

Public Question for Cabinet 18 January 2022

Question from Mike Allen

First may I wish the Cabinet and Officers a Happy New Year?

The publication of the Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment from Icen, along with the BCP Housing Land Availability Assessment, brings a wealth of new information to the local planning processes in both authorities.

In particular, based on the exceptional circumstance of out-of-date migration data, an important option is offered to BCP Council by Icen in the second volume of the LHNA, to reduce its Standard Method housing target from an unrealistic 2,667 dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,580 dpa. When spread over the 16 year period of the BCP plan 2022-38, this implies a reduction of more than 17,000 unneeded dwellings, and a new total BCP need of **25,280 dwellings**.

In parallel, the BCP HELAA suggests in Table 4 that there is land available in BCP for 39,164 plots (when higher density is included, with no extra building in Conservation Areas, and no building in Greenbelt). Even allowing for unoccupied stock, and allocations which may not come forward, it is clear that BCP Council does not have to ask Dorset Council to help with unmet need anymore. This has important implications for Dorset.

The first volume of the Icen housing needs study puts Dorset's Standard Method housing target at 1757 dpa, requiring **29,869 dwellings** over the plan period 2021-38.

Figure 2.7 in Volume 1 of the draft Dorset Local Plan tells us that there is land available for **39,285 plots**. Allowing again for unoccupied stock and commercial uncertainty (3% and 10% say) there is headroom for manoeuvre in Dorset as well as BCP.

It's clear that, with the exceptional circumstances option, neither BCP Council nor Dorset Council would have to release new land from their Green belt. No new releases would be needed from AONB areas either.

My question is, may the many thousands of people who enjoy living in or visiting the Greenbelt in both authority areas, along with the plethora of fauna and flora whose home it is, sigh with relief now that the houses the area needs can be built without taking anymore protected AONB or Greenbelt land?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

BCP Council is currently consulting on options for its local plan, including options for the housing requirements. No decisions have been made yet on the requirement figures that will be included in either the BCP or the Dorset local plans.

The next stage of the Dorset Council local plan will be when a revised draft plan is brought to Cabinet and full Council. This will take account of the consultation responses and the completed evidence base.