

Purbeck District Population Profile

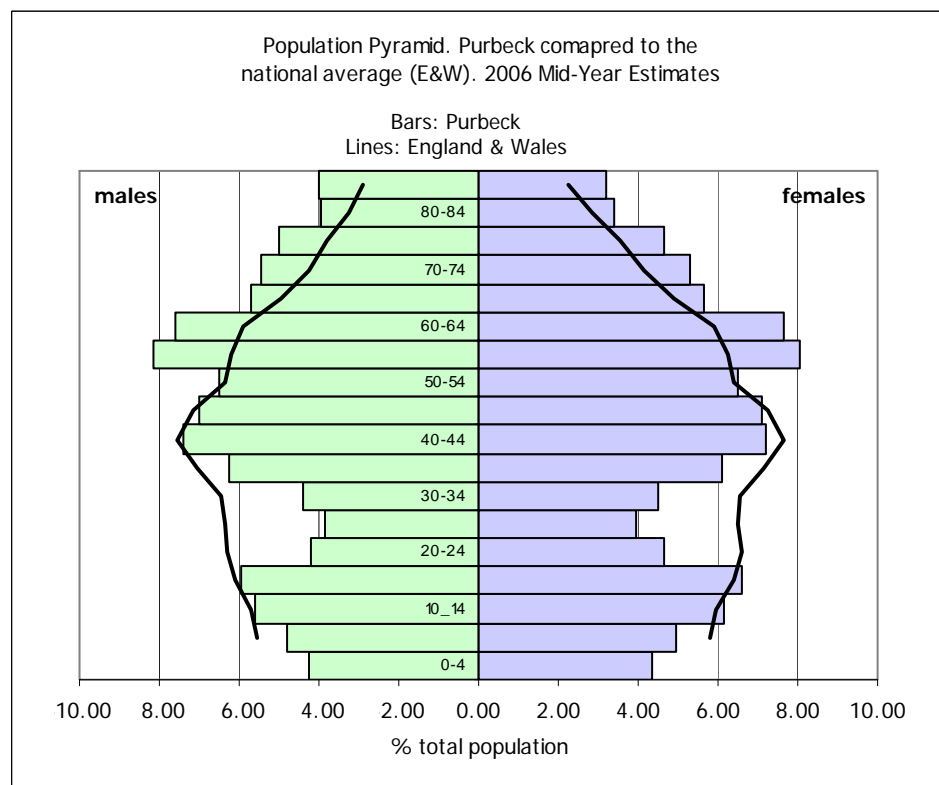
June 2008

Current population

The total population of Purbeck district is 45,200 (2006 mid-year estimate) making it one of the smallest districts in Dorset, in terms of population (Christchurch's population is 45,000). Purbeck has a total area of 40,442 hectares, giving an average population density of just over 1 person per hectare. This is significantly lower than the national average (England & Wales) of 3.55 persons per hectare. The reality is that the majority of Purbeck's population is concentrated in three main areas: Lytchett Minster & Upton, Wareham and Swanage. Almost 53% of Purbeck's population live within one of these three areas. Other significant settlements are Wool (including Bovington) with a total population of 4,400, Lytchett Matravers (3,500) and Wareham St Martin (Sanford area) 2,760.

Age Structure

The age profile of Purbeck's population is fairly typical of Dorset. Over 22% of the population are aged 65+; the national average is just 16%. In general, for all age groups below 50 years, the proportion in Purbeck is below average whilst for all those above 50 years the figures are above average. The following chart illustrates.



