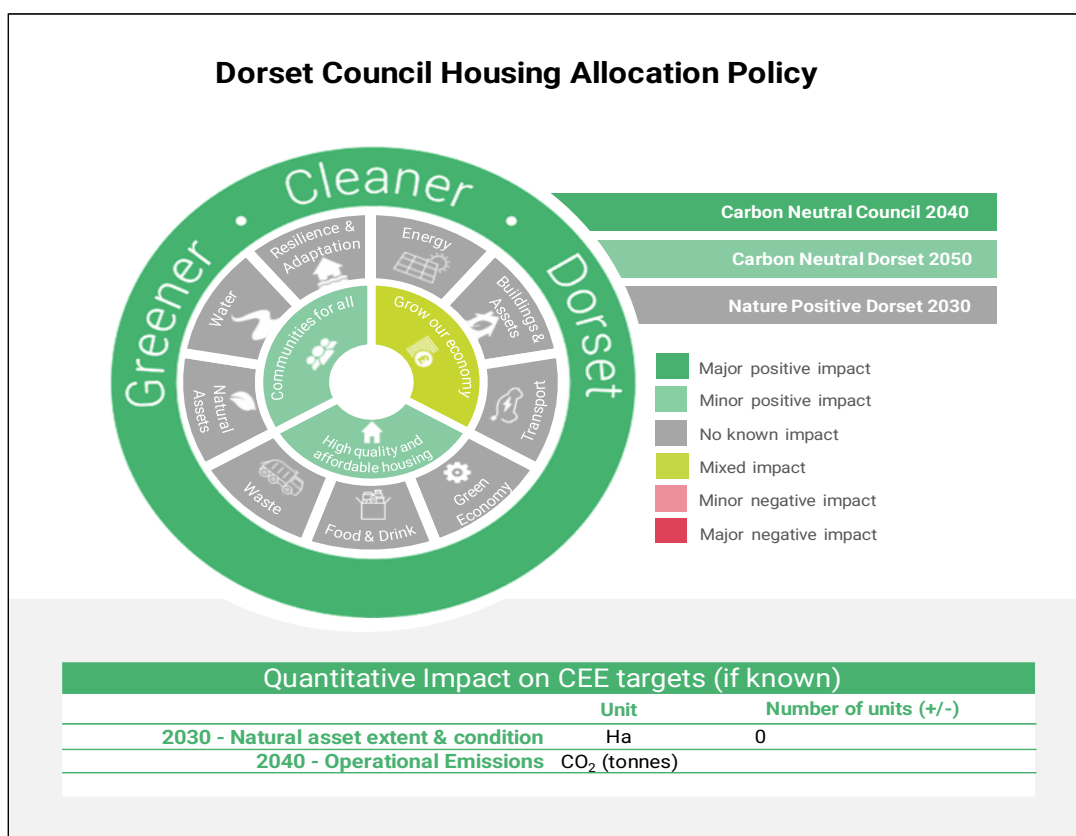
7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The proposal includes the creation of temporary posts for a fixed period of one year. These posts will provide additional capacity within the service to

enable the reassessment of current applications while maintaining business-as-usual operations. Funding for these temporary posts will require an agreed one-off allocation of corporate resources, and a business case has been submitted for consideration as part of the budget-setting process.

There are no direct financial implications associated with changes to the Huume Housing system, as the system allows for most adjustments to be made internally without additional cost. Any minor configuration changes will be managed within existing resources.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications



9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 Revising the Housing Allocation Policy is expected to have a direct impact on the well-being and health of residents who rely on the service. A clearer, fairer and more responsive policy can support better housing outcomes, which are closely linked to mental health. Households with medical needs, disabilities, or vulnerabilities may benefit from clearer criteria and banding enabling them to access appropriate accommodation.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 The allocations policy underpins the Council's wider strategic objectives. It supports the prevention of homelessness in line with the Homelessness Strategy and aligns with the Housing Strategy. The policy also reflects the Council's strategic approach to social housing tenure and will complement the forthcoming Tenancy Strategy once approved. In addition, it forms a key component of the Housing Strategy by making best use of new and existing housing stock to meet identified needs.

11. Risk implications

- 11.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: High

- **Insufficient Resources:** Failure to secure temporary staffing and an implementation period to reassess over 6,000 applications risks delays and service disruption, directly impacting the Council's strategic priority to deliver fair and timely housing allocations.

Mitigation - A business case has been submitted for temporary staffing to provide additional capacity during implementation. This will ensure reassessment of the housing register and delivery of business as usual services. Recruitment will be prioritised and monitored to avoid delays.

- **System Configuration:** Inadequate time for updating the housing software to reflect new processes could lead to operational errors, undermining the strategic priority of maintaining efficient, compliant, and customer-focused services.

Mitigation - Early engagement with the IT provider (Huume) has confirmed that required changes can be implemented internally. A configuration plan is being scheduled alongside staff training to ensure the system reflects the new policy before go-live. Contingency time has been built into the implementation timeline.

- **Policy Expiry and Legal Compliance:** If the revised policy is not adopted before the current one expires, allocations may be legally challenged and deemed invalid, jeopardising the Council's strategic priority to comply with statutory guidance and meet current housing needs in Dorset.

Mitigation - the revised policy is scheduled for adoption before the current policy expires to maintain legal compliance. A clear timeline for approval and implementation has been agreed. Minor amendments will continue to be made as required to reflect legislative changes.

Residual Risk: Low

While mitigation measures significantly reduce the likelihood of major issues, some residual risk remains. Recruitment delays or unexpected workload could still affect implementation timelines, and there is a risk that additional funding for temporary staff may not be approved, limiting capacity to deliver the changes. In addition, technical challenges may arise during system configuration. However, these risks are considered low and will be monitored throughout implementation.

12. Equalities

- 12.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed, and the assessment and action plan are attached at Appendix 3.
- 12.2 A statutory public consultation was conducted between 2 June 2025 and 24 August 2025, receiving 713 responses. Feedback included contributions from individuals with protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, and race, as well as respondents from the armed forces community and those living in rural areas.
- 12.3 Analysis of the consultation and engagement feedback informed the policy revisions. The updated policy strengthens support for vulnerable individuals, ensures equitable access, and enables all applicants to fully engage with the scheme. Overall, respondents expressed strong agreement with the proposed changes, particularly those relating to local connection, employment criteria, and the simplification of the banding. Some proposals, such as the timeframe for certain processes, received mixed views; however, most responses remained broadly supportive. These findings confirm that the revised policy reflects public priorities while maintaining fairness and transparency.
- 12.4 The Housing Service also sought advice from the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Panel (EDI) who broadly supported the proposed changes but highlighted areas requiring clarity and inclusivity. These points have informed clarifications in the policy and will be monitored to ensure fairness and accessibility.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy
- Appendix 2 - Consultation response
- Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

14. Background papers

- [Housing Act 1996, Part six UK parliament](#)
- [Allocations of accommodation statutory guidance, Ministry of housing, communities and local government](#)
- [Providing social housing for local people \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Right to move and social housing allocations \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Improving access to social housing for members of the armed forces \(statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Tenancy Standard, regulator of social housing](#)
- [Housing and Disabled people, a toolkit for local authorities in England: allocations, equality and human rights commission](#)
- [Housing allocations for disabled people, local government ombudsman](#)
- [Domestic abuse and housing decisions, local government ombudsman](#)
- [Medical assessments for housing applications, local government ombudsman](#)

15 Report sign-off

This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy

Rules for allocating social housing
2026 - 2031

**Dorset Council
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Introduction

Dorset Council, like all local housing authorities, is charged with administering a range of public law housing duties.

One such duty is to have a policy for the allocation of social housing.

In 2021, we adopted our first housing allocation policy. In 2025, a review of the policy was carried out and the findings informed amendments to the policy. This revised policy comes into effect from July 2026.

Our housing allocation policy operates across the whole of the Dorset Council area.

To allocate social housing, we work collaboratively with register providers of social housing that own stock in the Dorset Council area.

The demand for social housing exceeds the number of homes available to let, locally and nationally. For example, on the 31 March 2025, there were:

- 6,783 households on our housing register (including social housing tenants seeking a transfer).
- 22,142 units of social housing in Dorset (owned by 54 registered providers).

During the preceding year, from 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025:

- 1,198 units were let to households on the housing register.
- the total number of applicants on the housing register was nearly equal to one-third (31%) of the total units of social housing.
- the total number of units available to let was equal to one-twentieth (5%) of the total units of social housing.
- the total number of units let was equal to only one sixth (17%) of the number of people on the housing register.

Typically, a person might have to wait several years before being allocated social housing.

We will allocate social housing transparently, making rational, lawful, and objective decisions in accordance with this policy.

This housing allocation policy outlines the rules for who can join our housing register. It explains who is eligible and how applicants are prioritised for social housing. The policy also describes the level of choice people may have in the housing they are offered, and how we nominate individuals for properties owned by registered providers.

Aims of Dorset Council's housing allocation policy

Our vision for housing, set out in the housing strategy, is to ensure our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities.

We aim for this housing allocation policy to contribute to its vision for housing, by:

- making best use of social housing available to let.
- ensuring those most in need of social housing are prioritised for it.
- allocating social housing to people whose housing needs cannot be met by the commercial housing market.

The aims of our housing allocation policy, helps to meet the key objectives from the following Dorset Council housing strategies:

- housing strategy 2024 to 2029: enable residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs
- homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2021 to 2026: prevent homelessness and arrange for suitable accommodation to be available for everyone
- tenancy strategy 2025 to 2030: [insert relevant objective(s), this will be added shortly]

1.0. Allocation of social housing

Outlining our policy for allocating social housing

- 1.1. We will allocate social housing following the policy and procedure set out in this document. Decisions about the allocation of social housing shall be taken by officers acting under delegated powers.
- 1.2. 54 private registered providers of social housing collectively hold around:
 - 22,142 units of social housing in the Dorset Council area
 - four-fifths (82%) are held by four private registered providers, three of which previously received transfers of housing accommodation from our predecessor district local housing authorities
 - the remaining one-fifth of units (18%) are collectively owned by 50 private registered providers, five of which are also Almshouse Trusts (collectively owning less than 1% of units)

Find information on private registered provider's social housing stock in the Dorset Council area [insert hyperlink on whole sentence this will be added shortly].

- 1.3. We will allocate social housing, which is low-cost rental accommodation, made available for rent at below the market rate, to people whose housing needs are not met by the commercial housing market.
- 1.4. We will allocate the following types of social housing:
 - general needs housing. This is the most common type of social housing. It can be allocated to any person with a need for social housing
 - supported housing. This type of social housing has special design facilities, or features targeted at specific persons requiring support, for example, housing designed for older people
- 1.5. Dorset Council will allocate social housing to be let at the following rent rates:
 - at a social rent rate - this is the most common type of rent, it is set in accordance with a national formula that takes account of relative local earnings, for properties, relative value and the number of bedrooms it has, or
 - at an affordable rent rate - where the rent to be paid by tenants can be no more than 80% of the market value of the property, or

- at an intermediate rent -often part of a specific named scheme. Rent must not exceed 80% of current market rate, the reduced rent is an opportunity for the tenant to save towards a house purchasing deposit. There may also be a future opportunity to purchase all, or a share of the property currently being rented
- I.6. We will allocate social housing to a person that is eligible and qualifies to join our housing register, by nominating them to be an assured tenant of social housing held by a private registered provider.
 - I.7. We will allocate social housing to tenants seeking a transfer of social housing, in line with the rules of the policy.
 - I.8. Tenants who under-occupy their social housing that seek a transfer to downsize to a smaller home, will be given priority for an allocation of housing and shall be exempt from disqualification rules relating to outstanding rent or service charge arrears that have been incurred because of under-occupation.
 - I.9. We will make objective decisions about the allocation of social housing. Information on what social housing we allocate will be published on the Dorset Home Choice website. We will allocate housing as quickly as possible (in line with the nomination agreement held with private registered providers), advertising homes available to let on any day of the week, for any duration of time, to minimise void periods and reduce waiting times.
 - I.10. We will carry out analysis of our housing register and the nominations we make to the registered providers, and lettings made by them, to make sure the needs of tenants and households on the housing register are met and to inform any future amendments to this policy. We will carry out consultation with tenants and households on the housing register, and anyone else interested in how social housing is allocated by us, to seek their views on changes that might be made to the way social housing is allocated.
 - I.11. When allocating social housing, we will offer households on the housing register, an opportunity to express their preference on types of property they might be allocated and a choice of accommodation. To accomplish this, a choice-based lettings scheme (CBL) is incorporated into this policy. We will ensure the primary purpose of the stock is to meet housing need.
 - I.12. People who are owed a relief duty or main housing duty by Dorset Council will not be given choice, but if they are allocated social housing, we will make sure that any housing offered will be suitable for their needs. We want to make sure tenancies are sustainable and communities are settled, viable and inclusive.

- 1.13. Alongside this, we will support tenants, households on the housing register and prospective applicants to choose the housing option which is best for them. This will include promoting a wide range of options within the Dorset Council area and elsewhere such as, low-cost homeownership, mutual exchange, the private rented sector. Information shall be provided about staying put options, where desirable, viable and feasible, such as aids and adaptations.
- 1.14. We aim to make the best use of available social housing by prioritising applicants with the greatest housing need. Social housing that is intended for households with specific needs (e.g. accessible housing, older persons housing, etc) will be allocated to households that have a need for such housing, such as vulnerable people with housing care and/or support needs that are inextricably linked, to compliment other programmes of care and support commissioned and provided by us.
- 1.15. If planning permission includes specific conditions, like giving priority to people with a local connection to the parish, those conditions will affect how we decide who gets social housing. Our housing allocation rules are designed to make the best use of available homes and meet people's housing needs.
- 1.16. This policy sets out how households can apply to join our housing register, how decisions will be made about applications, and the procedure to be followed when a review of a decision is requested.
- 1.17. We will make sure that language and interpretation assistance is available for people who have difficulty speaking or reading English.

2.0. Other rules outside this Policy

The policies for deciding who is allocated social housing in the Dorset Council area, that are not covered by this policy.

- 2.1. In collaboration with the registered providers, we may use local letting plans to allocate specific homes to people who meet certain criteria. These plans achieve a wide variety of housing policy objectives, for example to deal sensitively with lettings on new housing development sites giving priority to those with a local connection to the parish council area.
- 2.2. A local letting plan is used alongside the main allocation policy. It adds extra rules or considerations for how homes are allocated. This type of plan applies to a specific housing development and must be backed up with information showing why it is required.

- 2.3. We will publish local letting plans as separate documents, which will be revoked or revised as appropriate. If the plan is only meant to be in place for a limited time, it should also include details on how and when it will end.
- 2.4. The availability of housing through local letting plans will fluctuate depending on the specific characteristics of each new housing development and the planning conditions for initial and subsequent lettings.
- 2.5. We will monitor and review local letting plans regularly, as to their effectiveness, to make sure decisions are fair and not discriminatory, and whether they remain appropriate or necessary.
- 2.6. Registered providers that own stock in the Dorset Council area and operate a separate housing register from ours must have rules explaining how they will allocate any social rented homes that are not allocated from nomination arrangements agreed with us. These rules should:
- ensure people seeking to become a social housing tenant are prioritised for an allocation of social housing; and
 - ensure that their existing tenants who wish to transfer from their current home to another social rented home are prioritised for an allocation of social housing

Please refer to each Registered Providers website for copies of their housing lettings policies, which we take into consideration when allocating homes.

- 2.7. The availability of private housing in Dorset is restricted by high house prices, high numbers of second homes and a low wage economy. As a significant proportion of social housing in Dorset is rural, this policy aims to sustain these rural communities by giving local people in housing need, priority for these properties and reducing reliance on new social housing developments (see appendix 6 for list of parishes).
- 2.8. Some rural properties are subject to planning legal agreements, known as section 106 agreements, which restrict residency to applicants meeting specific parish or settlement criteria and these restrictions take precedence over the housing allocations policy standard criteria.
- 2.9. Where rural properties are not subject to planning legal agreements specifying specific parish or settlement criteria Dorset Council will advertise for applicants with a local connection to the parish or settlement which they are located in.

- 2.10. Where no applicant meets the criteria, the area will be expanded to the neighbouring parish or settlement or the wider Dorset Council area until a suitable application is received.
- 2.11. Dorset Council will allocate 75% of these properties in this way to help create mixed, sustainable communities.
- 2.12. Where the property is a specific type (for example is accessible) applicants from the wider Dorset Council area will be considered to ensure we are making best use of any property adaptations.
- 2.13. Community land trusts (CLTs) are independent, non-profit organisations that provide affordable housing and manage land for the benefit of the local community. Because CLTs set their own eligibility criteria and allocation processes based on community led priorities, they operate outside the rules of the allocation policy.

3.0. Eligibility

How we decide if a person is eligible for an allocation of social housing.

- 3.1. We can allocate social housing to people who have a right to live without any restrictions to residence in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands.
- 3.2. We are not allowed to allocate social housing to persons from abroad who are subject to immigration control and those that are not subject to immigration control but for whom regulations stipulate should not be eligible for an allocation of social housing. We will allocate social housing to persons from abroad, only when the law allows. We will seek verification of a person's immigration status from the home office whenever there is any uncertainty about this.
- 3.3. We will not allocate social housing to persons from abroad who are not entitled to Universal Credit or Housing Benefit (regardless of whether they would apply for these benefits).
- 3.4. We will not assess the eligibility of existing social housing tenants who are seeking a transfer, as they are exempt from the usual eligibility rules for housing allocations.
- 3.5. We will provide people with a written decision about whether they are eligible for an allocation of social housing. We will issue decisions to each person via an individual online user account, or by the preferred method specified in their application.

- 3.6. We will make sure that online accounts are kept available for a person to access, for a reasonable period after a decision has been made.
- 3.7. We will make a decision regarding eligibility for an allocation of social housing. This decision will be made when an individual applies to join the housing register. Additionally, it will be made when an individual who has been accepted into the housing register is subsequently considered by us for an allocation of social housing.
- 3.8. When deciding whether a person is eligible for an allocation of social housing, we will assess a person's (and that of their family members):
- nationality
 - economic activity
 - compliance with worker registration schemes
 - immigration status
 - entitlement to public funds
 - where they usually live and where they are living when they make an application of to join the housing register
- 3.9. We will not check if someone is eligible for social housing if they choose to withdraw their application from the housing register.
- 3.10. Our employees responsible for making decisions about eligibility for an allocation of social housing shall be provided with training about housing allocation law and practice.
- 3.11. We will inform persons from abroad who are eligible for an allocation of social housing, that changes to their immigration status could affect their eligibility for an allocation of social housing. This information will be given when they join the housing register.
- 3.12. A person whom we have deemed to be ineligible for an allocation of social housing, may make a fresh application if they consider they should no longer be treated as ineligible. It will be for the person to show that their circumstances have changed.
- 3.13. A full description of persons that are eligible for an allocation of social housing can be found in an Appendix Two of this policy.

4.0. Qualifying persons

How we decide if a person qualifies to join the housing register.

- 4.1. We will only allocate social housing to people who satisfy the qualifying criteria set out below.
- 4.2. We have decided that to qualify for an allocation of social housing, people must be:
- capable of holding a tenancy, and
 - not guilty of past unacceptable behaviour, and
 - have a local connection to the Dorset Council area, and
 - not have sufficient income or savings to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market
- 4.3. We have decided to disqualify a person for an allocation of social housing when they are:
- incapable of holding a tenancy, or
 - guilty of past unacceptable behaviour, or
 - have no local connection to the Dorset Council area, or
 - have sufficient income or savings to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market
- 4.4. A person applying to join the housing register must satisfy all qualifying criteria. When qualifying criteria includes a person's usual household member, they must also satisfy the applicable qualifying criteria. A person's usual household member is defined as:
- someone who normally lives with the person making the application to join the housing register, and
 - someone who might be reasonably expected to live with the person making the application to join the housing register
- 4.5. Dependent children
- We will consider various factors on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a dependent child resides with the applicant. A child's residence is defined as the address where they are cared for by their parents, guardians or others with parental responsibility (or legal equivalent) and where it has been agreed they live. If this address is not the same as the applicants, the child cannot be included on the application.
- 4.6. A person is not a qualifying person when they are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, for example due to being:
- aged under 18 years, or

- looked after children owed a duty of care, or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement

4.7. Exceptions apply to people who are incapable of holding a tenancy agreement, when they are:

- eligible children, relevant children, former relevant children, including former relevant children pursuing further education or training, entitled to care leaving support from Dorset Council, or
- aged over 18 years lacking sufficient mental capacity to hold a tenancy agreement but have a suitable guarantor (for example Dorset Council's adult social care) who can hold a tenancy on their behalf

4.8. A person, including members of their household, will not qualify for social housing if they have been involved in serious unacceptable behaviour in the past. Behaviour that was serious enough that it could have been reasonable to allow us or another Registered Provider to secure a possession order had the applicant been a tenant at the time the behaviour occurred, and the persons behaviour remains unacceptable at the date of application, and/or at the date any allocation of social housing might be made.

4.9. Unacceptable behaviour that makes an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant, includes breaches of tenancy conditions, for example due to:

- having outstanding rent or service charge arrears, or property related recharges connected to a tenancy (see exemption below), or
- causing nuisance or annoyance or allowing a visitor to do so, to others living or visiting the neighbourhood of their home, or to employees or contractors of Dorset Council and/or registered providers that own stock in the Dorset Council area who are carrying out housing management functions, or
- having an unspent conviction for allowing their home to be used for immoral or illegal purposes or an offence in their home or nearby to their home; or
- having an unspent conviction for an offence which occurred during and at the scene of a riot in the UK, or
- violence or threats of violence towards another person that caused them to leave the home they share with the applicant, with the intention of not returning; or
- damaging or deliberately neglecting their home, or
- deliberately making a false statement to be granted a tenancy by Dorset Council (or another landlord), or
- paying money or receiving money as part of a mutual exchange, or

- being guilty of conduct that makes it inappropriate to continue living in their home, due to the home being part of a building used for non-housing purposes (e.g. a property situated in the grounds of a school or a public park)

4.10. Unacceptable behaviour that makes an applicant unsuitable to be a tenant, includes having unspent convictions or having breached an injunction for serious anti-social behaviour, for example due to:

- entry to a dwelling house that has been subject to a closure order, or
- noise nuisance and environmental legislation, or
- violent offences, or
- sexual offences, or
- offensive weapons, or
- offences against property, or
- drug related offences, or
- modern slavery, or
- encouraging or assisting to cause serious antisocial behaviour, or
- conduct causing nuisance to landlord, or
- offences connected with riot

4.11. Exceptions to outstanding rent or service charge arrears or property related recharges, connected to a tenancy with us or a registered provider, apply for people who:

- were not the tenant, when the outstanding arrears and/or recharges were accrued (e.g. the arrears or recharges occurred after a person stopped being a tenant or were accrued by a former member of their household); or
- their outstanding arrears and/or recharges accrued are no longer outstanding (e.g. they have been repaid, or too much time has passed due to being accrued more than 6 years ago and never being acknowledged by the debtor), or
- If you are a social housing tenant asking to transfer, you can be considered if:
 - You have made a payment in the past month, and
 - You are fully up to date with your payments up to the point of nomination, and
 - The payments you've made are equal to the usual rent or service charge for the tenancy where the arrears or charges are owed.

This also includes tenants who:

- Fell into arrears because of the overall benefit cap, and
- Applied for a Discretionary Housing Payment but were refused.

- are a new applicant and have agreed a repayment schedule for the outstanding arrears or recharges:
 - and made at least three consecutive repayments as per the repayment schedule at point of application, or
 - are up to-date with their repayments up to and including nomination, or
- have outstanding arrears or recharges that do not relate to a tenancy (e.g. non-housing debts such as Council Tax arrears), or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home, by the Local Housing Allowance size criteria, and intend to downsize to a smaller home, and the arrears have occurred due to under-occupation, or
- their arrears or recharges were a result of them being a victim of domestic abuse, or
- are a serving, or former member, of the regular Armed Forces, or their spouse or civil partner is or was, and who have accrued mesne profit charges as a result continuing to live in a home provided to them by the Armed Forces, following a relationship breakdown

4.12. A person (including their usual household members) is a qualifying person when they have local connection to the Dorset Council area due to:

- normally being resident in the Dorset Council area, by their own choice (i.e. not been detained in custody, serving a custodial sentence, or detained under mental health laws), for a minimum of two years, or
- being employed in the Dorset Council area for 2 years or more for a minimum of 16 hours per week, or
- having any association with close family (defined as adult children, parents, siblings, or someone else who can be regarded as a near a relative) resident in the Dorset Council area, by their own choice, for a minimum of two years
- Any location requirements detailed in a s106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (applicants will be limited to bidding on properties within that development only)

4.13 Applicants with a local connection only through a Section 106 agreement (and do not meet local connection rules through residency, family, or employment) can only bid on properties within that specific development.

4.14. Exceptions to local connection requirements, apply to people who are:

- members of the UK Armed Forces community who are currently serving or have served in the Regular Armed Forces, or

- bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Armed Forces, who have recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in ministry of defence accommodation, following the death of their spouse, or civil partner, where the death was wholly or partially attributable to the service, or
- serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to their service, or
- divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of UK Armed Forces personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or
- adult children of currently serving members of the UK Armed Forces who may no longer be able to remain in the family home, or
- tenants of any English local authority or registered provider that need to move to Dorset for work or an apprenticeship. Factors considered include;
 - travel distance and time
 - availability and affordability of transport in relation to earnings
 - the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities exist closer to home
 - personal circumstances such as medical needs or childcare
 - the length of the work contract
 - whether not moving would result in hardship.
- escaping violence, harm or harassment, (see 9.6) or
- Actively fleeing domestic abuse (within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021) from anywhere in the UK and are homeless as a result, or
- an eligible child, a relevant child or a former relevant child (aged 18-24) who is or was looked after by a local authority in England or Wales, or
- people who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act including those that are considered by Dorset Council to be intentionally homeless or not in priority need. or
- people who are homeless and owed a duty by Dorset Council under section s193(2) or s189(B) or s195(2) or s192(3) or s190(2), or
- Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller ethnicity with no local connection to any other local authority district, in the Dorset Council area, or required to be near special medical or support services which are available only in the Dorset Council area, or
- returning to the Dorset Council area where they previously were brought up or lived for a considerable length of time, following a period of imprisonment or hospitalisation, or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home in the Dorset Council area (by the local housing allowance size criteria) and intend to downsize to a smaller home, or

- are subject to Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and a multi-agency risk assessment has been carried out, or
- need to move to Dorset to provide care to a relative, or to receive care from a relative who has lived in Dorset for at least two years. The care must be essential to help the relative remain living independently and avoid residential or specialist accommodation
 - significantly reduce travel time for daily support.
 - daily care should be required for at least one hour per day.

4.15. A person is not a qualifying person when their earnings and/or savings, together with the other main earner in the household, allow them to meet their housing needs from the commercial housing market, due to:

- being the sole or joint owner of the property (including anyone with a mortgage on the whole or part of a home), such as a house, flat, second home or holiday home, which they usually live in or rent out to others, or owning land or a building intended for residential use, either in the UK or abroad, or
- having £16,000 or more of savings (£23,500 for adults who have been assessed by Dorset Council as needing care), or
- earning £60,000 or more of taxable income in the most recent tax year

4.16. Deliberate disposal of Assets (capital, savings or property)

The Council recognises that applicants may dispose of property, capital or savings for a variety of reasons. However, where such assets have been disposed of for nil or significantly reduced value, the Council will investigate whether this constitutes deliberate deprivation of capital. In making this assessment we will consider:

- The applicants' circumstances at the time of disposal
- Whether there was a reasonable alternative to disposal
- Whether the disposal was made to improve the applicant's housing priority

Where deliberate deprivation is established, we will assess the application based on notional capital.

4.17. Exceptions to homeownership, earnings and savings, apply to people who:

- are a person aged 55 years or older, who cannot stay in their own home and need to move into older people's accommodation or other types of older person specific social housing; or
- are a disabled person who requires accessible housing, whose current home is not suitable for adaptation under a disabled facilities grant, or housing renewal assistance (e.g. to purchase a new home, adapt or improve their

home, repair their home, demolish their home and build a replacement) from Dorset Council or through a third-party such as a home improvement agency; or

- have a home that is in such poor condition that living there could endanger the health of the applicant including anyone who normally lives there (or who is expected to live with them), and where there are no reasonable steps that the applicant can take to remove the danger, or they do not have the resources to fix the problem, or
- have a home that they could not sufficiently raise equity of £16k or more to enable them to afford alternative suitable accommodation, or
- have been deserted by the main wage earner following a relationship breakdown and may become homeless because the property is not affordable, or
- have let a house and cannot secure entry to it, because it is not safe to enter due to structural faults or where there are squatters living in the house, or
- it is probable that occupying the home would result in abuse from someone who currently lives there or from someone who previously lived with the applicant in that home or elsewhere, or
- are Armed Forces personnel or their families, in relation to any lump sum compensation received for injury or disability sustained on active service with Regular or Reserve Forces, or
- a young person leaving care, or a former care leaver, who is in receipt of funds paid to them because of compensation relating to the reason why they were a looked after child and/or because of experiences while a looked after child, or
- foster carers, adopters, special guardians, and family or friend carers approved by Dorset Council who have taken on the care of a child because their parents are unable to provide care, or
- are a social housing tenant under-occupying their current home (by the local housing allowance size criteria) in the Dorset Council area and intend to downsize to a smaller home

4.18. We may in exceptional circumstances choose to disapply the qualifying criteria in specific circumstances, for example people who are intimidated witnesses or protected persons who need to move quickly from another local authority area.

