

Housing Allocation Policy **Consultation Response Report**

Produced by Mark Simons
for Dorset Council

August 2020

Proposed Housing Allocation Policy

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	Dorset Council has been created out of the existing District/Borough council and the county council. Previously the Councils had their own housing allocation policies. Now it is necessary to create a single allocation policy for the new Dorset Council area. This consultation is about what options the council take in creating this new policy and understanding how those will affect people living the Dorset area Further to this the council needed to understand more about the possible impacts of any changes and if so whether these could be mitigated.
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation ran for 20 weeks starting on 2 March 2020 and finishing on 20 July 2020, following an extension due to COVID19 Over the latter part of this period the coronavirus pandemic meant council service points were closed. Following this the survey was extended finally closing on 20 July 2020. This allowed for a period to advertise and provide by post paper copies of the survey. The online survey remained open and further responses were received.
What consultation methods were used?	The consultation was available both electronically online and in paper form from local libraries/by post directly from Dorset Council. 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?	766 overall responses were received. 90% of responses were from members of the public. The rest were either organisational responses, elected members, support workers, parish councils or other.
How representative is the response to the wider population?	The response size is good for a council consultation of this type. The response from residents was reasonably representative of the Dorset population. There were significantly more female respondents than male but that is often seen in surveys of this type. Responses came from a wide range of ages matching the Dorset population as a whole. With 90% of the respondents saying their ethnic group was White British this is fairly typical of the wider population. Responses from disabled people were very high at 25.2% of responses compared to a Dorset figure of 4.6% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
How will the results be used?	Councillors will make the final decision on the Housing Allocation policy having regard to the feedback received during this consultation.

Who has produced this report?	Mark Simons, Consultation Officer, Dorset Council June 2020
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Background

Dorset Council was formed on 1 April 2019 as part of Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset. Dorset Council is a unitary authority that replaces the previous sovereign authorities, Dorset County Council; East Dorset District Council; North Dorset District Council; Purbeck District Council; West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

The council has a statutory duty to have a housing allocation policy under The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and has taken into account the code of guidance for local authorities published 2002, the Localism Act 2012, the Dorset Council Homelessness Strategy and the Equality Act 2010. The new Homechoice Dorset policy will replace the previous allocations policies of:

- ~ **Christchurch and East Dorset Joint Housing Allocation Policy**
- ~ **Dorset Home Choice Common Allocation Policy**

Dorset Council does not own its own housing stock. We work with registered providers to maintain a housing register where people can access social housing in our area. The scheme enables the Council and its partners to work together to ensure we prioritise those in most need of affordable housing. Dorset Council operates a Choice Based Letting Scheme and the Housing Allocation Policy sets out a framework that describes how to register, the assessment process and property allocation process.

The Consultation

The proposed policy makes some changes that will have an impact on households on the current housing register. Much of the content is determined by law but there are some key areas where we can exercise local discretion. These are the areas which were set out in the consultation questionnaire. We invited comments to make sure we have considered a wide range of views, which will help shape the final version of the new Homechoice Dorset policy.

We wanted to hear from a wide range individuals, and organisations such as registered housing providers, private rented sector landlords, people on the housing waiting list and the general public. A copy of the full draft policy was available online or by post from Dorset Council.

Very few questions were compulsory. A copy of the survey is available in the appendix.

Analysis Method: Questions were considered on an individual basis. Overall responses were examined -and also specific responses of respondents who responded with a disability. The official organisational responses were looked at separately. The main method of analysis was looking at the percentage of respondents who expressed a view on each question. For some questions the percentage strongly supporting and supporting are calculated. Those opposing and strongly opposing are also recoded. One is taken from the other giving a net agreement figure. This could be positive or negative. A figure of zero would mean an equal number of people supported and opposed a statement.

For each open question the text comments have been studied and coded depending on what issues were raised. The coded comments are then reported on based on the amount of times those individual issues have been raised. Total redacted comments are provided in an appendix.

Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

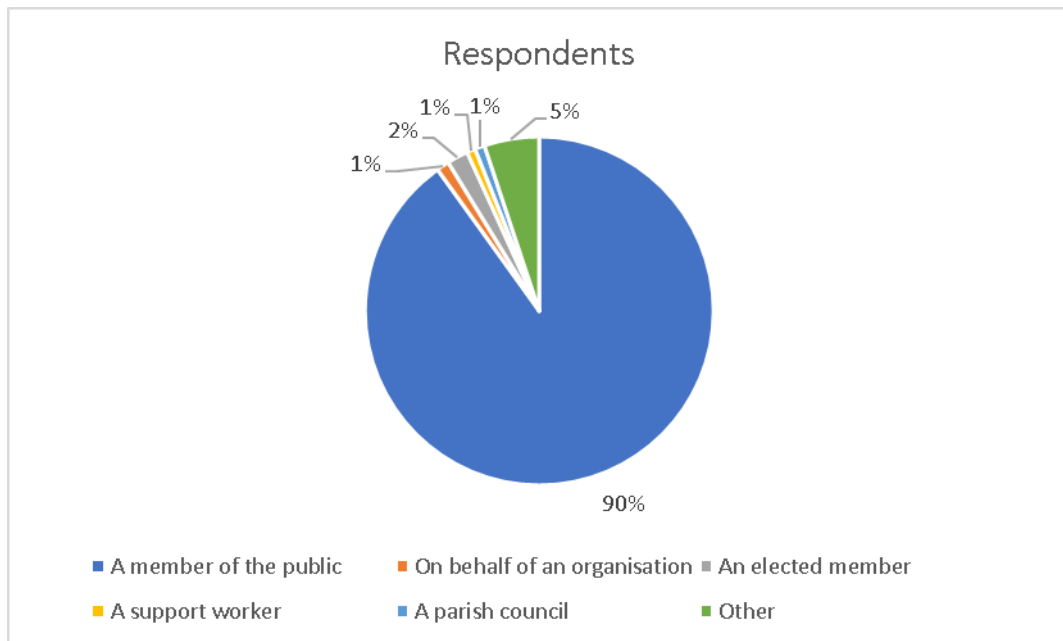
About respondents

766 overall responses were received.

Q Are you responding as:

Respondents:

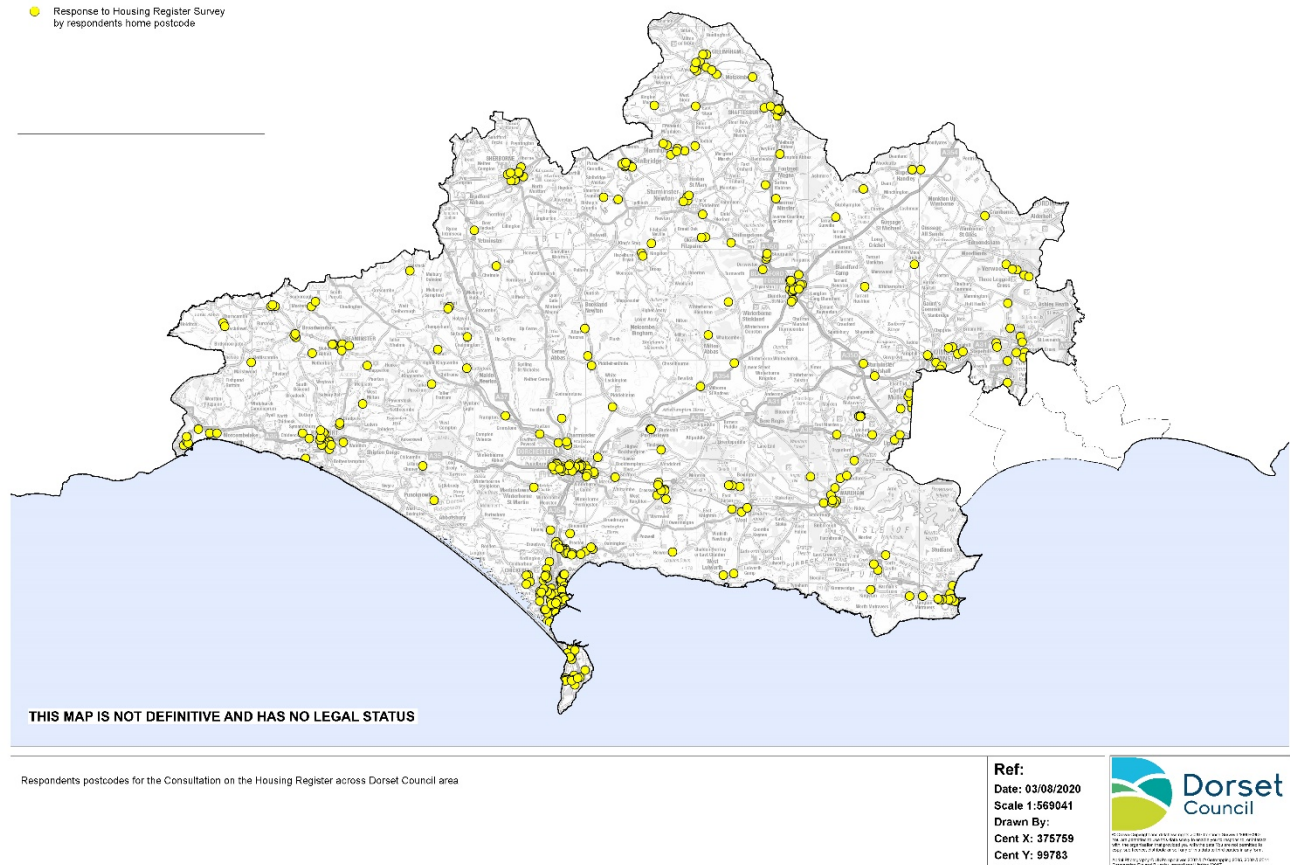
	% of all respondents	Number
A member of the public	90.1%	689
On behalf of an organisation	1.2%	9
An elected member	2.0%	15
A support worker	0.8%	6
A parish council	0.9%	7
Other	5.1%	39



90% of respondents were responding as members of the public. Other responses came on behalf of organisations, from elected members, support workers and parish councils.

Map of responses to the consultation

Postcodes were supplied by 561 respondents with the majority of those living in Dorset Council area. The map shows the distribution of overall responses to the consultation demonstrating a good spread across the geographical area. Promotion of the consultation appears to have been successful across all areas.



Parish/Town Councils

8 parish/ town councils responded including
:

Council name
Dorchester
Lydlinch Parish Council
Langton Matravers Parish Council
Wool Parish Council

Official Organisational Responses

9 organisations provided an official response

Organisational Responses
Bridport Cohousing
Places for People
Places for People
Hastoe Housing Association
Citizens Advice Central Dorset
Stonewater
Middlemarch
Bridport and District Citizens Advice
Dorchester Municipal Charities

A further 10 responses came from support workers

Groups

Q Please tell us which of the following groups you belong to: (select all that apply)

	% of all respondents	Number
On the housing register with Dorset Homechoice Common Allocations Policy	57.3%	436
On the housing register with Christchurch and East Dorset Joint Housing Allocations Policy	3.8%	29
Social Housing Tenant	23.8%	181
Private Rented Tenant	21.3%	162
Owner Occupier	18.7%	142
Other	7.2%	57

Respondents were asked about which groups they came into shown in the table above. They could be in multiple groups. In responses to each question we will look for similarities and differences based on these (and other) groups. e.g. disabled responses. There were responses from 159 who were disabled and 35 people who were serving/veterans/reservists/family of UK Armed Forces.

