

Somerset Council Methodology for Providing Neighbourhood Development Plan Groups with a Housing Requirement

Introduction

This note sets out the Somerset Council approach to providing neighbourhood planning groups with a housing requirement figure when requested.

Plan -making is an iterative process. The approach outlined here will be taken until the Somerset Local Plan has progressed through Gateway 2¹ of the new planning system—that is, once the settlement hierarchy has been established and settlement-level housing requirements and allocations have been identified.

The Somerset Local Plan will include minimum housing requirements for all designated Neighbourhood Areas.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Context

NPPF, December 2024

Paragraph 70 states:

Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area³³, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.

Footnote 33 states:

Because a neighbourhood area is designated at a late stage in the strategic policy-making process, or after strategic policies have been adopted; or in instances where strategic policies for housing are out of date.

Consultation draft NPPF, December 2025

Policy HO2 proposes that:

- A housing requirement figure *should* be set for designated neighbourhood plan areas unless it is impractical to do so (such as where designation occurs late in the Local Plan process, post-adoption, or where the Local Plan is out of date). In such cases, an *indicative* figure must be provided.
 - Requirement figures should take account of:
 - the latest local housing need evidence,
 - neighbourhood area population, and
 - the local planning authority's most recently available planning strategy.
- Housing requirement figures for neighbourhood areas should *not* be set at nil unless:

¹ [Create or update a local plan using the new system - GOV.UK](#)

- a) the Local Plan already meets or exceeds the housing need for the area;
- b) the neighbourhood area has a clear and well-evidenced need for no additional housing; or
- c) constraints in the area are so substantial that additional housing of any kind is precluded.

Local Housing Need Evidence

Somerset Council commissioned ORS to model the housing needs of all parishes. Their methodology includes:

- Identifying the number of current people, households and dwellings in each parish. This includes considering the age profile of the population and also the household types;
- Trends for population change in the parishes are then considered which allows a projection of migration for each area to be developed;
- The demography of each area is then considered to develop a projection of births and deaths;
- This allows for a projection of population change in each parish based upon recent trends;
- The analysis process set out in the main report LHNA is then followed for each parish to model their affordable and market housing needs based upon their demographic projections.

Methodology for providing a housing requirement figure

For the period 2025 to 2045 housing requirements for neighbourhood areas will be calculated as follows:

- Starting point ORS calculated housing need **minus** the following:
 - Housing completions within the Neighbourhood Area since 1 April 2025
 - Housing commitments (extant permissions) in the Neighbourhood Area since 1 April 2025
 - Existing Local Plan allocations without planning permission. Neighbourhood Plan groups will need to demonstrate that any such allocation remains deliverable.

Example:

Factor	Dwellings
<i>a. ORS calculated housing need</i>	80
<i>b. Housing completions within the Neighbourhood Area since 1 April 2025</i>	5
<i>c. Housing commitments (extant permissions) in the Neighbourhood Area since 1 April 2025</i>	12
<i>d. Housing allocated in existing Local Plan</i>	10
<i>e. Housing requirement (a-b-c-d = e)</i>	53

Points to note

- The housing requirement figure provided is a **minimum** requirement.
- If a neighbourhood plan covers a period of less than 20 years, the requirement can be adjusted proportionately.
Example: A 20-year requirement of 60 dwellings equates to 3 dwellings per year. For a 15-year plan period: $15 \times 3 = 45$ dwellings.
- For the purposes of NPPF, 2024 paragraph 14, the neighbourhood plan **must** allocate land for housing.²
- Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than provided for in other parts of the development plan for the area.
- This methodology does not prejudice decision-making on planning applications submitted during neighbourhood plan preparation.
- The forthcoming Somerset HELAA will be an important evidence source for neighbourhood plan groups seeking to make housing allocations.

² See also Policy S6 of the consultation draft NPPF, December 2025 [Link](#)