

# Parish Housing Needs Survey Report

## **Parish of Bere Regis**

### **Purbeck**

Commissioned by  
**Bere Regis Parish Council**

Report date August  
2012

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## **Background to the survey**

The Parish Council has commissioned a Housing Needs Survey to find out if a lack of affordable housing is a problem for some households in the parish.

The purpose of this survey is two fold. Firstly, to find out whether the general community supports the idea of more affordable housing for residents of the parish. Secondly, to find out exactly who, and how many people might need to return or be helped to stay in the community through access to affordable homes.

Surveys were sent out on 28 May 2012 and the return date was the 18 June 2012. All households in the parish of Bere Regis were sent survey questionnaires. The address list was compiled from the local land and property gazetteer.

Bere Regis Parish Council has been pro-active in wanting to provide affordable homes.

## **Housing Needs Surveys**

### **District Surveys - sampling and statistical validity**

District Housing Needs Surveys are carried out by the District Council every five years or so and are based on sampling of representative groups. The results from these sample groups are used to create a picture of need for the whole population. For this to be accurate a minimum response rate is required of around 35%.

### **Housing Enabler Parish Surveys - a Register of Interests**

In contrast Parish Housing Needs Surveys are sent to all households in a parish and do not require a minimum response rate. Parish housing surveys are a 'register of interests', or list, of people meeting the District Councils criterion for housing need. The purpose is to give every household the opportunity to have their need assessed, and identify actual households in need in the locality, no matter how few. A secondary function of parish surveys is to give an indication of the level of community support for the provision of affordable homes to meet local need.

### **General functions of parish surveys:**

1. Raise awareness of the local housing / income affordability gap.
2. Determine if there are many households whose housing needs are not being met.

3. Report on quantity of existing affordable housing in the community; the frequency of re-lets and whether re-lets are enough to meet the need of the community.
4. Consult on the best ways to meet outstanding local need - i.e. ensuring local lettings of existing social housing stock; converting buildings; providing new affordable homes.
5. Inviting landowners to consider making land available at low cost for the benefit of the community.
6. Give an impression of the general level of support for improving provision of affordable housing to meet local need.
7. Provide follow up information for the community about planning policies and affordable housing providers.
8. To encourage households in housing need to register on the Council's Housing register.

### **Who may be eligible for Affordable Housing?**

According to Local Plan policies, affordable housing should be made available to households unable to meet their own housing needs due to the disparity between household income and the cost of appropriate accommodation to rent or to buy on the open market. The measure of an affordable housing cost recommended in the Council's District Housing Survey is 25% of gross income.

### **What is Affordable Housing**

The current definition of affordable housing is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework is as follows:

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented

housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Shared ownership is managed by South West Homes who can be contacted at:

South West Homes  
Hatfield House  
Hatfield Road  
Torquay  
TQ1 3HF  
Tel: 0300 100 0021  
Website: [www.southwesthomes.org.uk](http://www.southwesthomes.org.uk)

## **Bere Regis Housing Information**

According to the Dorset Data Book 2011

Population of Bere Regis	<b>1780</b> (2011 estimate)
Total dwellings Bere Regis	<b>842</b> (2011 estimate)

Second homes in Bere Regis (as per information from Council Tax)	<b>20</b> (2.3%)
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Some residents list their properties, as Holiday Lets so pay business rates and not council tax so are not identified in the figure above. The discount for second homes is only 10% and not all households claim the discount so they would not show in the above figure either.

Social sector homes in Bere Regis	<b>181</b> (21.4%)
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## **Survey Result**

### **Households returning forms**

**9** households said they are in need of affordable housing but gave no details of their circumstances, contact details or if they are on the housing register.

12 households said they are in need of affordable housing but only gave details of the size of housing they require. It can not be confirmed that they meet the District Council's criterion for affordable housing or if they are on the housing register. No contact details were provided.

9 x 1 bedroom property  
2 x 2 bedroom property  
1 x 4 bedroom property

13 households meet the District Council's criterion for affordable housing

**The need comprises:**

Need physically adapted	x 1
Need to change tenure	x 1
Need to move into own accommodation	x 2
Need larger accommodation	x 4
Need to cheaper accommodation	x 1
Not stated	x 4

**Number of forms returned:** 197 of 859 households (22.9%)

Of the households responding 150 of the 197 (76%) are in favour of increasing the provision of local affordable housing. 24 (12%) are not in favour and 23 (12%) did not state if they were in favour or not.

**Tenures / accommodation indicated by information provided.**

The property sizes indicated are the minimum needed to meet current need and should be exceeded where possible (room in the roof or extra bedrooms) to retain families in the community as needs change over time.

Households have been split with households earning below £26,000 listed under rented and earning over £26,000 listed under possible shared ownership this is because it is felt that £26,000 is the minimum earnings to be eligible to buy a shared ownership/shared equity property.