Other groups included a wide range of personal situations including people living at home with their parents, people who were homeless, landlords and people waiting to get on the housing register.

Local Connection

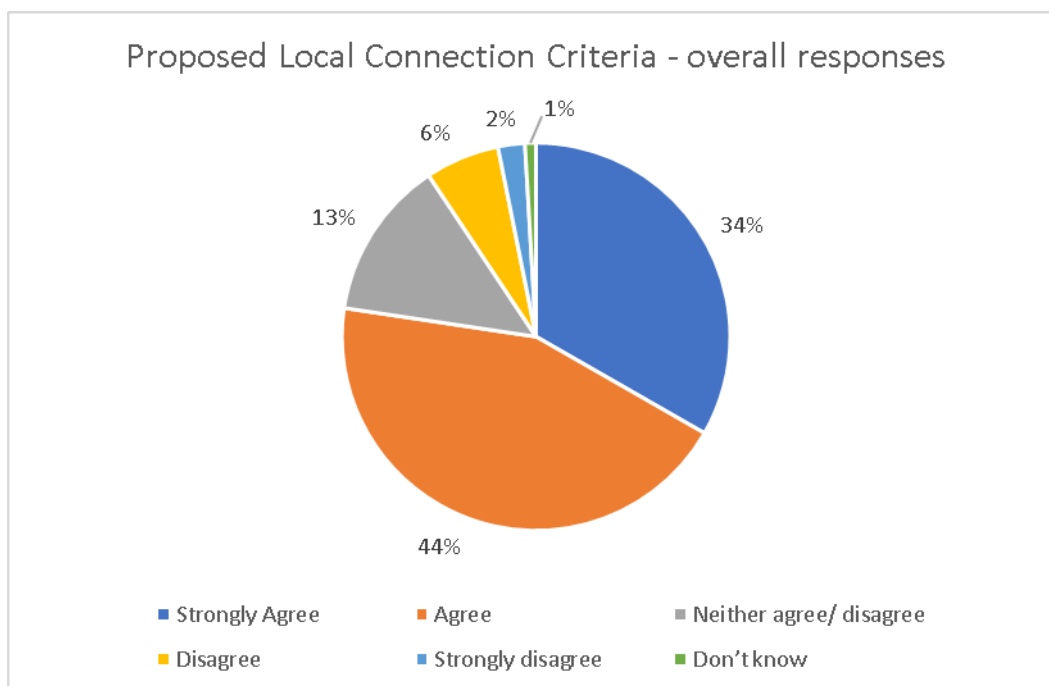
Who can apply to join the register? A key element of the policy is a local connection. To qualify for the Homechoice Dorset scheme applicants must meet **ONE** of the local connection criteria (below) to ensure wherever possible social housing goes to local people (there are some exceptions to this criteria shown in the policy). The current government guidance is that councils should apply a two-year residency test. Dorset Council proposes the following criteria for local connection:

Requirement	Qualification
Residency in the Dorset Council area	2 years or 3 years out of the last 5 years
Close family continuous residency in the Dorset Council area (parents, siblings, non-dependant children)	5 years evidenced
Paid employment in the Dorset Council area	16 hours per week average for minimum period of 1 year (including zero hours contracts).
Offer of permanent employment to social tenant in the Dorset Council area	16 hours per week average for period no less than 1 year (including zero hours contracts) and where it is unreasonable to travel from current social housing property
Location requirements	Any requirements detailed in a Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and/or a local lettings plan.

Q Do you agree with the local connection criteria as described above?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	253	335	101	47	17	7
% of all who responded	33.3%	44.1%	13.3%	6.2%	2.2%	0.9%

Overall there was strong agreement to the local connection criteria with 77.4% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 8.4% with disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 69, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing.



Looking at responses from different groups there are only small variations. The table below show net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be considerable support for the proposals. The strongest support comes from owner occupiers and private tenants and the weakest support people on the register with Christchurch and East and Social housing tenants.

Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Owner Occupiers	82%	4%	78
Private Tenants	82%	4%	78
Forces	86%	12%	74
Disabled	78%	9%	69
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	75%	9%	66
Social Tenants	73%	11%	62
Christchurch and East (on register)	62%	10%	52

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Middlemarch, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset), Bridport and District Citizens Advice and Stonewater all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal. No organisations disagreed.

Q. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 63 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances. There were concerns over the limitations over local authority boundaries. A number of comments related to how local people (who were born in Dorset) did not get the precedence they deserved due to the "openness" of the criteria. Employment criteria were felt to be weak and open to abuse by some but too onerous to others.. The full (redacted) comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	mentions
Local connections should go beyond local authority boundaries	6
Local connection period should be longer	4
Domestic abuse (fleeing) should override these connections	4
Some people have no options	3
Military should be exempt from local connection	2
5 years is too long for local connection	2
Employment should be longer e.g.2 years not 1	2
2 years out of 5 is ok	2
Give flexibility by reducing time of residency	2
Misinterpretation of 2 years or 3 out of 5	2
Other	2
Some people may want to move to a different area	2
5 years is reasonable to demonstrate local connection	1
2 years is too short for residency	1
Working time average should be longer - 30hrs a week for 2 years	1
3 years would make more sense than 5 years	1
working 16 hrs a week is fine - but what if you can't work	1
Some people don't have family	1
If your non dependant child moves 5 years is a long time to wait to move to join them	1
Close family connection should be dropped	1
Everyone should have the same opportunity to live where they choose	1
Include working but not schooling	1
Disagree with 5 year family residency	1
Don't agree with local connection at all	1
Priority need should overcome local connection	1
Good to use just 1 criterion	1
Working should be more than 16 hrs a week	1
care/health outcomes should give opportunity to move	1
Should support people born in the area wanting to return "home"	1
should be local people IN work	1
Local connection should include 2 criteria to stop in-migration	1
Should include church link as criteria	1
Employment criteria open to abuse	1
Working 25 hrs a week would make households more self-supporting	1
Employment criteria gives people precedence over locals	1
Zero-hour contracts difficult to evidence	1
1-year employment is too long	1
Need simpler criteria	1
Grandchildren and in laws don't count and should	1
Employment criteria too weak compared to residency	1

Sample comments

"5 years is a reasonable amount of time to demonstrate a local connection. 2 years is too short."

"As a military family it is almost impossible to form a local connection due to the frequent postings to other areas. As a military family we have no choice as to where we are based or where we are housed."

"Close family continuous residency: e.g., if a non-dependent child moves to the area intending to stay long term and the parent requires social housing, it would be unfair for them to have to wait for their non-dependent child to have lived continuously for five years before they can apply for social housing."

"I am on the border with Somerset and all the family live nearby but in Somerset. I can only bid for Dorset. I can't bid on properties in Somerset, I don't know whether this will change under the new system"

"Everyone should have equal opportunity to live in their chosen area."

"I feel that you shouldn't need to have a local connection with an area, especially if you have a priority need to be rehoused and wish to move to that area to receive support. Not having a local connection could mean a great impact on health and wellbeing if the person is turned down for a bidding property because they didn't have a local connection. How are people supposed to get a local connection in the area they wish to move to receive support if they keep getting turned down"

"I myself and my family applied to be registered on the housing register and were told as we had not been living in Dorset for two years, we would not be eligible. Here it states that registrants have to meet ONE local connection - I am an NHS worker in Dorchester however was told that I did not qualify to go on the register. So it would be good to use just ONE of the local connections rather than the 2 year requirement"

"I think that the residency period for all applicants should be longer to give long term residents of the county more chance of getting a property. People who have only lived in Dorset for less than five years get the chance to queue jump over long-time residents."

"Residency section compared to close family continuous residency. I feel that residency section, the qualifying time is not long enough. If someone has family, parents, siblings in the area, and we're born in the area and grew up in the area, they should be given first priority above all others."

"Some people have various zero hour contracts during a year with different employers, as we are a seasonal town, the requirement to provide proof of previous employment with in that year from another employer may be difficult for some people, what type of evidence would you accept ? , wage slips, p60, bank statements, is all of this evidence really necessary."

"This is too complicated. You've got a variety of housing schemes in the region and some only require a local connection with no housing need requirement and so simplifying any local connection requirement will help the public and the officers administering the register. Restricting people from registering will mean the housing register does not reflect the actual need in the region for accommodation. It is better to get people registered on the list and then use any local connection as a priority for shortlisting alongside any other planning or other restriction. The 3 years out of 5 and the family connection will mean people who are not local will be able to register and this seems to be counter intuitive to the statement that most social housing should go to local people."

Banding Assessment Criteria

The survey explained the proposed banding criteria, and this is set out below.

“We propose to use a banding system for prioritising applications for an allocation of housing. The following shows the proposed bands and full details can be found in Appendix 3 of the Homechoice Dorset Scheme.

