

**Guidance Note for Affordable Housing Provision in West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland**  
**Updated December 2017 to reflect made Neighbourhood Plans**

**Policy HOUS 1 – Affordable Housing**

Policy HOUS1 in the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan was adopted by West Dorset District Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015. It sets out the Council's approach to the provision of affordable housing on open market housing sites in the plan area.

**Threshold Above Which Affordable Housing Will Be Sought**

Policy HOUS 1 establishes that all new market housing, where there is a net gain of at least one market dwelling, should make a contribution to meeting affordable housing needs.

**Exemptions**

Criterion (i) of Policy HOUS 1 makes it clear that a contribution to the provision of affordable housing will not be sought where:

- the proposal is for the replacement or sub-division of an existing home.

Paragraph 5.2.5 of the Local Plan makes it clear that a contribution to the provision of affordable housing will not be required from:

- essential rural workers' dwellings; and
- homes restricted to holiday use.

National guidance (Paragraph Reference ID: 23b-031-20150814) also establishes that a contribution to the provision of affordable housing should not be required from:

- starter homes exception sites.

Self-build homes are not exempt from making a contribution to affordable housing provision, although they will be exempt from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges.

**Proportion of Affordable Housing Sought**

The Council will seek 35% of the total number of dwellings on a market housing site in West Dorset and in Weymouth (25% on Portland) to be affordable.

**On- and Off-site Provision**

On-site provision will always be sought unless:

- this would not deliver a whole unit; or
- there is compelling evidence why off-site provision or a financial contribution of equivalent value would be of greater all-round benefit.

**Viability**

Applicants seeking to justify a lower level of affordable housing provision (whether on- or off-site or by way of a financial contribution of equivalent value) will be expected to provide an assessment of viability.

## Financial Contributions

A financial contribution will be necessary:

- on market housing sites where one or two net additional dwellings are proposed (as on-site provision of 35% affordable housing in West Dorset and in Weymouth (25% on Portland) is not feasible); and
- where on- or off-site provision can only deliver a partial contribution towards the percentage of affordable housing being sought. In such circumstances, the balance between the target of 35% affordable housing provision in West Dorset and in Weymouth (25% on Portland) and the (lower) level of on- or off-site provision being delivered should be made up by way of a financial contribution.

Exceptionally, a financial contribution of equivalent value may be acceptable where there is compelling evidence that it would be of greater all-round benefit than on- or off-site provision.

### Level of Financial Contributions Sought

Where the Council agrees to a financial contribution being made, it will not seek the full amount required to deliver an equivalent affordable home, but rather an amount broadly equivalent to the average level of public sector subsidy required to deliver an equivalent affordable home in the plan area. This level of subsidy is equivalent to £345 per square metre [C].

The Council has established a 'per square metre' contribution payable on the Gross Internal Area (GIA) of the market element of a scheme, discounting any on- or off-site affordable housing provision. Financial contributions will be sought on the basis that they would provide sufficient subsidy to deliver a GIA of affordable housing equivalent to the GIA of the market housing scheme proposed.

In *West Dorset* and in *Weymouth*, where 35% affordable housing is required [P], the contribution is calculated on the basis of this level of contribution and the number of market units on site [N].

On *Portland*, where 25% affordable housing is required [P], the contribution is calculated on the basis of this level of contribution and the number of market units on site [N].

Level of contribution =  $N \times P \times \text{GIA} \times \text{£}345$ .

In *West Dorset* and in *Weymouth*, where 35% affordable housing is required, a contribution equivalent to £121 per square metre will be sought. This figure is equivalent to  $\text{£}345 \times 0.35 = \text{£}120.75$  (rounded to £121 per square metre).

On *Portland*, where 25% affordable housing is required, a contribution equivalent to £86 per square metre will be sought. This figure is equivalent to  $\text{£}345 \times 0.25 = \text{£}86.25$  (rounded to £86 per square metre).

### Worked Examples for *West Dorset or Weymouth* – Single Dwelling

For a single net additional market dwelling of 100 square metres GIA in in West Dorset or in Weymouth.

Number of units [N]	1	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	35%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>1 x 0.35</b>	<b>= 0.35</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT IN THIS EXAMPLE [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 0.35</b>	<b>= £12,075</b>

### Worked Examples for *West Dorset or Weymouth* – On-site Affordable Housing Provision Delivering Part of the Percentage Being Sought

A site for four houses in West Dorset or in Weymouth would enable one affordable dwelling to be provided on site. A financial contribution would be required for the balance based on the average GIA across the scheme as a whole.