4.19. We will notify people if they are not a qualifying person, explaining reasons for the decision. A decision about whether a person is a qualifying person, will be made at the time of initial application, and again when considering making an allocation.

4.20. A person who we previously deemed to be not qualifying to join the housing register, may make a fresh application if they consider they should no longer be

treated as not qualifying. It will be for the person to show that their circumstances have changed.

5.0. Housing Register

Our procedure for maintaining the housing register and the type of information we store on it.

- 5.1. We keep a register of people who are eligible and qualify for an allocation of social housing, known as the housing register.
- 5.2. We keep the housing register in an electronic format on a software system, provided and maintained by a third-party organisation.
- 5.3. People applying to join the housing register will have opened an online individual portal, linked to a software system used by us to administer the allocation of social housing.
- 5.4. A person's online portal will allow them to make an application to join the housing register, request information about the housing register, express preferences about any home that might be allocated to them, etc. We will issue all decisions, including reasons for decisions, via a person's online individual portal.
- 5.5. We manage the housing register for people applying for an allocation of social housing, and for existing social housing tenants seeking to transfer to another home. Applications from new applicants and transfer requests from current tenants are recorded separately so they can be distinguished.
- 5.6. Our housing register contains information, such as:
 - the number of people on the housing register
 - the number of people falling into one or more of the statutory reasonable preference categories set out in law
 - the number of members of the armed forces community given additional preference
 - allocations made
 - adapted and accessible properties and how these are matched to people who have access needs
 - properties advertised as part of or outside of the choice-based lettings, and
 - nominations taken up

- 5.7 We will use information held on the housing register to inform our strategic approach to housing, such as, when assessing the housing needs of people in the Dorset Council area.
- 5.8 We will process and store personal data provided by people applying for an allocation of social housing, in compliance with data protection law. We are prohibited from divulging to members of the public that a person is a social housing applicant.
- 5.9 We will inform people of their right to view the information held about them on the housing register.
- 5.10 People applying to join the housing register must provide appropriate documentary evidence to show they meet the qualifying criteria. Dorset Council will verify this evidence and, where necessary, may contact other individuals or organisations to assist with the verification. All checks will be carried out on a case by case basis in line with UK data protection law.
- 5.11 A detailed list of information that applicants must provide to join the housing register can be found at Appendix Five.

6.0. Operation of the housing register

Our procedure for assessing applications to be put on the housing register, how the housing register may be amended and how people may be removed from the housing register.

- 6.1 We will accept a person on the housing register if they apply to be put on it and they are eligible for an allocation of social housing and are a qualifying person. A person who is not eligible for an allocation of social housing or is not a qualifying person, will not be accepted on the housing register. The date a person applies to the housing register shall be known as the registration date.
- 6.2 Applications to join the housing register will be made via an online form, which will be accompanied by guidance notes that are easy to understand and in plain language. A person can only make one application at any time to join our housing register, multiple applications from the same person to join the housing register are not permitted.
- 6.3 We will notify a person when they have been accepted on the housing register. A person's entry on the housing register will include details of:
- people who normally live with them, for example a member of their family (i.e. those with close blood or marriage relationships and cohabiting

partners), or children (their own, and/or a child they have adopted, fostered or a step-child), who normally lives with the person that is making the application to join the housing register on a permanent or regular basis, at least part of the time

- people who might be reasonably expected to live with them, for example children in the care of children services or staying with relatives but will return to live with their parent(s), if they are allocated social housing. In such circumstances, we will liaise with children services before reaching any decision about the allocation of social housing, or
- foster children, potential adoptive children, or other children whom a person has been approved by us to be involved in their upbringing, or
- children living with one parent who, by arrangement between two separated parents or because of shared residence order made by the family courts, are to begin living with their other parent), or
- children of a person who have earlier fled their home in fear of domestic abuse, or
- a person unable to return from hospital to their normal home, where they were living before going into hospital or
- a person who must live apart of their spouse or civil partner, because they have nowhere that they can live together, or
- a prospective carer, (the person making an application to join the housing register) who wishes to live with and look after another person
- the address of the person who applied to join the housing register
- the date on which the person was put on the register
- the most recent date on which an entry on the register was amended

- 6.4. We will amend a person's entry on the housing register when there is an alteration to our rules for allocating social housing. It is the responsibility for applicants to log into their portal account immediately if there is a change in their personal circumstances such as change of address or housing need and make any changes to their application as appropriate. This will then be assessed and confirmed by us.
- 6.5. We will review the housing register regularly to make sure information held about each person is up to date. We shall operate an annual rolling review, contacting people on the housing register, on the anniversary of their effective date, providing them an opportunity to confirm whether their housing needs have changed and to see if they still wish to remain on the housing register.
- 6.6. We will notify a person when their entry on the housing register is amended, explaining the reasons for any amendment. Any amendment that results in a person being afforded a higher priority, shall be given a new effective date. Any change that results in a person having the same degree of priority or a lower priority, will retain their original effective date.

6.7. We will remove a person from the housing register, in the following circumstances:

- a person who is no longer eligible or qualifies to be allocated social housing, or
- a person requests to be removed from the housing register, or
- a person dies, or
- a person fails to respond to a first request and a follow-up request, to a review of information held about them on the housing register or other correspondence, such as request for information or an allocation of housing, or
- a person has have moved away or no longer needs or wants to be housed by us

6.8. We will notify a person, via their online portal, when they are removed from the housing register, explaining the reasons for the removal.

6.9. We will consider every application received to join the housing register, provided it is made in accordance with the rules of this policy.

6.10. A person applying to join our housing register is required to provide sufficient detail about their personal circumstances, to enable us to assess their housing need, or to identify those cases where further investigation may be needed. We will liaise with other local authorities, other landlords and other agencies (e.g. adult social services, children services, NHS trusts, prisons and probation) to verify a person's circumstances and their housing needs. When carrying out liaison, we will do so in accordance with information sharing protocols. We may liaise with medical and welfare experts when assessing a person's application that suggests they have a medical or welfare need.

7.0. Decisions, reviews and complaints

How we make decisions and how people can ask for a review if they disagree with a decision.

7.1. We will notify a person of their decision and of the reason for it when:

- a person applies to be put on the housing register, explaining if they are eligible or ineligible for an allocation of social housing, or are a qualifying or non-qualifying person, or
- we remove a person from the housing register, explaining why they are now ineligible for an allocation of social housing, and/or not a qualifying person,

- Any decision regarding the facts of an applicant's case that we consider when determining whether to allocate a home.
 - We remove a person from the housing register if they fail to respond to requests for information or other important correspondence, such as a request for details following a review of their application or an offer of housing.
- 7.2. We shall, when notifying a person that they are ineligible for an allocation of social housing, explain whether this is because:
- a person is subject to immigration control within the meaning of asylum and immigration law, or
 - because of other legislation that stipulates specified persons from abroad are ineligible for an allocation of social housing
- 7.3. We will, when notifying a person that they are not a qualifying person, explain whether this is because:
- they or a member of their household has been found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour that makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. At the time the application is considered, they remain unsuitable because of that behaviour.
 - any other reasons why they are not qualifying person
- 7.4. A person can themselves request to be removed from the housing register. They can do so by notifying us via email or phone. We shall confirm receipt of such a notification and confirm when the request has been acted on. Following which, a person's portal shall be closed.
- 7.5. We shall inform a person of their right to request a review of the following decisions made by Dorset Council:
- they are ineligible for an allocation of social housing.
 - they do not meet the criteria to be considered a qualifying person.
 - the priority awarded and whether this is a fair reflection of their housing needs, medical conditions, other welfare needs, or any other facts regarding their entitlement to a reasonable preference for an allocation of social housing.
 - whether or not a person should receive additional preference due to having urgent housing needs or otherwise.
 - they have been unfairly suspended, or their application has been unreasonably cancelled.

- a person's priority is reduced due to the number of offers refused.
- offence related to information given or withheld by them.
- the type of property which will be allocated to them, or
- any other facts of their case which were considered when deciding whether to allocate social housing to them

7.6 A person must make a request for a review before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which they are notified of our decision and reasons. We, may, in exceptional circumstances, allow a person a longer period to make a request for a review.

7.7 A person can request a review in writing, via email or letter or verbally via a telephone call or visiting our offices. A person is also entitled to instruct another individual or organisation, that can prove they have authority to act on their behalf and submit a request for review.

7.8. When making a request for a review, a person should set out the reasons for their request. This might be for the following reasons (this list is not intended to be exhaustive and the reasons shown below are provided for illustrative purposes only):

- the reliability of the evidence we relied on to make a decision
- how we interpreted the evidence it has relied on to make a decision
- the compatibility of our decision compared to housing allocation legislation
- whether there are sufficient facts available to us to reach a decision
- whether a person has been given the benefit of the doubt by us when a decision was made

7.9 A person cannot request a review of a decision reached on an earlier review. Upon receipt of a review request, we shall carry out a review of the decision in accordance with the procedure set out in the next chapter of this policy (Section 8).

7.10 We will notify a person when a review decision has been reached by email or post.

Complaints

7.11 We will notify people of the formal complaints process that is in place, including service standards and time frames for handling and responding the complaints, so people know what to expect. People will be informed of their right to make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman [insert hyperlink to complaint policy and any hyperlink that might allow people to make a complaint online].

- 7.12 We will monitor complaints, to identify any areas where improvements and/or training are required.
- 7.13 We will invite people to provide feedback on their satisfaction with using our housing allocation policy and service. This might be when they join the housing register or when they are nominated to a private registered provider or at other times.

8.0. Review procedure

Our procedure for carrying out a review of a decision.

- 8.1. We will carry out a review of a decision as per the procedure set out below.
- 8.2. We will appoint an employee of appropriate seniority, who was not involved in the original decision, to carry out the review.
- 8.3. Individuals can provide written representations, which should reach us within the agreed timescale set by the reviewing officer.
- 8.4. At our discretion, we can offer verbal representations, if this happens an applicant can choose to have a representative of their choice attend with them.
- 8.5. If a verbal representation is arranged, we will let you know the date and time in advance. This review can take place over the telephone or at suitable office location. This will be no sooner than five days after the request, unless the individual agrees to a shorter notice.
- 8.6. When carrying out a review, we will consider all information available at the time of the original decision, along with any new or additional details provided before the review decision is made. The review will focus on whether the original decision was consistent with our housing allocation policy and compliant with the law.
- 8.7. When issuing a review decision, we will explain the reasons for the decision and provide information about the individual's right to seek a judicial review.
- 8.8. We will complete the review and notify the individual of the outcome by letter or email within 56 days of receiving the request. This timeframe may be extended if agreed with the person requesting the review.
- 8.9. We will monitor reviews, to identify any areas where improvements and/or training are required.

9.0. Applications and information

Our procedure for social housing applications, how applicants are informed about their rehousing prospects, and how their information on the housing register is managed.

Applications for an allocation of social housing

9.1. We are aware of our public sector equality duty and shall work to ensure that no applicants are discriminated against or treated unfairly. We will provide advice and information, free of charge, to people in the Dorset Council area, about the right to make an application to join the housing register, regardless as to whether a person might wish to make an application. This shall include information about:

- application procedures
- qualification and prioritisation criteria
- how to apply for advertised vacancies
- how people on the housing register are selected for an allocation
- advertising criteria (e.g. priority for bungalows is given to older people or accessible housing for disabled people.), and
- review procedures

9.2. We will provide guidance notes that are easy to understand and in a plain language, to help a person complete their application to join the housing register.

9.3. We will provide any assistance necessary, free of charge, to people in the Dorset Council area who are likely to have difficulty without assistance to make an application to join the housing register.

9.4. We will use information from housing register applications to assess whether applicants are likely to have:

- priority under the rules of this policy
- difficulty in making an application or choosing their accommodation without assistance
- access or support needs

9.5. We will only request information needed to assess whether a person is eligible and qualifies to join the housing register and priority for housing. Appropriate evidence could include:

- valid passport or other identity documents
- birth certificate

- rent arrears repayment plan
- a contract of employment
- wage/salary slips
- bank statements
- tax and benefits information, for example proof that a person is in receipt of welfare benefits
- Proof of current address

After applying, applicants will be required to provide supporting documents. These documents can be uploaded immediately or up to 7 working days after submission of the application.

- 9.6. In cases involving harassment or domestic abuse, we will seek relevant supporting evidence from agencies such as the police, social services, and health when assessing priority for housing allocation.
- 9.7. We will make further enquiries as to what assistance applicants might require. For example, assistance may be provided to people with physical or mental impairments, people who may have difficulty in living independently in the community without care and or support.
- 9.8. We will work together with other relevant agencies and providers, to ensure people can make an application to join the housing register and consider support requirements at different stages of the allocation process. This extends to people who do not have access to or are unable to use a computer or the internet.
- 9.9. We, together with social services, prisons, probation and relevant health bodies and professionals, other housing providers, the voluntary sector, carers and user groups, will identify people who are likely to require intensive support throughout the process, such as assistance to choose accommodation that is appropriate to their needs, and make sure that suitable assistance is available. We will provide the assistance or rely on other organisations and individuals to provide assistance.
- 9.10. We will provide access to translation and interpreting services, for people whose first language is not English. Where there is a significant number of speakers of a particular language, we might publish information in that language.
- 9.11. We will provide information in other accessible formats for people with various communication needs, for example people with learning disabilities, people with literacy issues and people with a visual or hearing impairment.

- 9.12. We will provide information to people who are likely to have difficulty accessing information, for example, via home visits or housing advice surgeries to prisoners, the Gypsy and Traveller community, etc.
- 9.13. We will provide user-friendly information about our housing allocation policy via the Dorset Council website [insert hyperlink to be added shortly], via the telephone and in printed hardcopy form upon request.
- 9.14. We will provide information to a person when they apply to join the housing register, about how their application will be treated. We provide a calculator on the Dorset Council website that people can use to estimate average waiting times to being rehoused. [View the housing wait time calculator](#)
- 9.15. We intend to make available general information about the profile of social housing stock in the Dorset Council area. This might include the type, size and location of the stock, whether it is accessible or could be adapted, whether there is access to a shared or private garden, how old it is, and how frequently it is likely to become available.
- 9.16. We will provide information about appropriate housing options which might be available to people in the Dorset Council area. This information shall be made available when someone applies to join the housing register and more generally via the housing allocation policy website. This might include information about:
- private rented accommodation
 - low-cost homeownership options
 - mobility schemes, which enable people to move out of the Dorset Council area, and
 - home improvement policy or aid and adaptation services which enable people to remain in their existing accommodation for longer
- 9.17. We will provide information to people when they first join the housing register, that a choice-based system is being used to allocate homes, so they know how the system works and to assist them to participate successfully in bidding for homes being advertised as available to let.
- 9.18. We will provide generalised information, via the applicant's portal account and the Dorset Home Choice website, about how many bids have been received for a particular property and the band that the successful bidder was in, to help people on the housing register make decisions about what sort of homes to bid for.
- 9.19. We will provide generalised information, via the Dorset Home Choice website, about the number of direct lettings made.

- 9.20. We will, upon request from a person on the housing register, provide personalised feedback about a particular vacancy they might have been interested in but were unsuccessful when bidding for it. This might include their relative position on the shortlist, or why they were unsuccessful.
- 9.21. We will provide people on the housing register with information about vacancies which are advertised. Vacancies advertised via the Dorset Home Choice website, will be notified to people who cannot use a website and at their request we will bid on a vacancy on behalf of a person.
- 9.22. Our Dorset Home Choice website shall be accessible for people who have visual impairment or learning disabilities. As much as possible, this information shall be provided using symbols and maps. This information shall help people to determine:
- whether they are entitled to bid for a property
 - whether a property meet their needs and any other requirements
 - what their likelihood of success would be if they made a bid for a property

It will also give basic details about a property such as:

- location,
- type (e.g. flat, bungalow, etc)
- size (e.g. number of bedrooms)
- floor, and whether or not it has a lift
- type of heating
- whether it has a garden
- the amount of rent payable
- type and level of adaptations
- condition of the property
- access to services
- information about transport, education and other local public services, and
- what type of applicant is entitled or excluded from bidding for a property, or who will be given a preference for a property

Information about the housing register

- 9.23. If a person requests to view their housing register entry, we will provide them with a free copy.
- 9.24. We will not, without the consent of a person, share any information about them that is included on the housing register. We will share information about a person (with their consent,) on the housing register, for example, to ensure that a person is

properly assisted to participate in bidding for a home that is advertised by the policy and that they are housed properly.

- 9.25. We will share personal information without consent if a lawful basis can be identified, for example a person's safety is at risk. We will determine on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to share information regarding safeguarding concerns, including, but not limited to concerns about domestic abuse, with other agencies (such as private registered providers). Where there is a need to share data without consent, this shall be done in accordance with UK data protection law.
- 9.26. We will make sure employees responsible for making decisions about the allocation of social housing, have appropriate knowledge and training to allow them to identify possible victims of domestic abuse.
- 9.27. We will implement information sharing protocols to ensure clarity on what information will be shared, with whom, and for what purpose. These protocols will cover organisations such as social services, statutory bodies, and voluntary agencies.
- 9.28. When devising information sharing protocols, and when passing on information about individuals on the housing register, we will be mindful of responsibilities under data protection legislation.
- 9.29. We will inform people, both when they apply and when they join the housing register, of their right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office if they believe their personal data has been shared without consent.
- 9.30. We will obtain from applications, information to monitor the fairness of allocations and compliance with equal opportunity requirements. Information about ethnicity, disability, gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation shall be collected through applications.
- 9.31. We will inform applicants, both when they apply and when they join the housing register, of their right to make a complaint to the Equality and Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been discriminated against in social housing allocation decisions.
- 9.32. We will, once an application is submitted, keep people informed about what happens next. This might include:
 - sending confirmation that the application has been received, when it will be verified and what checks will be made
 - asking for any information that has not been supplied by the person making the application and give 7 working days to provide it (this can be extended at

Dorset Council's discretion) and make them aware of how it may affect their application if they fail to provide it

- advising people that they must inform Dorset Council about any changes in circumstances that could affect their application and level of priority, or

- 9.33. When a decision is made that a person can join the housing register, we will inform them about the level of priority they have been awarded, and that they should notify us immediately about any changes in circumstances which could affect their application and their level of priority
- 9.34. We will aim to verify applications within eight weeks.
- 9.35. People applying to join our housing register shall be asked to sign a declaration that the information they have provided is correct to their knowledge. We will advise people that register providers can raise action in the court for recovery of possession where a tenancy has been given based on information being knowingly withheld or false information knowingly supplied by a person.
- 9.36. We will carry out checks to verify an application when it is received and again at point of nomination.
- 9.37. High risk offenders with an offending history will always require an appropriate risk assessment, which will take MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) guidance into account where appropriate. They will only be considered for the housing register once a multi-agency risk assessment is carried out to consider what type of accommodation is appropriate.

10.0. Allocations

Our procedures for offering choice to people on the housing register, including making offers, rights to refuse, and how choice applies to homeless applicants and disabled people requiring accessible housing. It also explains when choice may be restricted.

Choice

- 10.1. We will prioritise people on the housing register, and allocate homes, following the procedure set out in this chapter. Decisions about allocations will be made by our employees tasked with administering housing allocation functions.
- 10.2. Most applicants will be entitled to express a choice about the type of social housing that they might be allocated. A minority of applicants, on some occasions or in specified circumstances will not be entitled to choice and instead will be made a direct let of social housing and/or have a bid automatically placed on their behalf.

- 10.3. We will provide people on the housing register with the opportunity of selecting the property they wish to be allocated. People will be able to apply (referred to as 'bidding') for homes which are advertised as vacant on the Dorset Home Choice website. People will be able to bid for up to six homes per day.
- 10.4. We will operate an 'open advertising' approach whereby all people on the housing register, and members of the public, can find out about vacancies which are advertised on the Dorset Home Choice website.
- 10.5. Specialist accommodation may be advertised via the Dorset Home Choice website to give people more choice. Where homes are designated for a specific purpose (such as housing for older people or adapted homes for disabled people), the advert will clearly state that applicants with relevant housing or support needs will be prioritised.
- 10.6. We will work together with other relevant agencies and providers to ensure people can bid for homes. This extends to people who do not have access to or are unable to use a computer or the internet. People that may have difficulty in bidding for homes without assistance, for example people with physical or mental impairments, shall have access to any necessary assistance to make a bid, such as the system automatically placing a bid for them (known as auto bidding).
- 10.7. We reserve the right to reject a bid on grounds of risk: People who pose a risk to themselves, to other individuals, or are at risk from other individuals, for example due to sexual or violent offences, shall be restricted in the homes that they shall be nominated to. The extent of risk posed shall be determined based on the facts and evidence available concerning a person's application. Any decisions made about risk shall give a person the benefit of the doubt where evidence is inconclusive.
- 10.8. We reserve the right to make a direct let to manage the risk posed by some people or for other management reasons. A direct let is when a direct offer is made to a household bypassing the usual bidding process or this policy. Examples of when a direct let might be made, include (the following list is illustrative only and is not intended to be exhaustive):
- people whose home has been compulsory purchased, where Dorset Council must offer a specific property to meet legal requirements.
 - people who are tenants, who need to leave their original home to facilitate an area regeneration scheme, who have not bid for any advertised homes that would be suitable for them to occupy
 - people who are homeless or owed certain homelessness duties (relief duty and main duty) who do not bid for any advertised homes that would be suitable for them to occupy

- people seeking a move under a witness mobility policy
- people managed under multiagency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) who pose a serious risk to the community, such as level 1 or 2 cases involving sexual or violent offenders

10.9. Our housing software system creates a shortlist of applicants who meet the advert criteria and have placed a bid. It lists everyone needing a home of that size, then ranks bidders in descending order of priority.

10.10. Homes are advertised daily. As a rule, homes which have been advertised shall be offered to a person who:

- has the highest priority under the policy, and
- has been on the housing register the longest (by date of completed application submitted to join the housing register), and
- has a local connection to Dorset Council (some homes have a planning stipulation that requires it is allocated to a person with a local connection to the parish or surrounding parish in which the property is located)
- matches the lettings criteria for that home (e.g. the type of home, its size and bedroom needs of the household, its location, accessible adaptations have been made or might be possible, etc), and
- matches any quotas that might be in place

10.11. A person's date of registration to join the housing register shall be based on the date they submitted a completed application, including all relevant supporting documentation, such as proofs of identity.

10.12. We may reject a bid for a home, if the property isn't suitable for the person. This could be because of risks to or from others, or because the home doesn't meet the person's specific needs. A person can see the reasons why they might have been rejected or bypassed for a home via their online individual portal.

10.13. When we do reject a person's bid, they shall be provided with the reasons for this decision and inform them of their right to request a review of the decision.

We shall keep a record of reasons behind decisions to reject bids. This information will help in monitoring the operation of the housing allocation policy and make sure individuals or groups are not systematically disadvantaged. Common reasons for rejecting a person on the housing register might include the person has already refused a very similar property and has said they're not interested in receiving a similar offer.

10.14. We will make sure property advertisements provide people with sufficient information about homes which are available to bid for, so they can make an informed decision about whether to bid for it.

When a home is advertised, the following details will be provided if supplied by the private registered providers:

- provision type, for example general needs, housing for older people
- photo of property or street scene
- rent type and charge, for example social/affordable/intermediate rent, weekly rent and service charges and any other property related charges
- unit size and maximum occupancy for each unit, for example studio, number of bedrooms, non-self-contained or self-contained
- letting criteria priorities (when applicable); such as giving priority to under-occupiers or applicants with accessibility needs
- tenure type, for example flexible tenancy, secure tenancy
- condition of home, for example type of windows/boiler/insulation/walls, whether it has a loft, number of floors, installation of renewable technology and if so, what type, state of repair, modernity of amenities and services, heating system and energy performance certificate, year of build
- location, for example street name and postcode
- accessibility, for example approach routes, ramps, steps, entrance doors, corridors and doors, lifts and stairs, gardens, adaptations already made to individual homes
- local services, for example GP surgery, schools/colleges/universities, Jobcentre Plus, post office, public transport
- typical running costs, for example Council Tax, heating, water

Nominations to a property and refusals

10.15. We will provide people with appropriate advice and assistance to help them to bid effectively.

10.16. The fact that an applicant has made a bid for a home should not be treated as meaning that we have made a final decision to allocate it to them. We will, on occasions, withdraw an allocation or nomination of home, for example, if a person:

- is no longer eligible to be allocated social housing
- no longer qualifies to join the policy
- would be overcrowded or under-occupy a home if it was allocated to them,
- does not require such adaptations, but they have been allocated a home that has adaptations to make the home accessible for a disabled person

- is disabled and requires adaptations to be made to a home that has been allocated, to make accessible for them, but it is not possible for adaptations to be made to the home
- the home is designated as supported housing (e.g. sheltered housing, extra care housing) and the person does not need such housing
- the person would be at risk of domestic abuse, violence, or threat of violence due to the locality of the home that has been allocated to them

10.17. When using discretion to allocate a home outside the rules and procedures of this policy, we will ensure the individual has an exceptional level of need or that their circumstances are so unusual they would not otherwise be adequately prioritised.

We will keep a clear audit trail and record the reasons for any such allocation. All decisions will follow a formal authorisation process and require approval by the Service Manager. Discretion will be used rarely.

10.18. The Registered Provider will allow people a reasonable period to decide about any home they have been nominated to, providing them with an opportunity to view the home before making a decision as to whether they wish to accept or reject the home to which they have been nominated.

They will allow sufficient time for people who require additional assistance and/or support to arrange for an adviser or an advocate (who may be a friend or family member) to accompany them when viewing a home and to take advice in making their decision to accept or reject an offer.

10.19. Before a nomination can be made to the Registered Provider, the applicant will be asked to provide up to date information, including but not limited to:

- evidence that they continue to be eligible for an allocation of social housing, qualify to be on Dorset Council's housing register, and are entitled to reasonable or additional preference for the allocation of social housing, and
- the number and ages of other persons who normally reside with them as a member of their family or who might reasonably be expected to reside with them

This information must be received by Dorset Council within 48 hours of the request being made. Failure to provide the information within in the required timescale will result in the applicant being bypassed for that property and further action may be taken against the applicant for failing to engage (implied refusal).

10.20. Applicants in Bands One, Two and Three may refuse up to three suitable properties. After the third refusal, they will be moved to Band Four for a period of 12 months. All applicants will be reminded of this limit whenever an offer of housing

is made.

- 10.21. Applicants in Band Four may refuse one offer of suitable social housing. If they decline a second offer, they will be suspended from the housing register for 12 months. This policy aims to reduce delays caused by repeated refusals. Applicants will be reminded of this limit whenever an offer is made.

People who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty

- 10.22. We will make an automatic bid to any person who is owed a relief or main homelessness duty.
- 10.23. People who are owed a homelessness duty have the right to refuse a suitable housing allocation. If a person does refuse a suitable offer, within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996 part 7, we will make them aware that the duty of homelessness assistance may come to an end.
- 10.24. People can stay on the housing register if they are still eligible and meet the rules, even if our duty to help them as a homeless applicant has ended. However, they will no longer get the same homeless priority. Instead, their housing needs will be reassessed, and any priority will be based on their current situation. If they are still homeless, they will continue to receive a priority for that reason.

Disabled people

- 10.25. Housing which has been designed or adapted to meet the needs of disabled people, known as accessible housing, will be advertised in the same way as other homes. Accessible housing shall be prioritised for people who have access needs. This will be explained in the advert.

Disabled people can apply for accommodation that does not meet their needs, but this will be assessed by relevant parties to check it is reasonable and practical to adapt the home.

- 10.26. When an accessible property is advertised, the advertisement shall give sufficient information about the level of adaptations and/or accessibility features in the accommodation, so that applicants can make informed decision on whether to bid for the particular property. Information shall be included about external access to the property (e.g. whether there is a ramp up to the property and whether there is accessible parking nearby) and relevant information about the surrounding area (e.g. local shops and public transport that is easily accessible).

10.27. We propose to establish and maintain a database of accessible properties owned by all registered providers with stock in the Dorset Council area. Disabled people shall be able to see the full range of accessible properties, including the number and types of properties, accessibility features, and the level of adaptations of each property and location. Such information shall be provided to assist disabled people to decide whether to bid for a particular home which is advertised.

10.28. We will provide disabled people with additional assistance and support, depending on the nature and degree of their disability.

Restricting choice

10.29. We will set advertising criteria for properties and people who meet the criteria will be given preference for that property. For example, advertising criteria will be used for:

- local lettings plan's, which are used to achieve housing management and other housing policy objectives
- a certain proportion of homes may be let to applicants who are homeless
- to match applicants with access needs to accessible accommodation

10.30. We will not allow every person to express an interest in or be considered for any, and every available home to let. People shall not be permitted to bid for homes, which would result in overcrowding or under occupation. Therefore, couples and single people will not usually be permitted to bid for a home that has more than one bedroom, unless there is an evidential need for a couple to have a two-bedroom home.

10.31. We will make a final decision on whether it is appropriate to nominate a person to any particular property. When doing so the following shall be considered:

- a. provision type (for example a home is housing for older people and person has no need for such housing, or a home is general needs housing, and a person has a need for supported housing or housing for older people)
- b. rent type and charge (for example a person cannot afford the pay the rent and all other property related charges for a home)
- c. unit size (for example a person and their household would under-occupy a home)
- d. letting criteria restrictions (for example a home must be allocated to disabled people with accessibility needs)
- e. location (for example a home would result in a person or members of their household being at risk to or from others)
- f. properties subject to s106 Town and Country Planning Act, local lettings plans, and/or specific social landlord requirements will be prioritised accordingly.