Band A – Exceptional Housing Need

- Exceptional Housing need that takes priority over other applicants
- Statutory Homeless and owed the full Housing Duty by Dorset Council s193 (2)
- Exceptional Disrepair Need
- Exceptional Medical Need
- Urgent Welfare Need
- Statutory Overcrowding Part X Housing Act 1985

Band B – High Housing Need

- Owed a relief duty under s189B (2)
- Under occupying social Housing
- Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms or more
- High Medical Need
- High Disrepair Need
- High Welfare Need
- Severe and/or persistent harassment
- Proven social need/support delivery of another service
- Social tenant living in adapted property
- Social tenant requiring extensive adaptations
- Corporate Parenting responsibility
- Corporate Duty
- Supported Housing and ready to move on
- Efficient Management of stock
- Owed a relief Duty under s189B (2) with no local connection

Band C – Medium Housing Need

- Owed a Prevention Duty under s195 (2)
- Homeless Households
- Accommodation duty following deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate s193c (4) duty owed
- Medium Medical Need
- Medium Disrepair Need
- Medium Welfare Need
- Social Tenant with right to move for work
- Affordability
- Service Personnel
- Split families
- Owed a Prevention Duty under s195 (2) with no local connection
- Unsatisfactory or unsanitary Conditions

Band D – Low Housing need

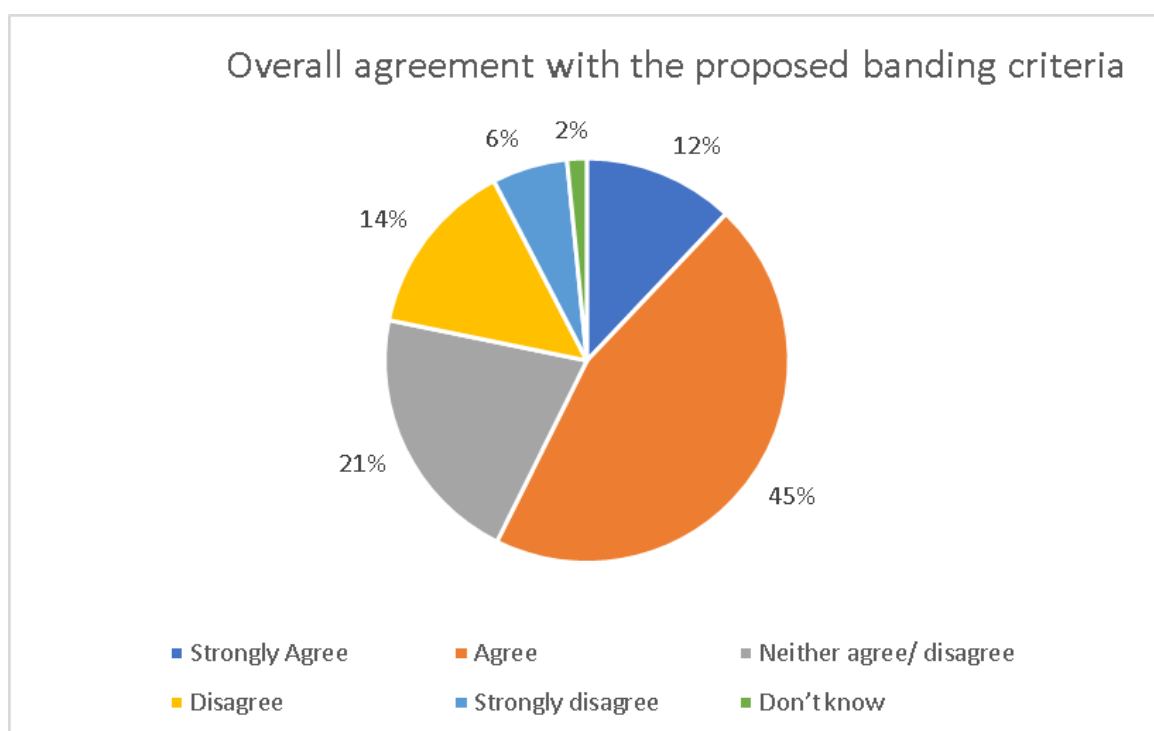
- Low Housing Need
- Low Medical Need
- Low Disrepair Need

- Low Welfare needs
- Older Peoples Housing
- Older Peoples Housing no local connection
- Supported Housing or Care Leaver not ready for move on
- Applicants with other Housing related debts
- Deliberately Worsening Circumstances”

Q. Do you agree with the banding criteria proposed above?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	92	345	159	108	46	12
% of all who responded	12.1%	45.3%	20.9%	14.2%	6.0%	1.6%

Overall there was relatively strong agreement to the banding criteria proposed with 57.4% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to 20.2% with disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 37.2, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 21% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the banding criteria.



Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table below show net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement. The strongest support comes from people on the Christchurch & East register and owner occupiers with Forces people and Dorset Homechoice respondents the least support. This is shown on the table below.

Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Christchurch and East (on register)	69%	14%	55
Owner Occupiers	66%	16%	50
Private Tenants	59%	17%	43
Disabled	62%	19%	43
Social Tenants	53%	20%	33
Forces	60%	29%	31
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	51%	23%	28

Nearly a third of Forces respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with the criteria.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Middlemarch, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset), Bridport and District Citizens Advice and Stonewater all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal. No organisations disagreed.

Q11. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 149 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances. The table below shows the concerns raised. There were many individual concerns but a number were raised several times. The top five issues were: medical needs should be banded higher, older people should be banded higher, length of time on the register should count for something together with how overcrowding was treated, particularly for overcrowding by 1 bedroom. The full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	mentions
All medical needs should be in higher bands	17
Older people should be higher banded	16
Length of time on the register really should count for something	13
Overcrowding by 1 bed should be included	13
Overcrowding by 2 beds should be higher banded	9
Without a local connection should not be on list	9
Service personnel need to be higher category and not time limited	9
Working people are disadvantaged	8
Bands C & D have no hope and need re assessing	6
Older people moving out to free up properties should be higher banded due to knock on gains	6
Banding doesn't work	6
Homeless households should be a higher band	5
Disabilities should be higher banded	4
Under occupancy should be on list	4
Low medical needs should be higher	4
All categories of refusal or unreasonable behaviour etc should be lower	3
Affordability and financial hardship should be higher	3
Need more flexibility	3
Other	3

Immigrants and prisoners should not score highly	2
Average person at a disadvantage	2
Prevention of Duty should be higher than a C	2
Unsanitary conditions should be higher	2
language not always clear	2
Homeless too highly ranked	2
People downsizing should be banded higher to make larger properties available	2
Age for older peoples housing need to go up	1
Affordability needs to be higher category	1
Private rents so high mean lower standard of living	1
All lower bands ignore personal problems	1
Exceptional housing need too vague	1
Victim of ASB needs top band	1
Service personnel should include break up of marriage	1
Low housing need must be higher banded than deliberately worsening circumstances	1
Too complicated	1
Cramped accommodation not adequately housed	1
Split families should be higher	1
Everyone should have access to housing	1
Care leavers should be a higher band	1
Process too slow	1
Risk of eviction not covered	1
Higher band always trump the others leaving no hope	1
Overcrowding often of own making	1
Don't agree with band A	1
You are housing the wrong people	1
Shouldn't include low housing need	1
Medical needs and overcrowding are linked	1
children staying in split families impact on need	1
Process of bidding too stressful	1
ECs always trump everyone else	1
Fraud and issue	1
Cross authority switching is difficult	1
Fleeing violence should be included	1
Band A should just be homeless	1
Need interview as well as paper assessment	1
Don't change	1
Have different rural bandings	1
Need to move for work band	1
Foster homes need own banding	1
Split families too high	1

Sample comments

"Although this prioritises those in the most need it leaves the average person at a disadvantage."

"At the moment we are in the sliver category for overcrowding by one bedroom as we have two bedrooms and 3 children under 6 (one boy and twin girls). Reading the changes we understand it that we would not be under any of the criteria. Also the statutory overcrowding is very confusing."

"Homeless households should be band A. Security for children is paramount. Older people's housing should take priority over older people's housing with no local connection. The council has no responsibility to house people of any age who have no local connection to Dorset. Split families should be band B as parents need to stay close to their children. We have enough housing need. Why does the council have any duty to house people under Prevention Duty, Relief Duty, and people who have refused to cooperate, especially if they have no local connection."

"How about people who have been on the list for a long time, why should they constantly be put back because other people feel they have a right to social housing, Length of time should be taken into consideration"

"I believe over crowding is a high need not just by 2 bedrooms as that is ridiculous. I am over crowded by having my son in my room and it makes me ill through lack of sleep and under this I would never be moved as we all know if your not high priority you will never move".

"I believe that anyone that has a medical problem should be all in same band don't think it's right you have low medical band if you got a medical problem and have proof from a doctor the council should sort it out soon as they can".

"I think medium medical needs should be more important than they are at the moment. Also the amount of years you are bidding should stand for something-i have been bidding for example 4yrs approx. and don't seem to be getting any nearer to being offered a property. I have to use metal stairs to leave the premises and with crutches that is not easy and even my partner has slipped on them and due to this i am even more shaky and don't go out very much if at all these days so i am stuck inside which can be depressing"

"Older people's housing is given no status at all? I live rurally and my husband works in our village. He is the main breadwinner. When I retire in 4 years we will not be able to afford our rented home and would be very much in need of older people's housing locally as my husband will still have another 8 years to work. This discounts us from applying"

"Overcrowding by 1 bedroom should be high priority, families are having to give up their lounge to get additional bedroom space therefore losing a central family hub"

"Some higher priorities should be lower such as refusal to cooperate. Those occupying a property with excess bedrooms should be higher to free it up. Why are single people housed in three bedroom properties? Also why is someone (a middle-aged person in a particular case) entitled to stay in a 4 bedroom house after parent dies? Accept that there will be a small period of allowance but no attempt to free up house years later?"

"Statutory Homeless and owed the full Housing Duty by Dorset Council s193 (2) should be band B Owed a relief duty under s189B (2) should be band c Owed a Prevention Duty under s195 (2) should be band d Deliberately Worsening Circumstances - should be do not qualify for the register Applicants with other Housing related debts - needs clarification as a lot applicants owe money to the council"

Bedroom Entitlement

The previous policies assessed residents using different bedroom entitlements depending on where they lived. We propose to harmonise the bedroom assessment as shown in the following table:

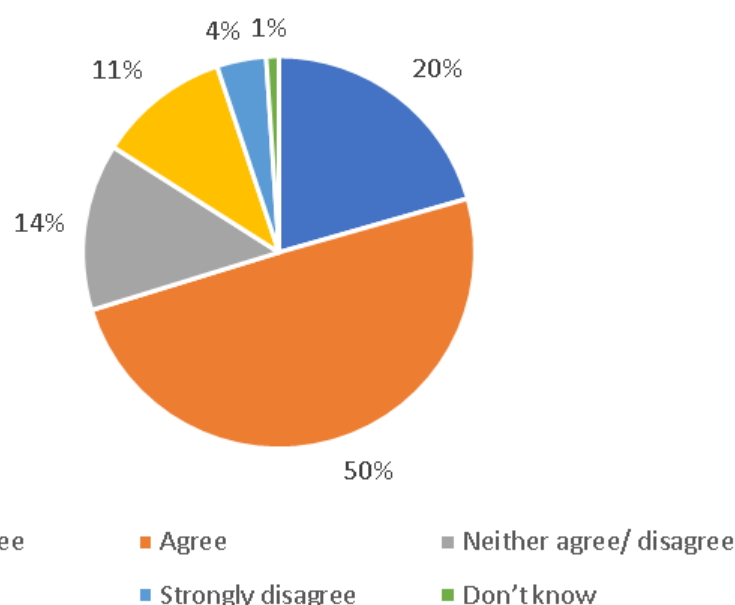
Property type/size	Household
Bedsit/studio	Single Applicant
1 Bedroom	Single Applicant or Applicants living as a couple with no children
2 Bedrooms	Couple, with 1 child; or Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 2 children of: (a) The same sex under 16 (b) Opposite sex under 10
3 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple with 2 children, with at least 1 of opposite sex over 10; Single Applicant, or Applicants living as a couple, with 3 children or 4 children: (a) Of the same sex under 16; or (b) Two children of each sex under 16 (c) of either sex all under 10
4 Bedrooms	Single Applicant, or Applicants with 5 or more children Single Applicant or Applicants with 4 children where at least one of them is aged 10 and is of the opposite sex of the others or one of them is aged 16 or over

Q. Do you agree with the bedroom criteria proposed?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	157	379	105	83	31	8
% of all who responded	20.6%	49.7%	13.8%	10.9%	4.1%	1.0%

Overall there was strong agreement to the bedroom criteria proposed with 70.3% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to 15.0% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 55.3, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 14% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the bedroom criteria.

