

# East Devon Self-build Register



Combined Monitoring Report for First  
and Second Base Periods (30/03/16  
to 30/10/16 and 31/10/16 to 30/10/17)

Published March 2018

## Contents

1. Monitoring requirements for self-build.....	2
2. Legal Background .....	2
3. Monitoring Demand.....	3
4. Monitoring Supply.....	3
5. Additional Information from the Self-build Register.....	3
APPENDIX A Self-build Register Application Form Analysis of Responses to Additional Questions .....	5
APPENDIX B Self-build Register Survey December 2017 – Summary of Responses.....	15

1. Monitoring requirements for self-build
  - 1.1 The Self- build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) places a duty on local authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land in their area for their own self build and custom build housing and to publicise that register. Furthermore, the act places a responsibility on councils to permission enough serviceable plots that can potentially be used for self or custom build housing in order to meet this demand.
  - 1.2 This report sets out both the demand for self-build in East Devon, as shown by the numbers on the self-build register and the supply of self-build plots in East Devon, as taken from the Councils residential monitoring figures.
2. Legal Background
  - 2.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 section 9 defines self and custom housebuilding as "...the building or completion by-
    - a) Individuals,
    - b) Associations of individuals, or c) Persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals.""

"But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person."
  - 2.2 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 places a duty upon Local Authorities to have regard to its register in carrying out its functions in relation to planning, housing, the disposal of land in its ownership and regeneration. The National Planning Practice Guidance provides more guidance [Self-build and custom housebuilding - GOV.UK](#).
  - 2.3 The Act also places a duty on Local Authorities to give suitable development permissions for enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand shown on 'Part 1' for self and custom build housing as identified on its register in a given 'base' period. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the East Devon self-build register has been divided into 'Part 1', where a local connection test is applied and 'Part 2' for applicants that do not meet the local connection tests set.
  - 2.4 The first base period runs from the date that the register was established (30<sup>th</sup> March 2016) until 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016; the second base period runs from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Local Authorities have three years from the end of each base period to permission enough 'serviced plots' to meet the demand shown in the respective base periods.
  - 2.5 A development permission (which could include a planning permission or prior notification approval) is considered suitable if it could include self/custom build

housing. A serviced plot of land is defined in the 2015 Act as amended by the 2016 Act as "... a plot of land that –

- a) Has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water and waste water, or
- b) can be provided with those things in specified circumstances or within a specified period

### 3. Monitoring Demand

3.1 The number of people on the register for the first base period in East Devon is 32 and the requirement to permission sufficient serviced plots to meet this demand expires on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019. This means that, between 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Council will need to demonstrate that at least 32 plots suitable for self-build have been granted planning permission.

3.2 The number of people on Part 1 of the register during the second base period is 40, with 43 on both Part 1 and Part 2 of the register. The three years to permission at least 40 serviced plots will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This means that the Council needs to demonstrate that at least 40 plots suitable for self-build have been granted planning between 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in addition to the 32 plots required from the first base period.

### 4. Monitoring Supply

4.1 The requirement to permission enough service plots that can potentially be used for self-build leaves a lot of discretion for the Local Planning Authority to determine how much of its housing supply meets this definition. The most likely sites to be purchased for self-build are those with permissions for a single dwelling, although it is possible that sites with permissions for more than one dwelling will come forward as self-builds. More work will be undertaken to establish criteria for establishing the supply of self-build plots, but as an interim measure all single permissions will be recorded as suitable for self-build. There are currently no larger sites where a proportion of sites have been specifically earmarked for self-build, but it is hoped that the evidence of demand now shown on the self-build register will result in successful negotiations to encourage this in line with Policy H2 of the adopted East Devon Local Plan.

4.2 Current monitoring shows that 75 individual permissions were granted to 30/10/2016 and 80 between 31/10/2016 and 30/10/2017. This shows that there is a good choice of sites suitable for self-build in relation to the level of demand shown on the self-build register.