**Affordable rented accommodation**

Households earning under £26,000 or requesting rented accommodation

1 person 1 bedroom	x 4
2 person 1 bedroom	x 2
3 person 2 bedroom	x 1
2 person 3 bedroom	x 1 (adapted property)
4 person 3 bedroom	x 1
5 person 3 bedroom	x 1

## **Possible shared ownership homes**

For mortgageable households usually earning over £26,000 pa, or with sufficient combination of earnings plus savings or equity – depending on the cost of the shared ownership offered.

3 person 2 bedroom	x 1
2 person 2 bedroom	x 1 (specifically requested 2 bedroom)
2 person 3 bedroom	x 1 (specifically requested 3 bedroom)

## **Local amenities**

The survey asked if you need to be housed in this parish will you have adequate access to amenities such as transport, school, shopping etc.

Yes	x 12
No	x 1

## **Local people having to move away**

14 households reported that family members have moved away in the past five years because of difficulties in finding an affordable home.

## **Transport**

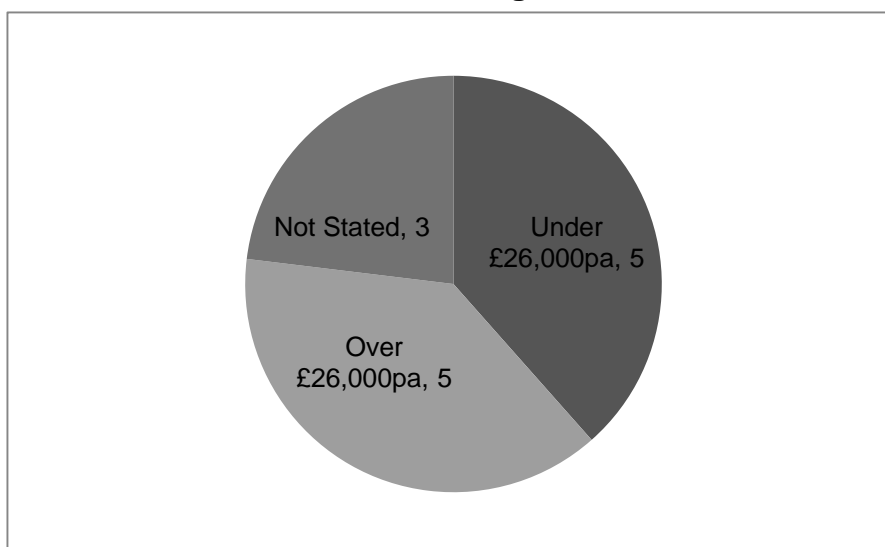
The survey asked what effect would it have on the number of vehicle journeys made in and out of the parish if you were offered an affordable home in the parish:-

No change in journeys made	x 8
Fewer journeys made	x 2
More journeys made	x 0
Not stated	x 3

## **Income**

Affordable housing should be available to households who are in unsuitable accommodation and who are not able to meet their own housing needs through buying or renting on the open market as a result of the local relationship between income and market price.

## Gross household incomes of households requiring affordable housing in Bere Regis



### Employment of respondent households

Apprentice; manager; nurse; teacher and various other employments.

### Current accommodation (from information provided)

Private rented	x 4
Living with parents or family	x 1
Renting from Housing Association	x 6
Tied to Job	x 1
Not stated	x 1

### Years resident in the parish

More than 10 years	x 7
More than 3 years less than 10 years	x 3
1 – 3 years	x 3

### Local connection

Households may have more than one connection

Member of household grew up in the parish	x 5
Currently living in the parish	x 8
Close family in the parish	x 2

## **Young people in full time education**

A young person would normally be expected to complete their course and show that they are permanently resident in the parish before being eligible for an offer of independent affordable housing. Allowance might be made for young people on local apprenticeship type courses, or in other circumstances where it is shown they will remain local.

## **Scheme considerations seen as important by respondents**

Households may have chosen more than one consideration.

Open Plan living space	x 5
Workshop / office space	x 3
Adequate domestic storage	x 8
Car free area around homes	x 1
Safe play area	x 7
Garden	x 11
Integrated car parking/Garage	x 7
Low heating costs	x 9
Environmentally friendly construction	x 4
Wheelchair access/ wet room	x 3
Close to public transport	x 6
Close to local shops	x 5
Close to doctor's surgery	x 7
Close to local school	x 6
Other – sound proofed	x 1

## **The Council Housing Register**

Number of households identified that meet the District Councils criterion for affordable housing that are on the register now: x 6

In addition to the **13** households that have been identified by the survey as needing accommodation and have provided their information there are an additional **58** households on the housing register who have a local connection to the parish of Bere Regis and their housing need is as follows:

35 x 1 bedroom  
18 x 2 bedroom  
3 x 3 bedroom  
1 x 4 bedroom  
1 x 4-5 bedroom

To be eligible to bid on any available housing association owned housing respondents must ensure they register on the Council's Housing Register. This applies to possible shared ownership, shared equity and rented alike.