Bedroom entitlement - overall responses



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Owner Occupiers	80%	9%	71
Christchurch and East (on register)	72%	14%	59
Social Tenants	72%	16%	57
Forces	71%	17%	57
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	68%	15%	53
Disabled	70%	18%	52
Private Tenants	66%	19%	47

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table below show net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with at least two out of three of all respondent groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes from owner occupiers and the least support from private tenants. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset) and Stonewater all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal.

Hastoe Housing Association, Middlemarch, and Bridport and District Citizens Advice all disagreed with the proposal.

Hastoe Housing Association said "Our own lettings policy allows some flexibility over bedroom allocation. For example, we would allow a single applicant, or applicants living as a couple with two children of opposite sex under 10 to occupy either a 2 or a 3 bedroom

property. We also allow under occupation by one bedroom in rural areas to meet local connection requirements”

Middlemarch said “Please make an exception for rural properties where local connection criteria apply. Allowing occupation of these properties with one spare bedroom assists the allocation of these homes to someone with a local connection because the numbers involved in supply and demand are relatively small and full occupation is not always possible. In addition, households are able to grow into their homes rather than seek larger accommodation which, due to the very low level of supply in rural communities, is rarely available at the right time.”

Bridport and District Citizens Advice said “We would wish to see a more flexible approach taken and consideration of blended households and families which do not fit the standard family unit.”

Q13. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 110 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people’s circumstances. The table below shows the main themes coming through. The top five issues raised were:

- One bedroom not always suitable for all couples as have medical needs
- Size of rooms in modern housing too small
- Children with special needs/disability need own room
- Upper age limit of 10 needs lowering
- Helpers/carers need a room to stay in

The concerns about couples needing to sleep apart due to health reasons and the need to have space for a carer were the main concern for quite a few respondents. The full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	mentions
One bedroom not always suitable for all couples as have medical needs	21
Size of rooms in modern housing too small	9
Children with special needs/disability need own room	8
Upper age limit of 10 needs lowering	8
Helpers/carers need a room to stay in	7
Same sex can't always share	6
Issue over parents who have custody/occasional staying visits from children	5
No under occupancy	4
Age issues as kids grow and create need to move... Futureproof	4
Single applicants need more than bedsits	3
Couple should be given option of two bedrooms	3
Family of 4 need 3 beds	3
Other	3
Be more flexible	3
Have no restrictions	3
Singles need space too	3
One bedroom often too small	2
Two beds not suitable for 2 adults and two kids	2
Age of puberty	2

Foster children by law must have their own room	2
Singles should not get/keep 2 bed properties	2
Singles should get 2 beds	2
Kids need space	2
Five kids can manage with less bedrooms	1
Have 4 kids and only qualify for 3 beds	1
Same sex children can share	1
Feels wrong	1
Can choose size if can afford it	1
mum and child need 2 beds	1
Age gap affects sharing	1
Seems to reward large families	1
In rural areas accept under occupancy to allow local connections	1
Need space to run business/work from home	1
Restrict singles more	1
Age 16 should be lowered	1
Rules create overcrowding	1

Sample Comments

"You do not class a couple living in a cramped studio apartment as being overcrowded or lacking a bedroom. My wife and I, living in a small studio flat, Have challenged this and been told "you and your wife do not meet the criteria for overcrowding". This has resulted in our having to live apart."

"We would wish to see a more flexible approach taken and consideration of blended households and families which do not fit the standard family unit"

"We have been assessed as one bedroom. We have two where we are and there isn't enough room for my husband to mobilise safely. This assessment should consider for options such as equipment, medical supplies and the fact that we don't get adequate rest as my husband is up and down all night and disturbs me crying with the pain in his legs. He needs room to consider for wheelchair as if we had adequate room he could use a pair of wheels now to get around on to take pressure off his legs."

"There is too much focus on bedroom entitlement (number of bedrooms) and not space standards as per the housing act 1985 part X. An example of this is our current property where a child of 5 is expected to share a bedroom with a 1.5 year old that can only fit a single bed with no furniture. This entitlement needs to take space regulation in to consideration instead of just age and sex."

"The upper age of 16, this needs to be lowered."

"The age bands are very high for same sex children. Why shouldn't they be allowed their own private space! Also in modern homes now room sizes are extremely small and cramped! Not ideal to share!"

"Please take into account the space people use to work / run a business. E.G. a single person with no children may still need their 2 bed property, if 1 of the bedrooms is used to run their business / work from home / freelance - i.e. to support themselves financially. More and more people will be working from home in the near and longer term future."

"My wife and myself have to sleep in separate bedrooms as I suffer with Sleep Apnoea and have to wear a face mask every night which is noisy and keeps her awake!"

“Medical needs - some clients I have worked with Need to separately sleep from their partners / carers. However there is little latitude to allow for this when helping with an Occupational Therapy Functional Needs Housing Report. The definition for Bedroom needs is often too onerous and does not allow for this medical need”

“I am an elderly tenant with various disabilities. Often I have a friend or a son staying with me when not well. I am still waiting for social housing 1 bedroom but hope to get a 2 bed so there is no problem for a helper to stay over. Also cheaper then nursing staff home visiting”

“As a family with 4 children (2 boys (6 & 10), 2 girls (14 & 8)), we would only be entitled to apply for a three bedroom home. Quite clearly although they are able to share a bedroom, the emotional strain due to age difference is not taken into account.”

“2 bedroom should be made available to couples where for medical reasons (proof from doctor) separate rooms are necessary i.e. where one partner has cancer or similar illness - to ensure the other has good sleeping conditions to enable prolonged care giving thereby reducing pressure on the NHS.”

“applicants as a couple should be allowed a 2-bedroom property”

Rural Properties

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, the 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. The policy aims to create mixed and balanced communities and manage the register for all those in housing need. We are **proposing to allocate 75% of rural properties to those who meet the local connection criteria** detailed in the Homechoice Dorset policy.:

Below is the list of villages that meet the criteria in Dorset.

Village List

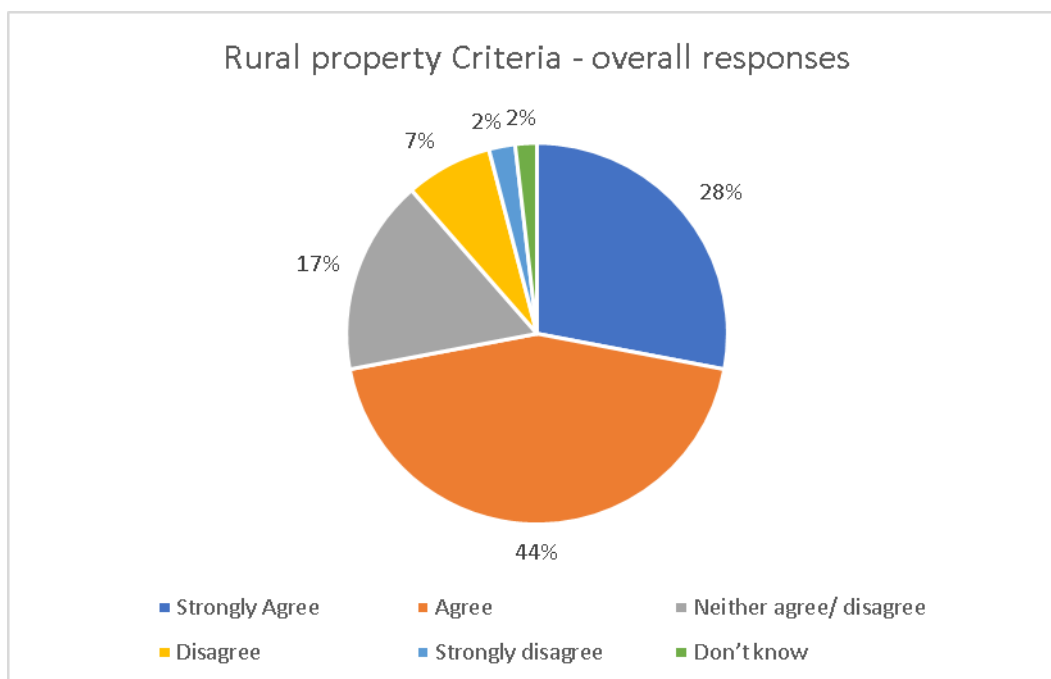
- Abbotsbury, Affpuddle, Alderholt, Allington, Alton Pancras, Anderson, Arne, Ashmore, Askerswell, Athelhampton
- Batcombe, Beaminster, Beer Hackett, Bere Regis, Bettiscombe, Bincombe, Bishop's Caundle, Blandford St Mary, Bloxworth, Bothenhampton, Bourton, Bradford Abbas, Bradford Peverell, Broadmayne, Broadwindsor, Bryanston, Buckhorn Weston, Buckland Newton, Burleston, Burstock, Burton Bradstock, Burton
- Cann, Castleton, Catherston Leweston, Cattistock, Caundle Marsh, Cerne Abbas, Chalbury, Chaldon Herring, Charlton Marshall, Charminster, Charmouth, Chedington, Cheselbourne, Chetnole, Chettle, Chideock, Child Okeford, Chilcombe, Compton Valence, Chilfrome, Church Knowle, Clifton Maybank, Compton Abbas, Coombe Keynes, Corfe Castle, Corscombe, Cranborne, Crossways
- Dewlish, Durweston
- East Chelborough, East Holme, East Lulworth, East Orchard, East Stoke, East Stour, Edmondsham, Evershot
- Farnham, Fifehead Magdalene, Fifehead Neville, Fleet, Folke, Fontmell Magna, Frampton, Frome St Quintin, Frome Vauchurch
- Glanvilles Wootton, Goathill, Godmanstone, Gussage All Saints, Gussage St Michael
- Halstock, Hammoon, Hanford, Haydon, Hazelbury Bryan, Hermitage, Hilfield, Hilton, Hinton Martell, Hinton Parva, Hinton St Mary, Holnest, Holt, Holwell, Hooke, Horton, Hurn
- Ibberton, Iwerne Courtney or Shroton, Iwerne Minster, Iwerne Stepleton
- Kimmeridge, Kingston Russell, Kington Magna
- Langton Herring, Langton Long Blandford, Langton Matravers, Leigh, Leweston, Lillington, Littlebredy, Litton Cheney, Loders, Long Bredy, Long Crichel, Longburton, Lydlinch, Lytchett Matravers
- Maiden Newton, Manston, Mapperton, Mappowder, Margaret Marsh, Marnhull, Marshwood, Melbury Abbas, Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Sampford, Melcombe Horsey, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Minterne Magna, Moor Crichel, Morden, Moreton, Mosterton, Motcombe
- Nether Cerne, Nether Compton, Netherbury, North Poorton, North Wootton
- Osborne, Okeford Fitzpaine, Osmington, Over Compton, Owermoigne