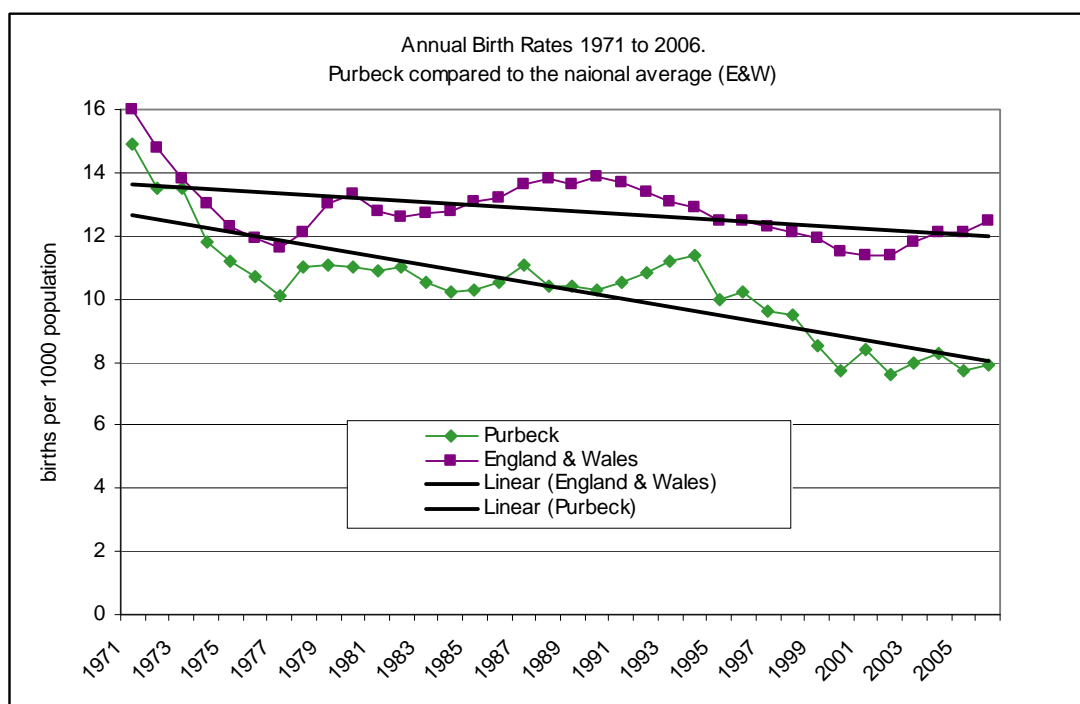
Recent population growth

Over the last 10 years (1996 to 2006) the total population of Purbeck has increased by just 2.5%, this is the lowest rate of growth in Dorset and less than half the average for the County as a whole (6.2% growth across DCC). Across England & Wales total population has grown by 4.5% over the last 10 years.

Birth rates

The birth rate in Purbeck is one of the lowest in Dorset with an average of 8 births per 1000 population over the last 3 years. Only East Dorset has a lower birth rate at 7.6 per 1000 population. However this part of the County has a higher proportion of older people than Purbeck so a lower rate would be expected.

Birth rates have been falling for many years across the Country. Annual birth rate data is available back to 1971. Over the last 35 years the birth rate in Purbeck has fallen from 14.9 per 1000 to just 7.9 per 1000. Across England & Wales the decline in birth rate has not been as great, falling from 16 per 1000 in 1971 to 12.5 per 1000 in 2006. The chart illustrates.



The trend lines clearly show the divergence over time between birth rates in Purbeck and the national average. Also interesting is that across England & Wales birth rates have actually started to increase in recent years. The figures show a low point was reached in 2001 and since then the birth rate has increased from 11.4 per 1000 to 12.5 per 1000. However, in Purbeck this recent increase is not apparent.

Drivers of population growth

The above information has shown that the birth rate in Purbeck is low. However, the death rate is higher than average. In 2006 the death rate for Purbeck was 11 per 1000 population, the national average was 9.4. More significant is the fact that the death rate is significantly higher than the birth rate, resulting in a natural decline in population. i.e. if no-one moved in or out of the area total population numbers would fall. This means that population growth in Purbeck, and across Dorset, is entirely dependent on net inward migration (more people move into the area than move out of the area). This is in turn dependent on the availability of housing for people to move to.

Population Projections

Because of these circumstances the strategic planning authorities for Dorset (Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council) collectively produce population projections linked to housing supply. This approach assumes that if new houses are built they will be filled. Of course, if the rate of house building were to increase dramatically there would be a saturation point, but the evidence we have to date has not shown this.

RSS background information

Information on future housing supply is taken from the strategic plans for the area. At present the plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy. A draft was published last year and was subject to an examination in public last summer. The panel of inspectors published their recommendations in January and we are now waiting for recommendations from the