11.0. Prioritisation

Our procedures for prioritising people for an allocation, determining bedroom entitlements and setting quotas.

11.1. When allocating homes, we will give a preference to people in the following order of bands:

- Band One: people with priority housing needs
- Band Two: people with high housing needs
- Band Three: people with medium housing needs
- Band Four: people with low housing needs

11.2. People who might fall into more than one band shall be placed in the band that gives them the greatest priority.

Band One: priority housing need

- Owed a main homelessness duty
- priority medical grounds
- UK armed forces
- fleeing domestic abuse
- priority welfare grounds
- disaster/emergency

Band Two: high housing need

- homelessness relief duty
- under occupying social rented housing
- overcrowded by two or more bedrooms
- foster carer/adopters and care leavers
- insanitary and unsatisfactory housing conditions
- medical grounds
- welfare grounds
- hardship grounds
- giving up accessible housing

Band Three: medium housing need

- homeless household
- homeless prevention duty
- social housing tenants right to move
- UK armed forces community
- Overcrowded by one bedroom

Band Four: low housing need

- social housing tenants seeking a transfer
- need for older person housing
- supported housing: not ready to move

- reduced preference for 12 months
- low housing need

11.3 We will, when making decisions about prioritisation, disregard a persons' household members, if such household members are ineligible for an allocation of social housing.

Bedroom criteria

11.4. When deciding if a person's household is overcrowded, for the purpose of determining the priority they should be afforded, make an assessment against the UK Government's Bedroom Standard, which allows a separate bedroom each for:

- any adult couple
- any remaining adult aged 21 years or over
- two males aged 10 to 20 years
- one male aged 10 to 20 years, and one male aged 9 years or under
- one male aged 10-20 years (if there are no males aged 0-9 years to pair with him)
- two females aged 10 to 20 years
- one female aged 10 to 20 years, and one female aged 9 years or under
- one female aged 10-20 years (if there are no females aged 0-9 years to pair with her)
- two children regardless of sex aged 9 years or under
- any remaining child aged 9 years or under

This criterion does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

11.5. When deciding if a person's household is under-occupied, for the purpose of determining the priority they should be afforded, we will make an assessment against the UK Government's Local Housing Allowance bedroom criteria, which allows a separate bedroom each for:

- any adult couple
- any person aged 16 years or over
- two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
- two children aged 9 years or under
- any other child
- a member of a couple who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a child who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition

- a foster child (if a person is an approved foster parent)
- a non-resident carer providing overnight care to a person or a member of their household (one room is allowed, regardless of the number of carers who stay overnight)

11.6. We will when allocating a home, use the UK Government's Local Housing Allowance bedroom criteria, to decide the number of bedrooms a person (taking account of who is usually a member of their household) requires. The following types of homes will be allocated to people with the following bedroom need:

Bedsit

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over

One-bedrooms

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over

Two-bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any one of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Three bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any two of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Four bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any three of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Five bedrooms

- any adult/couple or
- any person aged 16 years or over with any four of the following:
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under

- two children aged 9 years or under
- any other child

Six bedrooms

- any adult/couple with any five of the following:
 - any person aged 16 years or over
 - two children of the same sex aged 15 years or under
 - two children aged 9 years or under
 - any other child

Exceptions allowing an extra bedroom when assessing overcrowding and bedroom need

- a member of a couple who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a child who cannot share because of a disability or medical condition
- a foster carer who has fostered a child, are an approved foster carer or about to become an approved foster carer and have written evidence from Children's Services.
- a non-resident carer providing overnight care to a person or a member of their household
- Where the applicant or partner is pregnant, and the Mat b1 certificate has been received, and it is the first child
- Other exceptional circumstances

Quotas

11.7. We may set quotas to ensure fair allocation across different needs, but applicants in bands one, two and three will never be given lower priority than those in band four.

11.8. Quotas will be based on housing need and demand in the Dorset Council area, using data from the housing register. We will consider:

- the size and composition of the housing register, including the housing needs people have, and
- the profile of stock and vacancies which are likely to become available

11.9. If we set quotas, they will be flexible and adjustable to reflect changing circumstances, ensuring significant housing need continues to be met even after a quota is reached.

- 11.10. We shall monitor who is being allocated properties and publish information on performance against quotas that have been set.

12.0. Information about this allocation policy

Our procedure for providing copies of this policy, consulting people on future changes, and using UK guidance on social housing allocation when making decisions about social housing allocations.

- 12.1. We will publish a summary of this housing allocation policy and provide a printed copy free of charge to any person who requests one. The summary will be available to download from the Dorset Council Website in 2026. Copies can also be requested by contacting our Housing Register Team:

Email: dorsetcouncilhomechoice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01305 221739

- 12.2. We will make available a full copy of this policy for inspection at our office, [insert address]. We will, upon request from a person, provide a copy of the policy, and payment of a reasonable fee, maybe requested, to cover the cost of printing a copy.
- 12.3. We will regularly review and update this policy. We will, before modifying this policy, have regard to all relevant statute and local strategies and policies, including our:
- homelessness strategy
 - housing strategy
 - tenancy strategy
- 12.4. The Portfolio Holder for Housing may approve minor and/or legislative amendments to the housing allocation policy at any time to ensure it remains compliant with legal requirements. without the need for further approval.
- 12.5. We will, before making an alteration to the policy which would be a major change of policy, send a copy of proposed alterations to every registered provider, which own stock in the Dorset Council area and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.
- 12.6. When we make a significant change to the policy, which would affect a many people on the housing register, we will notify them and consult widely. Consultation will include stakeholders such as health services, community justice services, voluntary organisations, social housing tenants, people on the housing register and the public. The consultation approach will depend on the scale of the changes and may involve the following:

- a small sounding board group of social housing tenants and people on the housing register,
- a social housing tenant scrutiny panel, or
- public consultation

12.7. We will refer to statutory guidance published by the UK Government when reviewing and amending this housing allocation policy, and when making decisions about housing allocation policy and practice.

13.0. Co-operation with private registered providers

Our procedure for working with registered providers to nominate people from the housing register for a vacancy.

- 13.1. We will work together with register providers that own and manage social housing in the Dorset Council area, to make best use of the available social housing. We will make nominations to registered providers, for them to offer an allocation of social housing to people on our housing register.
- 13.2. We will comply with requirements set out in a nomination agreement with registered providers, when making nominations for social housing to persons from our housing register.
- 13.3. The Nomination agreement will have clear objectives, based on a thorough analysis of need and demand. It will specify the proportion of lettings that private registered providers in the Dorset Council area will make available to us.
- 13.4. The nomination agreement will set out any criteria which has been adopted for accepting or rejecting nominations and how any disputes shall be resolved.
- 13.5. We will monitor and regularly review the nomination agreement, to demonstrate that obligations are being met and to ensure they reflect changing needs and demand.
- 13.6. We will, when making nominations to a registered provider, make sure the details of a nominated person are accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date and provide information about any vulnerability, support needs and arrangements for support, where this information is available.
- 13.7. We will also agree an information sharing protocol with private register providers of social housing who own or manage stock in the Dorset Council area, covering issues such as rent arrears, antisocial behaviour and support needs.

I 4.0.False statements and withholding information

Our procedure for when someone applying for social housing gives false information and/or withholds information.

- I 4.1. We will consider, when a person knowingly or recklessly makes a false statement or knowingly withholds information that would be reasonable to provide on a housing register application, (including during review proceedings), as a reason for disqualification from joining the housing register.
- I 4.2. We will look at the circumstances of each person rather than applying a blanket approach and whether to institute criminal proceedings against a person who has given false information or withheld information.
- I 4.3. We will take appropriate steps to vet employees who make decisions about the allocation of social housing and require some decisions to be validated by a senior member of staff, via a system of random checks, to minimise the risk of employees allocating incorrectly or potentially fraudulently.

I 5.0.Elected members

The role of our elected members in allocating of social housing

- I 5.1. Our elected members shall not be part of a decision-making body at the time an allocation decision is made, when either the accommodation concerned is situated in their electoral ward or the person subject to the decision has their sole or main residence there.
- I 5.2. Elected members shall be permitted to represent their constituents in front of any decision-makers, such as seeking or providing information on behalf of their constituents and be permitted to participate in the decision-makers deliberations prior to a decision.
- I 5.3. Elected members shall not attempt to confer an advantage on any person seeking an allocation of social housing. Elected members shall ensure compliance with our Code of Conduct and shall consider whether they are required to declare an interest before participating in such deliberations. Elected members shall seek to obtain advice from our monitoring officer, should there be any doubt.
- I 5.4. Elected members shall be involved in policy decisions that affect the generality of social housing in their electoral ward.

- 15.5. Elected members shall be responsible for determining allocation policies and monitoring the implementation of this policy, to ensure the operation of the policy is open and accountable and systems are compliant with our policy objectives.

Appendix one – statute

Law

[Housing Act 1996 Part VI Allocation of Housing Accommodation](#)

Statutory guidance

[Allocation of accommodation guidance for local authorities](#)

[Providing social housing for local people](#)

[Right to move and social housing allocations](#)

[Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse](#)

[Improving access to social housing for members of the armed forces](#)

Regulations

[The Allocation of Housing Regulations 1996](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Procedure\) Regulations 1997](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(England\) Regulations 2000](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Housing Act 1996 Additional Preference for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Right to Move\) \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) and Persons subject to Immigration Control \(Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

[The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness \(Eligibility\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)

Appendix two – eligibility

The following classes of persons, subject to satisfying a habitual residency test, will be eligible to join this scheme:

- British citizens (constituting the nations of England, Scotland and Wales)
- Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK immediately before 01 January 1983 who have remained commonwealth citizens throughout (excluding non-British citizens from Pakistan and South Africa, but inclusive of citizens from Gambia and Zimbabwe)
- Irish citizens (constituting the nations of Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland)
- EEA Nationals (other than those from Ireland) and their family members, who:
 - have acquired limited leave to enter and remain in the UK
 - were frontier working before 31 December 2020, or;
 - are lawfully residing in the UK by 31 December 2020, but still have to apply to, or acquire status under the EU Settlement Scheme before the deadline of 30 June 2021, and are covered by the “Grace Period statutory instrument”
- persons exempt from immigration control (e.g., diplomats and their family members based in the UK and some military personnel).
- persons granted refugee status by the UK Government
- persons granted exceptional or limited leave to enter or remain in the UK with condition that they and any dependents have resource to public funds (e.g: humanitarian or compassionate circumstances)
- persons with current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation, and who are habitually resident in the UK, The Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (defined as the Common Travel Area) (a person whose maintenance and accommodation is being sponsored must be resident in the Common Travel Area for five years since date of entry or date of sponsorship, unless the sponsor has died)
- persons who have humanitarian protection granted under the Immigration Rules (e.g., a person whose asylum application has failed, but they face real risk of harm if they returned to their state of origin)
- persons who moved to the UK as child seeking asylum and have been given limited leave to remain
- persons who have limited permission to enter or remain in the UK, from November 2018 onwards, due to Calais leave
- persons who have limited permission to enter or remain in the UK as the family member of a relevant persons of Northern Ireland
- persons who have leave to enter or remain in the UK under Appendix Hong Kong British National (Overseas) of the Immigration Rules, and your leave is not subject to a condition requiring you to maintain and accommodate yourself or any person dependent upon you
- persons who are a relevant Afghan citizen, such as one who has worked for the UK government in Afghanistan

- persons who have permission to enter or remain in the UK and left Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government took place on 15 August 2021 and are allowed to claim housing and welfare assistance from the state
- persons who are currently living in the UK and previously was living in Ukraine before 1 January 2022 and left as a result of the Russian invasion which took place on 24 February 2022 and have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine family scheme or the homes for Ukraine scheme and have been granted leave to remain
- persons who have been granted limited leave to remain due to being a victim of human trafficking or slavery
- persons who were living in Sudan before 15 April 2023 and left as a result of conflict that commenced on 15 April 2023 and have been granted leave to remain and are allowed to claim housing and welfare assistance from the state and do not have a person that will sponsor your stay in the UK
- person who are EEA Nationals means nationals of any of the EU member states, and nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Even when an Applicant is eligible for an allocation of social rented housing, only those who are habitually resident in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Isle of Mann or the Channel Islands, will be eligible for an allocation (except persons which exempt from the requirement to be habitually resident, as defined in law or statutory guidance).

Applicants who are subject to immigration control or are an ineligible person from abroad will not be eligible for an allocation of social rented housing

Appendix three – banding

Band One: priority housing need

Owed a main homelessness duty

People who are owed a homelessness duty by Dorset Council under section 193(2). This applies to those that have a priority need, are not intentionally homeless, and must be provided with suitable accommodation.

Priority medical grounds

People (or someone from their household) who have urgent medical needs and require stable accommodation because of their health condition, due to:

- the condition is expected to be terminal, and re-housing is required due to unsuitable accommodation or to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care, or
- a condition is life threatening and existing accommodation is a major contributory factor, or
- a planned discharge from hospital is imminent and there is no accommodation available that is reasonable to occupy, or
- Extensive adaptations are required, and adapting the current home is not possible because it is either technically unfeasible, unsuitable due to a progressive medical condition, or not cost-effective. (This applies where remaining in the current property is clearly impractical and urgent rehousing is essential.)

UK Armed Forces community

People who are members of the UK Armed Forces community, who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs:

- former members of the Regular Armed Forces (including those who are close to leaving or have recently left the Regular Armed Forces, or
- serving in the Regular Armed Forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness (including mental ill health) or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to the person's service, including those who need to move to suitable adapted accommodation, or
- serving or have served in the reserve forces and suffering from a serious injury, illness (including mental ill health) or disability which is wholly or partially attributable to the person's service, or
- bereaved spouses of civil partners of those serving in the Regular Armed Forces where the bereaved spouses of civil partners have recently ceased,

or will cease, to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their partner whose death was attributable (wholly or partially) to that service.

Domestic abuse

This includes people who need to move because they are fleeing domestic abuse (within the meaning of the domestic abuse act) from anywhere in the UK. It covers those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or who are living in a refuge or other safe temporary accommodation in the Dorset Council area, having escaped domestic abuse, or

Priority welfare grounds

People who need to be urgently rehoused because of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out, who are:

- witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current home, or
- escaping serious antisocial behaviour, or
- hate incidents, or
- harassment (for example racial, religious or sectarian, homophobic, transphobic,).

Disaster/emergency

People who have lost their home because of a disaster, such as a fire, flood or other emergency.

Band Two: high housing need

Homeless relief duty

People who are homeless and owed the section 189(B)(2) initial (relief) duty (by Dorset Council).

Under-occupying social housing

People who are tenants of a Private Registered Provider property within the Dorset Council area and are under-occupying their home, as defined by Local Housing Allowance size criteria, and who wish to transfer to a smaller property.

Overcrowded by two or more bedrooms

People occupying overcrowded housing, by two bedrooms (by the Bedroom Standard criteria).

This banding does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

Foster carers, adopters and care leavers

People with a need for accommodation, who are:

- foster carers and adopters, special guardians, and family and friend carers (who have taken on the care of a child because their parents are unable to provide care), who need a larger home in order to accommodate a looked after child, approved by or being assessed by Dorset Council, or
 - is an eligible child
 - age 16/17
 - currently looked after by children's services
 - has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, including time after their 16th birthday
 - has support of a personal advisor, Needs Assessment, Pathway Plan, and continued care until leaving care
- relevant child
- age 16/17
 - currently looked after by Children's Services
 - has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, including time after their 16th birthday
 - has a personal adviser, needs assessment, pathway plan, accommodation and financial support for education, training, and employment
- former relevant children
- age 18 to 24
 - Previously an eligible child or relevant child
 - Personal Adviser, Pathway Plan (reviewed regularly), assistance with accommodation, living costs, and education/training

Insanitary and unsatisfactory housing conditions

People occupying insanitary, or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions, for example due to:

- entirely lacking bathroom or kitchen or the bathroom or kitchen is in such disrepair as to make it unusable, or
- lacking inside WC, or
- entirely lacking cold or hot water supplies, electricity, gas, or a fixed adequate heating system, or the cold or hot water supplies, electricity, gas or heating is in such disrepair as to make it unusable, or
- property in serious disrepair, due to significant damage or deterioration in a property, where repairs are needed to make it safe, habitable and usable, or

- tenants who need to be rehoused because of them being displaced from rented accommodation in the consequence of Dorset Council making a housing order (prohibition or demolition order), where suitable alternative accommodation on reasonable terms is required and is not otherwise available to the person.

This list is not exhaustive, and the banding shall only be awarded for the duration of the disrepair.

Medical grounds

People who need to move on medical (including any grounds relating to a disability), due to:

- a mental illness or disorder (including Armed Forces veterans with mental ill health, or
- a chronic or progressive medical conditions (e.g. MS, HIV/AIDS); or
- an infirmity due to old age, or
- a need for improved heating (on medical grounds), or
- a need for older peoples housing (on medical grounds) or
- a need for ground floor accommodation (on medical grounds), or
- a need for adapted housing and/or extra care facilities, such as a property with an additional bedroom or bathroom, where the current home could technically be adapted but doing so would involve significant delays, high costs, or complex works. (This applies where adaptation is possible but not ideal, and rehousing would better meet the person's needs), or
- the need to move, following hospitalisation or long-term care, or
- moving on from a drug or alcohol recovery programme.

Welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability)

People who need to move on welfare grounds, due to:

- a physical or learning disability or sensory impairment, or
- learning difficulties; or
- the need to give or receive care; or
- the need to recover from the effect of violence or threat of violence, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse (e.g. victims of domestic abuse); or
- people who cannot fully look after themselves because of certain limitations or circumstances making it difficult to manage daily tasks without support, or
- young people at risk (i.e. child(ren) in need, 16–17-year-olds, lone parents under 18); or
- people with behavioural difficulties; or

- being ready to make a planned move from supported housing (commissioned, managed or owned by Dorset Council), where they are provided with care, support or supervision in resettlement accommodation, or a managed property, or a hostel for homeless people, or
- Being vulnerable (e.g. having learning disabilities) and not expected to find their own accommodation, who wish to live independently in the community, with appropriate care and support.

Hardship

People who need to move to a particular locality in the Dorset Council area, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others), for example due to accessing specialised medical treatment or financial implications.

Giving-up accessible housing

People occupying accessible housing adapted for disabled people, who no longer require such accommodation and wish to move.

Band Three: unmet housing need

Homeless Households

People who are experiencing homelessness (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996 Part 7 Homelessness) in the Dorset Council area, that have either not made an application for homelessness assistance, have withdrawn their application for homelessness assistance, or any homelessness duty of assistance owed has ended, including people:

- with no fixed abode, or
- living with friends, or
- rough sleeping, or
- Intentionally Homeless
- homeless upon departure from prison.

Homelessness prevention duty

People who are threatened with homelessness and owed a homelessness duty by Dorset Council under section 195(2). The council must take reasonable steps to help them keep their current home or find somewhere else to live.

Social tenants right to move for work

People who are a social housing tenant anywhere in England and need to move to the Dorset Council area for work reasons. This includes those who already

work in Dorset or have a genuine job offer (including an apprenticeship) that will last more than 12 months and involves at least 16 hours of work per week.

UK Armed Forces community

People who are members of the UK Armed Forces community, who are:

- divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Regular Armed Forces service personnel, who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence, or
- adult children of Regular Armed Forces service personnel, who may no longer be able to remain the family home.

Overcrowded by one bedroom

People occupying homes that are overcrowded by one bedroom based on the Bedroom Standard.

This banding does not apply to households accommodated in temporary accommodation by Dorset Council.

Band Four: other housing needs

Social tenants seeking transfer

People who are secure tenants of a private registered provider in Dorset Council area who are seeking a transfer, and who are not entitled to a reasonable preference for an allocation of social housing (for example they would not be placed in any of the above bands).

Need for older person housing

People aged 55 years or over requiring older persons housing and do not meet the criteria in the bands above.

Supported housing: not ready to move

People not ready to make a planned move from supported housing (commissioned, owned or managed by Dorset Council). This includes those receiving care, support or supervision in resettlement accommodation, or a hostel for homeless people.

Reduced preference for 12 months

People who have had their priority on the housing register reduced for 12-months because they have refused 3 offers of suitable housing that would have been reasonable to accept.

Low housing need

Any other person who is eligible for an allocation of social housing and qualifies to join the housing register.

Appendix four: registered providers that own social housing stock in the Dorset Council area.

Providers include:

- Abri Group Limited
- Anchor Hanover Group?
- Aster Communities
- Bournemouth Churches Housing Association Limited
- East Boro Housing Trust Limited
- Hastoe Housing Association Limited
- LiveWest Homes Limited
- Magna Housing Limited
- Places for People Homes Limited
- Sage Homes RP Limited
- Sanctuary Housing Association
- Sovereign Housing Association Limited
- Stonewater Limited
- The Guinness Partnership Limited
- Willow Tree Housing Partnership Limited

Appendix Five: Information applicants need to provide when making an application to join the housing register

Submission of supporting documents

After submitting your application, you must provide the required supporting documents when requested. If you are unable to provide all the documents at the time of submission, you will have up to 7 working days to supply them. If the documents are not received within this timeframe, your application will be closed. Applicants requiring assistance should contact the housing service via telephone on 01305 221739 or via email dorsetcouncilhomechoice@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk - please quote your application reference number.

Note: During the assessment of your application, we may ask you to provide additional information.

How to Submit Your Documents

You can submit your documents in one of the following ways:

- Online:
Log into your Portal Account and upload the requested documents via the Actions Page.
- By Post:
Send photocopies to:
The Housing Register Team
Dorset Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester DT1 1XJ
(Please allow time for delivery and include your application number on each document.)
- In Person:
You can take your documents to a local library or County Hall where staff can assist you with scanning and uploading your documents.

Required Documents to establish eligibility and qualification to join the Dorset Council Housing Register.

I.Nationality and immigration status

Provide applicable documents:

- Passport

- Right to remain papers (e.g. Home Office letters)
- EU Settlement Scheme confirmation
- Biometric residence permit (front and back)
- Share code from the Government website to prove immigration status

2. Identity (Applicants aged 18+)

Provide one of the following:

- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Citizen Card
- EU ID Card
- Bus Pass

3. Proof of Current Address

Provide one of the following (dated within the last 3 months):

- Utility bill (gas, electric, water)
- Council Tax bill
- Letter from DWP
- Letter from an official body (e.g. NHS, Solicitor, Social Services)

4. Proof of Local Connection via

Residency – currently resident and have been for two years prior to the application date

Provide one or more of the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
 - Utility Bill
 - Car Insurance document
 - Mobile phone contract
 - Council Tax Bill
- (You can access and screenshot your Council Tax summary at Dorset Council Tax Portal)*

Family – currently resident and have been for two years prior to the application date

Provide:

- Tenancy Agreement or Utility/Council Tax bills for each year (up to 2 years)
- Most recent Utility bill

- Full birth certificate (to confirm relationship)
- Written confirmation of relationship
(Include marriage certificate if name has changed)

Note: Bank statements and driving licences are not accepted as proof of local connection or residency.

Employment

Provide:

Contract of employment (showing permanent employment over 16 hours/week for 2+ years)

- 3 months of recent wage slips
- Full name and address of workplace

If self-employed, provide:

- 2 years of HMRC tax returns
- Invoices/receipts showing self-employment in Dorset Council area (16+ hours/week)

5. Employment (All Working Applicants)

Provide:

- 3 months of recent payslips
- Contract of employment

6. Residency of Dependent Children (Under 18 or in Full-Time Education)

Provide:

- Full birth certificate
- Child Benefit letter (showing children's names) or
- Recent bank statement showing benefit payments

7. Financial Information (All Applicants)

Provide:

- 3 months of recent bank statements (including savings/Post Office accounts)
- Pension Service award letter (if applicable)
- Details of any children's savings account

- Mortgage statement and estate agent's details (if homeowner)
- Any benefit letters

Supporting evidence dependent on circumstances

1. Parish Connection

Provide:

- Proof of relative's residency in the parish (e.g. Tenancy Agreement, Utility bill)
- Full birth certificate (to confirm relationship)
- If a name has changed by marriage, a copy of the marriage certificate is also required.
Written confirmation of relationship
- Proof of employment in the parish (employment contract and recent wage slips)

Note: Parish connection priority is assessed case-by-case based on property criteria (e.g. Section 106 Agreement or Local Lettings Plan).

2. Armed Forces

Provide:

- Armed Forces ID
- 3 months of recent wage slips
- Proof of discharge date (if applicable)

3. Health and Support Needs

If you or a household member has health-related needs that affect your housing situation, please provide supporting information relating to your circumstances from the following list:

- Medical Evidence:
 - PIP (Personal Independence Payment) award letter
 - Disability Living Allowance award letter
 - Confirmation from a GP or medical professional explaining how a medical condition affects your housing needs
- Critical/Essential Support Needs: If you need to move to receive or provide essential care and support, please provide:
 - A letter from a relevant practitioner (e.g. GP, social worker, care coordinator) stating:
 - The medical diagnosis
 - The type of care/support required or provided

- Why this support cannot be delivered by anyone or any service in your current area
- Support from a Family Member in Dorset: If your move is related to receiving support from a family member living in the Dorset Council area, please provide:
 - Proof that your family member has lived in Dorset for more than 2 years (e.g. utility bill, tenancy agreement)
 - A letter confirming your relationship to them
 - A statement outlining the support they will be providing

4. Overcrowding

Provide:

- Copy of current tenancy agreement showing number of bedrooms in the property or
- Letter from Letting agent or landlord confirming the number of bedrooms in the property
- If living with family, a breakdown of all household members

5. Pregnancy

If any individual included in your Housing Register application is pregnant, please provide:

- Mat BI certificate (usually provided on or around 20 weeks)

Appendix Six – Parish List

A

Abbotsbury Parish, Affpuddle and Turnerspudde Parish, Alderholt Parish, Alton Pancras Parish, Anderson Parish, Arne Parish, Ashmore Parish, Askerswell Parish, Athelhampton and Puddletown Parish

B

Batcombe Parish, Beaminster Town Council, Beer Hackett Parish, Bere Regis Parish, Bettiscombe Parish, Bincombe Parish, Bishop's Caundle Parish, *Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish, Bloxworth Parish, Bourton Parish, Bradford Abbas Parish, Bradford Peverell Parish, *Bridport Town Council, Broadmayne Parish, Broadwindsor Parish, Bryanston Parish, Buckland Newton Parish, Burleston and Tolpuddle Parish, Burstock Parish, Burton Bradstock Parish

C

Cann Parish, Castleton Parish, Catherston Leweston Parish, Cattistock Parish, Caundle Marsh Parish, Cerne Abbas Parish, Chalbury Parish, Chaldon Herring Parish, Charlton Marshall Parish, Charminster Parish, Charmouth Parish, Cheselbourne Parish, Chetnole Parish, Chettle Parish, *Chickerell Town Council, Chideock Parish, Chilcombe Parish, Child Okeford Parish, Chilfrome Parish, Church Knowle Parish, Clifton Maybank Parish, *Colehill Parish, Compton Abbas Parish, Compton Valence Parish, Coombe Keynes Parish, Corfe Castle Parish, *Corfe Mullen Town Council, Corscombe Parish, Cranborne Parish, Crichel Parish, Crossways Parish

D

Dewlish Parish, *Dorchester Town Council, Durweston Parish

E

East Chelborough Parish, East Holme Parish, East Lulworth Parish, East Orchard Parish, East Stoke Parish, East Stour Parish, Edmondsham Parish, Evershot Parish

F

Farnham Parish, *Ferndown Town Council, Fifehead Magdalen Parish, Fifehead Neville Parish, Fleet Parish, Folke Parish, Fontmell Magna Parish, Frampton Parish, Frome St Quintin Parish, Frome Vauchurch Parish

G

*Gillingham Town Council, Glanvilles Wootton Parish, Goathill Parish, Godmanstone Parish, Gussage All Saints Parish, Gussage St Michael Parish

H

Halstock Parish, Hammoon Parish, Hanford Parish, Haydon Parish, Hazelbury Bryan Parish, Hermitage Parish, Hilfield Parish, Hilton Parish, Hinton Parish, Hinton St Mary Parish, Holnest Parish, Holt Parish, Holwell Parish, Hooke Parish, Horton Parish

I

Ibberton Parish, Iwerne Courtney (Shroton) Parish, Iwerne Minster Parish, Iwerne Stepleton Parish

K

Kimmeridge Parish, Kington Magna Parish

L

Langton Herring Parish, Langton Long Parish, Langton Matravers Parish, Leigh Parish, Leweston Parish, Lillington Parish, Littlebredy Parish, Litton Cheney Parish, Loders Parish, Long Bredy and Kingston Russell Parish, Longburton Parish, Lydlinch Parish, *Lyme Regis Town Council, Lytchett Matravers Parish, *Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council

M

Maiden Newton Parish, Manston Parish, Mapperton Parish, Mappowder Parish, Margaret Marsh Parish, Marnhull Parish, Marshwood Parish, Melbury Abbas Parish, Melbury Bubb Parish, Melbury Osmond Parish, Melbury Sampford Parish, Melcombe Horsey Parish, Milborne St Andrew Parish, Milton Abbas Parish, Minterne Magna Parish, Morden Parish, Moreton Parish, Mosterton Parish, Motcombe Parish

N

Nether Cerne Parish, Nether Compton Parish, Netherbury Parish, North Poorton Parish, North Wootton Parish

O

Osborne Parish, Okeford Fitzpaine Parish, Osmington Parish, Over Compton Parish, Owermoigne Parish

P

Pamphill Parish, Piddlehinton Parish, Piddletrenthide Parish, Pilsdon Parish, Pimperne Parish, Portesham Parish, *Portland Town Council, Powerstock Parish, Poxwell Parish, Poyntington Parish, Pulham Parish, Puncknowle Parish, Purse Caundle Parish

R

Rampisham Parish, Ryme Intrinseca Parish

S

Sandford Orcas Parish, Seaborough Parish, *Shaftesbury Town Council, Shapwick Parish, *Sherborne Town Council, Shillingstone Parish, Shipton Gorge Parish, Silton Parish, Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge Parish, South Perrott Parish, Spetisbury Parish, St Leonards and St Ives Parish, Stalbridge Town Council, Stanton St Gabriel Parish, Steeple with Tyneham Parish, Stinsford Parish, Stockwood Parish, Stoke Abbott Parish, Stoke Wake Parish, Stour Provost Parish, Stourpaine Parish, Stourton Caundle Parish, Stratton Parish, Studland Parish, Sturminster Marshall Parish, Sturminster Newton Town Council, Sutton Waldron Parish, *Swanage Town Council, Swyre Parish, Sydling St Nicholas Parish, Symondsburys Parish

T

Tarrant Crawford Parish, Tarrant Gunville Parish, Tarrant Hinton Parish, Tarrant Keyneston Parish, Tarrant Launceston Parish, Tarrant Monkton Parish, Tarrant Rawston Parish, Tarrant Rushton Parish, Thorncombe Parish, Thornford Parish, Tincleton Parish, Todber Parish, Toller Fratrum Parish, Toller Porcorum Parish, Trent Parish, Turnworth Parish

U

Up Cerne Parish

V

*Verwood Town Council

W

Wareham St Martin Parish, *Wareham Town Council, Warmwell Parish, West Chelborough Parish, West Compton Parish, West Knighton Parish, West Lulworth Parish, *West Moors Town Council, West Orchard Parish, West Parley Parish, West Stafford Parish, West Stour Parish, *Weymouth Town Council, Whitchurch Canonorum Parish, Whitcombe Parish, *Wimborne Minster Town Council, Wimborne St Giles Parish, Winfrith Newburgh and East Knighton Parish, Winterborne Came Parish, Winterborne Clenston Parish, Winterborne Herringston Parish, Winterborne Houghton Parish, Winterborne Kingston Parish, Winterborne Monkton Parish, Winterborne St Martin Parish, Winterborne Stickland Parish, Winterborne Whitechurch Parish, Winterborne Zelston Parish, Winterbourne Abbas Parish, Winterbourne Steepleton Parish, Witchampton Parish, Woodlands Parish, Woodsford Parish, Wool Parish, Woolland Parish, Wootton Fitzpaine Parish, Worth Matravers Parish, Wraxall Parish, Wynford Eagle Parish

Y

Yetminster Parish

* Properties in these parishes would not be included within the rural allocation process and would not normally have restrictive letting criteria unless associated with a Community Land Trust (CLT) scheme.