### 5. Additional Information from the Self-build Register

5.1 In addition to the 'standard' questions that are needed to establish whether applicants meet the criteria set for inclusion on the self-build register, extra

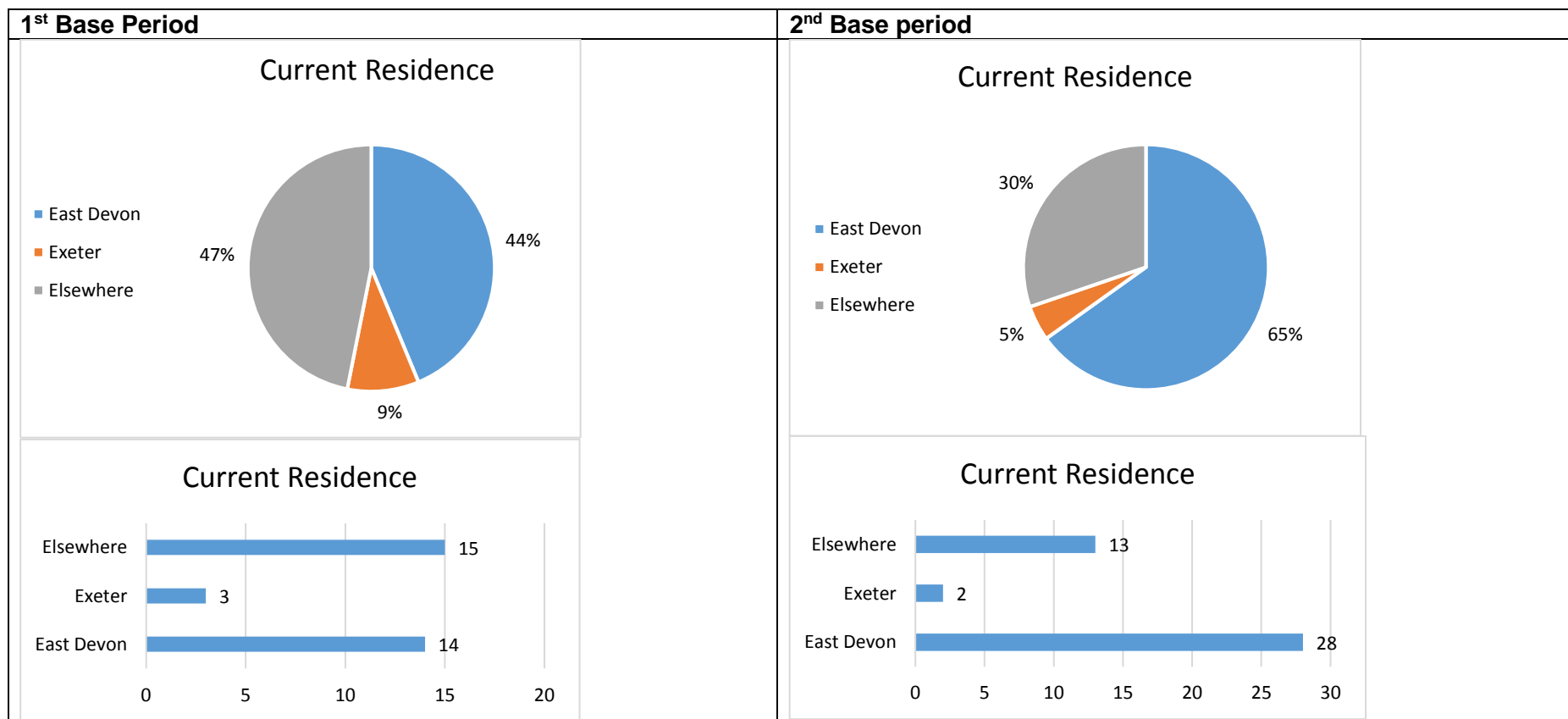
questions are asked to help establish where in East Devon people are most interested in building, what people are interested in building and how much money is available to finance it. The results are useful in helping to provide evidence to inform planning applications, Council decisions and policy development.

5.2 Charts are included in Appendix A of this report for each of the completed base periods, but 'highlights' of the data show that:

- Over 75% of applicants are aged between 31 and 65 years, with only 3% being over 65;
- More than 55% of applicants live in East Devon;
- At the time of application, most applicants had not applied to any other self-build register;
- The most popular towns for self-build were Sidmouth, Exmouth and Budleigh with Woodbury and Lympstone being the most popular villages;
- More than half were already owner occupiers, but there are also 'concealed households' living with parents or other family members;
- The majority want three bedrooms or less;
- Around two thirds want a detached dwelling;
- A majority had a total budget of under £400,00; and
- Over one third were ready to self-build within one year.