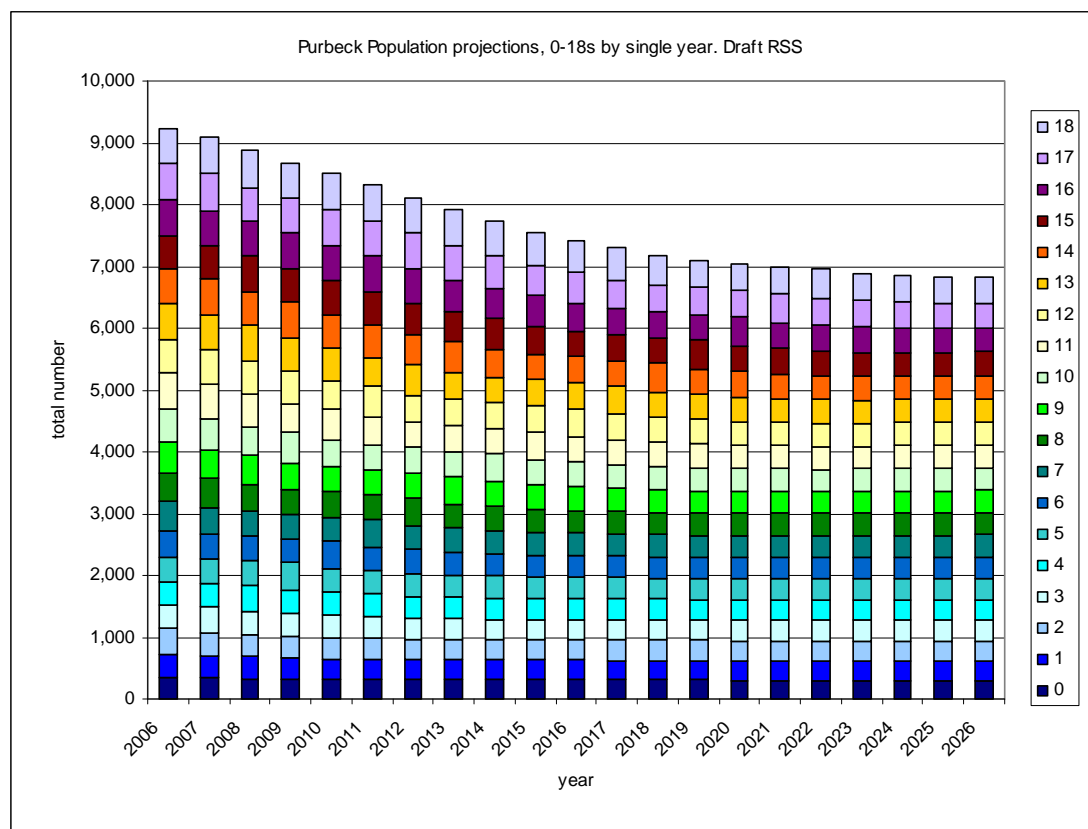
Secretary of State. The plan will then be amended and subject to a consultation period before being finalised. In short it is a period of change. Projections currently available are based on the housing numbers stated in the draft RSS.

Over the last 10 years there have been, on average, 135 dwellings built in Purbeck each year. The draft RSS recommended, for the next 20 years (2006 to 2026) an average of 105 dwellings per year. Slightly lower than in previous years, in recognition that all large sites had been already been developed.

The panel recommended a further 2,750 (137 per year) dwellings should be accommodated in the district during the period 2006 to 2026, within an area of study to the north of Upton and Lytchett Minster. If this additional development were to go ahead, it is most likely to be within the second half of the plan period (2016 to 2026) and the area of study is entirely within the Lytchett & Upton pyramid area.

What the projections show

As stated above the latest projections are based on the draft RSS and therefore exclude the additional dwellings recommended by the panel. Based on these projections, the total population of Purbeck district is projected to fall by just over 3% between 2006 and 2026. The number of people aged 0-18 years is projected to fall by 26%. The most significant decreases are projected for those aged 10-16 years, falling by between 30% and 36%. The following chart shows the projected number of 0-18 year olds.



Office for National Statistics (ONS) trend projections

The ONS produce population projections for all local authorities in England on a consistent basis. The 2006-based projections were published on June 12th. These projections assume that past trends will continue. For Purbeck they show that total population will increase by almost 11% over the 20 year period 2006 to 2026. Despite this overall level of growth the more detailed breakdown by age shows a 4.5% decrease in the number 5 to 9 year olds, 17.9% decrease in 10-14s and 10% decrease in 15-19s. Although the actual numbers do vary

the message is similar, the number of children in Purbeck is expected to decrease steadily over the next 20 years. This pattern is not in line with national trends but is projected for other parts of Dorset. In East Dorset a decrease in the number of children is projected whilst in West Dorset no increase is expected despite total population being projected to increase by over 16%.

Helen Owens
Principal Researcher (Projects)
Environment Directorate