- Pamphill, Pentridge, Piddlehinton, Piddletrenthide, Pilsdon, Pimperne, Portesham, Portland, Powerstock, Poxwell, Poyntington, Puddletown, Pulham, Puncknowle, Purse Caundle
- Rampisham, Ryme Intrinseca
- Sandford Orcas, Seaborough, Shapwick, Shillingstone, Shipton Gorge, Silton, Sixpenny Handley, South Perrott, Spetisbury, Stalbridge, Stanton St Gabriel, Steeple, Stinsford, Stockwood, Stoke Abbott, Stoke Wake, Stour Provost, Stourpaine, Stourton Caundle, Stratton, Studland, Sturminster Marshall, Sturminster Newton, Sutton Waldron, Swyre, Sydling St Nicholas, Symondsbury
- Tarrant Crawford, Tarrant Gunville, Tarrant Hinton, Tarrant Keyneston, Tarrant Launceston, Tarrant Monkton, Tarrant Rawston, Tarrant Rushton, Thorncombe, Thornford, Tincleton, Todber, Toller Fratrum, Toller Porcorum, Tolpuddle, Trent, Turners Puddle, Turnworth, Tyneham
- Up Cerne
- Wareham St Martin, Warmwell, West Chelborough, West Compton, West Knighton, West Lulworth, West Orchard, West Stafford, West Stour, Whitcombe, Whitchurch Canoniconum, Wimborne St Giles, Winfrith Newburgh, Winterborne Came, Winterborne Clenston, Winterborne Herringston, Winterborne Houghton, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Monkton, Winter borne St Martin, Winterborne Stickland, Winterborne Whitechurch, Winterborne Zelston, Winterbourne Abbas, Winterbourne Steepleton, Witchampton, Woodlands, Woodsford, Wool, Wolland, Wootton Fitzpaine, Worth Matravers, Wraxall, Wynford Eagle
- Yetminster

Q. Do you agree with the rural property criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	213	335	126	56	17	14
% of all who responded	28.0%	44.0%	16.6%	7.4%	2.2%	1.8%

Overall there was strong agreement to the rural property criteria proposed with 72.0% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 9.6% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 62.4, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 17% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the rural property criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Christchurch and East (on register)	82%	7%	76
Social Tenants	75%	7%	68
Private Tenants	73%	8%	65
Disabled	73%	9%	64
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	70%	8%	62
Forces	72%	14%	57
Owner Occupiers	73%	16%	56

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table above show net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with at least two out of three of all respondent groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people on the housing register with Christchurch and East and the least support from disabled. A high 28% of respondents strongly agreed with this criteria, the highest of all the questions. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset), Hastoe Housing Association Middlemarch, and Bridport and District Citizens Advice Centre all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal.

Stonewater and Dorchester Municipal Charities neither agreed nor disagreed. No organisations disagreed with the proposal and there were no specific comments.

Q15. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 72 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances. Most concerns were that the policy didn't go far enough to local people had a good opportunity to get a property. There were quite a few concerns about the problems of rural living and the difficulties over public transport and other facilities. There were some who felt need should always come before local connection. The full range of comments are available in the appendix and a summary of issues provided here.

Issue	mentions
Should be 100% not 75%	15
Policy does not work due to problems of rurality and lack of facilities like transport	9
Other (non-related to question)	8
Need is better than local connection	7
Should be 80% or higher with local connection	4
Needs some flexibility	4
probably agree with proposals in some way	3
The local connection needs to include wider family/friends etc	2
New properties should go to existing good tenants	2
50% would be better to let others in	2
Should be village focused not wider area	2
All Dorset should be local connection - not just rural	2
It The policy won't work	1
New properties should be 100% too	1
A gold should always take priority over bronze with a LC	1
Towns should be protected more too	1
Town people often don't fit in rural areas	1
Could lead to under occupancy in rural properties	1
Too many people don't have local connections	1
New people moving into rural areas bring social benefits	1
Antiquated policy	1
Funding only for outsiders to move in	1
Don't include Corfe Mullen	1
What does local connection really mean - born but moved away is still local	1
If you are not local this policy gives little chance of getting a property	1
Affordable rent high compared to social rent	1
People get stuck in villages	1
Not fair on urban people	1
Support older people in rural living	1

Sample Comments

"I think it should just stay as who comes up highest on the banding. Housing needs are desperate and I don't think for example a silver or bronze applicant should come up higher than a gold just because of a local connection to the area."

"I was allocated a house in Corfe Castle, I would have preferred to be in an area with more facilities for my teenage children and public transport, we all feel rather cut off."

“100% of these properties should be allocated to people with a proven local connection and housing need...not 75%”

“There is a lot of properties in rural areas that we have family members living in but are not parents or siblings. They our aunts/uncles or grandparents”

“We could be a perfectly suitable family for a rural property and definitely have a housing need for the size of property but because we have no local rural connection we will miss out and feel limited to where our local area connection is even though it may only be a few miles down the road, makes no sense when we are a homeless full duty family and limits us to where there is a shortage of housing when I thought the whole point of opening the councils in Dorset up to the different areas/councils was to make it fair and easier to bid on properties a little further afield and actually feel hopeful you have a chance of getting it”

“You don't need this policy criteria to achieve the aim, you can achieve sustainable rural communities by giving opportunity to Dorset residents to embrace neighbouring communities - this is too antiquated in policy”

“Rural properties should be 100 percent local connection widening out to adjacent villages”

“People need housing regardless of where they had the privilege of being born it's not fair otherwise on those in need who were born outside of rural areas and it reduces social mobility”

Homelessness

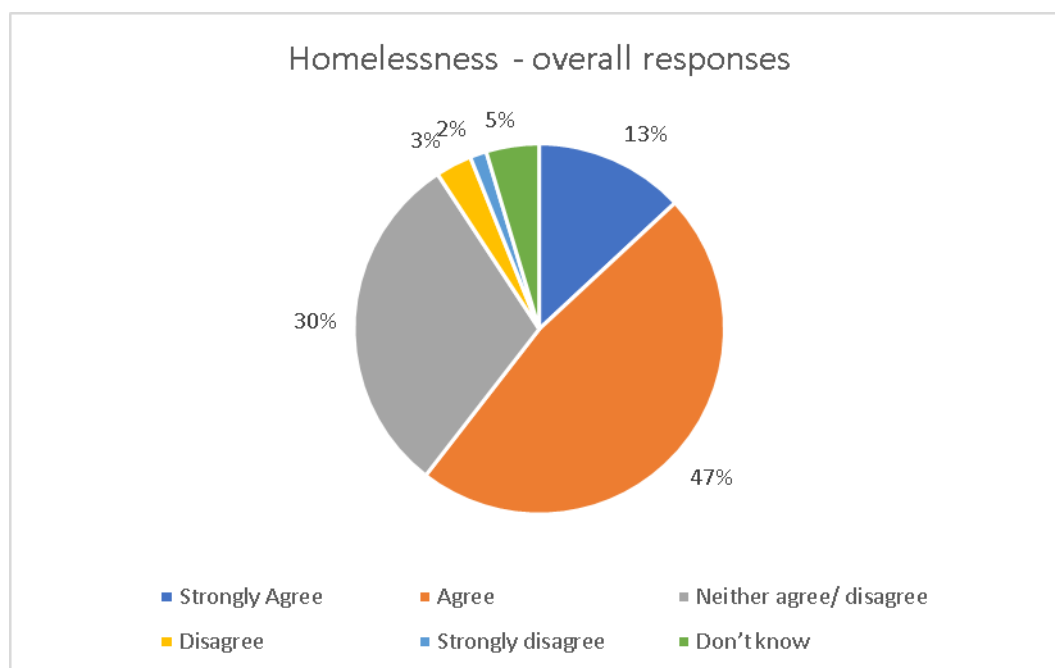
The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced new duties for the council to prevent or relieve homelessness. We propose to harmonise the variations in the way homelessness applicants are supported on the housing register. That includes:

- ~ Qualification exception
- ~ Financial resources
- ~ Deliberately worsening circumstances
- ~ Banding
- ~ Bidding
- ~ Lettings outside of the scheme

Q. Do you agree?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	99	359	229	24	11	35
% of all who responded	13.1%	47.4%	30.3%	3.2%	1.5%	4.6%

Overall there was strong agreement to the homelessness criteria proposed with 60.5% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 4.7% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 55.8, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 30% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the harmonisation of the homelessness criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Forces	66%	3%	63
Disabled	63%	4%	59
Social Tenants	61%	4%	57
Private Tenants	60%	4%	56
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	61%	5%	56
Christchurch and East (on register)	62%	7%	55
Owner Occupiers	61%	5%	56

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table above shows net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with nearly two out of three of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people in the forces and the least support from owner occupiers. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset), Stonewater, Middlemarch, Stonewater and Dorchester Municipal Charities all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal.

Hastoe Housing Association & Bridport and District Citizens Advice neither agreed nor disagreed. No organisations disagreed. There were no specific comments on this proposal.

Q17. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 31 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances. The concerns had no particular theme but a summary is provided below. The full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	mentions
many homeless people are not actually without a home/queue jumping	3
Local connection is important with homeless people	2
Problem caused by selling housing stock	1
Single males get a poor deal	1
Overcrowding is an issue	1
Banding and bidding is unfair	1
Homeless drug and alcohol users affect residents	1
Many "hidden" situations of homelessness not understood	1
Getting on the Register in the first place is the issue	1
Financial resources shouldn't affect support	1
Special needs/distribution should be more important than homelessness	1
Need temporary accommodation for homeless people	1
Homelessness doesn't help getting a house	1
Homeless people should go to the top of the list	1
Deliberately homeless - should not be considered	1

Drink and drugs problem shouldn't jump list	1
If people don't contribute, they shouldn't get priority	1
Most homeless need help	1
Too many categories	1
Qualification should be the same for everyone	1
One offer policy is not good	1
Temporary accommodation is poor	1
Current tenants under occupy houses	1

Sample comments

"After being homeless for 12 months with a young child and been forced to rent privately because I didn't want to go into a flat. If you never started to sell the housing stock to rich outsiders for second homes there would never really of been a problem. For instance long term rental of an ex council house in Dorchester 3 beds with parking £1200 per month !!"

"Deliberately worsening circumstances needs to be described as an exemption rather than a presumption, there are a number of mental and physical health conditions (such as Autism, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Asthma (cleaning product triggers) and Arthritis) that are poorly understood in the Dorset area due to a lack of expertise and services but do affect a person's ability to cope living in 'hidden' situations where there is existing mould in properties, irregular neighbourly noise, fluctuating crime rates and fluctuations of health conditions that can be missed due to the lack of services."