Housing need identified in a parish and delivered on a planning 'exception site' allows local need to take priority over District need.

### **Comments from those in favour**

- ❖ Too many local families are having to move away. There is not enough 2-3 bed homes for growing families.
- ❖ Most houses here are owner occupied. I would like to see more affordable housing available. I am afraid with a mixed development people with real needs, families, single, elderly would not be met.
- ❖ Because I believe that people in all walks of life can benefit from each other.
- ❖ The reason is obvious, there is insufficient housing to meet the lower paid.

### **Comments from the people not in favour**

- ❖ Local infrastructure is not sufficient to meet needs now. Any development will be built cheaply and ruin the rural nature of the village. Every development to date has done this.
- ❖ Whilst understanding the need to support low income families and affordable housing, recent developments locally have been poor eg. Purbeck Gate in Wool is poorly designed, overcrowded by design, inaccurate pricing levels and attracted mass of low income individuals on mass that would not suit Bere Regis and supporting business and services.
- ❖ The village has already filled all available spaces – parking and access through West St is already a nightmare – double yellow lines needed outside the shops to stop blocking side roads.
- ❖ No jobs, no amenities, need to keep as a village.

### **Bere Regis general context**

#### **What kind of development? How much and how local?**

National Planning Guidance recognises the greater affordability gap affecting rural communities and allows strictly controlled provision of affordable housing to meet proven local need via Rural Exception Sites Policy. Such sites are limited to provide only for households within the parish or with a local family or employment connection.

The size of development may not exceed the proven local need.

Exception site policy has tightened considerably in recent years requiring that schemes be bound by a Section 106 Agreement to prioritise local need in perpetuity, and avoiding loss through the Right to Buy or Acquire. Residents of neighbouring parishes may be offered housing where a household from the parish is not available to occupy a vacant home.

Tenures can include social rented housing, affordable rented, shared equity or shared ownership homes offering a financial stake in the home for households on intermediate incomes.

Housing Associations specialise in developing and managing affordable housing schemes and may obtain grant from the government to do this. Scheme design standards are very high and communities are consulted during the process of working up a planning application.

Exception sites must form a natural extension to the existing built settlement with good access and comply with other Planning Policies. They are also dependent on landowners' acceptance of reduced land values to produce affordability.

Housing need may be registered by contacting the Housing Enabler or the Housing Needs Team at any point, including after a survey has taken place. Ultimately affordable homes can only be offered to households who are registered on the Council's Housing Register.

Local people may have to solve their housing problems by accepting offers of housing elsewhere during the time a local scheme may be worked up. In these circumstances, it is possible for a family to be considered for a new affordable home in the parish by registering on the Council's Housing Register.

## **Existing social housing**

### **Parish of Bere Regis**

#### **Properties owned by East Boro Housing Trust**

21 x 1 bedroom flat for rent.

8 vacancies in the last 5 years

#### **Properties owned by Raglan Housing Association**

7 x 2 bedroom house for rent.

6 x 3 bedroom house for rent.

5 vacancies in the last 5 years.

### **Properties owned by Knightstone Housing Association**

1 x 3 bedroom house for shared ownership.

### **Properties owned by Sovereign Housing Association**

4 x 2 bedroom house for rent.  
4 x 3 bedroom house for rent.  
1 x 3 bedroom house for shared ownership.

5 vacancies in the last 5 years.

### **Properties owned by Spectrum Signpost**

1 x 3 bedroom house for rent.

0 vacancies in the last 5 years

### **Properties owned by Synergy Housing**

4 x studios for rent  
58 x 1 bedroom flats for rent.  
10 x 1 bedroom bungalow for rent.  
8 x 2 bedroom bungalow for rent.  
2 x 3 bedroom house for shared ownership.  
25 x 2 bedroom house for rent.  
28 x 3 bedroom house for rent.  
1 x 4 bedroom house for rent.

50 vacancies in the last 5 years.

24 sales through the Right to Buy in the last 20 years.

### **Transfers within existing stock**

There is little scope for gaining social rented homes through transfers. Of those households living in the parish who say they need alternative accommodation, six are currently living in a socially rented home in the parish of Bere Regis.

### **The local affordability gap**

This affects the ability of local people to access the market

David Couttie Associates (DCA) who specialise in housing market research define rental affordability as being approximately 25% of gross income.

### **Typical cost of local rural housing to buy**

The typical cost of an average terraced house listed in the Dorset Data Book for July - September 2010 in Purbeck is £221,611.