Glossary of terms

This section shows the key definitions used in this Policy.

Allocation	When Dorset Council nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a private registered provider of social housing.
Eligibility	The rules set out in UK immigration law, which Dorset Council must follow to check by the nationality which persons can and cannot be allocated social housing.
Qualification	The criteria Dorset Council has chosen to decide which persons are entitled to join its housing register.
The housing register	The list of people to whom Dorset Council can allocate social housing.
Allocation policy	The procedures (i.e. this document), Dorset Council follows when allocating social housing, which includes including all aspects of the allocations processes and descriptions of persons who will make decisions.
Notifications	Decisions made Dorset Council about a person's application to join the housing register, including the extent of priority they are entitled to, or to remain on the housing register.
Review	A person's right to ask Dorset Council to reconsider a decision made about their housing register application.
Review procedure	The rules Dorset Council shall follow when carry out a review of a decision.
Case	The information held by Dorset Council about a person on the housing register.
Applications	The process people must following when applying to join the housing register.
Choice	The way by which people can express a preference about the type of social housing they might be allocated.

Banding	The way Dorset Council prioritises people when selecting someone on the housing register for an allocation of social housing.
Nominations	Arrangements held between Dorset Council and private registered providers of social housing for selecting a person on the housing register for a social rented home available to-let.
Dorset Council	The area of the local authority district.
Private Registered Provider	Organisations that own social housing and are on the register of social landlords maintained by the Regulator of Social housing and are regulated by it.
False statements	When a person knowingly and recklessly provides false materials when applying for an allocation of social housing, which is a criminal act
Withholding information	When a person knowingly withholds information about the application for allocation of social housing, which is a criminal act.
Local lettings policy	A set rules explaining how the usual rules for allocating social housing will be changed for particular types of homes, or particular locations of homes or particular types of people.
Public portal	Online software system used by Dorset Council, which allows people to apply to join the housing register, view and express a preference for home advertised as available to-let, receive notifications of decisions and more.

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Housing Allocation Consultation

Consultation response analysis report produced by the
Consultation and Engagement Team – Dorset Council

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	The Council has a public law duty to operate a Housing Allocation Scheme, like all local authorities. This scheme explains how to register for housing, how applications are assessed, and how properties are allocated. Dorset Council is required to periodically review its Housing Allocation Scheme. The current housing allocation scheme was introduced in 2021. The Council intends to amend its Housing Allocation Schemes, so that it continues to meet legal requirements and good practice standards. The proposed policy makes some changes that will affect households on the current housing register. The consultation was to hear the public's views to help shape the new policy.
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation ran from 02/06/25 to 24/08/25.
What consultation methods were used?	This consultation was available through an online survey and a paper version of the survey. The consultation was promoted widely through both the local press and social media. The consultation had a separate communications plan and consultation plan prepared beforehand.
How many responses were received overall?	713 overall responses were received
How representative is the response to the wider population?	53.7% of responses were from Housing Register applicants; 22.0% were members of the public; 16.8% were Social Housing tenants; Registered Providers and Parish/Town Councils were 1.0% respectively; 0.4% were from other organisations, 2.4% were Elected Members; 0.1% were voluntary organisations and 2.7% identified themselves as 'other'. There were significantly more female respondents (71.0%) than male (23.1%). 32.2% of the overall response were from people aged 60 and above, 39.0% from those aged between 40 and 59 with 24.8% 39 or below. 37.1% of respondents identified as having a disability.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and on Dorset Council's consultation platform
How will the results be used?	Results from this survey will be used to inform the next steps of the process.

Who has produced this report?	Consultation and Engagement Team, Dorset Council, September 2025
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Background

Local authorities are required under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a housing allocations policy and to ensure social housing allocated accordingly. In 2021 we adopted our first allocations policy. A review of that policy has been carried out along with a consultation, and the findings will inform the new policy due in 2026.

The Consultation

The consultation survey was aimed at Dorset Council residents including those on the current housing register. It asked for their thoughts on the proposed changes.

Analysis Method

Responses to closed questions were reviewed and summarised, with the source of each dataset clearly shown in the report's base notes. All consultation questions and their results are included. For open-ended comments, we looked for common themes where enough people responded to make patterns clear. These themes were grouped and reported based on how often each issue was mentioned.

Note: Figures may not always total precisely due to rounding.

Executive Summary

Dorset Council undertook a public consultation from 2 June to 24 August 2025 to gather feedback on proposed changes to its Housing Allocation Policy. The consultation aimed to ensure the policy remains legally compliant, reflects best practice, and continues to meet the needs of residents. A total of **713 responses** were received, with the majority (53.7%) from current Housing Register applicants.

Key Findings

Criteria Changes:

- **Residency Requirement:** 66% supported the requirement for applicants to be residents in Dorset by choice. However, support dropped to 55% for changing the qualifying period to two years, with higher opposition from the general public.

- **Close Family Connection:** 70.3% agreed with recognising close family ties in Dorset. Support for the two-year timeframe was lower (54.1%), again with higher disagreement among the public.
- **Employment-Based Eligibility:** 62.7% supported recognising employment of 16+ hours/week in Dorset. The two-year employment requirement received 57.6% support, with stronger backing from the public than tenants or applicants.

Removal of Criteria:

- **Criteria 4:** 41.2% supported its removal, but 31.6% were neutral, indicating uncertainty.
- **Older People with No Local Connection:** 74.6% supported removal, with strongest support from the public (88.4%).
- **Housing-Related Debt:** 53.6% supported removal, though 25.9% were neutral and 15.6% opposed.
- **Banding System:**
 - **New Band Names:** 49.2% supported the proposed names, with 29.4% neutral and 18.8% opposed.
 - **Banding Criteria:** 54.6% supported the proposed criteria, with Housing Register applicants showing the highest agreement (58.4%).
- **Special Groups:**
 - **Armed Forces Community:** 53% supported the proposed banding, though 28% were neutral.
 - **Care Leavers & Tenancy Capability:** 54.1% supported the proposed requirements, with 32.1% neutral.
- **Other Proposals:**
 - **Savings & Earnings Thresholds:** 63.3% supported the proposed criteria.
 - **Refusal of Nominations:** 74.2% supported allowing up to three refusals; 59.5% agreed with reducing banding for 12 months after three refusals.
 - **Quotas:** 50.4% supported inclusion of quotas, with 33.2% neutral.
 - **Overcrowding Assessment:** 55.9% supported using the bedroom standard over Local Housing Allowance criteria.
 - **Direct Lets for Homeless Households:** 65.4% supported this approach.

Conclusion

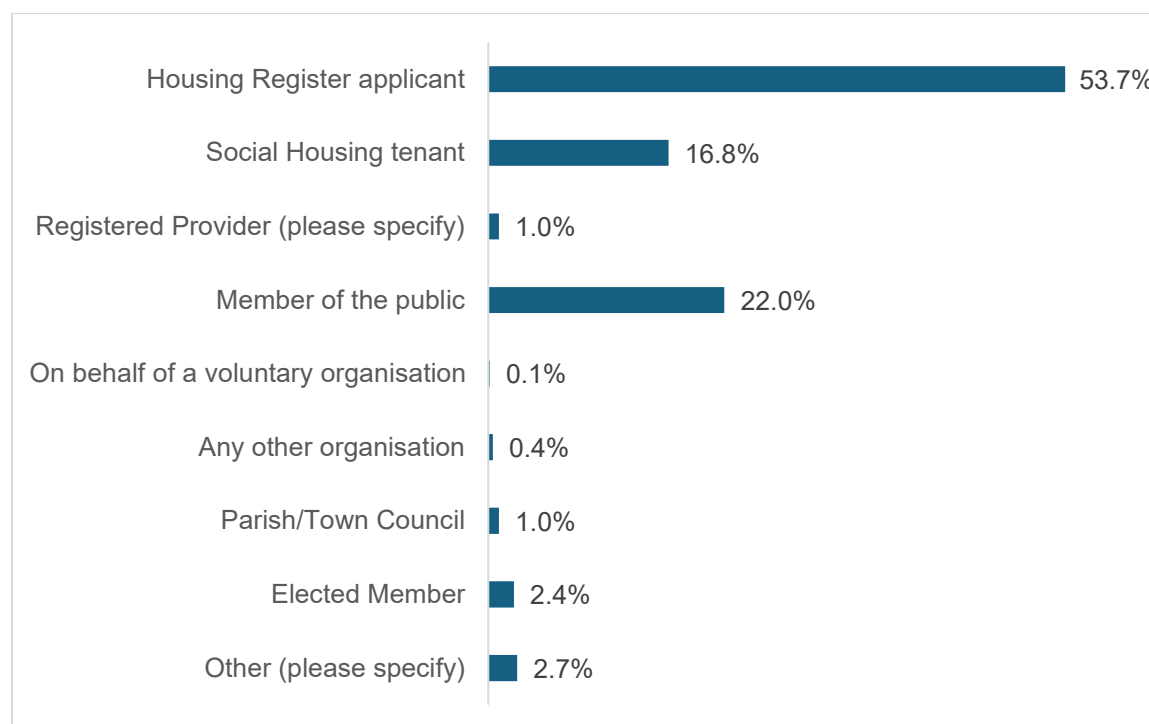
The consultation revealed broad support for many of the proposed changes, particularly around local connection, employment, and simplifying the banding

system. However, some proposals, especially those involving timeframes and removal of certain categories, produced mixed views or uncertainty.

Data Analysis

Q1. I am responding as a:

Base: n-710



Option	Total	Percent
Housing Register applicant	381	53.7%
Social Housing tenant	119	16.8%
Registered Provider (please specify)	7	1.0%
Member of the public	156	22.0%
On behalf of a voluntary organisation	1	0.1%
Any other organisation	3	0.4%
Parish/Town Council	7	1.0%
Elected Member	17	2.4%
Other (please specify)	19	2.7%

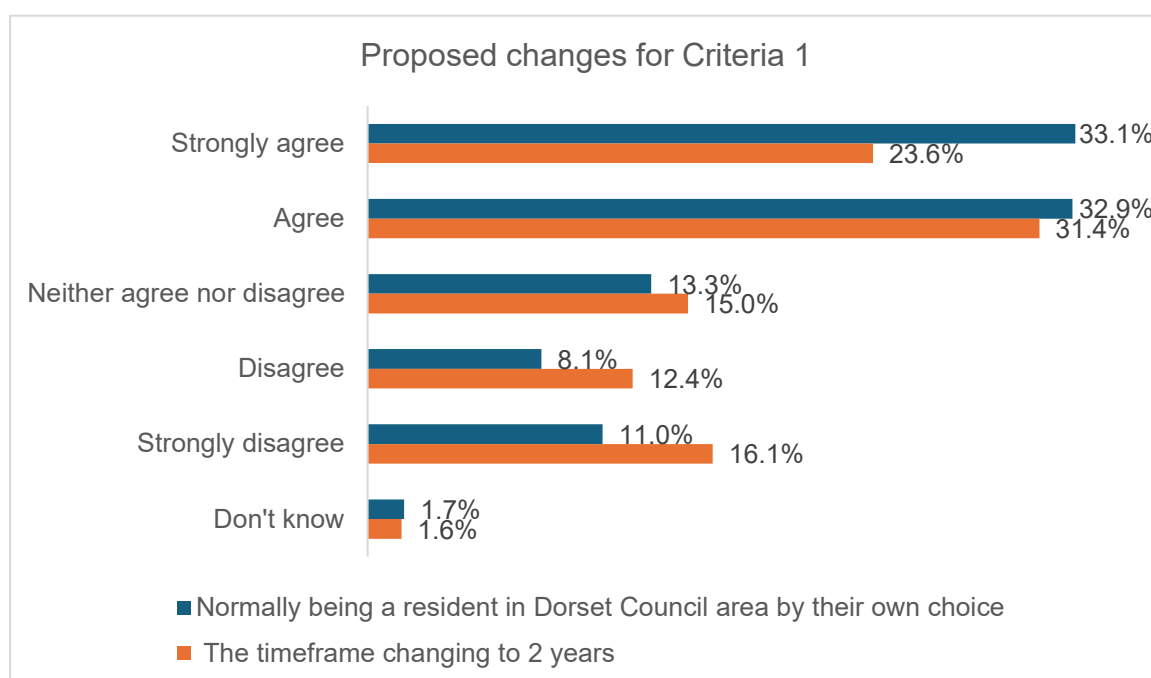
The majority of responses (53.7%) came from Housing Register applicants, indicating a strong interest or concern from individuals actively seeking housing.

Members of the public made up the second-largest group at 22.0%, followed by Social Housing tenants at 16.8%, suggesting broader community engagement beyond those directly involved in housing services. Smaller proportions of responses came from Elected Members (2.4%), Other (2.7%), and Registered Providers and Parish/Town Councils (each at 1.0%). Minimal input was received from voluntary organisations (0.1%) and other organisations (0.4%). Overall, the data suggests that the consultation was most effective in reaching individuals directly affected by housing issues.

Respondent type	Respondent details
Registered Provider	Abri
Registered Provider	Aster Group
Registered Provider	Supported Living
Registered Provider	Aster
Registered Provider	Abri
Registered Provider	Magna Housing
Registered Provider	BCHA
Other	Local person wants housing
Other	Awaiting rehousing from MAGNA
Other	Council house tenant, and currently on bidding site waiting for housing
Other	I'm on the housing register and also work in supported accommodation
Other	Home for Ukraine
Other	Mother of a housing register applicant
Other	I am a tenant but am waiting for a three bed property
Other	Planning consultant
Other	carer for social housing tenant
Other	Housing Register applicant and Social Housing Tenant
Other	Dorset Council
Other	DC employee
Other	Housing Professional
Other	Mother of a tenant
Other	Property landlady
Other	Carer of Social Housing Register Applicant
Other	Householder
Other	Local resident who also works within housing
Other	Professional supporting young people

Q2. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes for Criteria 1?

Base: Normally being a resident in Dorset Council area by their own choice (n -702),
The timeframe changing to 2 years (n-695)



Criteria 1: Normally being a resident in Dorset Council area by their own choice	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	232	33.1%
Agree	231	32.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	93	13.3%
Disagree	57	8.1%
Strongly disagree	77	11.0%
Don't know	12	1.7%

Criteria 1: The timeframe changing to 2 years	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	164	23.6%
Agree	218	31.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	104	15.0%
Disagree	86	12.4%
Strongly disagree	112	16.1%
Don't know	11	1.6%

The results for Criteria 1 indicate stronger support for the proposal that individuals should normally be residents in the Dorset Council area by their own choice, with 66% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. In contrast, the proposed change to extend the residency timeframe to two years received comparatively less support, with 55% expressing agreement.

Opposition to the two-year timeframe was notably higher, with 28.5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, compared to 19.1% for the residency criteria. These findings

indicate that while there is broad support for the principle of voluntary residency, the proposed change to the two-year timeframe appears to be more contentious and may benefit from clearer communication or further justification to enhance public understanding and acceptance.

Looking at different respondent types, females had a sizeable difference for the timeframe changing to 2 years proposal versus males. Respondents identifying as male had lower levels of agreement than both females and the overall data, at 46.2% (73), with higher levels of disagreement at 34.8% (55).

Female respondents however were slightly higher than the overall in terms of agreement, and lower for disagreement. 58.5% (288) expressed agreement, with 25.2% (124) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Looking across the respondent types in the tables below, support for residency by choice has a majority agreement across all groups. However, overall opposition is higher for members of the public by comparison.

The data for the proposed 2-year timeframe shows a sharp divide, especially among the public. This group had a disagreement rate of (42.1%) compared to social housing tenants (26.9%) and housing register applicants (22.8%).

Criteria 1: Normally being a resident in Dorset Council area by their own choice

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	67.0%	16.1%
Housing Register applicant	67.1%	15.5%
Member of the public	61.3%	29.7%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-374); Member of the public (n-155)

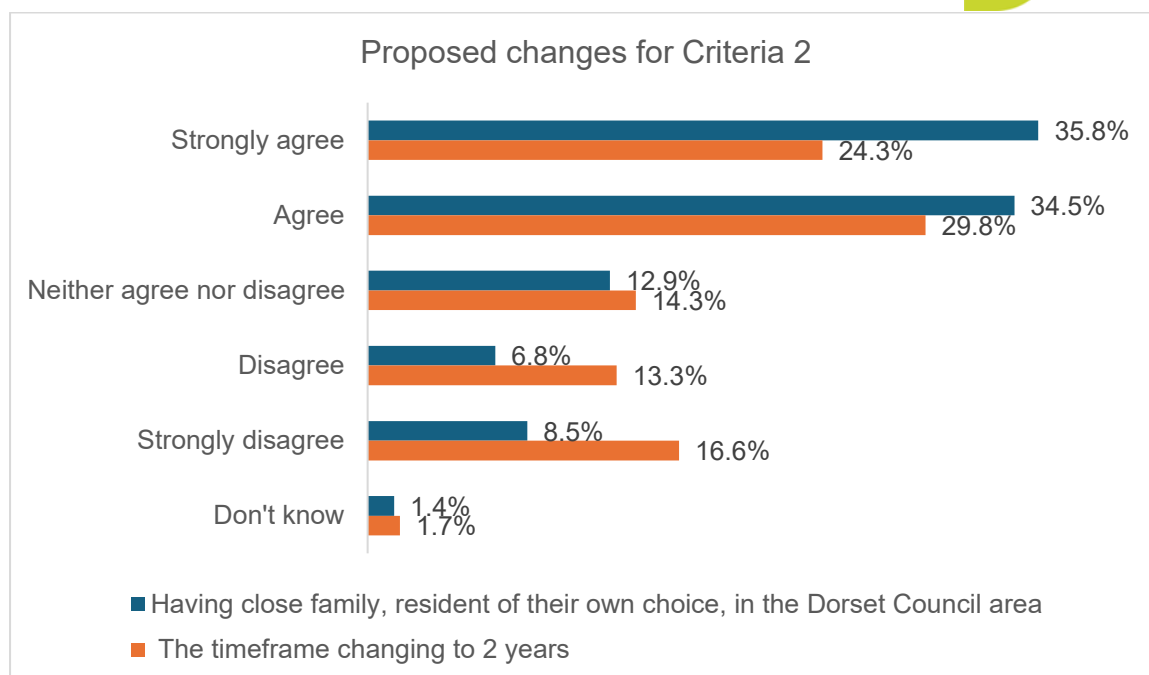
Criteria 1: The timeframe changing to 2 years

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	62.2%	26.9%
Housing Register applicant	55.0%	22.8%
Member of the public	48.0%	42.1%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-369); Member of the public (n-152)

Q3. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to Criteria 2?

Base: Having close family, resident of their own choice, in the Dorset Council area (n-704), The timeframe changing to 2 years (n-692)



Criteria 2: Having close family, resident of their own choice, in the Dorset Council area	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	252	35.8%
Agree	243	34.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	91	12.9%
Disagree	48	6.8%
Strongly disagree	60	8.5%
Don't know	10	1.4%

Criteria 2: The timeframe changing to 2 years	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	168	24.3%
Agree	206	29.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	99	14.3%
Disagree	92	13.3%
Strongly disagree	115	16.6%
Don't know	12	1.7%

Results for Criteria 2 indicate stronger support for the proposal that individuals should have close family living in the Dorset Council area by their own choice, with 70.3% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. In contrast, the proposed change to reduce the residency timeframe to two years received comparatively less support, with 54.1% expressing agreement.

Opposition to the two-year timeframe was notably higher, with 29.9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, compared to 15.3% for the close family residency criteria. These findings suggest that while there is broad support for recognising voluntary family connections within the area, the proposed reduction to a two-year timeframe is

more divisive and may require additional explanation or outreach to build broader understanding and support.

For the having close family proposal, there are again similar differences between female and male respondents. As before, female respondents had higher levels of agreement than the both the overall and when compared with males, at 73.4% (365). Conversely, although still showing a clear majority, males had lower levels of agreement at 67.5% (108).

This trend continues for the second proposal too. 57.1% (278) of female respondents expressed agreement for the change to the timeframe, opposed to just under half of males, at 49.4% (48). Males also had higher levels of disagreement compared to the overall data and females in addition to this, with 34.2% (54) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. 27.1% (132) of female respondents expressed disagreement.

The data in the tables below demonstrate that Social Housing tenants and Housing Register tenants show the strongest agreement with the close family criteria at 70.9% and 70.1% respectively. In contrast, Members of the public show the highest disagreement with the proposed 2-year timeframe (46.4%), significantly more than Social Housing tenants (28.0%) and Housing Register applicants (22.8%).

These differences suggest that the public is more open to stricter residency requirements, while tenants are more supportive of both criteria.

Criteria 2: Having close family, resident of their own choice, in the Dorset Council area

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	70.9%	17.1%
Housing Register applicant	70.1%	12.2%
Member of the public	68.2%	20.1%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-117); Housing Register applicant (n-378); Member of the public (n-154)

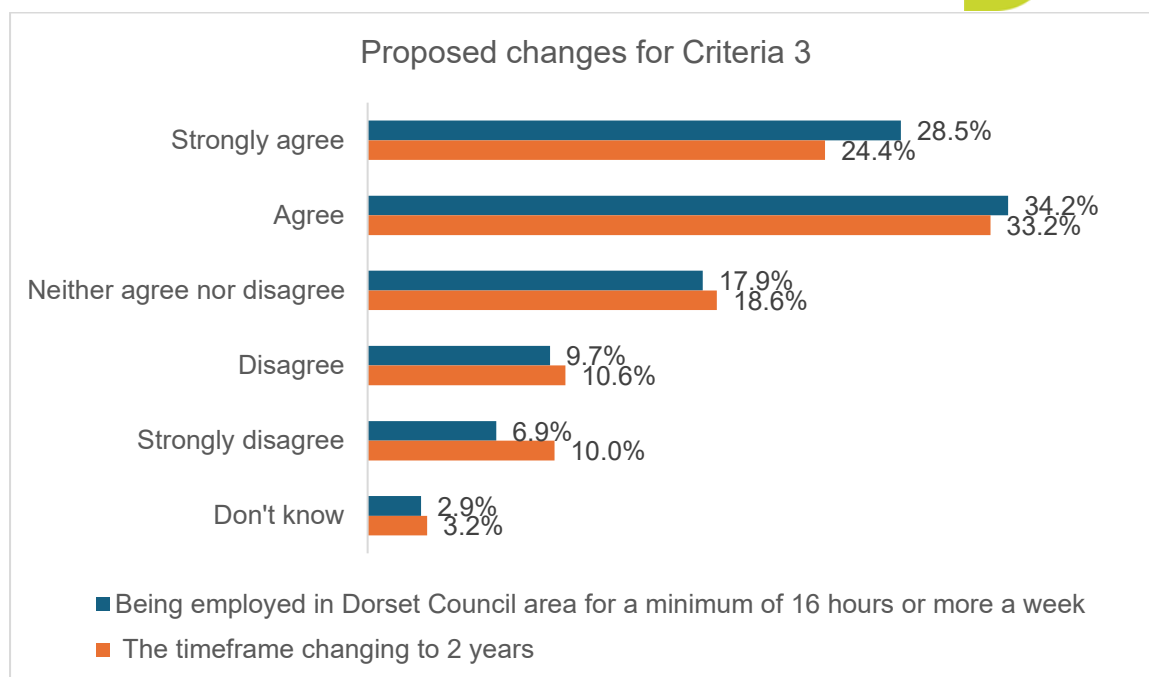
Criteria 2: The timeframe changing to 2 years

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	56.8%	28.0%
Housing Register applicant	57.1%	22.8%
Member of the public	44.4%	46.4%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-368); Member of the public (n-151)

Q4. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes for Criteria 3?

Base: Being employed in Dorset Council area for a minimum of 16 hours or more a week (n-699), The timeframe changing to 2 years (n-692)



Criteria 3: Being employed in Dorset Council area for a minimum of 16 hours or more a week	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	199	28.5%
Agree	239	34.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	125	17.9%
Disagree	68	9.7%
Strongly disagree	48	6.9%
Don't know	20	2.9%

Criteria 3: The timeframe changing to 2 years	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	169	24.4%
Agree	230	33.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	129	18.6%
Disagree	73	10.6%
Strongly disagree	69	10.0%
Don't know	22	3.2%

The findings for Criteria 3 show stronger support for the proposal that individuals working at least 16 hours per week in the Dorset Council area should be recognised, with 62.7% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement. In comparison, the proposal to introduce a two-year employment timeframe received slightly lower backing, with 57.6% in favour.

Levels of disagreement were more pronounced for the two-year timeframe, with 20.6% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, compared

to 16.6% for the current employment criteria. These results suggest that while the principle of acknowledging local employment is broadly accepted, the proposed timeframe adjustment has raised more concerns and may require additional context or clearer justification to strengthen public understanding and support.

Respondents that identified as disabled had lower levels of agreement compared to the overall for the being employed in the Dorset Council area proposal, with 55.2% (144) agreeing. A higher percentage also remained neutral, with 22.6% (59) neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposal.

Similarly, for the timeframe changing to 2 years, 50% (126) of respondents that identified as disabled agreed, which is lower than the overall levels of agreement. Again, a higher percentage responded neutrally, with 23.4% (59) answering so.

Members of the public show the highest agreement with both the employment criteria (71.1%) and the 2-year timeframe (63.8%). This is noticeably more than Social Housing tenants (59.0% and 55.3%) and Housing Register applicants (60.1% and 54.3%). Disagreement levels are similar across all groups for both aspects, but the public's stronger support for the employment-based criteria stands out as the key difference.