"If someone homeless they should be put temporarily housing till housing is available, I find if you have alcohol problems or drugs people get it straight away but if you're working and have no medical problems you told there's no hope why is that everyone should have the same rights as everyone and be equal."

"They should have a local connection, if not then they should return to the council of origin."

"Some homeless are claiming as single but then gaining properties so working partner can move in. Obviously not being declared"

"Qualification exception The rules should apply equally to all. This appears to be a dossers charter to a free home by the sea."

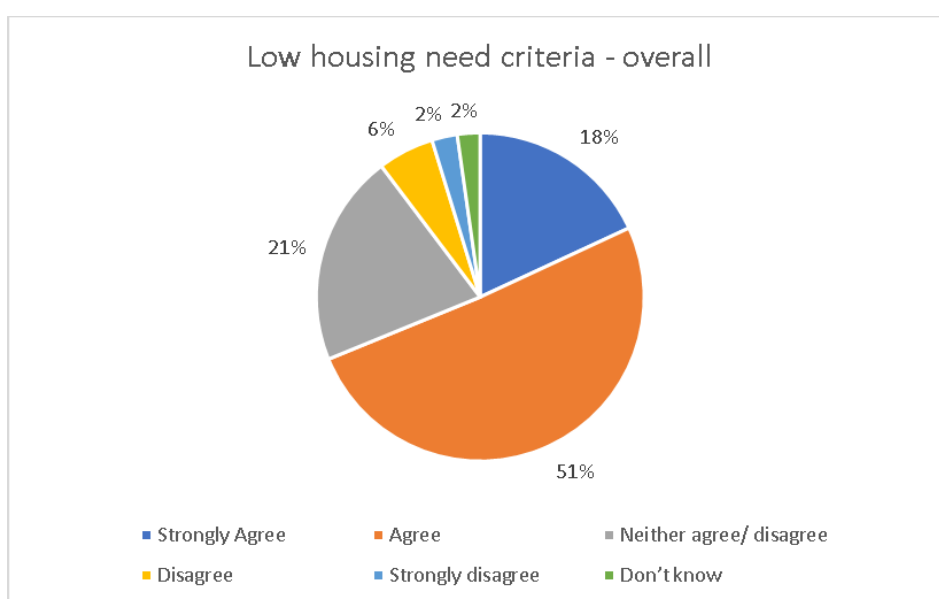
Low Housing Need

Residents applying who live in a property that is adequate for their needs in terms of size and facilities may have been unable to register according to some previous policies. We propose to harmonise this providing applicants meet the eligibility and qualification criteria. Because the demand for social housing is much higher than the numbers of properties available these applicants have limited opportunity to be offered suitable housing. However, on occasion we may be able consider them for properties that otherwise are hard to let. In addition, new housing developments are best supported when we understand the housing need in the area and we will refer to the housing register for that information.:

Q. Do you agree with the Low Housing Need banding criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	137	384	158	42	19	17
% of all who responded	18.1%	50.9%	20.7%	5.6%	2.5%	2.3%

Overall there was strong agreement to the rural property criteria proposed with 69.0% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 8.1% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 60.9, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 21% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the low housing need banding criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Owner Occupiers	79%	6%	73
Christchurch and East (on register)	72%	3%	69
Disabled	73%	4%	69
Forces	74%	6%	68
Social Tenants	70%	7%	63
Private Tenants	68%	8%	60
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	66%	8%	58

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table above shows net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with nearly three out of four of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people who are owner occupiers the least support from people on the Dorset Homechoice register. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset), Stonewater and Dorchester Municipal Charities all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal. Bridport and District Citizens Advice neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal

Middlemarch had some concerns. They said “

I don't disagree so much as have a question. Will it be possible for households currently occupying expensive private rented accommodation to be registered in Band D. This is assuming that the private rented accommodation is in good repair and a suitable size but where the applicant would be paying >35% of their gross income in housing costs. This appears to be possible under the examples given by a) and b) in Band D: "for example they require: a) a Community Land Trust property b) independent affordable accommodation" People catered for by CLT projects are often in this position: desperate to stay within the support networks provided by their communities and forced into unaffordable private rented accommodation to try to do so.”

Q19. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 31 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances. The main theme was that everyone should have the same right to appropriate housing. There were concerns about the criteria which put people in the low housing need category. On the other hand, there were a number of comments about if the property was adequate they don't need to move and don't need to be on the register. A summary of the comments is available below and the full comments in the appendix.

Issue	mentions
Everyone should have the same right to appropriate housing	9
Low housing need criteria difficult	5
If property is adequate let them stay put	5
High private rents are creating problems and housing need	4
Low housing need shouldn't be on the register	3
Other	3
Not good for older people to be homeless/in housing need	2
Higher banding should always trump others like this	2
Appropriate individual assessment is necessary	2
Abuse is not classed as need	1
In this case all needs are met and just adds to pressure on register	1
Adequate doesn't always mean suitable	1
Need more accommodation	1
Hard to let only	1
Does hard to let really exist	1
Does affordability put people into low housing need	1
Should first be offered to those who can pay rent	1
Ageist policy	1
Need to improve hard to let properties	1
Need to be flexible	1
Should help low housing need people straight away	1
problem for young people	1

Sample Comments

"As there needs are met and the situation the housing is in at the moment this should not be an option, no added pressure needed. I don't think there would be many cases of hard to let you could use them for temp accommodation."

"because some people may be living in a property that is adequate but it is not always suitable for their means if it is privately rented"

"Being on low housing need band makes it impossible for the elderly to find a permanent home in their old age - makes one very insecure knowing that a private landlord can evict you at any time on 2 months notice and being faced with homelessness in old age is very daunting."

"Because you may consider it low medical need but others with the "needs" and problems may think otherwise".

“Everyone has a right to social housing, just because they don't meet some particular criteria shouldn't mean they are not as eligible”

“I disagree because you are leaving people who you deem low housing need with the houses that are hard to let so they will most likely be in a bad state or too difficult to get to. I feel everyone on the list should have a chance at getting a home where they desire so that they are happy and more likely to stay where they are and not re-register or ask to be moved.”

“I disagree with having a band when the people in it have virtually no chance of having a property when they still have a need.”

“I don't think people with a low housing need should be on the housing register, unless they have a reason for wanting to move linked to low health or harassment needs. If they don't like their accommodation and want to better their circumstances, they should work towards this themselves, instead of adding extra burden to the housing service.”

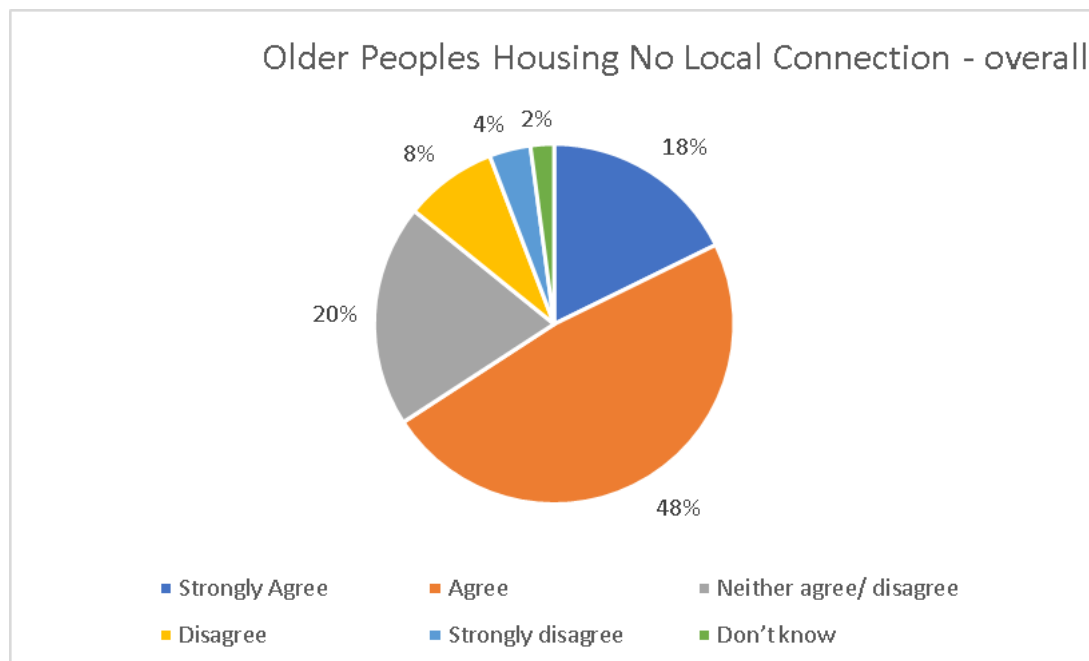
Older Peoples Housing No Local Connection

Some residents were unable to register for older peoples housing if they didn't have a local connection. We propose to harmonise this so that households eligible for housing for older persons and who are deemed to have no local connection, may be considered for difficult to let older people's housing. Households in this band will be able to bid for properties, but their bids will only be considered after all bids from households who do meet the local connection requirements have been dealt with in the same band.

Q. Do you agree with the Older Peoples Housing No Local Connection criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	134	363	151	63	28	16
% of all who responded	17.7%	48.1%	20.0%	8.3%	3.7%	2.1%

Overall there was strong agreement to the Older Peoples Housing No Local Connection criteria proposed with 65.8% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 12.0% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 53.8, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 20% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Disabled	70%	10%	61
Owner Occupiers	70%	15%	56
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	65%	11%	54
Social Tenants	67%	13%	53
Private Tenants	63%	14%	49
Forces	65%	18%	47
Christchurch and East (on register)	52%	14%	38

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. Net agreement is generally lower than most previous questions but is still positive net agreement from all groups. The table above shows net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with nearly two thirds of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people who are disabled, and the least support from people on the Christchurch and East register. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Citizens Advice(Central Dorset) and Dorchester Municipal Charities all agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal. Middlemarch neither agreed nor disagreed. Bridport and District Citizens Advice disagreed with the proposal. Bridport and District Citizens Advice said "If a property is difficult to let, then the matter should be addressed as to why and corrective action taken. Local households are greatly disadvantaged with regard to accessing social housing. However, if the property is purpose build for older households then the criteria as outlined above may be appropriate."

Q.21 As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 80 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances

Issue	Mentions
Keep local connection meaning just that local only	30
Offer housing to younger people with a local connection	8
Sheltered housing shouldn't be age related but need related	6
Not a good idea to import older people into area as they need services etc	5
Should be based on time on list so you move up	3
Are there really properties that are hard to let	3
People "seasiding"	3
More old people means more demand so keep local	3
No queue jumping	2
What about young disabled people	2
Don't agree with local connection	2
Shouldn't be treated different by age	1
Treat older people better	1
Should previously not been home owners outside the area	1

Local connection still doesn't help	1
Should be flexible	1
Difficult to get into Weymouth anyway	1
Re-house older people to release larger houses	1
Disruptive moving from elsewhere	1
Problem with local connection area	1
Does this work?	1
Don't mix generations	1
Swaps ok otherwise not	1

Sample Comments

"As we have such a massive housing issue in this area I do not feel it is appropriate for people outside the area with no local connections to move here. Weymouth is well known as a retirement area and as such puts a huge strain on Council resources in all areas. The housing that is not taken by an older person should then be offered to more single people aged 50 plus."