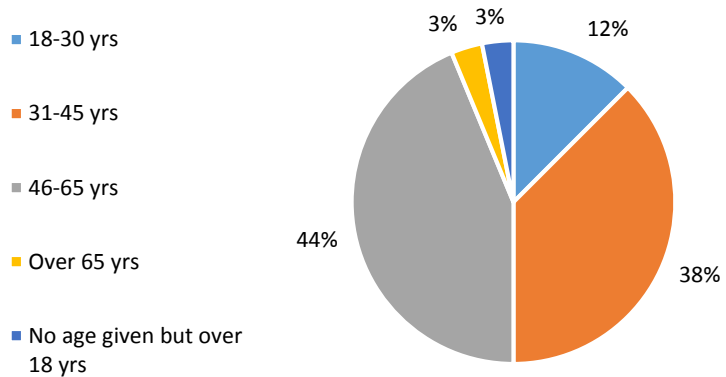
5.3 In addition to the questions asked when people apply to go onto the self-build register, a short series of questions to those on the register was sent out in December 2017 and the results of this are included in Appendix B of this report.

APPENDIX A Self-build Register Application Form Analysis of Responses to Additional Questions

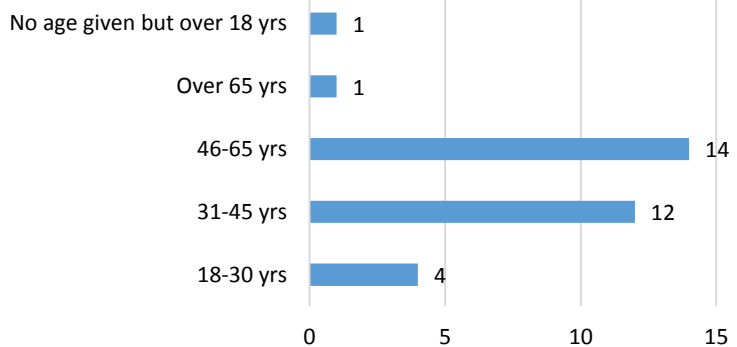


**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

Age of individual at date added to register

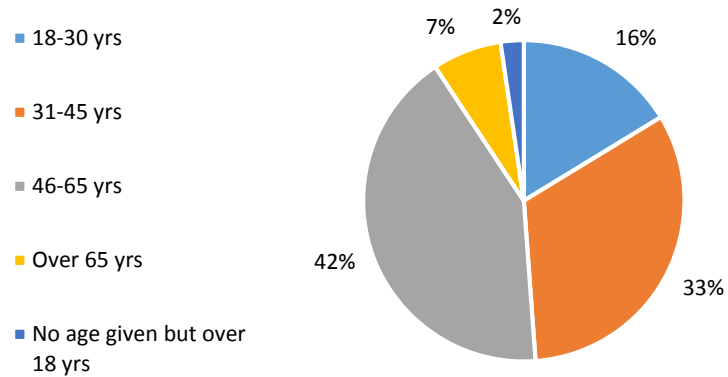


Age of individual at date added to register

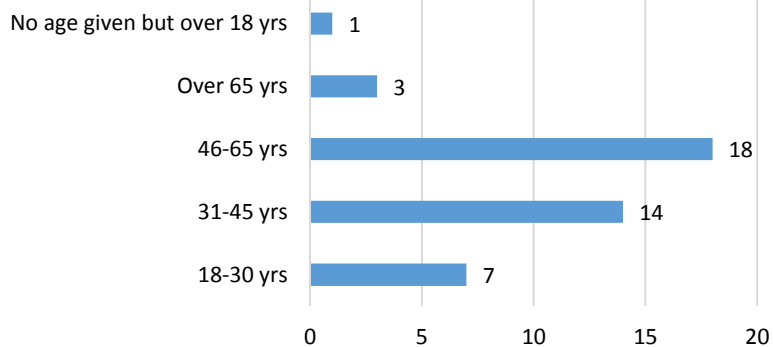


**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

Age of individual at date added to register

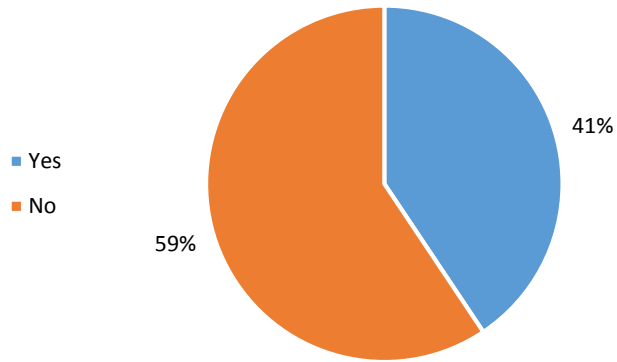


Age of individual at date added to register

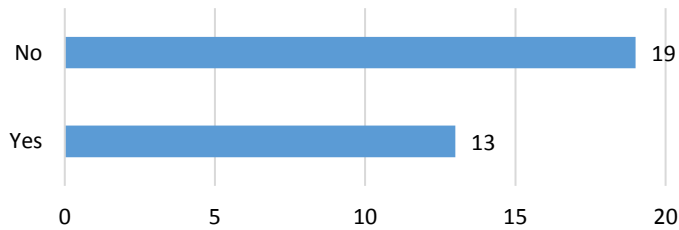


1<sup>st</sup> Base Period

Have you applied to any other register?