Criteria 3: Being employed in Dorset Council area for a minimum of 16 hours or more a week

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	59.0%	18.8%
Housing Register applicant	60.1%	15.2%
Member of the public	71.1%	18.4%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-117); Housing Register applicant (n-376); Member of the public (n-152)

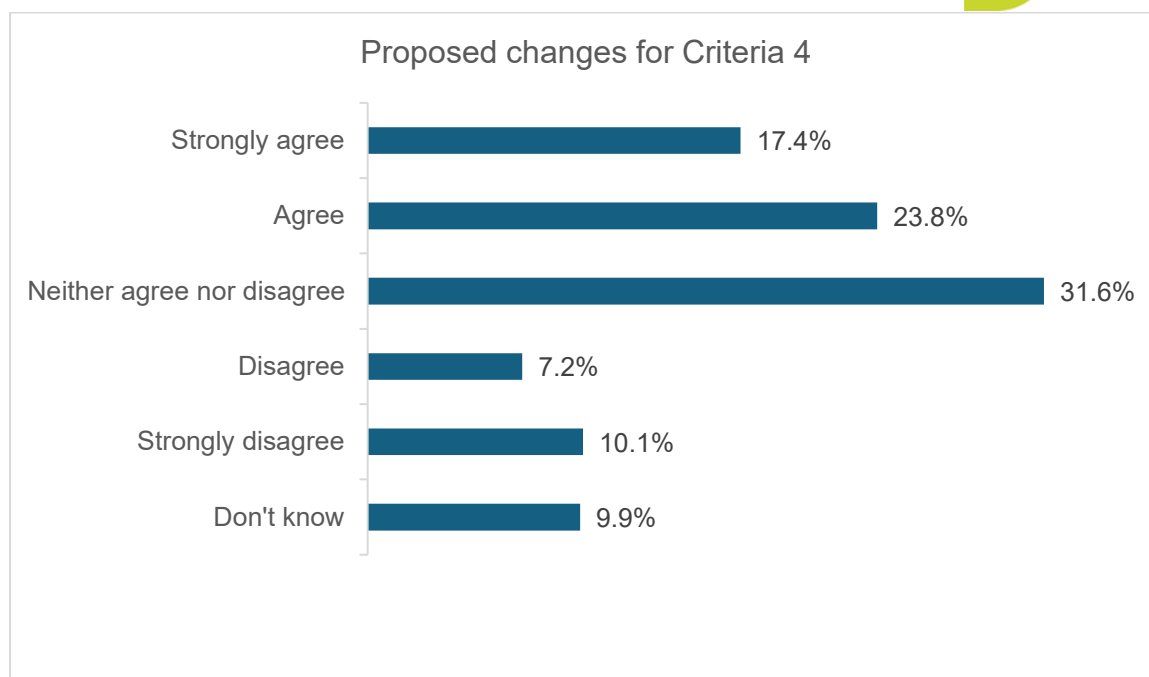
Criteria 3: The timeframe changing to 2 years

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	55.3%	21.1%
Housing Register applicant	54.3%	20.5%
Member of the public	63.8%	20.4%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-114); Housing Register applicant (n-370); Member of the public (n-152)

Q5. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposals for Criteria 4 to be removed?

Base: n-706



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	123	17.4%
Agree	168	23.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	223	31.6%
Disagree	51	7.2%
Strongly disagree	71	10.1%
Don't know	70	9.9%

The responses to the proposal to remove criteria 4 show a relatively mixed picture. A combined total of 41.2% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the removal, while 17.3% expressed disagreement. Notably, the largest proportion of respondents (31.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and a further 9.9% selected 'Don't know,' indicating a significant level of uncertainty or ambivalence. These results suggest that while there is some support for removing criteria 4, a substantial portion of respondents are either undecided or unsure. This may reflect a lack of clarity around the implications of the change and could benefit from further explanation or engagement.

Housing Register applicants show the highest agreement with the removal (43.7%) and the lowest disagreement (13.4%). In contrast, members of the public have a higher disagreement (22.9%) than both Social Housing tenants (19.3%) and particularly housing register applicants (13.4%), indicating more concern about removing this criterion.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
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Social Housing tenant	37.0%	19.3%
Housing Register applicant	43.7%	13.4%
Member of the public	37.9%	22.9%

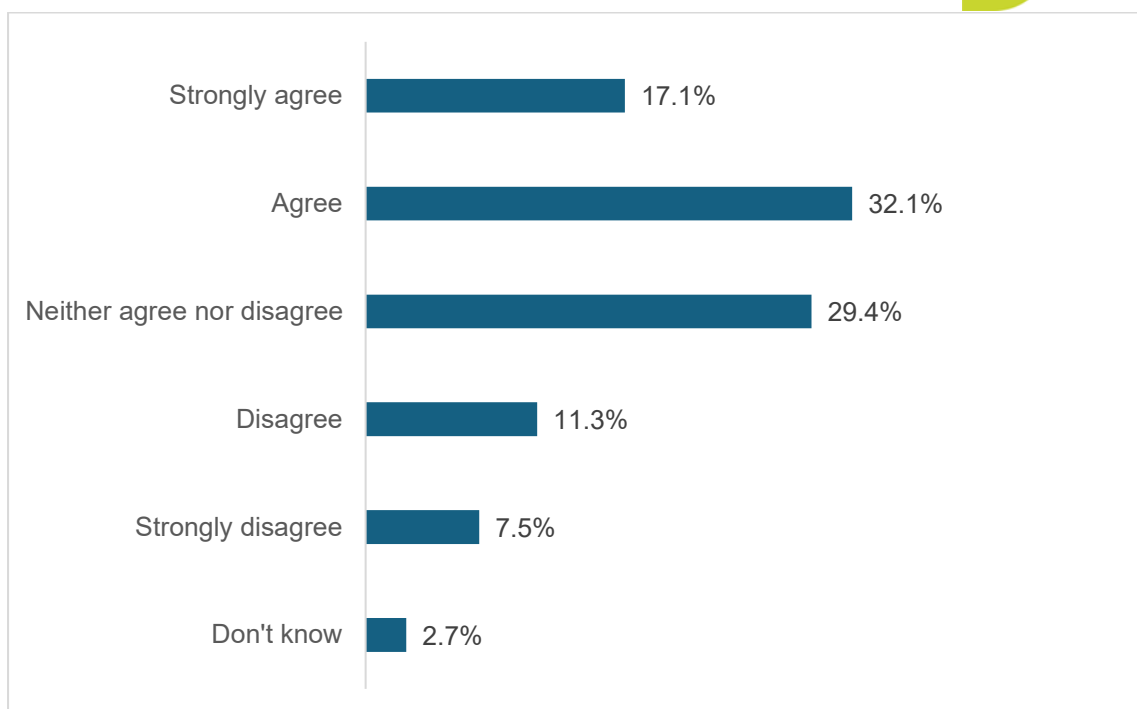
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-380); Member of the public (n-153)

Q6. If you disagree with any of the criteria proposals, please let us know which ones and why

Comment/theme	Total
Comments against proposals re changes to residency in area	101
Comments against changes to close family connection (5yrs to 2 yrs)	86
Local houses for local people / locals should take priority	69
Personal issues re allocation system / comments about personal situation	67
Comments against changes to increase from 1 to 2 yrs in paid employment	66
Comments relating s106 and location requirements	35
Retired / disability category / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion comments	34
Not enough suitable property / property allocation	29
Uncategorised statement	24
Comments supporting changes to close family connection (5yrs to 2 yrs)	20
General comments about accessibility of survey / wording of policy	11
Comments in support of change to residency in area	9
Comments re community and infrastructure needs	7
No change	5
Comments re cross border allocation	4
Comments supporting changes to increase from 1 to 2 yrs in paid employment	4
Need to give single people higher priority / more property availability	2

Q7. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed new band names above?

Base: n-708



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	121	17.1%
Agree	227	32.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	208	29.4%
Disagree	80	11.3%
Strongly disagree	53	7.5%
Don't know	19	2.7%

The responses to the proposed new band names show a moderate level of support, with just under half (49.2%) of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the changes. However, a significant proportion (29.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting a degree of ambivalence or uncertainty. Opposition was relatively low, with 18.8% expressing disagreement or strong disagreement, and 2.7% indicating they didn't know.

Members of the public show the lowest agreement (44.1%) and the highest disagreement (22.4%) compared to Social Housing tenants (51.3% agreement, 16.0% disagreement) and Housing Register applicants (51.2% agreement, 17.9% disagreement), indicating greater scepticism among the public toward the proposed naming changes.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	51.3%	16.0%
Housing Register applicant	51.2%	17.9%
Member of the public	44.1%	22.4%

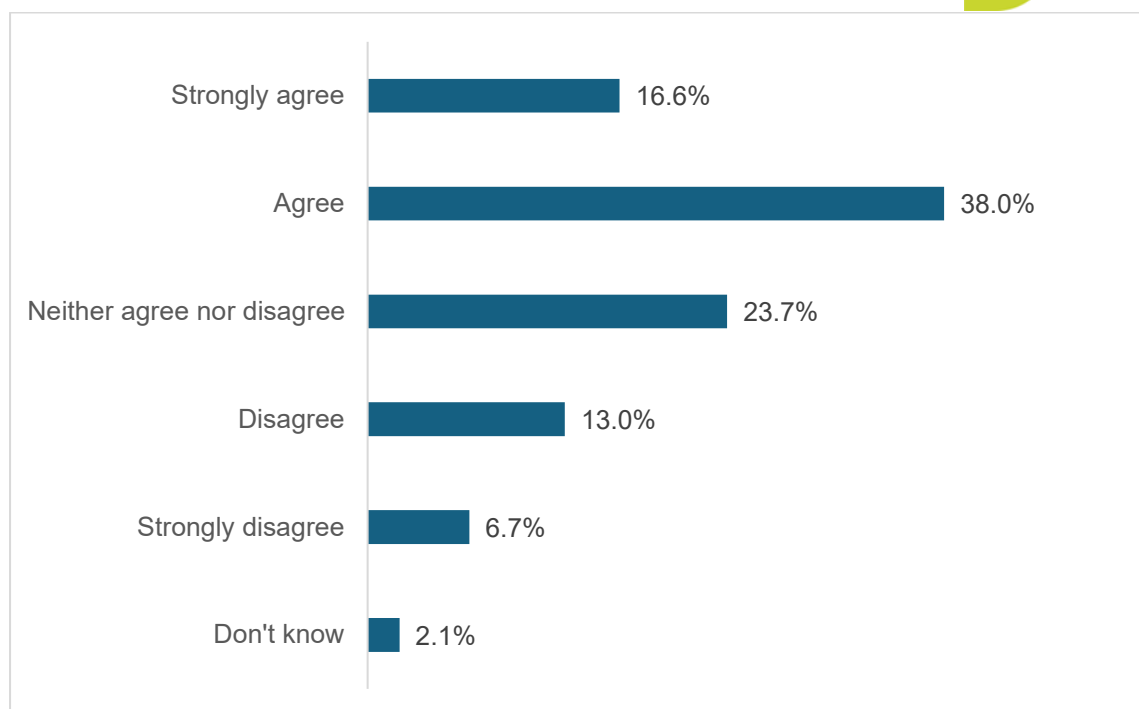
Base: Social Housing tenant (n=119); Housing Register applicant (n=381); Member of the public (n=152)

Q8. If you disagree with specific parts of the banding names, please specify which parts you do not agree with and explain your reasons

Comment/theme	Total
It doesn't matter/makes no difference	75
I don't understand the language used	38
Banding system isn't fair	34
Unmet' or 'other' seems disrespectful	22
I don't agree with the banding I am on	19
Priority level is above urgent need	10
Prioritise longer waits	9
Prioritise local people/UK citizens	8
Depends on the criteria for each band	6
You never get moved	5
I like the new criteria	3
Prioritise those who are employed	3
Need more affordable social housing	3
Observe individual cases	3
Band A should be medical and homelessness	3
Replace priority with 'immediate'	1
Basic human rights is an issue	1
Make it easier to downsize or house swap	1
Armed forces should not take priority	1
We need a sub banding system	1
Current banding easier to understand	1

Q9. How much do you agree or disagree with the banding criteria proposed?

Base: n-706



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	117	16.6%
Agree	268	38.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	167	23.7%
Disagree	92	13.0%
Strongly disagree	47	6.7%
Don't know	15	2.1%

The proposal for the new banding criteria received a fair level of support, with an overall agreement of 54.6%. However, 23.7% neither agreed nor disagreed, and a further 2.1% selected 'Don't know,' suggesting that a notable portion of respondents may not feel strongly about the changes or may lack sufficient information to form an opinion.

Although not the majority view, 19.7% of respondents did express some level of opposition. These findings suggest that although the proposed criteria are broadly supported, a notable proportion of respondents remain uncertain or undecided about the changes.

Comparing against different respondents, there was a slight difference for those identifying as male. 60.9% (98) of males either agreed or strongly agreed, showing a higher level of support for the proposed banding criteria than the overall figures. Responses from females were closely aligned to the overall figures.

Housing Register applicants show the highest agreement (58.4%) and lowest disagreement (17.1%), indicating stronger support for the proposed criteria. In

contrast, Social Housing tenants (47.9% agreement, 25.2% disagreement) and members of the public (47.4% agreement, 24.3% disagreement) are more divided, with notably higher levels of disagreement.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	47.9%	25.2%
Housing Register applicant	58.4%	17.1%
Member of the public	47.4%	24.3%

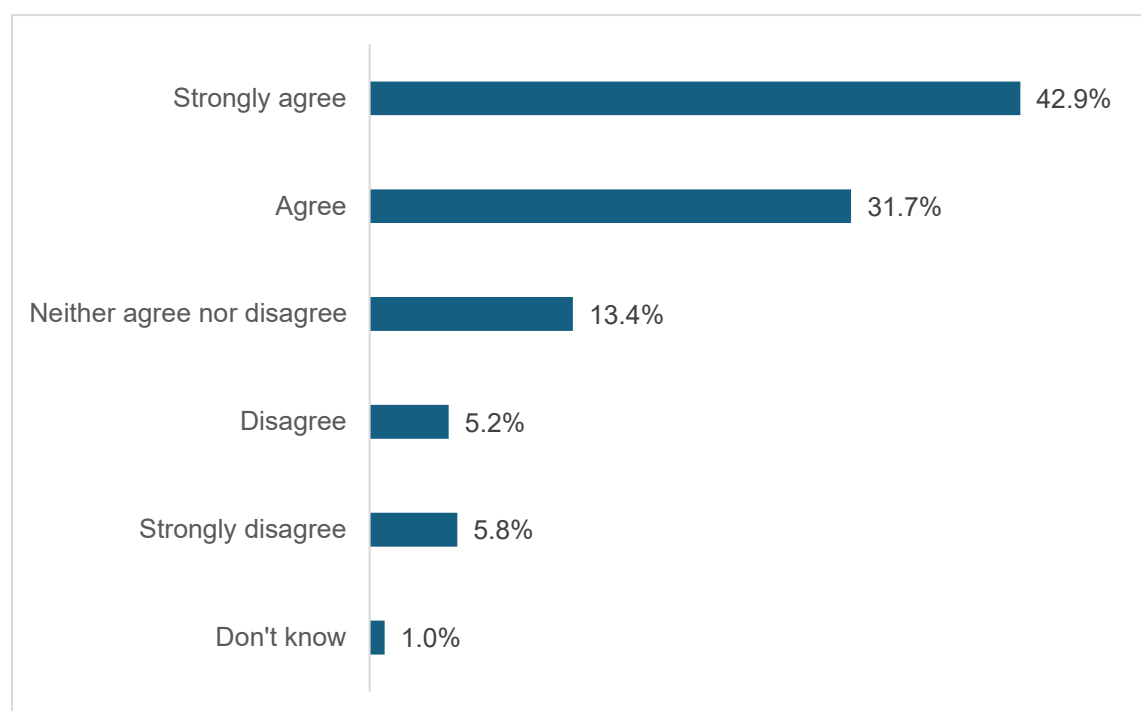
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-380); Member of the public (n-152)

Q10. If you disagree with the banding criteria proposed, let us know why here:

Comment/theme	Total
Disagree with the grouping/banding	63
Other 'priority group' suggestions	44
Relates to personal circumstances	28
Should prioritise UK/local residents	21
Clarify definition/wording	18
Consider medical needs in banding	15
Free up bigger homes when household numbers have reduced	14
Consider disability in banding	9
Agree with proposals	7
Consider length of time on housing list	7
Need detail on 'how' these are changing	5
Groups missing from categories	5
System could be open to abuse	5
Uncategorised comment	5
It is confusing	5
Changing the banding/wording will not change the outcome	4
System is not fair	4
Recognise the varying age/abilities of pensioners	2
Refers to previous answer	2
Single people overlooked	2
People paying unaffordable private rental should be included	2
It is easier to understand	2
Previous banding was better	1
Overcrowding should be 1 or more bedrooms	1
Age should be a consideration	1
Only band 1 will be housed	1
Protections for tenants	1
Should identify affordable housing ownership	1
Consider timescales around age and room sharing	1

Q11. How much do you agree or disagree with removing the category 'Older people with no Local Connection'?

Base: n-709



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	304	42.9%
Agree	225	31.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	95	13.4%
Disagree	37	5.2%
Strongly disagree	41	5.8%
Don't know	7	1.0%

The proposal to remove the category 'Older people with no Local Connection' received strong support, with an overall agreement of 74.6%. Only 11% expressed disagreement, while 13.4% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 1.0% selected 'Don't know.'

These results suggest a clear majority in favour of the removal, with relatively low levels of disagreement or uncertainty. The strength of support may reflect a shared view that local connection should be a consistent requirement across all applicant groups.

Members of the public show the strongest support for removal of 'older people with no local connection' category (88.4%) and the lowest disagreement (7.7%), followed by Social Housing tenants (79.8% agreement). Housing Register applicants are

slightly less supportive (67.3%) and show slightly higher disagreement (12.7%), marking them as the most cautious group on this proposal.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	79.8%	10.9%
Housing Register applicant	67.3%	12.7%
Member of the public	88.4%	7.7%

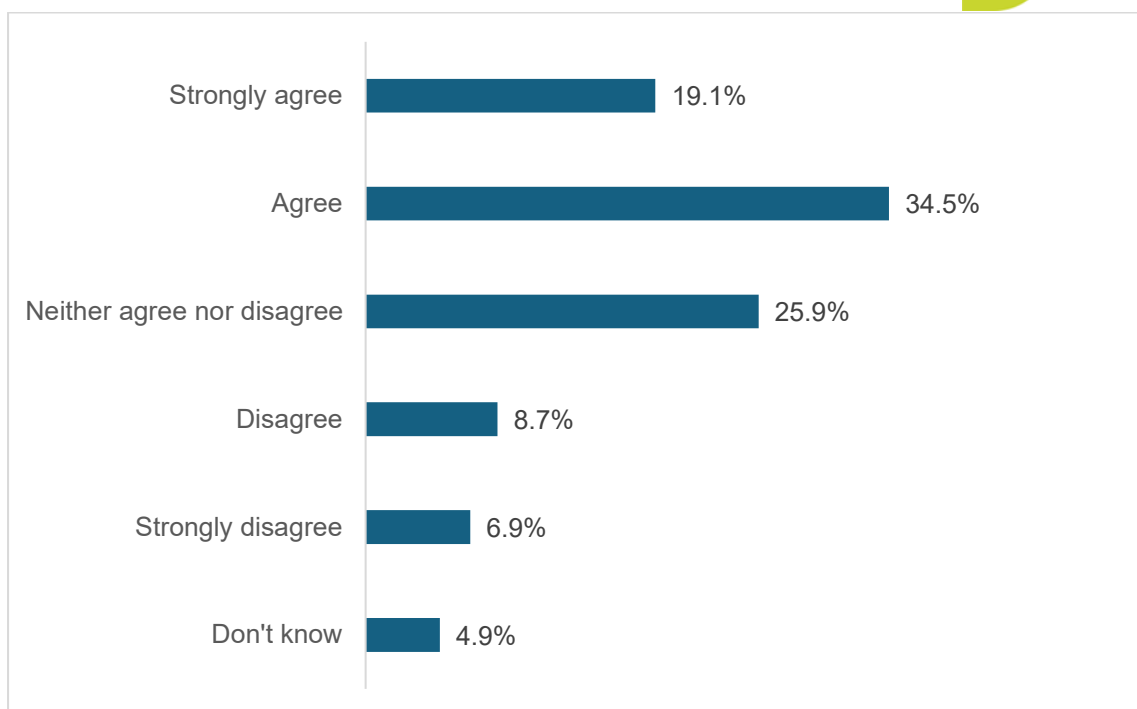
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-379); Member of the public (n-155)

Q11. Disagree comments - Removing older persons housing no local connection

Comment/theme	Total
Locals should have first priority - "born and bred" / lived here for years	19
Need to move closer to family for support	11
Dorset 'local' but have 'no local connection' - either no family or not worked in DC area	11
Older people need support / are vulnerable / social care is expensive / ageing population	11
Support the removal of the 'Older Persons housing with no local connection'	10
Should be able to live where you want in the UK / able to swap	10
Comments relating to personal situation	10
Too much accommodation for older people, not enough for families	10
Disagree - would be unable to retire to the south coast /near the sea	8
Comment not categorised	7
Unclear about what 'local connection' means	6
Properties reserved for older people should not be on open market	6
Should be able to move within the DC area	4
Need to increase housing stock suitable for single AND older people	4
Concern for homeless older people	3
Properties reserved for older people could be used for general use	3
Difficult for older people to downsize to smaller/suitable property	2
Wording of changes don't help	2
Look at individual on case-by-case basis	1

Q12. How much do you agree or disagree with removing the category of 'housing related debt'?

Base: n-711



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	136	19.1%
Agree	245	34.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	184	25.9%
Disagree	62	8.7%
Strongly disagree	49	6.9%
Don't know	35	4.9%

The proposal to remove the category 'Housing-related debt' received moderate support, with an overall agreement of 53.6%. However, 25.9% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 4.9% selected 'Don't know,' indicating a notable level of uncertainty or ambivalence.

Overall disagreement was relatively limited at 15.6%. These results suggest that while the proposal is generally supported, the significant proportion of neutral and unsure responses may reflect a need for greater clarity around the implications of removing this category.

Housing Register applicants show the highest agreement (55.9%) and the lowest disagreement (12.9%), indicating strong support for removal. In contrast, members of the public show similar agreement to Social Housing tenants (49.0% vs. 50.4%) but have a much higher disagreement (23.9%), suggesting greater concern among the public about removing this category.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	50.4%	14.3%
Housing Register applicant	55.9%	12.9%

Member of the public	49.0%	23.9%
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Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-381); Member of the public (n-155)

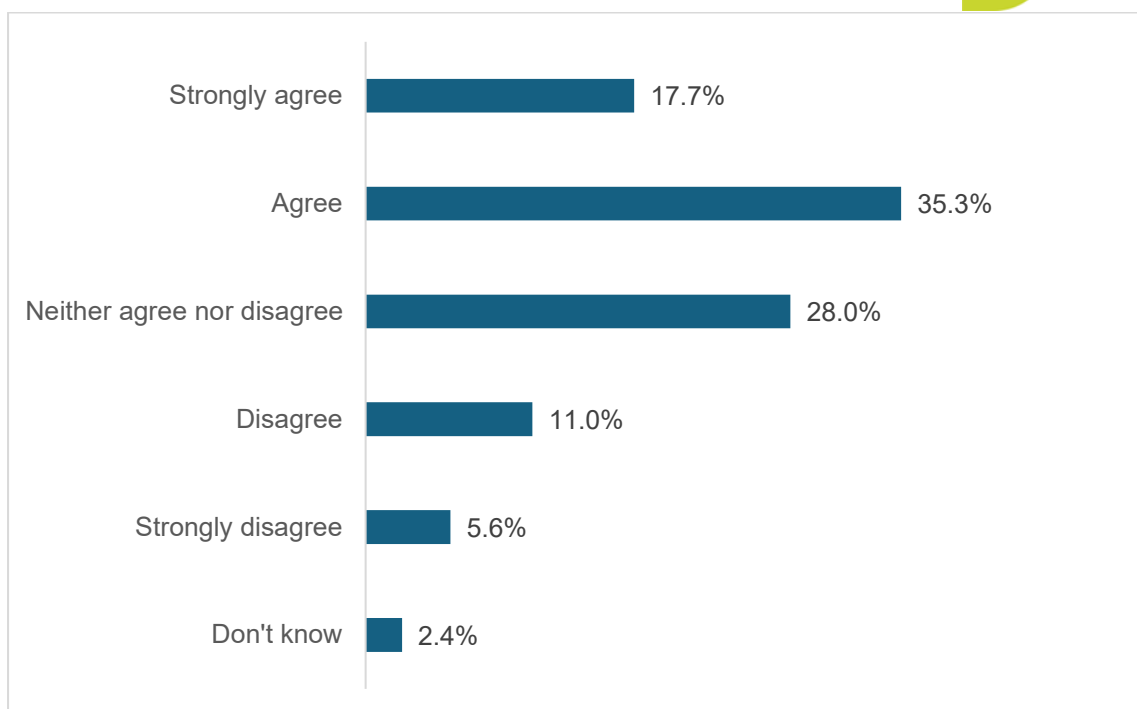
Q13. Removal of housing related debt- disagree comments

Comment/theme	Total
Perceived unfairness	25
Based on individual circumstances - consider the reasons	22
People should learn to budget/ manage debt	16
An 'easy way out' perpetuates the pattern	15
Should be based on people wilfully trying to improve their circumstances	12
Money/rent/debt should be prioritised before re-housing	8
They need help and support	7
Further detail/definition required	6
Non-payment shouldn't be rewarded	5
Personal circumstances comments	4
The state makes it too easy	4
There should be repercussions	3
People should have responsibility for what they owe	3
Don't know enough to comment	2
People without debt should have priority	2
Other	2
Creative ways to pay off the debt	1
Do not disagree - debt creates barriers	1
It will affect our communities negatively	1
No apparent change	1
Financial assessment should be included	1
People who can't pay, won't pay	1
It could make people more vulnerable	1
Moving could help/improve their financial situation	1

Q14. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed banding criteria?

Armed Forces Community

Base: n-711



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	126	17.7%
Agree	251	35.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	199	28.0%
Disagree	78	11.0%
Strongly disagree	40	5.6%
Don't know	17	2.4%

The proposed banding criteria for the Armed Forces Community received a fair level of support, with over half of respondents (53%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2.4% selected 'Don't know,' indicating a degree of uncertainty or lack of strong opinion among a notable portion of respondents.

A smaller proportion of respondents (16.6%) expressed disagreement with the proposal. These findings suggest that while the criteria are generally viewed positively, the relatively high proportion of neutral responses may point to a need for further clarification or awareness around how the changes would affect this group.

Members of the public show the highest agreement (60.0%), noticeably more supportive than Social Housing tenants (47.9%) and Housing Register applicants (50.7%). Social Housing tenants also show the highest disagreement (22.7%), suggesting more reservations within that group compared to others.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	47.9%	22.7%
Housing Register applicant	50.7%	13.1%

Member of the public	60.0%	18.7%
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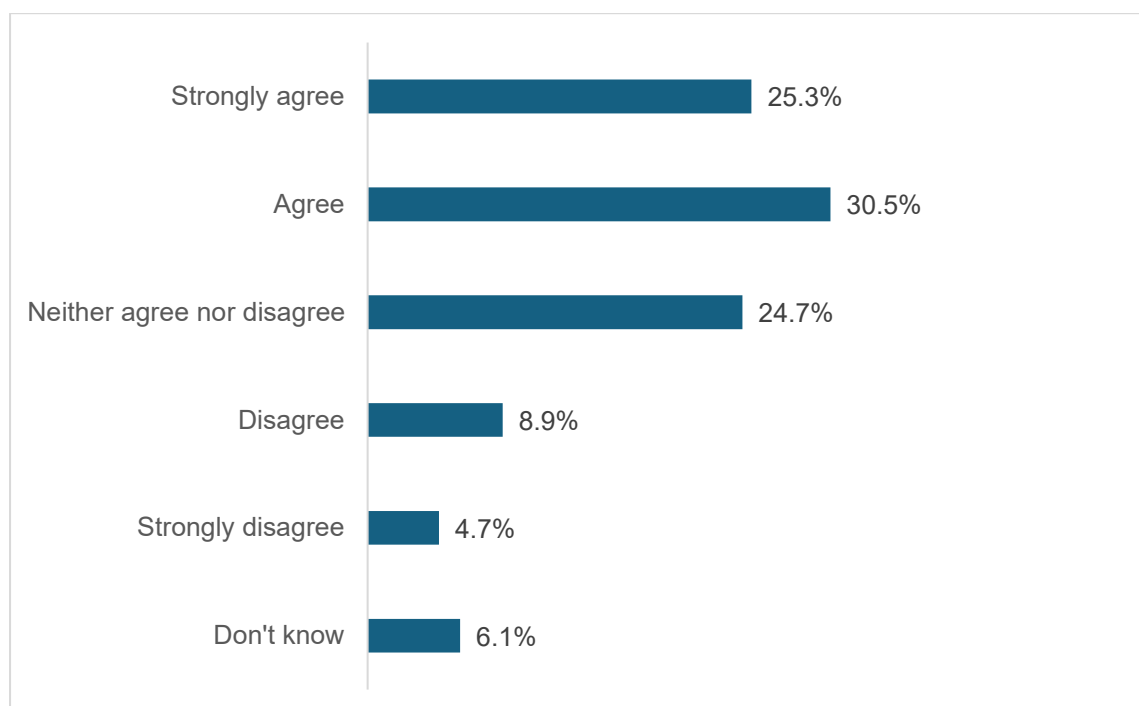
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-381); Member of the public (n-155)

Q15. Disagree - Armed Forces Community

Comment/theme	Total
Placed on list according to need like everyone else / case by case basis/ Shouldn't have preference	28
Don't agree with adult family members	17
Should be higher band	13
MOD should help more / housing via work / not a council issue	13
Not fair / don't agree	13
Other comments	7
Only band 3 if local connection (family or work)	6
Agree with the current banding (3)	5
Should be lower band (4)	4
Comments relating to personal situation	4
Should be housed in county they originated from pre-armed forces	3
Should be for all 'blue light' personnel / why just armed forces	3
Only UK residents	1

Q16. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to apply all qualification criteria to those with an accepted homeless duty?

Base: n-709



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	179	25.3%
Agree	216	30.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	175	24.7%
Disagree	63	8.9%
Strongly disagree	33	4.7%
Don't know	43	6.1%

A majority of respondents (55.8%) expressed support for applying all qualification criteria to individuals with an accepted homeless duty. Just under a quarter (24.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6.1% selected 'Don't know,' indicating that a significant portion of respondents may be uncertain or undecided about the implications of the change.

A smaller share of respondents (13.6%) expressed disagreement with the proposal. These findings suggest that while the proposal is generally supported, the level of neutrality and uncertainty may point to a need for clearer explanation of how the criteria would be applied in practice.