"Could these properties not be let to other people in need with a local connection rather than people from outside the area?"

"I don't feel that just because someone is old that they should get a house even if they don't have a local connection. I've had a local connection to Swanage all my life. Lived here most of my life. Overcrowded and on the housing list for the last 2 years and not been offered anything."

"I think it could become appealing to older people who want to retire in a coastal seaside area to actually move to Dorset to seek Social housing and get on the housing list, they will then be able to go to their doctor if they have age-related medical conditions and use it as a way of prioritising over families who have a local connection and take our homes that are already in a shortage. We will end up with more population and a bigger shortage of housing in the future."

"I think the difficult to let housing for older people should be considered for others (not elderly) with local connections first before offering to those without local connections"

"Do consider younger disabled people first - there is a lot of housing that is 55 + but you can be disabled at any age."

"There will always be a need from local people, no need to open to others"

"Would it not be better to offer these properties for 'older residents' to younger applicants, especially if they have a local connection There are residents with school age children in housing (BUNGALOWS) designed for 'older residents Thorncombe already"

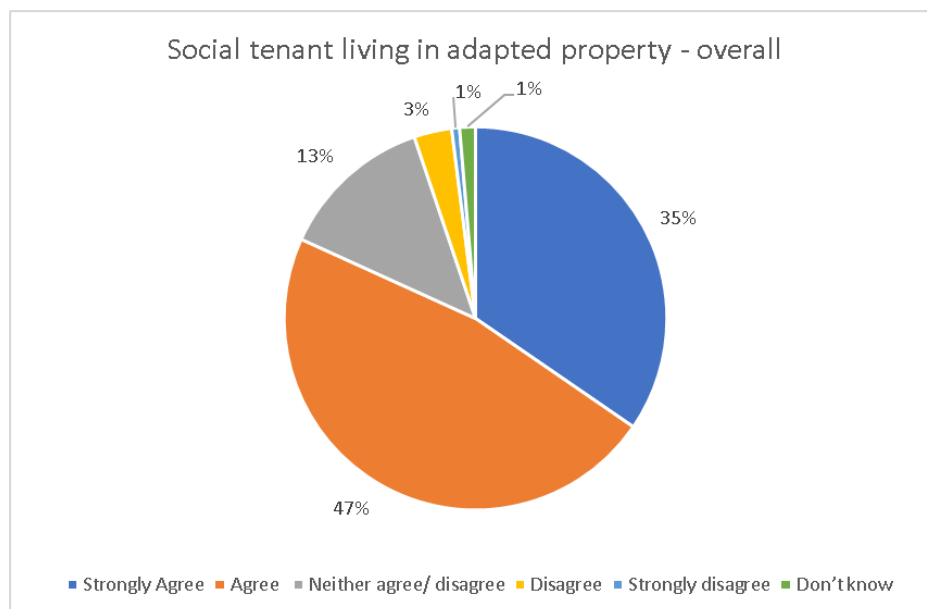
Social tenant living in an adapted property

We propose to introduce prioritisation criteria for social tenants who live in an adapted property with extensive adaptations that are no longer required by either the applicant or a member of their household. This encourages applicants to move to suitable alternative accommodation and increases the availability of properties already adapted for those who are most in need.

Q. Do you agree with the social tenant living in an adapted property criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	260	355	98	24	5	10
% of all who responded	34.6%	47.2%	13.0%	3.2%	0.7%	1.3%

Overall there was strong agreement to the social tenant living in an adapted property criteria proposed with 81.8% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 3.9% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 77.9, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 13% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Forces	86%	0%	86
Disabled	87%	3%	83
Social Tenants	86%	3%	82
Private Tenants	81%	3%	78
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	80%	4%	76
Christchurch and East (on register)	76%	3%	72
Owner Occupiers	67%	4%	63

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. The table above shows strong net agreement for all the groups. In all groups there seems to be strong support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with around 8 out of 10 of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people who are in the forces, and the least support from owner occupiers. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Citizens Advice (Central Dorset) and Dorchester Municipal Charities all agree/ strongly agree with these proposals. Middlemarch and Bridport & District Citizens Advice had some concerns.

Middlemarch said “Please allow some discretion for those living in rural communities where the alternative accommodation would mean a move away”

Bridport & District Citizens Advice said “Whilst we don't disagree in principle as the need for adapted accommodation is great, however if an able bodied person is living alone in adapted premises it suggests that there has been a change of circumstances including bereavement. Significant sensitivity needs to be applied in these cases.”

Q. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 25 people responded to this question. Many responses were about the principle of people moving for adaptations rather than whether the benefits of people moving would justify them getting preferential treatment on the housing register. The issues raised are listed below.

Issue	mentions
Treat disabled people kindly and with sensitivity	6
Don't coerce people to move	6
Good idea if adaptations are not needed	5
Should consider personal circumstances	5
Should be allowed to stay	2
What counts as extensive adaptations?	1
Other ways to move people	1
Might have to move to new area	1

Example comments

"I'm not sure I fully understand the proposal, but if it means someone will have to or be made to feel they have to move out of a house they have lived in for a long time and made a home of, I think it would be wrong to make them move out just because there are facilities they don't need. It's their home first. If someone wants to move and they are just being helped to do so, then that is ok."

"It depends how this is implemented. If a sufficient amount of time is granted for existing tenants to overcome bereavement before pressure to move is placed on them, then ok. People may have lived somewhere for considerable periods or have cared for disabled relatives or children in a home that they have deep personal connections to. As long as they are given adequate time to adjust, not booted out while grieving."

"These properties are a persons home they may have built up local support networks with neighbours, friends and should not have to move just because there needs have changed."

"where is the definition of 'extensive adaptations'? example, taps, walk-in shower, ramps, wider doors, and is sheltered included among those properties where a care-line service is installed?"

"This makes sense, I agree on need to save money for adapted property. What would be the impact on children in school?"

"Personal circumstances should be considered"

"I know of at least one person who is living in a sheltered housing bungalow who does not need and adapted property at all so why does this happen?"

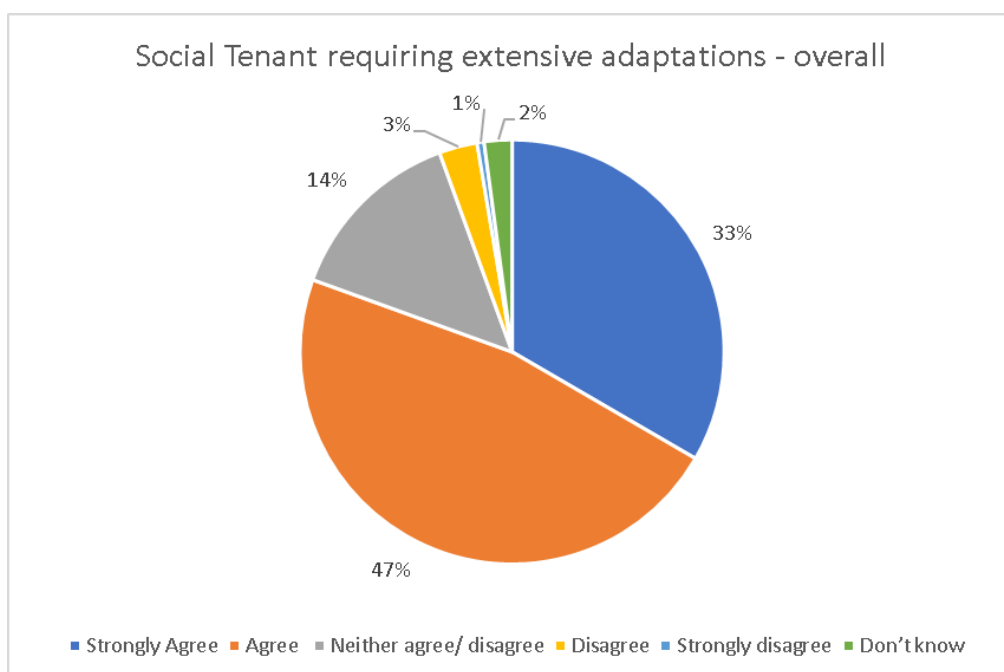
Social tenant requiring extensive adaptations

We propose to introduce prioritisation criteria for social tenants or members of their household who require extensive adaptations and who are prepared to move to a property with such adaptations rather than having them done in their current home. This will improve the availability of general needs accommodation.

Q. Do you agree with social tenant requiring extensive adaptations criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	252	356	105	22	4	16
% of all who responded	33.4%	47.2%	13.9%	2.9%	0.5%	2.1%

Overall there was strong agreement to the social tenant requiring extensive adaptations criteria proposed with 80.6% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 3.4% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 77.2, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 14% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Owner Occupiers	89%	3%	86
Forces	89%	3%	86
Disabled	86%	4%	82
Social Tenants	86%	3%	82
Private Tenants	81%	3%	79
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	78%	3%	75
Christchurch and East (on register)	69%	7%	62

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. In all groups there seems to be strong support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with around 8 out of 10 of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people who are owner occupiers, and the least support from those on the register for Christchurch and East. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational views and comments on these criteria

Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Citizens Advice(Central Dorset), Stonewater, Bridport and District Citizens Advice all agreed/strongly agreed this proposal. .Bridport Co-housing neither agreed/disagreed. Middlemarch and Bridport & District Citizens Advice both disagreed with the proposal. Middlemarch said "Please allow some discretion for those living in rural communities where the alternative accommodation would mean a move away". Bridport & District Citizens Advice said "If a household is happy with the move then this is fine, but for many people their home is a place of sanctity and safety and at times of need such as illness or disability, the disruption of moving home may not be in their best interest. The council must view the dwelling as the persons home not as housing stock."

Q25. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 25 people responded to this question. Many responses were about the principle of people moving for adaptations rather than whether the benefits of people moving would justify them getting preferential treatment on the housing register. The issues raised are listed below.

Issue	mentions
People live in a home and should be allowed to stay there	6
Too stressful moving	6
Tenant should have the choice to stay or move	6
Should do adaptations to existing house if possible	3
Should be done on an individual basis	2
Need to move to an urban area for better care and support network	2
Too costly for people to move	1
Maybe move for major adaptations	1
Might have to move to new area	1

Sample comments

"I'm not sure I fully understand the proposal, but if it means someone will have to or be made to feel they have to move out of a house they have lived in for a long time and made a home of, I think it would be wrong to make them move out just because there are facilities they don't need. It's their home first. If someone wants to move and they are just being helped to do so, then that is ok."