The last house that sold in Bere Regis listed on houseprices.co.uk is a semi detached two-bedroom cottage that sold for £270,000 in June 2012.

To purchase the property in Bere Regis would have required an income of £76,500 based on a safe multiple of 3 x gross annual household income and a 15% deposit.

### **Typical costs of rural housing to rent**

At the time of writing this survey, there was a two-bedroom semi-detached property for rent in Bere Regis for £700 per month listed on [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

### **Factors influencing how many new homes may be provided**

- The potential for existing affordable housing stock to meet local need – i.e. frequency of re-lets.
- Investigating scope for re-use of existing buildings.
- The number of respondent households that become registered and verified in need by the Council's Housing Register.
- Expected provision through planned new development sites? The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment offers an opportunity for parishes and landowners to suggest sites for affordable or open market housing.
- The most likely means of delivering local need is to identify 'rural exception sites' closely related to the existing settlement, where landowners are willing to accept the low land values to ensure the affordability of schemes.
- The availability of government housing grant to enable housing associations to provide affordable schemes.

### **Actions Already Taken Place**

1. Engagement and involvement of Bere Regis Parish Council
2. Completion of Housing Needs Survey.

## **Suggested Actions**

### **Parish Council**

1. Adopt the Housing Needs Survey and make available to the community.
2. Enter into further consultation with the community to air the issues revealed in the report and build support.
3. Inform the community that households in need can register at any point with the District Council and that it is essential to register to be eligible for offers of affordable housing.

### **District Council, Registered Providers**

1. Keep in regular contact with the Parish Council to discuss the way forward and any imminent planning applications for an exception site.
2. Identify potential exception sites and initiate dialogue with landowners and planners to assess viability i.e. willingness to sell / planning policy context.
3. Hold a community drop in consultation once a site has been identified to gain the community views on layout and design prior to a planning application.

## **Appendix**

### **What is a Rural Exception Site?**

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. The affordable housing provided on rural exception sites should only be used to meet a clearly identified local need for accommodation and will therefore be subject to strict local occupancy clauses (see an example below).

### **Example of a Local Occupancy Clause:**

The following persons are eligible to occupy a vacant dwelling within the Development, in the following order of priority:

1. Persons who:

- (a) Throughout the period of at least three years immediately prior to the dwelling becoming vacant; or
- (b) For at least three years during the period of five years immediately prior to the dwelling becoming vacant,

have had their principle place of residence within the Parish.

2. Persons who throughout the period of at least three years immediately prior to the dwelling becoming vacant have been employed in permanent full-time work in the said Parish.

3. Persons who have close family member (e.g. parent, child, brother or sister) who has had their principal place of residence in the Parish for a period of at least five years prior to the dwelling becoming vacant.

If the vacancy cannot be filled in accordance with the above then the same criteria will be applied to the adjacent Parishes.

If the vacancy still can not be filled it will then be offered to residents of Purbeck.

### **Rural Exception Site Policy**

Purbeck District Council's policy MN 5 on rural exception sites is contained in the Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition 2004.

## **Policy MN 5**

Housing development within or adjoining existing settlements of fewer than 3,000 population, on sites where housing would otherwise be contrary to the policies for general housing provision in rural areas, may, in exceptional circumstances, be permitted to meet local needs for affordable housing in rural areas, provided that:

- (i) the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal is capable of meeting an identified, current, local need within the Parish, or immediately adjoining rural Parishes, which cannot otherwise be met
- (ii) the site is not remote from existing buildings and does not comprise scattered, isolated development in the open countryside
- (iii) the site is outside the Green Belt, or is a very limited development in the outer parts of the Green Belt and would not harm the function of the Green Belt
- (iv) the scheme is small in scale and of a character appropriate to the location
- (v) there are secure arrangements to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by subsequent as well as initial occupiers.

## **Dorset HomeChoice Scheme**

Dorset HomeChoice is the way of letting the housing association properties, which become available to let in Purbeck. It requires households to “bid” for properties advertised – this does NOT involve paying money; it is another way of saying “express an interest”.

Each Wednesday by 4 pm, Purbeck District Council updates the properties advertised. Properties will be advertised on the internet at [www.dorsethomechoice.org](http://www.dorsethomechoice.org) and at Purbeck District Council offices. For a full list of places where you can see a copy of the advert, please contact Purbeck District Council, Westport House, Worgret Road, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 4PP. Telephone: 01929 557370.

This is the only way Housing Register applicants will be considered for rented properties owned by Housing Associations.

## **The Council Housing Register**

The Housing Register is a list of people who want to rent Housing Association owned property in the District.

This survey is intended to assist people who need to be housed in this parish. However, whether your household requires affordable housing in this parish or elsewhere you must also register on the Council's Housing Register, Purbeck District Council, Westport House, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 4PP Telephone: 01929 557370.