Social Housing tenants (59.7%) and Housing Register applicants (56.3%) show stronger agreement than members of the public (49.4%), who also show the highest disagreement (19.5%). This suggests the public is more cautious about applying full qualification criteria to those with a homeless duty.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	59.7%	15.1%
Housing Register applicant	56.3%	10.5%
Member of the public	49.4%	19.5%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-380); Member of the public (n-154)

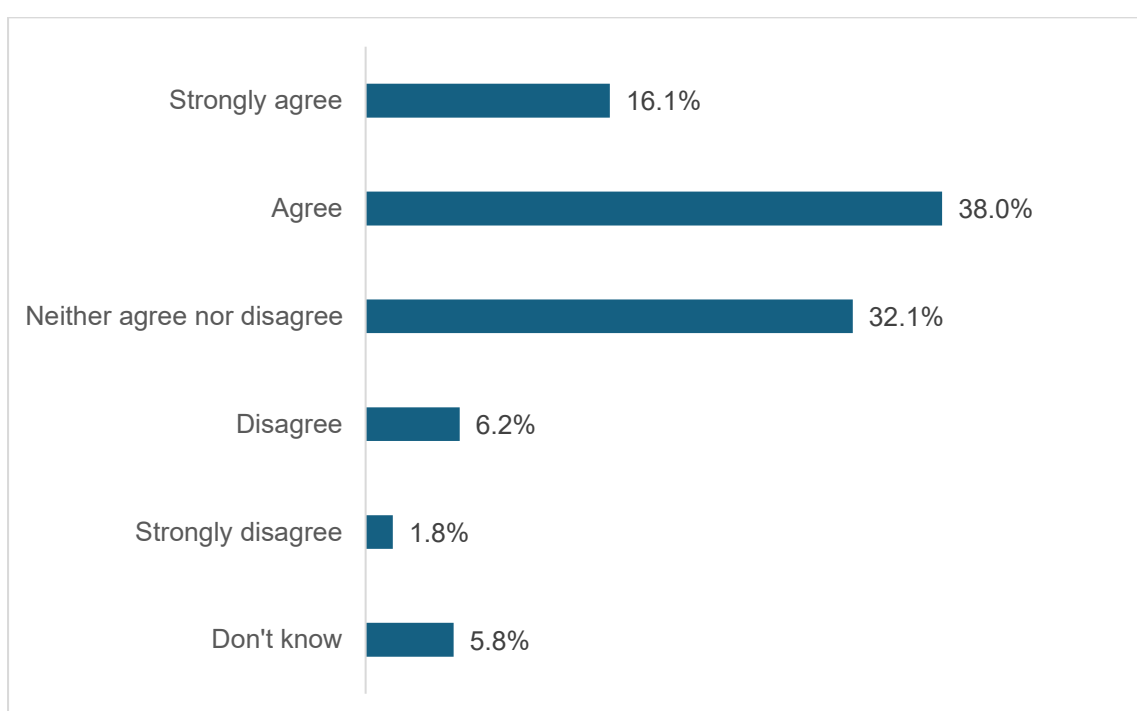
Q17. Disagree - Unacceptable Behaviour

Comment/theme	Total
Rent arrears on case by case / genuine reasons e.g. illness, cost of living / support re anti-social behaviour	33
Don't understand wording / proposal	23
Unacceptable behaviour shouldn't be tolerated / taken more seriously – anti-social behaviour affects neighbours - needs better policing	20
Don't agree with rent arrears - should be separate from noise / abuse	16
Homeless - not their fault, make difficult situation worse	13
Uncategorised comment	12
Rent arrears are unacceptable / pay on time / prioritise	11
Unacceptable behaviour should apply to everyone	9

Anti-social behaviour - respect property or should be moved out of area / not entitled to social housing	9
Should be at bottom of list / banned from social housing / penalty in allocation	9
Personal situation comment	6
Need more supported housing	2
Council has a responsibility for everyone	1

Q18. How much do you agree or disagree with the requirements proposed above for care leavers and for anyone that is incapable of holding a tenancy?

Base: n-708



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	114	16.1%
Agree	269	38.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	227	32.1%
Disagree	44	6.2%
Strongly disagree	13	1.8%
Don't know	41	5.8%

The proposal received a fair level of support, with an overall agreement of 54.1%. Nearly a third of respondents (32.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5.8% selected 'Don't know,' suggesting that many respondents may be uncertain or lack strong views on the proposed changes.

Although not widespread, 8% of respondents did express disagreement. While the proposal was met with overall support, the significant number of neutral responses may point to a lack of clarity regarding how it would be implemented.

Members of the public show the highest agreement (57.4%) and the lowest disagreement (5.8%), indicating strong support and minimal concern. Housing Register applicants (51.9%) and Social Housing tenants (52.1%) also show support, but with higher disagreement levels (8.2% and 10.9% respectively) highlighting that the public is notably more unified in support compared to the other groups

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	52.1%	10.9%
Housing Register applicant	51.9%	8.2%
Member of the public	57.4%	5.8%

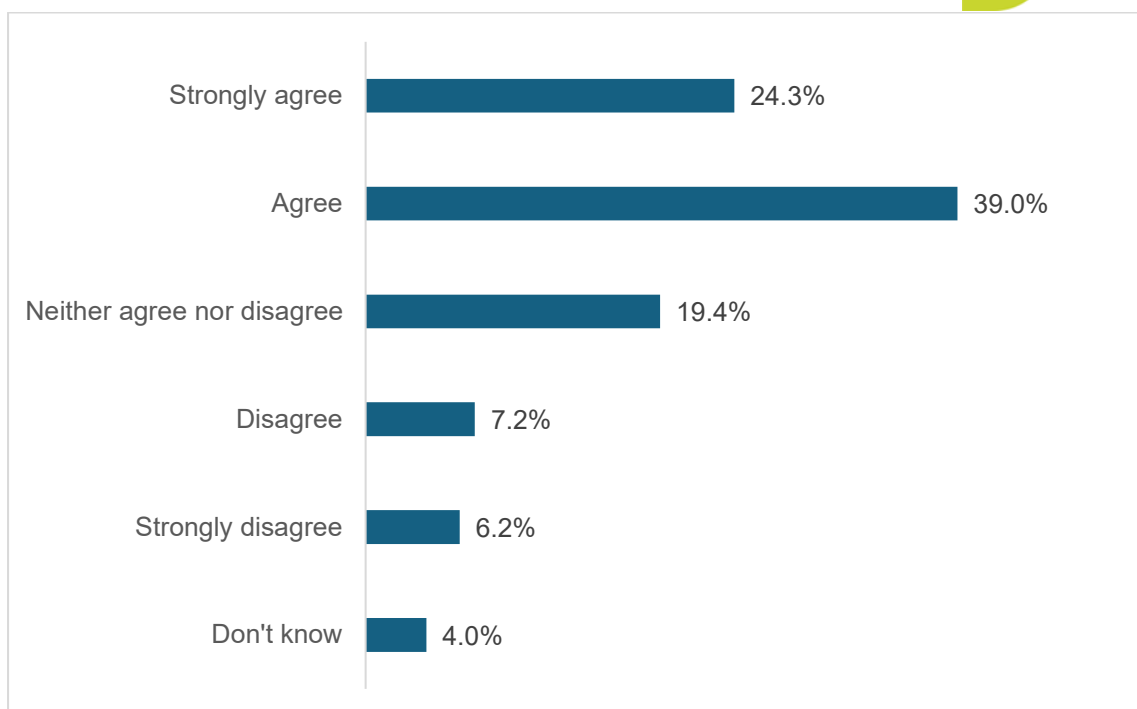
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-119); Housing Register applicant (n-378); Member of the public (n-155)

Q19. Guarantor requirements - disagree comments

Comment/theme	Total
Give people support when they are unable to reach out	10
Care leavers should be priority	9
Not everyone can get a guarantor	9
Young people need more than a guarantor	9
Treat all fairly	4
Not all care leavers can live independently	4
Guarantors are necessary	3
This will create issues	3
Depends on suitability of guarantor	2
Guarantors not necessary	2
Decisions are necessary	1
All rent needs to be guaranteed	1
All cases should be assessed individually	1
Don't take credit score into account	1
Alternative options needed	1
Guarantor in place before joining the register	1

Q20. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed savings and earning criteria?

Base: n-708



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	172	24.3%
Agree	276	39.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	137	19.4%
Disagree	51	7.2%
Strongly disagree	44	6.2%
Don't know	28	4.0%

The proposal to introduce savings and earning criteria received a good level of support, with 63.3% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, 19.4% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 4.0% selected 'Don't know,' suggesting that some respondents may not have formed a clear opinion on the proposal.

Disagreement was relatively limited, with 13.4% expressing opposition. Although the proposal was positively received, the high proportion of neutral responses may signal that its practical implications are not yet fully understood.

Social Housing tenants show the highest agreement (67.5%), followed by members of the public (63.2%) and Housing Register applicants (61.3%). However, disagreement levels vary more noticeably: members of the public show the highest disagreement (18.1%), compared to Social Housing tenants (15.4%) and Housing Register applicants, who show the lowest disagreement (10.0%). This suggests that while support is generally strong, the public expressed more concern about the criteria than those directly engaged with housing services.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	67.5%	15.4%

Housing Register applicant	61.3%	10.0%
Member of the public	63.2%	18.1%

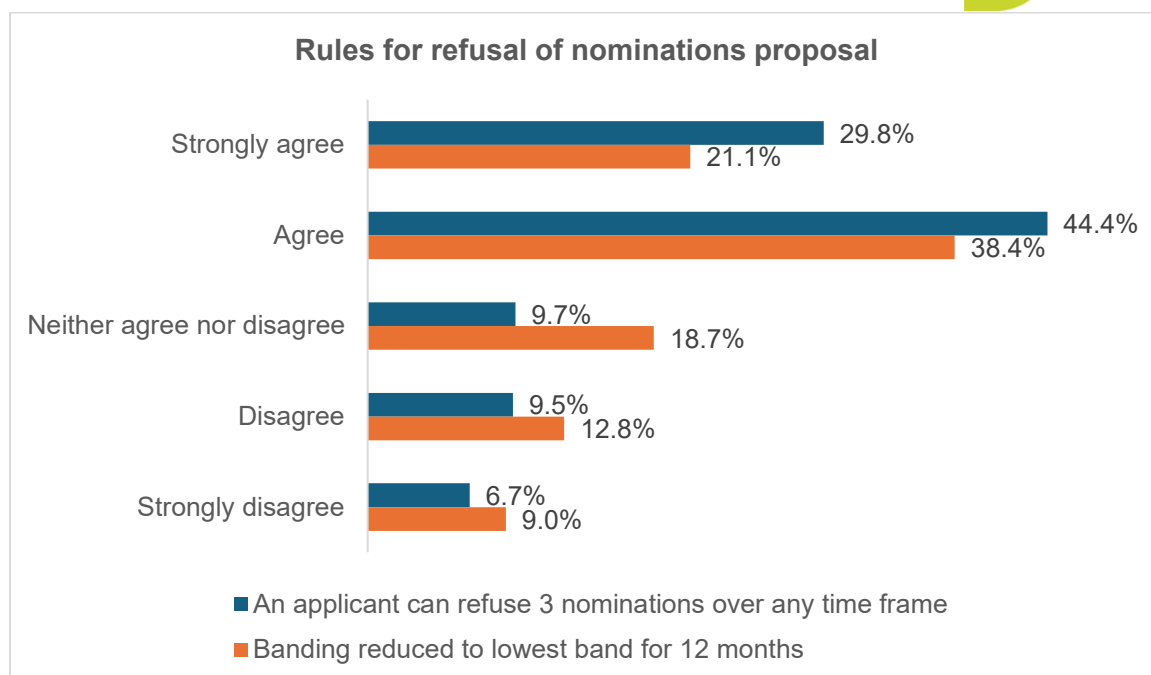
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-117); Housing Register applicant (n-380); Member of the public (n-155)

Q21. Disagree - savings and earning criteria

Comment/theme	Total
£16k is too low given current housing market / cost of living	22
60K salary cap is too high	20
Uncategorised comment	19
60k salary should be able to rent on private market	11
Social housing should be for those in need e.g. disability / on small income	10
Comments related to personal circumstances	10
Savings cap too low - means can't save deposit for own property /mortgage	9
£16k savings is too high	9
Not eligible if own property	7
Should not include pensioners/pensions	6
Income and savings should be checked for current social housing tenants every 5 years	4
Should include assets like cars, motorhomes etc / include deprivation clause	4
Criteria should remain the same	2

Q22. How much do you agree or disagree with the rules for refusal of nominations proposal?

Base: An applicant can refuse 3 nominations over any time frame (n-705), Banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months (n-631)



An applicant can refuse 3 nominations over any time frame	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	210	29.8%
Agree	313	44.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	68	9.7%
Disagree	67	9.5%
Strongly disagree	47	6.7%

Banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	133	21.1%
Agree	242	38.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	118	18.7%
Disagree	81	12.8%
Strongly disagree	57	9.0%

Note: Due to a minor error, this question was slightly different from others in that it did not include a 'Don't know' answer option. While this was not intentional, the question was not set as mandatory, allowing respondents to skip it if they chose. Given this flexibility, the absence of a 'Don't know' option is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the overall results.

The proposal allowing applicants to refuse up to three nominations over any time frame received strong support, with 74.2% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. In comparison, the proposal to reduce banding to the lowest level for 12 months following three refusals was less popular, with 59.5% expressing agreement.

Neutral responses were notably higher for the banding reduction proposal (18.7%) than for the nomination refusal rule (9.7%), suggesting greater uncertainty or hesitation about the consequences of refusal. Similarly, 21.8% of respondents expressed disagreement with the banding reduction, compared to 16.2% for the refusal rule. Although the option to refuse nominations is well-supported, the idea of reducing banding for doing so seems to be met with greater hesitation.

When looking at the data for respondents who identified as disabled, there was a slight disparity when compared to the overall response for the proposal allowing applicants to refuse up to 3 nominations. 79.3% (207) either agreed or strongly agreed, showing a slightly higher level of support. In turn, the level of disagreement for the proposal was lower too, with 12.6% (33) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

For the first criteria (refusing 3 nominations), Housing Register applicants show the highest agreement (77.4%) and lowest disagreement (11.6%), while members of the public show lower agreement (67.3%) and the highest disagreement (26.1%), indicating more concern about this rule.

For the second criteria (banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months), members of the public show the highest agreement (61.0%), but disagreement remains high across all groups, especially among Social Housing tenants (25.9%) and the public (25.5%) suggesting mixed views on the penalty aspect.

First criteria: An applicant can refuse 3 nominations over any time frame

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	75.4%	15.3%
Housing Register applicant	77.4%	11.6%
Member of the public	67.3%	26.1%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-380); Member of the public (n-153)

Second criteria: Banding reduced to lowest band for 12 months

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	54.6%	25.9%
Housing Register applicant	58.9%	19.9%
Member of the public	61.0%	25.5%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-108); Housing Register applicant (n-331); Member of the public (n-141)

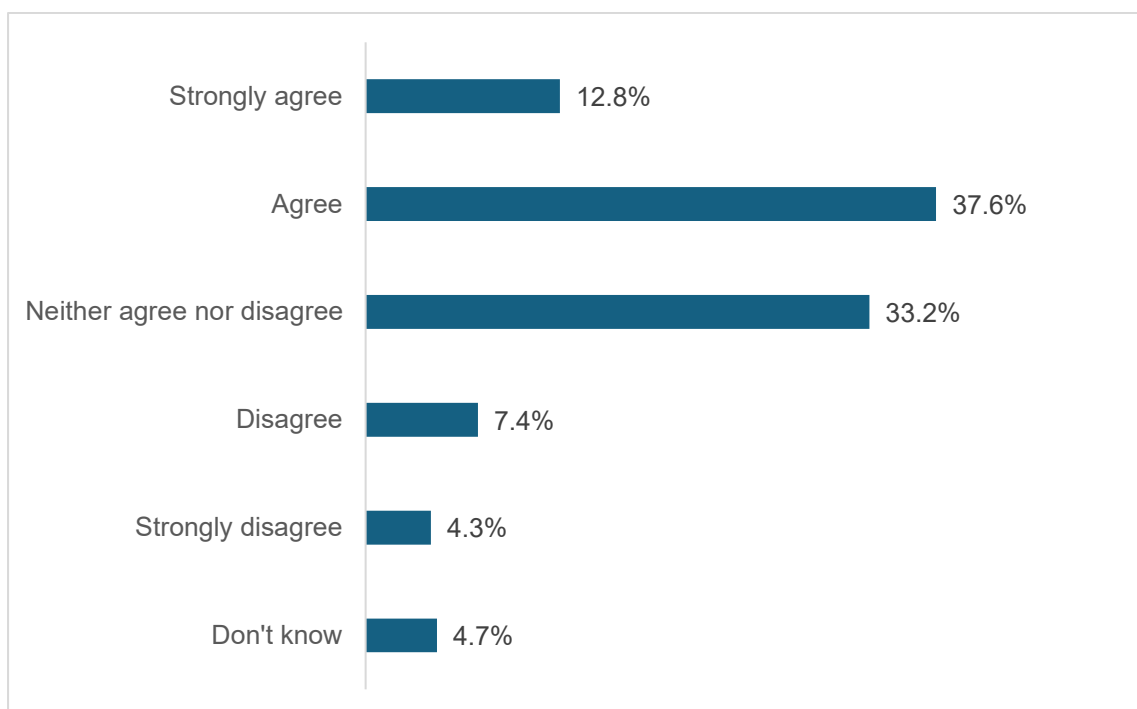
Q23. Disagree - rules for refusal of nominations

Comment/theme	Total
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Don't limit refusals	47
People should have one or two chances	45
Limit refusals	31
People shouldn't get to choose if they are in need	27
Penalising refusers is unfair	19
Remove refusers from register	16
More chances for disabilities	13
Provide property images	8
Judge on individual cases	5
Original version better	4
Terms and language are hard to understand	4
12 months is a long time to reduce banding	4
Let people arrange as many viewings as necessary	2
Other	1

Q24. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed inclusion of quotas?

Base: n-704



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	90	12.8%
Agree	265	37.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	234	33.2%
Disagree	52	7.4%
Strongly disagree	30	4.3%

Don't know
33
4.7%

The data suggests a generally positive reception toward the inclusion of quotas, with over half of respondents expressing support, with 12.8% strongly agreeing and 37.6% agreeing, totalling 50.4% in favour. A third of respondents, 33.2%, remained neutral, highlighting the need for possible further communication or engagement to clarify the proposal and address any concerns or gaps in understanding. Opposition was relatively low, with an overall disagreement of 11.7%. Additionally, 4.7% of respondents selected 'Don't know,' suggesting some uncertainty or lack of information.

Members of the public show the highest level of disagreement (19.5%), indicating more concern or opposition to the proposal. This contrasts with Social Housing tenants (16.9%) and especially Housing Register applicants, who show the lowest disagreement (5.6%), suggesting they are significantly more supportive or less opposed to the inclusion of quotas.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	50.9%	16.9%
Housing Register applicant	52.8%	5.6%
Member of the public	48.7%	19.5%

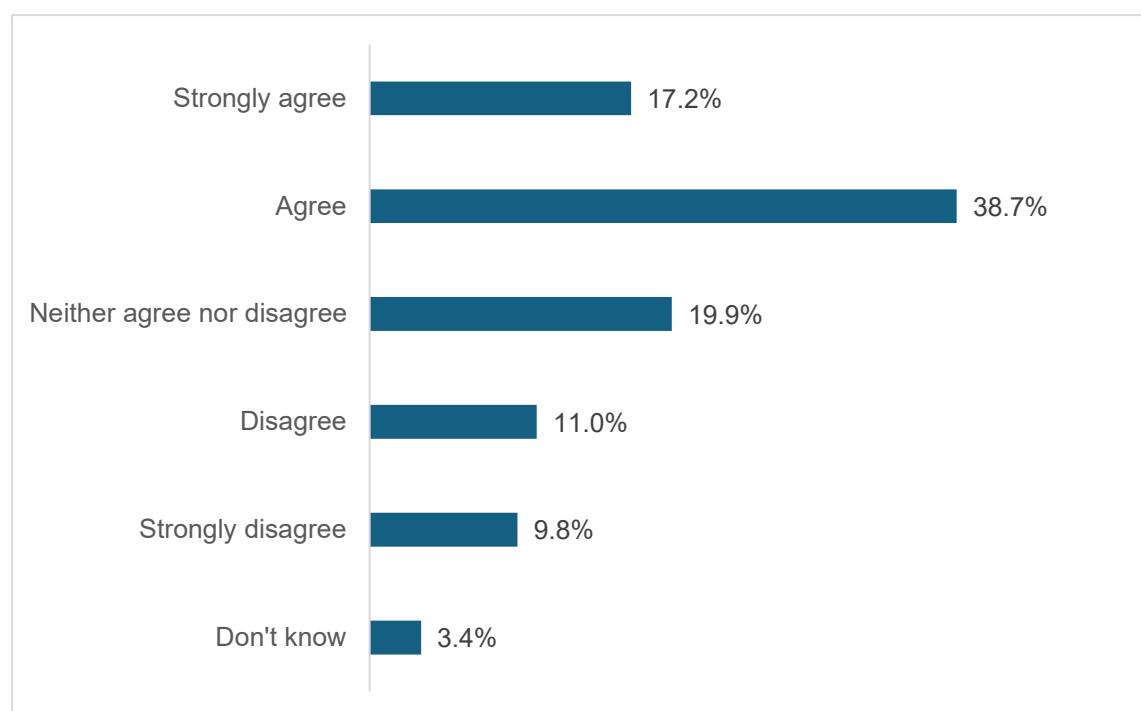
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-377); Member of the public (n-154)

Q25. Disagree - inclusion of quotas

Comment/theme	Total
Uncategorised comment	33
Comments relating to quotas managed / how allocated etc	32
Should be case by case basis	12
Should be equal / fair for everyone	11
People on the waiting list should be housed first	11
Disagree with Armed forces personnel	7
Need quotas for local people / prioritise local people	7
Agree with Children leaving in care	4
Agree with Armed Forces personnel	3
Don't agree with proposals	3
Need more supported accommodation / accommodation for disabled people	2
Agree with all criteria	1
comment related to personal situation	1

Q26. How much do you agree or disagree with assessing overcrowding using the bedroom standard rather than the Local Housing Allowance criteria?

Base: n-708



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	122	17.2%
Agree	274	38.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	141	19.9%
Disagree	78	11.0%
Strongly disagree	69	9.8%
Don't know	24	3.4%

A majority of respondents support assessing overcrowding using the bedroom standard rather than the Local Housing Allowance criteria, with an overall agreement (55.9%) indicating general support for this approach. Meanwhile, 19.9% neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting some uncertainty or neutrality. Opposition accounted for 20.8%, with 11.0% disagreeing and 9.8% strongly disagreeing. A small proportion, 3.4%, selected 'Don't know.' This suggests that while the proposal is broadly accepted, there remains a significant minority who are either unconvinced or require further information or reassurance.

Responses from males were slightly different to the overall, showing higher levels of agreement and lower levels of disagreement. 61.7% (100) expressed they either agreed or strongly agreed, while 16.7% (27) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Female respondents were closely aligned to the overall figures.

Members of the public show the highest agreement (63.6%), indicating stronger support for the proposed change. In contrast, Social Housing tenants show the lowest agreement (50.0%) and the highest disagreement (30.5%), suggesting more concern or resistance within that group. Housing Register applicants fall in between, with moderate agreement (54.6%) and lower disagreement (17.3%), showing a more balanced view.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	50.0%	30.5%
Housing Register applicant	54.6%	17.3%
Member of the public	63.6%	20.1%

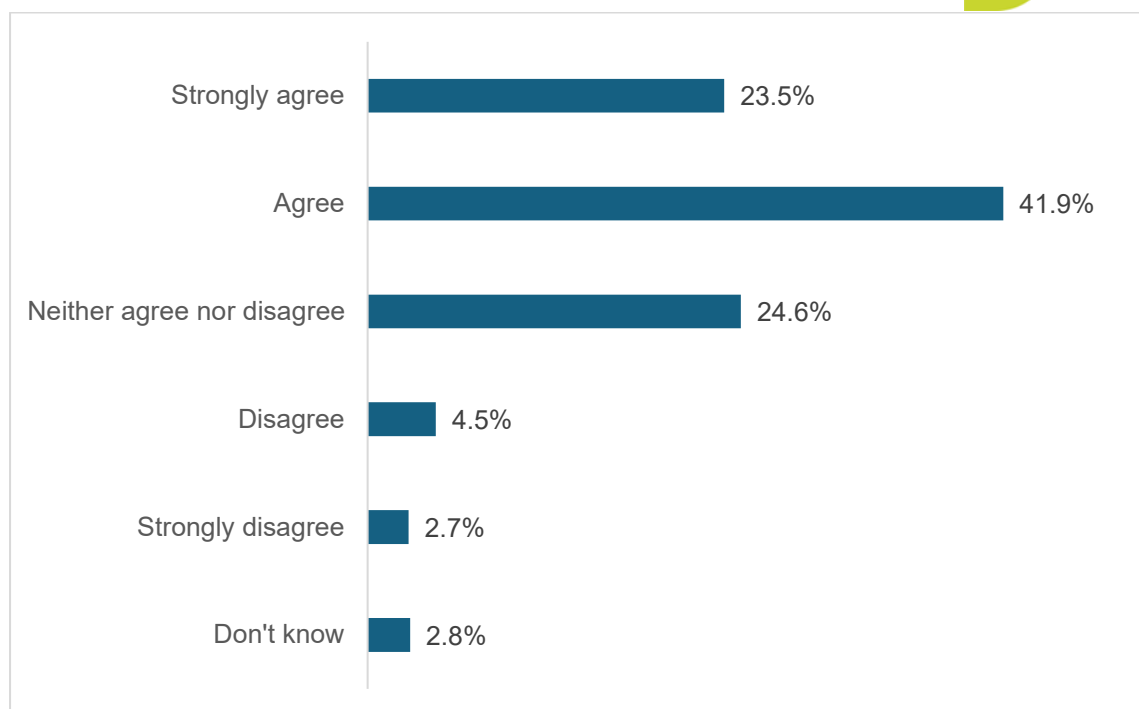
Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-381); Member of the public (n-154)

Q26. Disagree - assessing overcrowding

Comment/theme	Total
Limit needs lowering, 20/21 is too old. 18+ are adults	45
Children need their own privacy	39
It's inappropriate for mixed sex children to share	28
None of these limits are practical	19
My children struggle sharing	11
Puberty is starting earlier	10
Children with health needs need privacy	9
Children should share if they have to	6
People have children to get a bigger house	6
I don't understand the language being used	5
Children are more aware of sexuality	3
Overcrowding shouldn't be an issue	2
Criteria is too vague	1
These limits are practical	1
Overcrowding is common	1
Needs to be more info on overcrowding	1
Rooms not big enough for separate beds	1
Non-blood siblings should not share	1

Q27. How much do you agree or disagree with direct lets for homeless households?

Base: n-707



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	166	23.5%
Agree	296	41.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	174	24.6%
Disagree	32	4.5%
Strongly disagree	19	2.7%
Don't know	20	2.8%

A clear majority of respondents reflects the overall support for the use of direct lets for homeless households, with 23.5% strongly agreeing and 41.9% agreeing, totalling 65.4% in favour. Just under a quarter of respondents remain neutral, (24.6%) indicating a notable level of neutrality or uncertainty. The low overall level of disagreement (7.2%) suggests that this approach is broadly accepted and may be seen as a positive step toward addressing homelessness. Additionally, just 2.8% selected 'Don't know.'

All groups show strong support, with members of the public showing the highest agreement (69.9%). However, the most notable difference is in overall disagreement: Housing Register applicants show the lowest disagreement (3.9%), compared to Social Housing tenants (12.7%) and members of the public (8.5%), indicating that applicants are the most unified in support of this proposal.