"Please allow some discretion for those living in rural communities where the alternative accommodation would mean a move away."

"What is the point of having a home with adaptations to be put in the position of the upheaval of moving to another property - only if a tenant is absolutely sure they want to move"

"Most villages do not offer the facilities these persons need, and will only stretch the existing social care budgets further. It is my opinion that it is better to settle/resettle the persons involved in more urban areas."

"I believe that the adaptations should be done in their home. It is unnecessary stress requiring a tenant to move even if they are 'prepared' to move or not. A home means a lot to these families"

"If families are involved what happens about the children being stable, secure and familiar surroundings considering the children's psychological and emotional needs? Clearly the effects on everybody's needs within the household."

"Adaptations should be provided in the applicant's current home at all times possible."

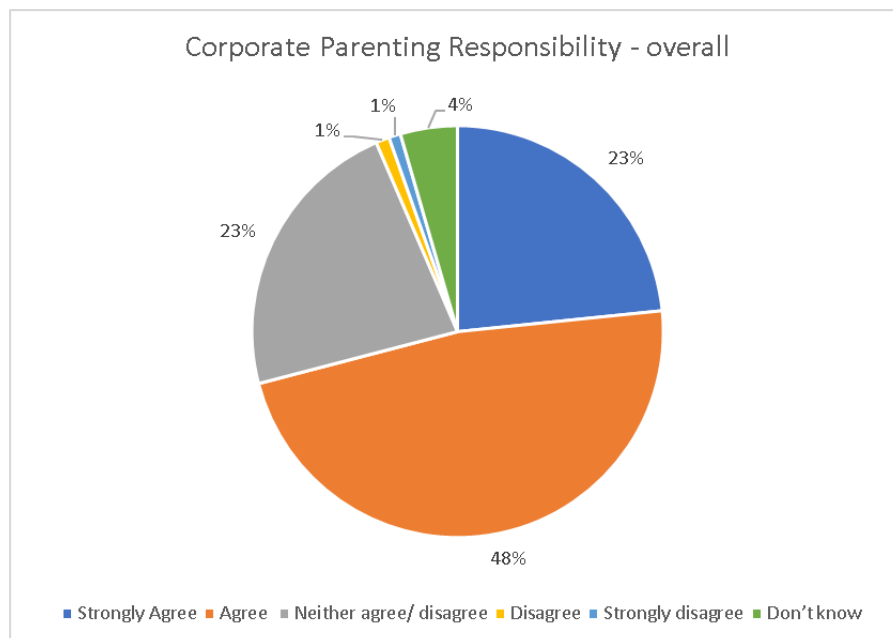
Corporate Parenting Responsibility

Dorset Council has a corporate parenting duty where there is a responsibility to a young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has had a duty of care accepted under the Children Act by Dorset Council, and is ready for independent living. We propose to introduce Corporate Parenting criteria.

Q. Do you agree with Corporate Parenting Responsibility criteria?

Overall responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Number	177	360	171	8	7	34
% of all who responded	23.4%	47.6%	22.6%	1.1%	0.9%	4.5%

Overall there was strong agreement to the corporate parenting responsibility criteria proposed with 71.0% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares to only 2.0% who disagree or strongly disagree with it. The figures give a net agreement figure of plus 69.0, where zero would be an equal amount of people supporting and opposing. 23% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with criteria.



Group	strongly agree/agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	net agreement
Owner Occupiers	82%	1%	81
Christchurch and East (on register)	79%	0%	79
Forces	77%	0%	77
Social Tenants	78%	3%	75
Disabled	72%	0%	72
Dorset Homechoice (on register)	66%	2%	64
Private Tenants	63%	4%	60

Looking at responses from different groups there are variations. In all groups there seems to be strong support for the proposals with all returning positive agreement, with around 8 out of 10 of all respondents in these groups either supporting or strongly supporting the criteria. The strongest support comes people who are owner occupiers, and the least support from those who are private tenants. This is shown on the table above.

Organisational responses on these criteria

Most of the organisations supported this proposal. Bridport Cohousing, Places for People, Hastoe Housing Association, Citizens Advice, Central Dorset, Stonewater, Bridport and District Citizens Advice supported it. Dorchester Municipal Charities and Middlemarsh neither agreed nor disagreed with it. No comments were made.

Q27. As you disagree what particular part(s) do you not agree with and why? 9 people responded to this question. The concerns were wide and varied and generally appeared dependent on people's circumstances

Issue	mentions
Don't know what corporate parenting is	4
Not done in the past	2
Too complicated and unnecessary	1
Agree with it	1
Should be left to fend for themselves	1

Sample comments

"Another example of a complicated unnecessary banding category"

"I do not understand what corporate parenting is."

"They should be given a list of landlords with bedsits available that will accept DSS, just like everybody else (just like I was told)."

General Comments

304 additional comments were made covering a wide range of themes. These have been examined and coded into themes. The main issue raised was about housing local people before people from outside the local area. The second most regular theme was the importance of personal circumstances. Whilst policies need to have rules people often felt the system should be flexible enough to cater for individual circumstances. Further significant concerns were over extortionate private rent and the lack of need build social housing. A significant amount of comments related to the size of properties and how to make best use of the housing stock to meet the requirements of people in need. The table below ranks all the issues raised but the full comments are available in the appendix.

Issue	Overall
Outsiders shouldn't get housed before locals	45
Personal circumstances should be taken into account	31
Private rents extortionate	25
Need more housing built	22
Do more to enable/force people to downsize when family leave home	20
Other	16
Agree with all the survey	15
Need to match size of properties to families better (-with register of properties)	15
Working people get no help and are worst off	15
Struggle despite working	14
Confusingly worded/ hard to understand	13
Need to be homeless to have any hope	11
System needs some flexibility due to circumstances	11
Register should relate to length of time on it	8
Build more larger 3/4 bed houses to rent	8
No further comments	8
System doesn't work	7
Overcrowding a big issue	7
Protect vulnerable old people	7
Good affordable housing is good for health	6
Some people work the system	6
Bidding system no good	6
Staff ned to implement policy fairly	6
Specialist medical needs not really catered for	6
Domestic violence is an emergency	5
Good to know how long each band in the list is	5
More sheltered accommodation needed	5
Bring empty properties back into use	4
Implementation important - timely	4
Concerned over homelessness issue	4
Homelessness must be tackled	4
need room for a carer	4
Stop people buying social housing	4
Detailed response on the finer detail of the proposals	4
Second homes	4
Housings issues are often linked to transport	3

Care leavers out of area need consideration	3
Feel like an outsider - too locals focused	3
Disabled need more bedrooms	3
Give financial support to private renters	3
Agree with new bandings	3
Selling of Social housing is not good	3
Build more to rent in villages	3
Financial position should be taken into account	3
Being able to phone and speak to someone is important, especially for older people	3
Should be short-term solution	3
Changes may give some hope	2
ASD issue	2
Housing generally well managed	2
Housing associations not doing a good job	2
People shouldn't have to live next to some of the drug addicts/criminals	2
Council have failed me	2
Disabled adaptations - why move in people who are not disabled?	2
Distance from workplace should be considered when being placed	2
Floorplans before accepting bid	2
More peace of mind in social housing than private rent	1
Don't ruin villages	1
Disabled can fit in 55+ housing as facilities already there	1
Guardianship is an issue not covered	1
Old people bungalows should be 55 again not 60	1
Remove persistent offenders/anti social tenants	1
Help existing tenants move in the system	1
Local should mean Dorset not a specific area	1
Home swapping is difficult and should be easier	1
Housing Associations should be more involved in allocations	1
More help for older people	1
Think ahead for pregnant women - the baby will eventually need a bedroom	1
Affordable accommodation for young people who are trying to save for house deposit	1
Help young people more	1
Shared Ownership encouraged	1

Demographic Information

Age

The tables below show the profile of people taking part in the consultation. The consultation has attracted residents covering quite a wide age range and is not dominated by those in the older age groups, with those aged 65+ making up 25% of respondents compared to 29% of the Dorset population. Those responding in other age groups varied between 16% and 21%.

3.1% of respondents preferred not to disclose their age group.

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-and over	Prefer not to say
% of responses in age group	0.0 %	3.3 %	16.9 %	16.1 %	17.8 %	21.3 %	21.5 %	3.1%

Gender

The current profile of the residents of Dorset show 49.8% male and 51.1% female. As the table below shows the responses from females, does vary considerably from the Dorset profile but this is not unusual in this type of survey.

	Male	Female	Use another term	Prefer not to say
What best describes your gender?	26.4%	70.2%	0.0%	3.3%

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself trans?	0.5%	95.5%	4.0%

Employment status

Respondents were asked their employment status. Nearly half were employed/self employed. 88 people specified other. The status varied considerably but many were not working due to health reasons, some were disabled and other were stay at home mums and others carers.

What is your employment status	number	%
Student	5	0.7%
Employed/self employed	341	45.1%
Not employed and looking for work	19	2.5%
Not employed and not looking for work	58	7.7%
Apprenticeship scheme/training	4	0.5%
Retired	182	24.1%
Prefer not to say	59	7.8%
Other	88	11.6%

Disability

25.2% of respondents considered they had a disability. This equates to 189 people. This is considerably higher than many other surveys. There is no overall figure for Dorset. The data has been used when analysing the responses to all the questions to see if people who have a disability had a different view to the majority on the key questions in the consultation.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act, 2010?	25.2%	66.3%	8.5%

When looking at the specific disabilities the 189 people responding 113 said they had a physical disability 107 had a longstanding illness, 76 had a mental health condition, and 22 a sensory impairment.

Ethnic Group

The profile of residents in Dorset overall show 95.6% are White British and 4.4% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). From those who chose to answer this question 3.3% stated they were from a BME background and 89.8% White British.

	What is your ethnic group?
White British	89.8%
White Irish	0.5%
Gypsy/Irish traveller	0.0%
Any other white background	2.5%
Asian/ Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.1%
Asian/ Asian British - Chinese	0.0%
Asian/ Asian British - Indian	0.1%
Asian/ Asian British - Pakistani	0.0%
Any other Asian background	0.0%
Black/Black British - African	0.1%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	0.0%
Any other black background	0.0%
Mixed ethnic background – White and Asian	0.3%
Mixed ethnic background – White and Black African	0.1%
Mixed ethnic background – White and Black Caribbean	0.1%
Any other mixed background	0.5%
Prefer not to say	4.8%
Any other ethnic group	0.9%

Are you currently serving or a veteran in the UK Armed Forces, a member of service personnel's immediate family or a reservist or in part time service such as the Territorial Army?

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Are you currently serving or a veteran in the UK Armed Forces, a member of service personnel's immediate family or a reservist or in part time service such as the Territorial Army?	4.7% (35)	92.8% (698)	2.5% (19)

Responses were received from 35 from the Armed Forces and their responses were considered under each question.