Assuming no affordable housing units are provided:

Number of units [N]	4	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	35%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>4 x 0.35</b>	<b>= 1.4</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT IN THIS EXAMPLE [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 1.4</b>	<b>= £48,300</b>

Assuming one affordable housing unit is provided on site:

Number of units [N]	4	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	35%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>4 x 0.35</b>	<b>= 1.4</b>
<b>Subtract affordable housing units provided on site</b>	<b>1.4 – 1</b>	<b>=0.4</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT TO PROVIDE THE RESIDUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 0.4</b>	<b>= £13,800</b>

If average GIA was increased to 125 square metres, the contribution would be equivalent to:  $4 \times 0.35 \times 125 \times £345 = £60,375$  if no affordable housing is provided on site.

### PORTLAND

#### **Worked Example: Portland – Single Dwelling**

For a single net additional market dwelling of 100 square metres GIA on Portland

Number of units [N]	1	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	25%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>1 x 0.25</b>	<b>= 0.25</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT IN THIS EXAMPLE [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 0.25</b>	<b>= £8,625</b>

### Worked Examples: Portland - On-site Affordable Housing Provision Delivering Part of the Percentage Being Sought

A site for five houses on Portland would enable one affordable dwelling to be provided on site. A financial contribution would therefore be required for the balance based on the average GIA across the scheme as a whole.

Assuming no affordable housing units are provided:

Number of units [N]	5	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	25%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>5 x 0.25</b>	<b>= 1.25</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT IN THIS EXAMPLE [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 1.25</b>	<b>= £43,125</b>

Assuming one affordable housing unit is provided on site:

Number of units [N]	5	
Percentage of affordable housing required [P]	25%	
<b>Number of affordable houses required by policy HOUS1 [N x P]</b>	<b>5 x 0.25</b>	<b>= 1.25</b>
<b>Subtract affordable housing units provided on site</b>	<b>1.25 – 1</b>	<b>=0.25</b>
Average Gross Internal Floor Area [A]	100 square metres	
Level of contribution being sought [C]	£345 per square metre	
<b>Contribution required to provide a single affordable dwelling of equivalent size [A x C]</b>	<b>100 x £345</b>	<b>= £34,500</b>
<b>LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION SOUGHT TO PROVIDE THE RESIDUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT [N x P x A x C]</b>	<b>£34,500 x 0.25</b>	<b>= £8,625</b>

If average GIA was increased to 125 square metres, the contribution would be equivalent to:  $4 \times 0.35 \times 125 \times £345 = £53,906$  if no affordable housing is provided on site.

A calculator has been made available to enable easy calculation of the level of contribution required under Policy HOUS1. This enables any on site affordable housing units to be counted in the calculation of the overall contribution. The calculator can be found [here](#).

### **Measuring Gross Internal Area (GIA)**

Guidance on how GIA should be measured is set out in Appendix 1. This is based on the RICS Property Measurement (Incorporating International Property Measurement Standards), published 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015, but excludes areas with a headroom of less than 1.5 metres (except under stairs), reflecting the Valuation Office Agency's approach to measuring property for rating and council tax purposes.

**Please note:** Where a Neighbourhood Plan has been made part of the development plan, alternative thresholds and percentage requirements may have been introduced which should be used rather than that set out above. Details of made neighbourhood plans can be found [here](#).

## **Appendix 1 - Gross Internal Area Definitions**

Gross Internal Area (GIA) is the area of a building measured to the internal face of the perimeter walls at each floor level.

### **It *includes*:**

- Areas occupied by internal walls and partitions;
- Columns, piers, chimney breasts, stairwells, lift-wells, other internal projections, vertical ducts, and the like;
- Atria and entrance halls, with clear height above, measured at base level only;
- Internal open-sided balconies, walkways, and the like;
- Structural, raked or stepped floors are property to be treated as a level floor measured horizontally;
- Horizontal floors, with permanent access, below structural, raked or stepped floors;
- Corridors of a permanent essential nature (e.g. fire corridors, smoke lobbies);
- Mezzanine floor areas with permanent access;
- Lift rooms, plant rooms, fuel stores, tank rooms which are housed in a covered structure of a permanent nature, whether or not above the main roof level;
- Service accommodation such as toilets, toilet lobbies, bathrooms, showers, changing rooms, cleaners' rooms, and the like;
- Projection rooms;
- Voids over stairwells and lift shafts on upper floors;
- Loading bays;
- Pavement vaults;
- Garages; and
- Conservatories.

### **It *excludes*:**

- Perimeter wall thicknesses and external projections;
- External open-sided balconies, covered ways and fire escapes
- Canopies;
- Areas with a headroom of less than 1.5m (except under stairs);
- Voids over or under structural, raked or stepped floors; and
- Greenhouses, garden stores, fuel stores, and the like.