	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Social Housing tenant	65.3%	12.7%
Housing Register applicant	64.0%	3.9%
Member of the public	69.9%	8.5%

Base: Social Housing tenant (n-118); Housing Register applicant (n-381); Member of the public (n-153)

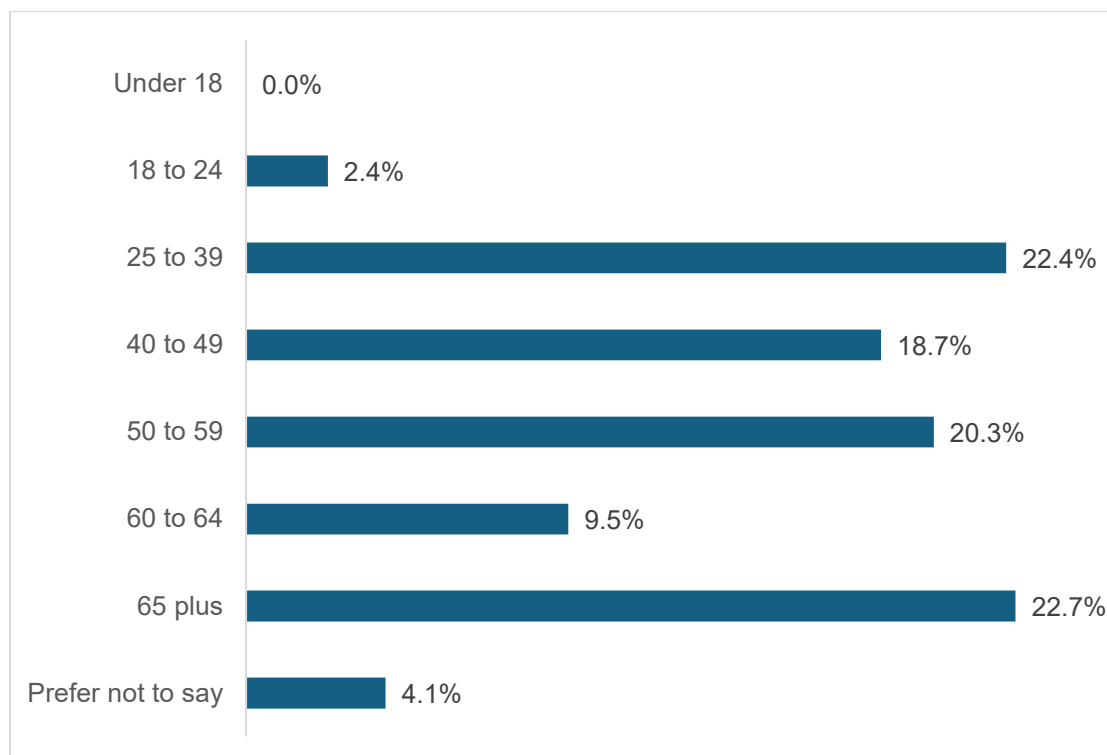
Q28. Disagree - direct lets

Comment/theme	Total
Other uncategorised comment	16
Should be on a case-by-case basis according to need / vulnerability	14
People should have choice	13
Jobs / transport / family support affect where people can live	10
Comments relating to personal situation	9
Should be more than one offer of suitable accommodation	8
Need to prioritise local people	8
Agree with policy	5
The system needs to be fair / equal / transparent	5
Private Lets not stable / secure as landlord can sell / landlords profiteering /private let properties substandard	5
Should explore other options first	3
Don't use expensive hotels / temporary housing is a waste of money	3
Direct Lets need to be within the Dorset area	3
Don't understand policy / wording	2
Private housing much more expensive than social housing	2
Singles and couples without children shouldn't be eligible	1

About You

Q29. Please select your age group.

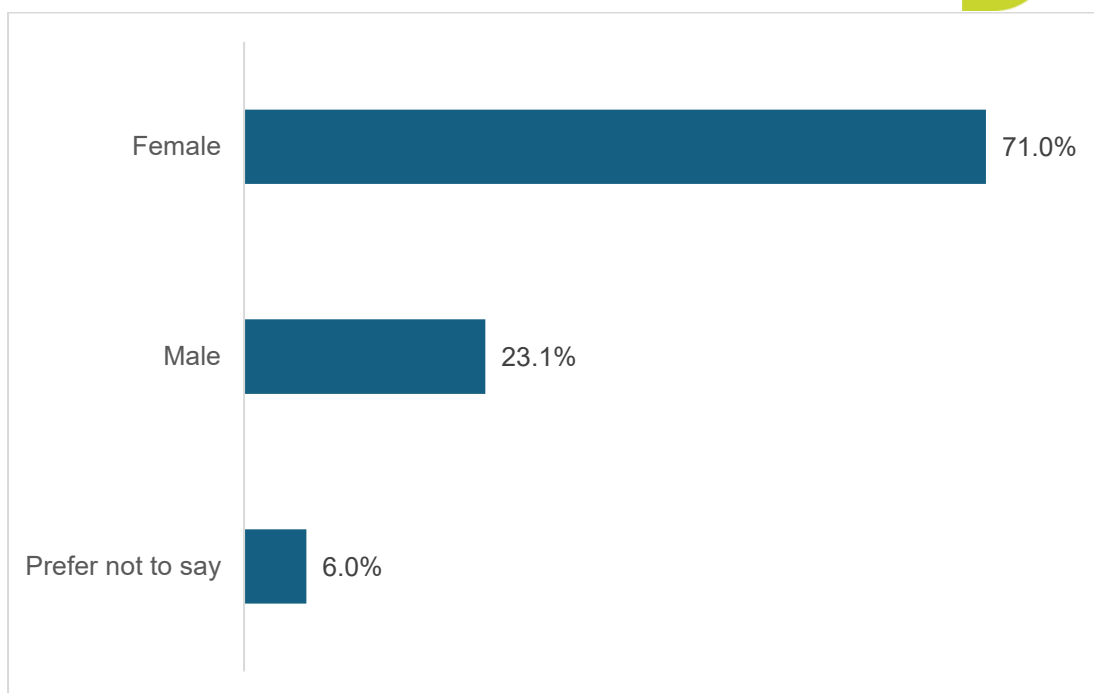
Base: n-706



Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	0	0.0%
18 to 24	17	2.4%
25 to 39	158	22.4%
40 to 49	132	18.7%
50 to 59	143	20.3%
60 to 64	67	9.5%
65 plus	160	22.7%
Prefer not to say	29	4.1%

Q30. What is your sex?

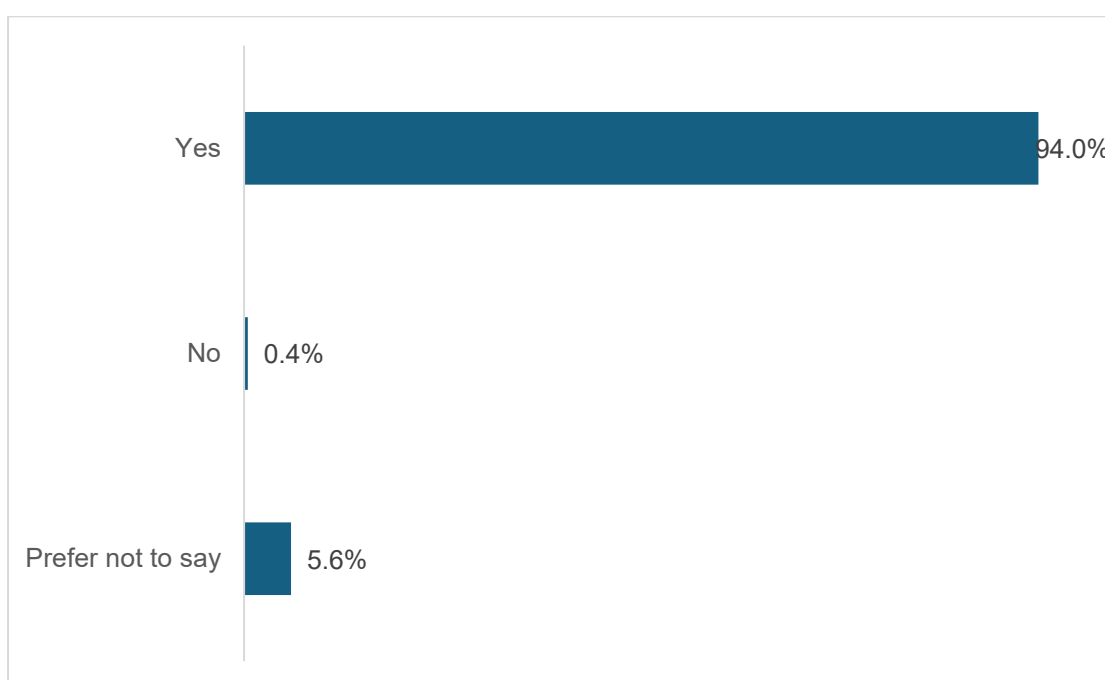
Base: n-706



Option	Total	Percent
Female	501	71.0%
Male	163	23.1%
Prefer not to say	42	6.0%

Q31. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Base: n-703



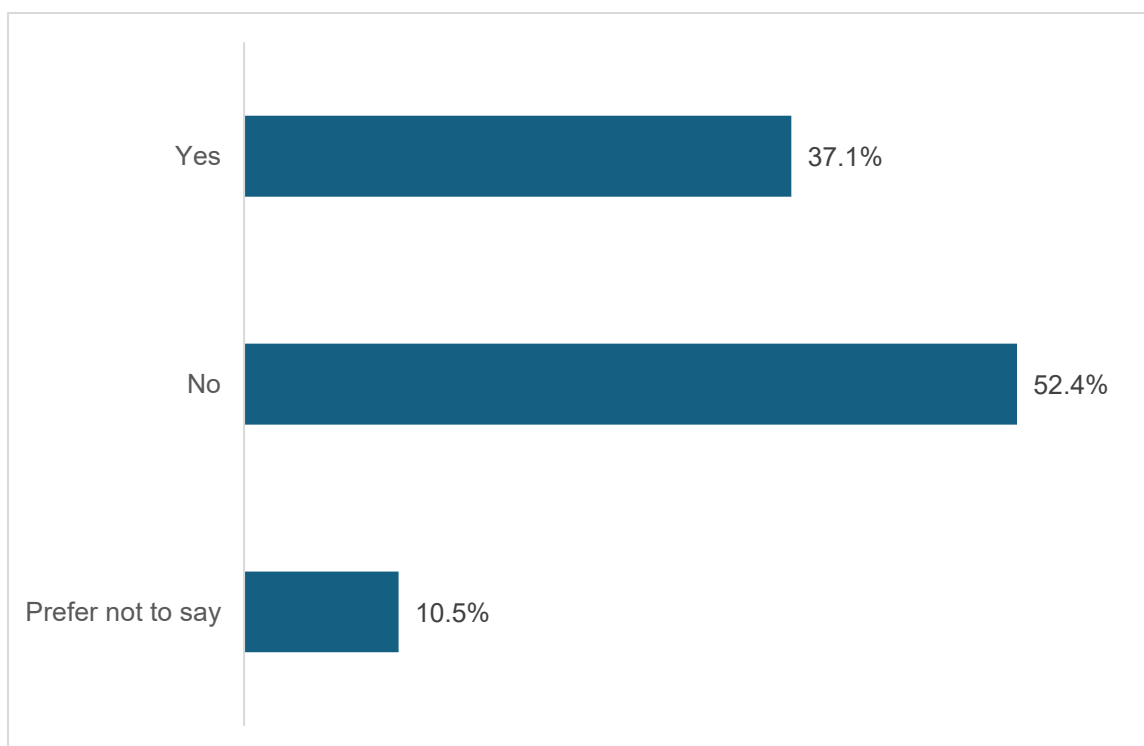
Option	Total	Percent
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Yes	661	94.0%
No	3	0.4%
Prefer not to say	39	5.6%

Q32. The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

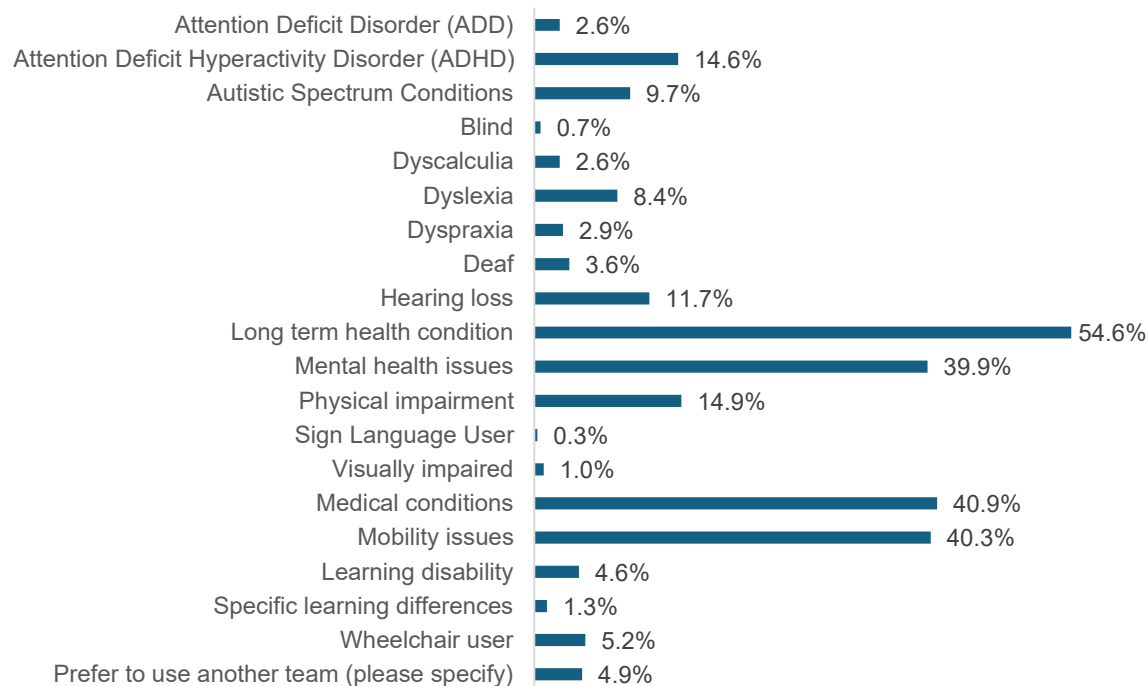
Base: n-706



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	262	37.1%
No	370	52.4%
Prefer not to say	74	10.5%

Q33. If at the previous question you stated you consider yourself to have a disability, please state the type of disability which applies to you.

Base: n-308



Option	Total	Percent
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)	8	2.6%
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	45	14.6%
Autistic Spectrum Conditions	30	9.7%
Blind	2	0.7%
Dyscalculia	8	2.6%
Dyslexia	26	8.4%
Dyspraxia	9	2.9%
Deaf	11	3.6%
Hearing loss	36	11.7%
Long term health condition	168	54.6%
Mental health issues	123	39.9%
Physical impairment	46	14.9%
Sign Language User	1	0.3%
Visually impaired	3	1.0%
Medical conditions	126	40.9%
Mobility issues	124	40.3%
Learning disability	14	4.6%
Specific learning differences	4	1.3%
Wheelchair user	16	5.2%
Prefer to use another team (please specify)	15	4.9%

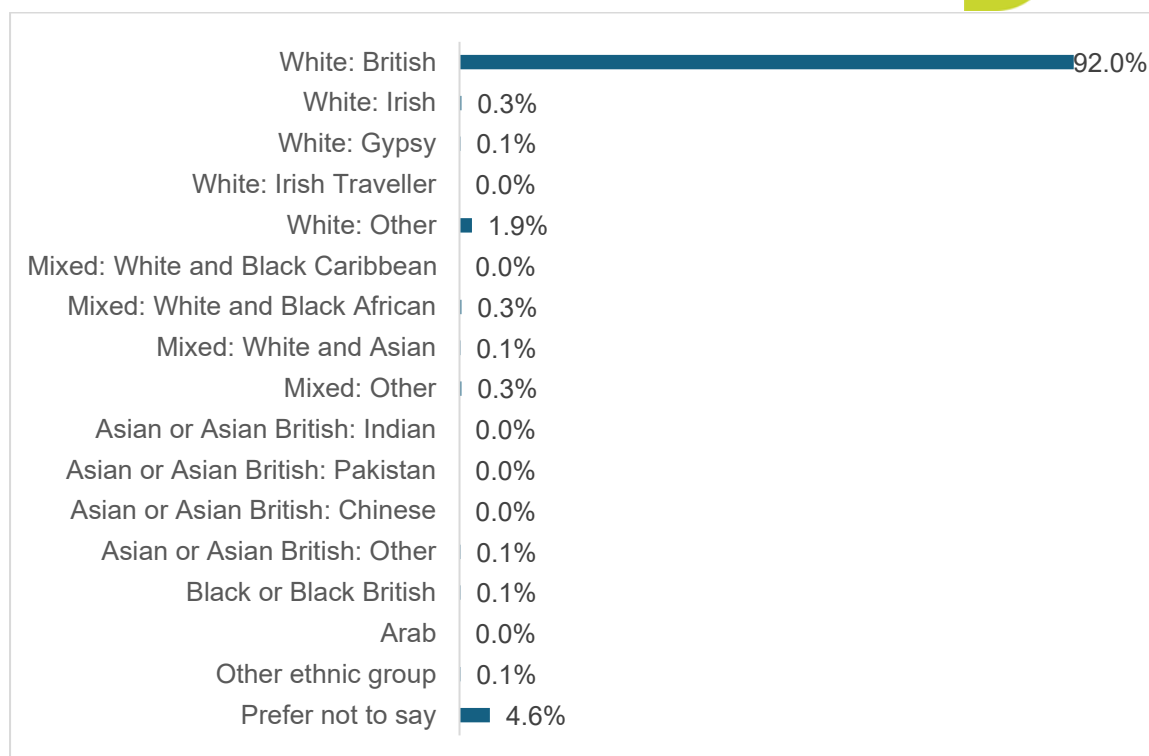
Other - disability type

Lung disease

Polymyalgia fibromyalgia osteoporosis primary biliary sclerosis
Fibromyalgia
Also my daughter [redacted] is 30 with Down's syndrome autism bad eyesight and anxiety x
Bipolar and arthritis
A typo above. I ticked - Prefer to use another 'team' . It should say - another term.
My son is these and I have fubromialja
I have rheumatoid inflammatory arthritis
Fibromyalgia
Arthritic
Crone's disease
Chronic back pain. Anxiety. Insomnia
Addiction issues
Stroke
Anxiety
Spinal cord injury resulting in severe disability
Mobility scooter needed for extended mobility
Depression exacerbated by little opportunity to rent on the private market or get allocated a council place
my son is on the housing list he has severe learning disabilities
COPD & Emphysema
Is it team or term - spelling error above
Ability
Ongoing health issues
PTSD
Paralysed
Fibromylga
PTSD, Depression & anxiety
Many issues not happy to state
Heart Failure
Cancer

Q34. What is your ethnic group?

Base: n-701



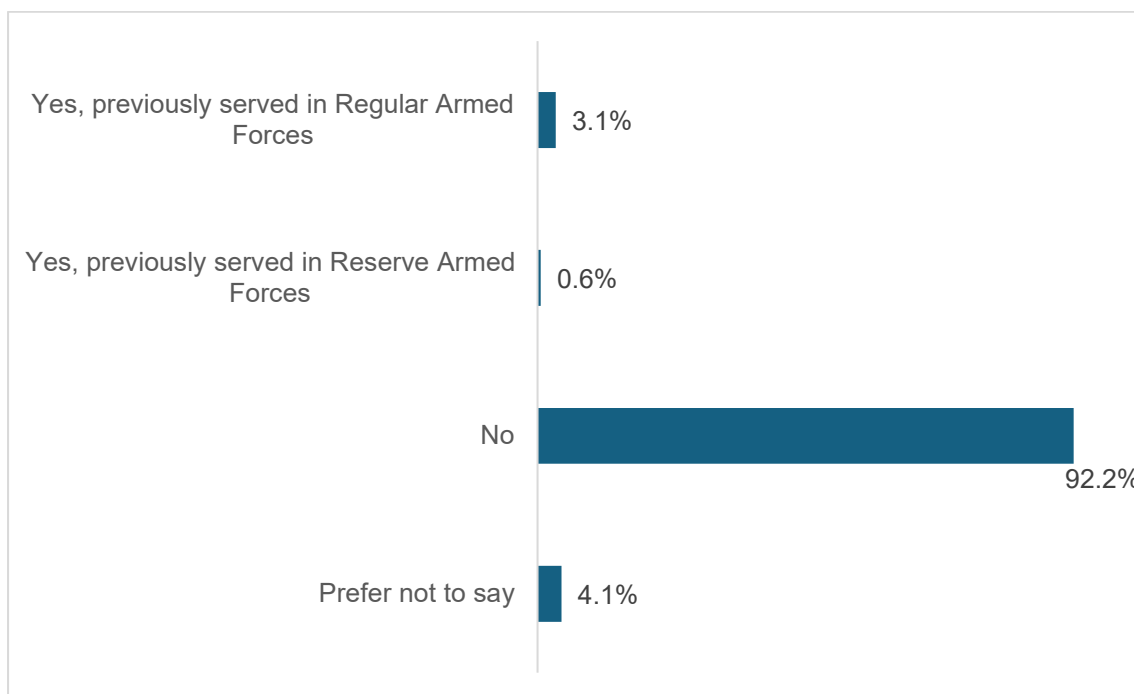
Option	Total	Percent
White: British	645	92.0%
White: Irish	2	0.3%
White: Gypsy	1	0.1%
White: Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
White: Other	13	1.9%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0	0.0%
Mixed: White and Black African	2	0.3%
Mixed: White and Asian	1	0.1%
Mixed: Other	2	0.3%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistan	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Other	1	0.1%
Black or Black British	1	0.1%
Arab	0	0.0%
Other ethnic group	1	0.1%
Prefer not to say	32	4.6%

Other - Ethnicity
White British English
Minority (White, English, Born in Dorset, Fully employed and not claiming anything!)
Mixed - white/Fijian

White English

Q35. Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

Base: 702



Option	Total	Percent
Yes, previously served in Regular Armed Forces	22	3.1%
Yes, previously served in Reserve Armed Forces	4	0.6%
No	647	92.2%
Prefer not to say	29	4.1%



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

Review of policy

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

- The allocations policy sets out how Dorset Council works with social landlords to manage the housing register and allocate housing fairly and transparently. It explains the choice-based lettings scheme, including registration, assessment, and property allocations processes, to ensure applicants understand how to access social housing.
- The policy provides guidance for housing and lettings officers, outlining clear criteria and procedures to support consistent decision-making. It promotes equality, prevents discrimination, and ensures effective use of housing resources to meet diverse community needs.
- Additionally, the policy supports strategic planning by enabling the collections of accurate data to inform future housing development and optimise the use of available stock to meet local demand and strategic housing goals.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

- Under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), local authorities are required to have a housing allocation scheme to ensure social housing is allocated appropriately. This policy complies with legal obligations, including the duty to give reasonable preference to certain groups such as those who are homeless, living in unsanitary or overcrowded conditions or needing to move for medical or welfare reasons.
- Social housing is essential for providing secure, affordable homes to those unable to access the private market. The Allocation Policy ensures that

available housing is distributed fairly, prioritising those in greatest need, including vulnerable individuals and families.

- The policy also responds to increasing demand and limited supply of social housing, with the need to support vulnerable groups, such as those experiencing homelessness, overcrowding or health-related housing needs. The Dorset Council Housing Allocation Scheme will apply to all Dorset Council residents.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

- Housing Act 1996, Part 6
- Statutory guidance for housing allocations
- Tenancy standard, the regulator or social housing
- Housing and disabled people the human rights commission
- Housing Allocations for disabled people, local government ombudsman
- Domestic abuse and housing decision, local government ombudsman
- Medical assessments for housing applications, local government ombudsman
- The Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy
- The Housing Register
- Local housing data
- Internal consultation

During the 12-week statutory consultation of the Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy the following responses were received:

- Registered Providers – 1% or 7 responses
- Registered Provider tenants – 16.8% or 119 responses
- housing register applicants – 53.7% or 381 responses
- Elected members – 2.4% or 17 responses
- Parish and town councillors – 1% or 7
- members of the public – 22% or 156 responses

7. What did this tell you?

There are currently 6629 households on the housing register and we receive 400 – 500 new applications each month this tells us there is a high level of demand for social housing in the Dorset Council area. The number of lets made between 2024/25 was 978 with an average wait time of 18 months. This tells us that many applicants eligible to register will not be allocated a home quickly and can wait years

before a suitable home is found. This also tells us many people are living in homes that do not currently meet their need.

Data from the current housing register illustrates the average wait time for properties during 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Bedsits - 31 allocations average wait of 14 months

1 bedroom – 423 allocations average wait of 17 months

2 bedrooms – 407 allocations average wait of 17 months

3 bedrooms – 105 allocations average wait of 25 months

4 bedrooms – 11 allocations average wait of 30 months

5 bedrooms – 1 allocation average wait time of 8 years

7.1 Equalities raised as part of the consultation on Housing allocation policy

A meeting was held with the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Panel to review and address comments raised during the consultation process, ensuring that principles of fairness and equality were upheld. The following key issues were discussed:

Local connection - the panel generally agreed with the proposed requirement for a two-year local connection. However, they recommended that the employment criterion should allow cumulative evidence rather than requiring two consecutive years. This means applicants who have worked in the area intermittently over a longer period can still demonstrate a local connection, ensuring fairness for those with seasonal or non-standard work patterns.

Banding name changes - the panel supported changing the banding system from alphabetical to numerical, as this provides a clearer and more structured approach. However, concerns were raised about the original band descriptions:

- Band 1 – Urgent housing need
- Band 2 – Priority need
- Band 3 – Unmet housing need
- Band 4 – Other housing need

The panel felt that “priority” and “urgent” were too similar, “unmet” could be perceived as discriminatory, and “other” could be considered dismissive of someone’s housing needs. Following feedback, the proposed bands for the new policy are:

- Band 1 – Urgent need
- Band 2 – High need
- Band 3 – Medium need
- Band 4 – Low need

This revised terminology is clearer, avoids negative connotations, and better reflects levels of housing need in a fair and respectful way.

Income Savings and capital - the panel agreed with the proposed income and savings limits, as they align with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Universal Credit (UC) thresholds. However, concerns were raised that older people could be unfairly impacted—particularly those who own their own home but can no longer remain there due to suitability, affordability, or adaptability issues. This risk is mitigated within the policy, which allows applicants who own a property that is unsuitable and cannot be adapted or afforded to join the housing register.

Overcrowding - the panel expressed concerns about the age limits used in the Bedroom Standard for determining overcrowding. Under the Bedroom Standard, same-sex children can share a bedroom until the age of 21, which is less generous than the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) standard, where individuals aged 16 and over are entitled to their own bedroom.

However, while the Bedroom Standard will be used to assess overcrowding for banding purposes, it is not used to assess bedroom need. Applicants will still be able to bid on properties that meet the LHA standard. This means families who are not classed as overcrowded under the Bedroom Standard will be able to bid on larger homes, reducing any disadvantage caused by the stricter criteria.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

- Members of the Housing Team
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Engagement Panel

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No

Is an EQIA required?

Yes

Not every proposal will need an EqlA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqlA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqlA, please answer the following question:

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has

been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age (55+)	Negative	Current housing allocations policy (2021-26) The current allocations policy includes an exception for people aged 55 or over who do not have a local connection to the Dorset Council area, allowing them to be considered for housing. This exception was originally introduced to help fill properties that were hard to let. However, this is no longer necessary because there is now sufficient demand from eligible applicants with a local connection. Proposed Housing allocations policy (2026-31) Under the proposed policy, anyone who does not have a local connection to the Dorset Council area, regardless of age, will not be able to join the housing register. As of 7 January 2026, we anticipate this impacting 559 households.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age (16+)	Positive	Current housing allocations policy (2021-26) The current allocations policy requires applicants to have a local connection to the Dorset Council area. This can be shown by living in the area for two years, living in the area for three out of the last five years, or having close family who have lived locally for at least five years. Proposed Housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed policy simplifies this requirement. Applicants will need to show two years of continuous residency or a two-year family connection, in line with the national Code of Guidance, which recommends that two years is a reasonable period to establish a local connection.
Age (16+)	Negative	Current housing allocations policy (2021-26) The current policy allows those that are working to apply to the housing register after one year. Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposal in the new policy is to increase the local connection timescale to two years. This change may disadvantage individuals who move to Dorset for employment or who have recently started working locally, as they will need to wait longer before being eligible for social housing.
Age (16+)	Positive	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31)

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		The proposed allocations policy increases the local connection requirement from one year to two years for working applicants ensures consistency and fairness across all applicants, regardless of employment status. It supports community stability by encouraging individuals to establish a stronger connection to the area before accessing social housing. This approach helps manage demand on the housing register, prioritising those with a more established link to Dorset. It also aligns with the national Code of Guidance, which recommends two years as a reasonable period to demonstrate a local connection.
Disability (visible and non-visible)	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy continues to support applicants with disabilities by ensuring adapted properties are prioritised for those who require them. This helps make best use of available stock and ensures that homes meet the specific needs of applicants. Additionally, applicants who no longer require adapted properties are placed in a high housing need band to facilitate appropriate re-housing, ensuring fairness and efficient use of resources.
Disability (Neurodivergence such as ADHD, Autism etc.)	Positive	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed simplified banding system provides a clear and structured framework for assessing housing need. For people who are neurodivergent, the impact of housing can be complex and may require additional consideration. We do not rely solely on information provided by the applicant; we also consider

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		relevant details from professionals involved in their health or support needs. Our team can offer practical assistance with the application process. This includes completing the form on the applicant's behalf, guiding them through it step by step, or arranging a home visit. We can also meet applicants at selected libraries to provide support in a comfortable and accessible setting.
Care Experience	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would negatively or positively impact individuals based on care experience.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would negatively or positively impact individuals based on gender reassignment or gender identity. Access to the housing register and the assessment of housing need remain based on objective criteria such as local connection, housing circumstances, and vulnerability, without regard to gender identity
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals based on their marital or civil partnership status. Eligibility and priority for housing are determined by housing need, local connection, and other objective criteria, regardless of relationship status.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) Under the proposed Allocation Policy, pregnant women will be eligible for an additional bedroom from the point at which a MATB1 certificate is provided—typically around 12 weeks into

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		pregnancy. This is an improvement on the previous policy, which only granted an additional bedroom within 12 weeks of the expected due date. The change ensures earlier recognition of housing need and supports better planning and stability for expectant mothers.
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals based on race or ethnicity. All applicants are assessed equally based on housing need, local connection, and other objective criteria.
Religion and belief	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals based on religion or belief. All applicants are assessed equally based on housing need, local connection, and other objective criteria.
Sex (consider men and women)	Positive/Negative	Current housing allocations policy (2021-26) The current policy uses the local Housing Allowance (LHA) bedroom standard when assessing overcrowding. Under this standard: • Children under 10 share a bedroom regardless of sex. • Children of different sex require their own room from age 10 • Children of the same sex can share a room until they are 16 • Individual 16 or over require their own room Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) At the time of drafting this assessment the impact could be positive or negative depending on individual circumstances. The proposed policy replaces the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) standard with

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		the Bedroom Standard when assessing overcrowding, this is a nationally recognised measure aligned with statutory guidance. The Bedroom Standard provides a clear and consistent framework for assessing overcrowding based on household composition. Under this standard: • Children under 10 share a bedroom regardless of sex. • Children aged 10–20 can share if they are the same sex. • Individuals aged 21 and over require their own bedroom. This approach ensures fairness and transparency across all applicants and supports better management of housing stock. The policy also retains flexibility by allowing additional bedrooms where there is a welfare or medical need, ensuring that households with specific health or care requirements are not disadvantaged.
Sex (consider men and women)	Negative	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The Bedroom Standard is less generous than the LHA standard, which previously allowed individuals aged 16 and over to have their own bedroom. As a result, fewer households will be classed as overcrowded under the new measure, which may delay access to larger homes for some families. Larger families may experience longer waiting times for suitable accommodation.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals based on sexual orientation. All applicants are assessed equally

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		based on housing need, local connection, and other objective criteria.
People with caring responsibilities	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals with caring responsibilities. All applicants are assessed equally based on housing need, local connection, and other objective criteria. If there is a sleeping overnight carer the additional bed need will be assessed accordingly.
Rural isolation	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect individuals in rural areas. The policy supports applicants in rural areas by offering flexible and accessible application methods. Applications can be completed online from home or at public access points such as libraries. Additionally, support is available over the phone, with staff able to complete back-office applications on behalf of applicants or provide in-person assistance if required or a paper application. This ensures equitable access to the housing register regardless of geographic location.
Socio-economic deprivation	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed changes to the allocations policy are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on individuals or households experiencing socio-economic deprivation. The policy continues to assess housing need based on clear criteria such as homelessness, overcrowding, and medical or welfare needs, which apply equally regardless of income or social status. Access to the housing register remains based on housing need rather than financial circumstances, and support is available for applicants who may require assistance with the application process.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Single parents	Neutral	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy does not introduce any changes that would affect single parents. Their housing needs continue to be assessed based on household composition, housing circumstances, and other objective criteria.
Armed forces communities	Positive	Proposed housing allocations policy (2026-31) The proposed Allocation Policy provides additional reasonable preference to members of the UK Armed Forces. In addition, there is a new band for family members of service personnel

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

The revised Allocation Policy introduces several changes aimed at improving fairness, consistency, and alignment with best practice. Positive impacts include additional preference and increased priority for Armed Forces applicants, moving from Band B (high housing need) to Band 1 (priority housing need), and earlier recognition of housing need for pregnant women, who will now qualify for an additional bedroom when they are 12 weeks pregnant and receive their MATB1 certificate rather than 12 weeks before their due date as set in the current allocation policy.

