

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY UPDATE presented by **Alex Rehaag, Senior Specialist, Affordable Housing, South Hams District Council** to a meeting of Thurlestone Parish Council on 7th February 2022

Introduction

A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2016 by South Hams District Council. This was required as evidence to support the Neighbourhood Plan which has since been adopted for the area. Neighbourhood Plans should be reviewed throughout the life of the plan. Housing Needs Surveys generally have a shelf life of about 5 years also these types of surveys are a snap shot in time.

The Parish has been in discussion with the council to support a small rural exception site in Bantham, this has been discussed locally throughout the process. The site would accommodate around 6 units of affordable homes. In line with the Neighbourhood Plan, this site would not allow any open market properties and therefore this survey is primarily aimed at those in need of affordable housing.

There have been delays in bringing a site forward and circumstances of some of those interested applicants may have changed, therefore it was timely to revisit the housing need. It is also necessary in terms of proceeding discussions with the landowner as housing need evidence is required as part of any potential planning process.

This survey is considered to be a refresh of the 2016 evidence as no new developments within the parish have come forward since the last survey or adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Survey Aim and Method

The survey aim is primarily to refresh the 2016 survey to identify how many properties are required to meet local needs within the parish. This survey will assist in determining any significant changes as part of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Housing Crisis which has been declared by the Local Authority. The results of this survey will be used by South Hams District Council if a planning application is submitted within the next 5 years.

The 2016 survey was distributed to every household, however this survey was available by paper copy and return to a secure ballot box in the village shop and also through an on line survey link. The survey purpose, link and how to complete this was publicised through the Parish Council and South Hams District Council's social media channels and publicised on the SHDC consultation portal through the local paper.

Headline information

- 39 people started to complete the survey, not all completed this hence the disparity with some of the figures
- 32 people stated this was their main home. No responses from second home owners
- There were varying types of accommodation eg bungalow, house
- 17 responders owned their home with or without a mortgage, 3 were in tied accommodation, 10 privately rented and one was a current housing association tenant.
- 30 of responders met the local connection tests and 22 of these had lived in the parish for 3 years or more

- 17 of the responses stated that they would need to move within the next 5 years
- Varying bedroom needs were identified of various family make up.
- The most common reason for moving through the drop down answers or through free text was that the property was too small, unsuitable or too expensive. Also a fear of the landlord selling.
- No responders had a need for specialist housing

I have selected the above responses as a snap shot of the information provided. Behind the insight programme which was used for the survey is an excel spreadsheet that contains in-depth, personal information. This spreadsheet is what has been used to interrogate the detail and reach a conclusion on the number of new homes that is needed.

Interrogating the data

All of the applicants that stated that they did not have a need to move in the next 5 years were discounted.

Those that owned their own homes that provided details on equity were discounted.

Respondent's that expressed a wish to buy on the open market or self-build who had income or savings above the Help to Buy threshold were discounted.

Responses to the survey identified the below as a potential need.

Shared Ownership

1 x 2 bedroom property

1 x 3 bedroom property

1x 4 bedroom property

Rented (social rented as per NPPF definition)

4 x 1 bedroom property

2 x 2 bedroom property

1 x 3 bedroom property.

The above figures do not take in to account the fact that there is current affordable housing within the area and there will be turnover (churn) within these properties. There is particular turnover within the 1 bed stock within the area. There will also be changes within people's lives that may see them move on to alternative accommodation, move out of the area or need different size property from the response they have provided. Therefore the survey is noted as a snap shot in time and the Devon Home Choice register will be used as an additional form of evidence.

Survey conclusions

The recommendation is that **6** new properties are provided within the next **5 years** and the tenure of these properties should all be **Rented** dwellings to meet the highest and most certain evidence of need. This size of the properties is detailed below:

Rented (social rented as per NPPF definitions)

2 x 1 bedroom property

2 x 2 bedroom property

2 x 3 bedroom property.

If any new properties are brought forward using this survey information, the following should be included within the section 106 agreement, ensuring perpetuity:

- properties meet Local Connection requirements as per the adopted Neighbourhood Plan,
- advertised through Devon Home Choice,
- allow Bands A-E to apply.
- also be a cascade to allow applicants the ability to under occupy by one bedroom in the 2 and 3 bed units.

Justification for not including shared ownership

Shared Ownership or other intermediate home ownership has not been considered at this stage due to the limited information that has been provided to support the affordability of this product. There is also a question over any shared owners ability to 'sell' their share within the legal rules of the proposed section 106. Available mortgages may be restricted to the shared ownership/intermediate product, particularly where there are local connection restrictions for section 106 properties.

Following the above data analysis the following should direct any affordable housing development within the next 5 years.

Prepared as a refresh to the 2016 survey by Alex Rehaag, Senior Specialist – Affordable Housing.