

Cabinet
11 June 2024
Questions for Councillors

Question from Cllr P Kimber

Question to Cabinet on Housing

- A recent report put 10,500 people on the waiting list in Dorset for housing from the CPRE.

Could we confirm the numbers of families needing Social Housing to rent, and Families in Bed and Breakfast.

- The need for affordable homes is paramount and a major concern for local families.

Soaring house prices, the cost-of-living crisis and wages have failed to assist many Dorset families.

Given the fact we are starting a new 5-year term, are we ready to meet the Challenge on housing and could you give us indicators how and where we plan to build to meet this challenge.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Environment Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory

We have seen the figure quoted in the CPRE report and would advise that this is the combined housing register data for both Dorset and BCP Councils. As at 6 June there are 5,962 households on the Dorset Council Housing Register. These are households who have an unmet housing need and have expressed a wish to move to social housing. It is important to note that social housing is often not the only housing option open to those who join the housing register, and we actively encourage all applicants to consider every suitable option available to them. The Housing team are making good progress in reducing the number of families in Bed and Breakfast emergency accommodation, which is intended only for short term emergency respite from homelessness. At 6 June, there were 21 families in Bed and Breakfast, with intensive work in place to find settled solutions and to deal with the initial circumstances which brought about the homelessness. Our overall numbers of people in bed and breakfast has reduced over the past year, against the national trend, and I am committed to build on this strong work to prevent homelessness as well as finding and providing homes for those who need them.

Registered Providers of Social Housing, or Housing Associations, manage almost 25,000 homes in our area and the Dorset Council teams work closely with them to support and enable many hundreds of new homes provided each year. However, as

a Council and Housing Authority, we recognise that the demand for housing that is affordable for our residents, both to rent and buy, far outstrips supply. We are working up our plans setting out how we intend to accelerate and deliver on the actions outlined in the Housing Strategy. This work is already exploring all feasible and cost-effective ways to increase access to housing and how Dorset Council will act, enable or influence gaps in housing supply. Whilst it is too early in the project to present recommendations, we are working to provide some initial options in the Autumn.