The shift to the Bedroom Standard provides a clear, nationally recognized measure of overcrowding and retains flexibility for welfare or medical needs, ensuring vulnerable applicants are not disadvantaged.

Local connection requirements have been simplified to two years' residency, making qualification easier to demonstrate.

However, some negative impacts are anticipated. The Bedroom Standard is less generous than the LHA standard, meaning fewer households may be classed as overcrowded, potentially delaying access to larger homes. Applicants aged 55 and over without a local connection will no longer be eligible, and the increase in employment-based local connection from 12 months to two years may disadvantage older applicants who are working. These changes reflect a balance between

managing housing stock effectively and prioritising those in greatest need, while maintaining safeguards for applicants with specific health or care requirements.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Review of Consultation Feedback	Some of the proposed changes in the policy may still require further amendment during the democratic process.	Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings	April 2026
Staff Training	The Housing Register and Lettings Team, Registered Providers and other Housing Teams to receive specific training on the Dorset Council Housing Allocations Policy and the actions in the EqIA.	Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings. Letting Team Leader, Housing Register Team Leaders	May 2026
Amendments to Existing Applications	The proposed new policy has several changes to the current version. If the new policy is approved this will result in all existing applicants requiring a new band and approximately 2,500 existing applicants having their current banding reassessed. Depending on individual circumstances this will result in a higher or lower priority or being removed from the register altogether. All affected applicants will be contacted and the Huume system will be updated to reflect the changes and the applicants notified.	Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings. Letting Team Leader, Housing Register Team Leaders	On going from April 2026
Reasonable Adjustments to service delivery must be embedded	Reasonable adjustments will continue to be embedded across all processes to ensure accessibility and inclusion. Information will be provided in alternative formats where required, such as large print, audio, or other accessible options. Any changes to application forms, letters, and emails will incorporate accessibility considerations, and support will be offered to applicants who need assistance completing forms or understanding communications. Comms will be sent before the policy is implemented and during implementation to ensure the public, internal and external services are aware of the changes. This will be monitored and staff training given as required.	Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings. Letting Team Leader, Housing Register Team Leaders. Comms Team (Rachael Ballard)	Ongoing

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Being Flexible and Agile	Over the remaining time until this proposed policy and its potential changes are implemented, circumstances may change, and we will need to react to these changes and take appropriate action, including updating this EqIA if appropriate. All changes will require monitoring and reporting on after implementation to ensure there is no discrimination or any one group impacted unfairly.	Service Manager Housing Register and Lettings	Ongoing from November 2025

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Sarah How and Martin Short

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Sarah How, Martin Short, Cara Buckley, Neil Morland (consultant)

Date of completion:28/11/2025

Version Number: 4

EqIA review date:20 April 2026

Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)

Recommendation to Dorset Council Thursday 16th April 2026

**From General Licensing Committee on Wednesday 25th
February 2026**

Consideration of Objections to Taxi Licensing Fee Increase for 2026/7

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio: Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: Jan Britton, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: John Newcombe

Title: Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety

Tel: 01305 838027

Email: John.Newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That Full Council adopts the new fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences.

Appendices and Background papers

Appendix 1 – Report to the General Licensing Committee on Wednesday 25th
February 2026

Appendix 2 – General Licensing Committee Taxi Fees and Charges

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General Licensing Committee

25 February 2026

Consideration of Objections to Taxi Licensing Fee Increase for 2026/7

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s):

N/A

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe, Director of Public Health & Prevention

Report author and job title: John Newcombe

Email: John.newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Report status: Public

Executive summary

In accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, proposed fees for Private Hire Operator and Vehicle licences must be published in a local newspaper to allow for objections prior to adoption. These fees were advertised in the Dorset Echo on 9 December, and all hackney carriage and private hire licence holders were provided with the full schedule of fees, including driver charges via newsletter. This report sets out the objections received for consideration.

1. Recommendation

To consider the responses and agree a recommendation to full Council to adopt the new fees for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences

2. Reason for the recommendation

The fees have not been raised since 2022 when they were calculated on the cost of running the service.

3. The Fees for Licences

- 3.1 Taxi licence fees were last set in 2022 when they were calculated based on the costs of running the service including, processing applications, materials for badges and plates and additional costs including staffing costs, office costs, database management, website maintenance, policy development, training, legal advice and enforcement were also included.

- 3.2 [The Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance for Licensing Authorities in England](#) issued by the Department for Transport states at section 3.4 that:

“It is essential to a well-functioning taxi and private hire vehicle sector that those administering and enforcing the regime are well-resourced. The licensing model is intended to be self-funding through licensing fees and it is expected that licensing authorities seek to provide a well-resourced system at the lowest cost to licensees. Licensing authorities should regularly review their fees to reflect changes to costs, both increases and reductions.”

- 3.3 The increases being proposed align with the general rises in Council fees and remains significantly below inflation since 2022.

Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Increase
Taxi - Vehicle - New Vehicle Fee	190	200	5.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - New Vehicle Fee (Weymouth Vehicles)	240	260	8.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - Renewal Fee	183	200	9.30%
Taxi - Vehicle - Renewal Fee (Weymouth)	223	240	7.60%
Taxi - Vehicle - Plate Holder	15	16	6.70%
Taxi - Vehicle - Replacement Plate	26.5	28	5.70%
Taxi - Vehicle - Temporary Plate (Accident related)	79	83	5.10%
Taxi - Driver - New Driver 3 year licence	192	210	9.40%
Taxi - Driver - Renewal 3 year licence	142	150	5.60%
Taxi - Driver - New Driver 1 year licence	163	180	10.40%
Taxi - Driver - Renewal 1 year licence	113	120	6.20%
Taxi - Driver - Replacement Badge	16	17	6.30%
Taxi - Operator - 5 year licence	416	440	5.80%
Taxi - Operator - 1 year licence	118	130	10.20%
Subsequent Knowledge Test	52.5	55.5	5.70%

- 3.4 The average percentage price increase proposed equates to an additional 7% income for the 2026/27 financial year.
- 3.5 The service is currently on target to be running a deficit of £22,902 for the current financial year and the proposed increase will reverse that position and potentially give a small operating surplus of £11,083 for 2026/27.

- 3.6 When the income and expenditure figures are assessed over the three year rolling programme however the service is in deficit to £142,978 however the majority of that deficit occurred in the 2024/25 financial year where income levels were particularly weak resulting in a deficit of £87,999. Officers consider this to be an anomaly which is not expected to be repeated. A copy of the accounts is included at **Appendix A**.
- 3.7 Under section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 fees for vehicle and operator licences must be advertised in a local paper for two weeks and any objections considered for any fees being proposed that are over £25. This section does not apply to driver licences.
- 3.8 The fees for the vehicle and operator licences were advertised in the Dorset Echo on the 9 December and a newsletter was sent out to all the holders of the 3188 taxi and private hire licences advising them of all of the proposed fee increases.
- 3.9 There have been 5 representations made regarding the proposed increase on the fees, all received as a response from the consultation with the licence holders. Officers will present the representations along with any responses to the Committee at the meeting;
- a) I would like to formally state that I have no objection, to the increase. As I believe that this is a normal practice, that is inline with inflation.
 - b) I strongly object to your license fee increases most taxi drivers and companies are already finding it difficult with the cost of living as it is and we have noticed the lack of business in 2025 however if this goes ahead we will have no choice to put our prices up which will also include putting the prices up for school runs that we do for council . And also, I'm sure council tax will go up along with dropping off cost at airports costing us and ulez costs. I feel this will lead to some taxi drivers giving up the job altogether
 - c) I would like to object to the proposed fee increases.
 - d) I'm writing to state my objections to the proposed Taxi Licensing fee increases based on several factors.

Since the last major revision of Dorset's Taxi Licensing policy in 2021, drivers and operators alike have seen a number of problems navigating ambiguous and incomplete local legislation with dwindling resources being offered to clarify and signpost enquiries to satisfactory outcomes.

Emails are currently being responded to with automated read receipts with up to 10 working days or two-week lead times for replies.

Phone lines available only between 0900 and 1200 and often reliant on staff who are expected to be a jack of all trades when it comes to licensing enquiries.

Previous FOI requests have informed drivers that the majority of the license fee are allocated to cover enforcement, however little to no enforcement is seen at least in the Weymouth and Portland area.

The recent online upgrades to Licensing have amalgamated all previous systems and in theory have streamlined the way in which licensing applications are handled and processed.

Plate printing and shipping is now outsourced to a third party, thus eliminating the need and budget for backstock which presumably is a net cost saving.

The single largest frustration has been a lack of specialisation in Taxi licensing and law when enquiries are made, inconsistent responses and poor communication as seen by the December 5th Newsletter (sent December 9th) which was poorly formatted, evidently not spell-checked or proofread before sending; it also arrived in inboxes at 3pm on the day of the public notice in the local paper presenting little opportunity for drivers and license holders to even know of the existence of a right to comment or object.

I regularly hear from 'veteran' drivers about the days where a local office would hold walk in appointments and deal with enquiries there and then, licenses and plates being issued on the spot with relevant paperwork and while I understand this wouldn't be compatible with the new workflow, it represents a much more cohesive working relationship between drivers and Dorset Council.

I personally object to any proposed increases until we as License holders see improvements in the above metrics to rebuild confidence in our local authority's ability to maintain a professional and efficient department. Until these areas are under control, given the increased driver operating costs with Private Hire circuit fees rising to cover minimum wage/ Employer NI increases, private and public hire insurance increases and general cost of living increases, I would like to see more value for my money before simply handing over more to a struggling department.

- e) Just to say, I don't agree to these fee increases. My main concern is that since the last fee increases, services have got worse. Office hours are reduced; communications are less frequent and take much longer to obtain replies – with some communications by email stating 7-14 days for a response!

4. Financial Implications

The funding for the preparation and consultation of the fees and charges came from existing budgets. The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing must be self-funding, not be a drain on the taxpayer and not make a profit, these fees will achieve this. There are no further financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

6. Well-being and Health Implications

None

7. Other Implications

There are no implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council

8. Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

9. 8. Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Accounts for the Taxi Licensing Service 2023 to 2027

11. Background Papers

[Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#)

[Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

[LGA guidance on locally set licensing fees | Local Government Association](#)

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26/27 (estimated)

Income 26/27 (estimated)	
Hackney Carriage Fees	158,272
Private Hire Fees	393,301
Fees & Charges	
Total income 26/27	551,573

Expenditure 26/27 (estimated)	
Staffing costs	298,983
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	31,584
Total Expenditure 26/27	540,491

26/27 Income and expenditure **11,083**

Rolling total **-131,895**

25/26 (estimated)

Income 25/26 forecast to year end	
Hackney Carriage Fees	147,918
Private Hire Fees	367,571
Fees & Charges	
Total income 25/26	515,489

Expenditure 25/26	
Staffing costs	296,958
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	31,510
Total Expenditure 25/26	538,391

25/26 Income and expenditure **- 22,902**

Rolling total **-142,978**

24/25

Income 24/25	£
Hackney Carriage Fees	140,003
Private Hire Fees	296,541
Fees & Charges	915
Total income 24/25	437,458

Expenditure 24/25	£
Staffing costs	279,454
Corporate Recharges	209,923
Taxi Specific expenditure	36,080
Total Expenditure 24/25	525,457

24/25 Income and expenditure **- 87,999**

Rolling total **-120,076**

23/24

Income 23/24	£
Hackney Carriage Fees	139,359
Private Hire Fees	314,581
Fees & Charges	
Total income 23/24	453,940

Expenditure 23/24	£
Staffing costs	259,454
Corporate Recharges	204,943
Taxi Specific expenditure	21,620
Total Expenditure 23/24	486,017

23/24 Income and expenditure **-32,077**

Rolling total **-32,077**

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Full Council 16 April 2026 Shipton Gorge and Loders Community Governance Review – final recommendations For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council, Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Local Councillor(s):

Cllr Neil Eysenck and Cllr Sally Holland

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

Report author and job title:

Jacqui Andrews, Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services

Email: jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

Part 4, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Local Government Act 1972

Report status: Public

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 A community governance review looks at the governance arrangements of parishes in the area under review – in this case Shipton Gorge Parish and Loders Parish – and seeks to ensure that these are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- 1.2 In undertaking a review, Dorset Council (“the council”) will comply with the requirements of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”), the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”), and have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the 2007 Act. The council will also give due consideration to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published in 2008.
- 1.3 The report seeks a resolution agreeing final recommendations in respect of parish boundaries for Shipton Gorge and Loders that will be subject to a reorganisation order with changes taking effect on 1 April 2027.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To agree final recommendations in respect of parish boundaries for the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loders as shown in Appendices A, B and C.

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

- 3.1 To ensure that community governance arrangements within the area under review are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and comply with statutory guidance.

4. **What is a community governance review**

- 4.1 A Community Governance Review is a legal process whereby the Council will consult with those living in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the area identified in the review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.
- 4.2 Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake a Review, provided that it complies with certain duties in that Act including details set out relating to consultation, the need to ensure any proposals reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. The Council has to publish its recommendations but that manner in which the Council consults with its residents is not prescribed.

5. **Why is the council undertaking a review?**

- 5.1 On 7 July 2025, Dorset Council received a petition seeking a review of part of the boundary between the parishes of Shipton Gorge and Loders. Following receipt of a petition, the council has a duty to undertake a review which must be concluded within 1 year of receipt of the petition ie 6 July 2026.
- 5.2 At its meeting on 14 July 2022, Dorset Council agreed to change the parish boundary between these parishes following no comments from either parish council or any local residents, and a related change to Dorset Council's ward boundaries was subsequently made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to ensure that the parish and ward boundaries align (are coterminous).
- 5.3 The area of Loders parish that was moved into Shipton Gorge parish as a result of the previous community governance review contains 14 properties with 29 electors registered as at 1 December 2025.
- 5.4 Local residents have since raised concerns about the changes to the parish boundaries as they do not believe the current arrangements reflect community identity. The petition to Dorset Council seeking a further review was signed by

22 registered electors and asks that the boundary be returned to its previous line prior to the change that took effect in 2024.

6. Consultation undertaken

- 6.1 A public consultation exercise in respect of draft recommendations agreed by Full Council on 10 February 2026 was undertaken between 23 February and 27 March 2026. This included an online consultation survey, direct communication with the petition organiser and the affected parish councils, local ward members, the DAPTC, the member of Parliament and 77 residents of Shipton Gorge and Loders parishes who have signed up for direct e-newsletter communications from the council.
- 6.2 There were 21 responses received during the public consultation period. There were 20 respondents (95.24%) who were in favour of the draft recommendations whilst 1 respondent (4.76%) disagreed with the proposals as they felt the A35 was a more obvious boundary.

7. Working Group recommendations

- 7.1 A cross-party working group considered the petition and the responses received to the public consultation on draft recommendations, together with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance on community governance reviews.
- 7.2 The cross party task and finish group formed by resolution of Full Council to develop recommendations considered all responses received. As the majority of respondents supported the draft recommendation, the task and finish group propose these as their final recommendations which, if supported by Full Council, will form a reorganisation giving effect to the changes. The task and finish group's final recommendations are supported by the local ward members. The proposed final recommendations of the task and finish group are set out at Appendix A with the proposed new boundary being shown by a black dashed line. At Appendices B and C the western and eastern line of the boundary between the parishes is shown in closer detail.
- 7.4 Any decision made will not affect Dorset Council's ward boundaries. If Full Council's final recommendations is to make a change to the parish boundary, the LGBCE will be notified so that they can take this into account as part of the electoral review process.

8. Legal considerations

- 8.1 The Community Governance Review was undertaken under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and a reorganisation order will be drafted giving effect to the changes agreed by Full Council from 1 April 2027. Election dates and the councillors' term of office will remain unchanged with the next scheduled elections taking place in May 2029.

9. **Financial implications**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications to Dorset Council associated with this report.

10. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

- 10.1 There are no natural environment, climate and ecology implications associated with this report.

11. **Well-being and health implications**

- 11.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

12. **Other implications**

- 12.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

13. **Risk implications**

- 13.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

14. **Equalities**

- 14.1 Consideration to any equalities impact has been given and the report is attached to Appendix 2 of the [23 October 2025 Full Council](#) report on the community governance review.

15. **Appendices**

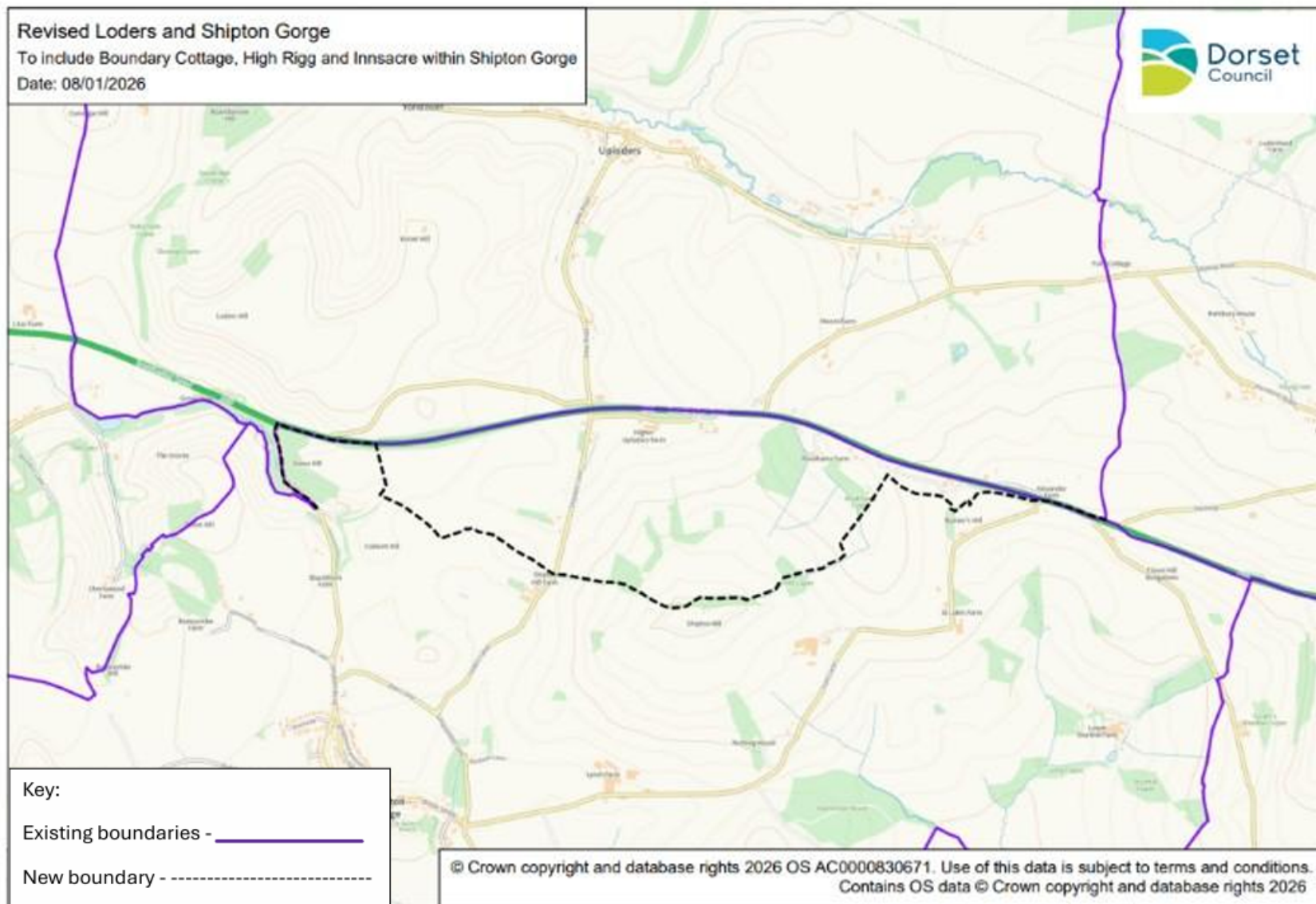
- 15.1 Appendix A – Final recommendations for public consultation.
Appendices B and C – Final recommendations in close up for the eastern and western ends of the boundary between Loders and Shipton Gorge.

16. **Background papers**

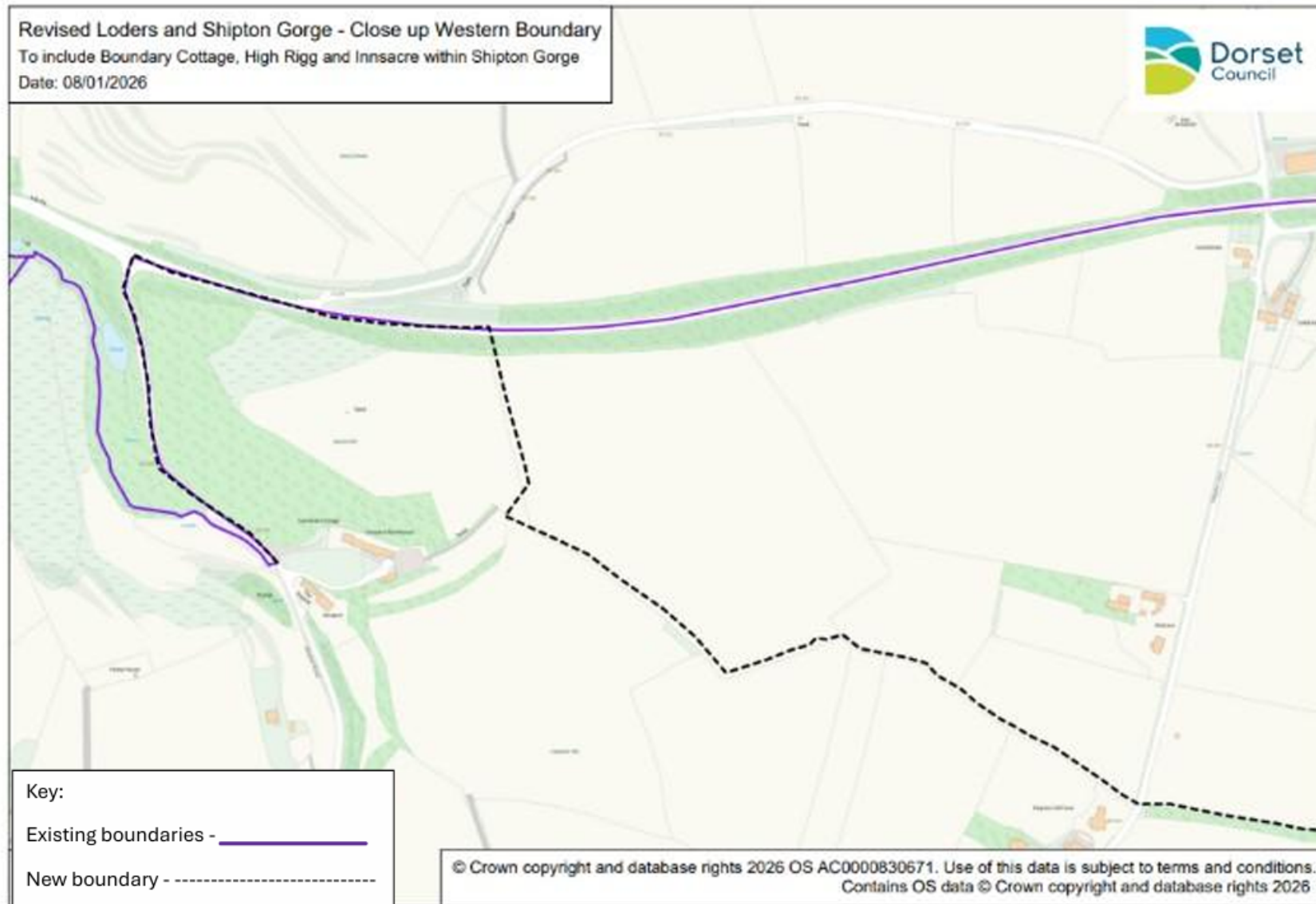
- 16.1 [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)
[Local Government Boundary Commission for England - Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)

17. **Report sign-off**

- 17.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Corporate Director Finance and Commercial (Acting Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder.







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Recommendation to Full Council 16 April 2026

From Staffing Committee – 31 March 2026

Review of the Senior Leadership Team and Appointment to Roles

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

C Howe, Chief Executive

Report Author: Chris Matthews

Title: Head of Human Resources

Tel: (01305) 225171

Email: Christopher.matthews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Part Exempt

Recommendation:

- (a) That Sean Cremer be appointed to the post of Director - Resources (Section 151 Officer) and as the administrator for the Local Government Pension Scheme in Dorset.
- (b) That the Council's Pay Policy Statement be amended to incorporate an additional pay enhancement for Directors in Statutory Officer positions.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Exempt report to Staffing Committee – 31 March 2026 (including its appendices 1 & 2)

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MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

REPORT BY: MONITORING OFFICER

Purpose of the Report

This report is to inform Full Council of the outcome of a complaint about the conduct of Cllr Alex Fuhrmann, as required by the Council's Member Complaint Process.

This report is for Members information only. There is no recommendation and the outcome is not for discussion or comment.

Background to the Report

The Monitoring Officer received a complaint against Councillor Alex Fuhrmann from Councillors Jane Somper, Laura Beddow and Andrew Parry, supported by Councillors Jill Haynes, Sherry Jespersen, Cathy Lugg, Emma Parker, Carole Jones and Val Potheary.

The complainants alleged Councillor Fuhrmann's use of social media in particular comments sent to Councillor Somper and private messages sent to Councillor Beddow on 18 December 2024 had breached the following parts of the Member Code of Conduct:

Section 1 - requirement to treat councillors and others with respect

Section 2 – requirement for councillors not to bully, harass or discriminate.

The complaint was investigated by Ms M Dolley a solicitor in Legal Services.

The complaint was heard by an Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee of Councillors Gary Suttle (Chair), Andy Todd and Neil Eysenck on 25 February 2026. Councillor Fuhrmann did not attend, and the Sub-Committee decided to proceed in his absence.

M Dolley presented the investigation report to the Sub-Committee and the Independent Person Mrs Elizabeth Whatley gave her view.

Following deliberations the Sub-Committee found that Councillor Fuhrmann had:

- breached the code of conduct by failing to treat Councillors Somper and Beddow with respect;
- not breached the code of conduct in respect of allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

The Sub-Committee agreed the following sanctions:

- Councillor Fuhrmann is required to make a written apology to Councillors Jane Somper and Laura Beddow

- The Monitoring Officer is instructed to arrange training for Councillor Fuhrmann; specifically in relation to the Councillor Code of Conduct and use of social media by councillors

The hearing concluded the complaint. There is no right of appeal of the decision. The Complaint Process requires Full Council be informed of the decision.

The decision is recorded in minutes of the hearing and a Decision Notice, both of which have been sent to Councillor Fuhrmann and published on the Council's website along with a version of the Investigation Report.

[Agenda for Audit and Governance \(Hearing\) Sub-Committee on Wednesday, 25th February, 2026, 4.00 pm - Dorset Council](#)

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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