

**Email dialogue between Andrew Wilson and Bridget Downton re  
Housing Need  
In chronological order**

**03 March 2017 09:85**

Dear Mr Wilson,

Further to your letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> February to Cllr Miller and further email exchanges that you have had with colleagues, please find below a response to your query about housing numbers. I'm sorry for the delay in getting this to you.

As you know, the Government expects councils to plan for their objectively assessed housing need on a housing market area basis. Evidence, such as population and household projections, shows that there are sub areas within housing market areas with specific needs. Purbeck is part of the East Dorset Housing Market Area which covers 6 local government boundary areas - i.e. the housing market sub areas - and 5 local plan areas (East Dorset and Christchurch have a combined local plan.) The Council will seek to meet its own identified need before approaching other councils to accommodate development, if it can be proven that the need cannot be met in Purbeck because of planning constraints. Likewise, the Council would expect any neighbouring council to prove why it cannot meet its own needs if it were to ask Purbeck to accommodate any additional development.

We have to plan for both market housing need and affordable housing need. We have to plan for houses to buy and houses to rent ~~or~~ market, affordable and social rent. For the purposes of strategic planning, the Council has divided the District into 5 spatial areas: North West; South West, Central, North East and South East. The Government does not expect councils to break objectively assessed need down to this level of granularity but rather to plan strategically to meet its needs across the whole district. The Local Plan that we are currently in the process of updating will need to deliver the projected housing need up until 2033. So whilst the current numbers on the housing register are provided here, they do not provide a picture of the need for affordable housing from now until 2033. In summary, we currently have 660 households on the register, For context, in the year between 01/03/16 and 01/03/17 we had 226 new applications accepted on the register. And of course, this also does not include the market housing need which we also have to plan for.

Because of the expectation to plan strategically, we do not have a breakdown of need by area in the way that you have requested. People may (but do not have to) express a preference for where they would like to be housed when they apply to be on the register. In any event, with the choice based allocations system, people can bid for houses across the District.

There are currently 660 households on the housing register. The following two tables break this down (as far as is possible) by the five spatial areas in two different ways. The first table aligns the people on the housing register to a spatial area according to first preference for where they would like to be housed (where they have expressed a preference). The second table aligns the people on the housing register to a spatial area based on where they currently live.

**Households by stated preference:**

Area	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Shared Ownership
North West	0	0	6	25	11
South West	0	6	10	66	23
Central	5	21	26	86	39
North East	2	11	30	60	33
South East	5	10	33	108	34
None specified	2	0	1	5	2

**Households by current location:**

Area	Emergency	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Shared Ownership
North West	0	2	7	28	4
South West	0	7	10	64	9
Central	7	17	21	76	21
North East	0	9	19	54	14
South East	5	9	38	101	17
None of the above	2	4	11	27	77

Yours sincerely  
Bridget Downton

**3 March 2017 10:52**

Dear Ms Downton

Thanks for your reply, which has given me some of the information for which I am looking.

Whilst I understand the apparent difficulty in supplying the information relative to location, I find it indicative of a complete lack of joined up thinking in that there is seemingly no connection between the totally disproportionate and therefore apparently random numbers suggested for market value housing in the designated settlement areas as stated in the Partial Review and the actual need for genuinely affordable housing in those settlement areas that predicates and/or justifies the numbers of market value houses that could or should be built to finance required infrastructure development and the affordable housing component.

Furthermore, there is a total lack of clarity and definition in terms of the relationship between the Settlement Areas in the Partial Review and the five Spatial Areas that you have indicated, leading to an obvious question along the lines of "If the areas are different, how can housing requirements be accurately assessed?"

I also note that you have given a total of 660 households on the housing register. However, as I am sure you are aware, actual housing need is calculated on Emergency, Gold and Silver bands - it is generally accepted that Bronze and Shared Ownership are aspirational figures rather than actual registered need, and rehousing

within these bands - much less new build to satisfy aspiration - is so unlikely as to be discounted entirely in the current financial climate. I am sure you will be aware that the E,G & S bands of Households by Stated Preference is only 128 - rounded up to 130, this gives a requirement/justification of only **390** market value houses.

That being so, it cannot have escaped your attention that even going by your vastly inflated figure of 660 (which I would dispute for the reasons given) the requirement of market value housing to finance such a number is in the region of **1980** - which, even if rounded up to 2000 is a very different number to the 3000+ **additional** houses mooted by the Partial Review. And as mentioned above, if the calculation is based only on E, G & S across the whole of Purbeck, the total number of houses actually required based on actual need would be (rounded up) **530** .

So whilst I thank you for your response to my original question, I find that your reply raises actually more more questions than it answers:

1. How can the numbers of proposed market value houses be justified when related to actual housing need, however calculated?
2. Why is there no definable or discernible relationship between Spatial Areas, Settlement Areas and Housing Register areas?
3. Why is there no definition available of 'affordable' in the context of needed housing?
4. Why is there no attempt to differentiate - in terms of actual needs related numbers - between 'affordable' and social housing, and is there a policy statement available which would indicate that PDC will undertake ownership of future Social Housing (rather than devolving it to non-covenanted Private Landlords)?

Do you think that there might be some benefit were we to arrange a meeting to discuss some of these specific issues before the concerns that the lack of clarity and joined-up thinking in your response goes out into the public domain?

Andrew Wilson

**3 March 2017 11:34**

Dear Mr Wilson,

Thank you for your email. You have, on many occasions, made it very clear that you believe that the Council is wrong in the number of houses it is trying to deliver. I do not consider it necessary to meet and discuss this as we are well aware of your position. As you know, we will be revisiting the objectively assessed need to reflect a range of changes since these numbers were produced. The key to the review of the Council's local plan is getting the new assessment right and that is what I intend to focus resources on. The Government has signalled its intention to consult soon on a new standardised method for calculating objectively assessed need. We have committed to update the numbers to reflect a range of changes since the assessment was carried out such as changes in household projections, etc.

It will be important to get the numbers right and I welcome the scrutiny that we have received on this to date as it will help us to ensure that our new figures reflect the necessary changes in input assumptions as well as any methodological changes

that may emerge. I intend to ensure that we have some continued independent scrutiny as we progress with the review of the local plan. We also need to get on with the very important task of working out what communities would like to see alongside new housing developments (however many that may be) that we are likely to need.

Yours sincerely

Bridget Downton