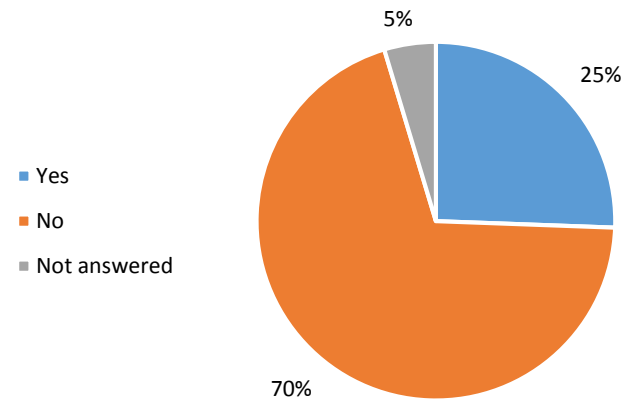


Have you applied to any other register?

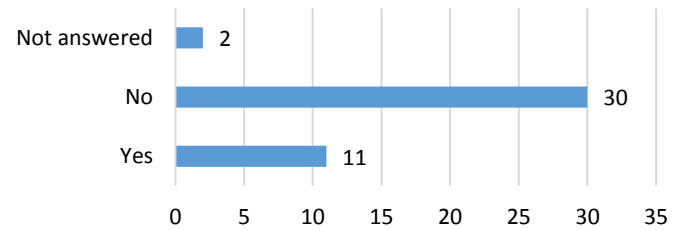


2<sup>nd</sup> Base period

Have you applied to any other register?



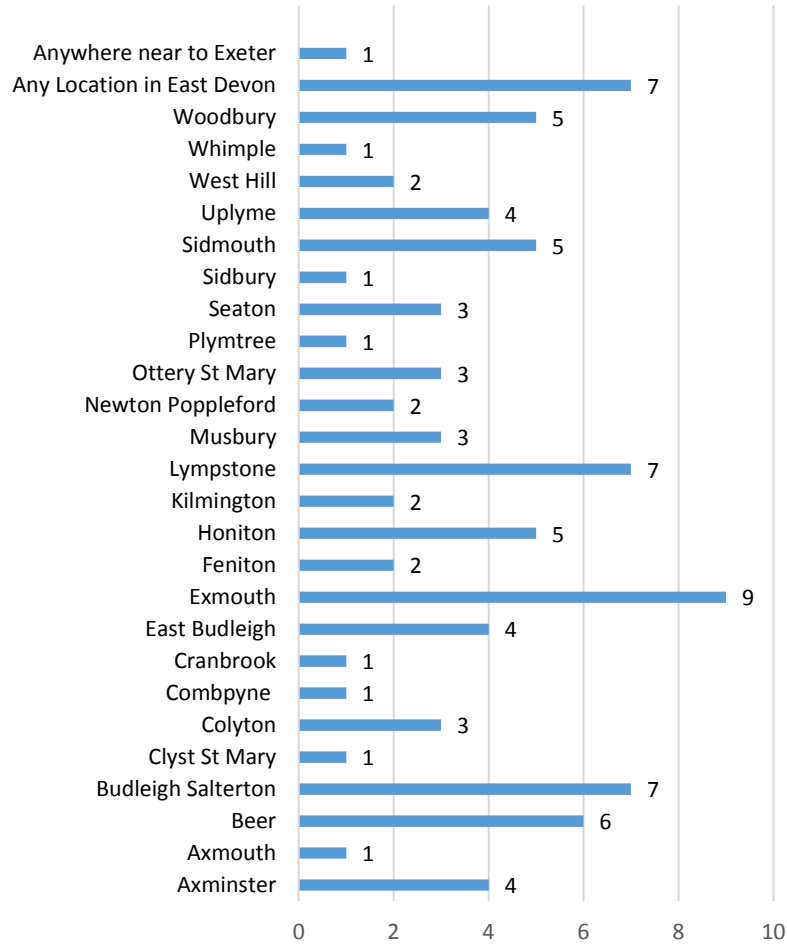
Have you applied to any other register?





**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

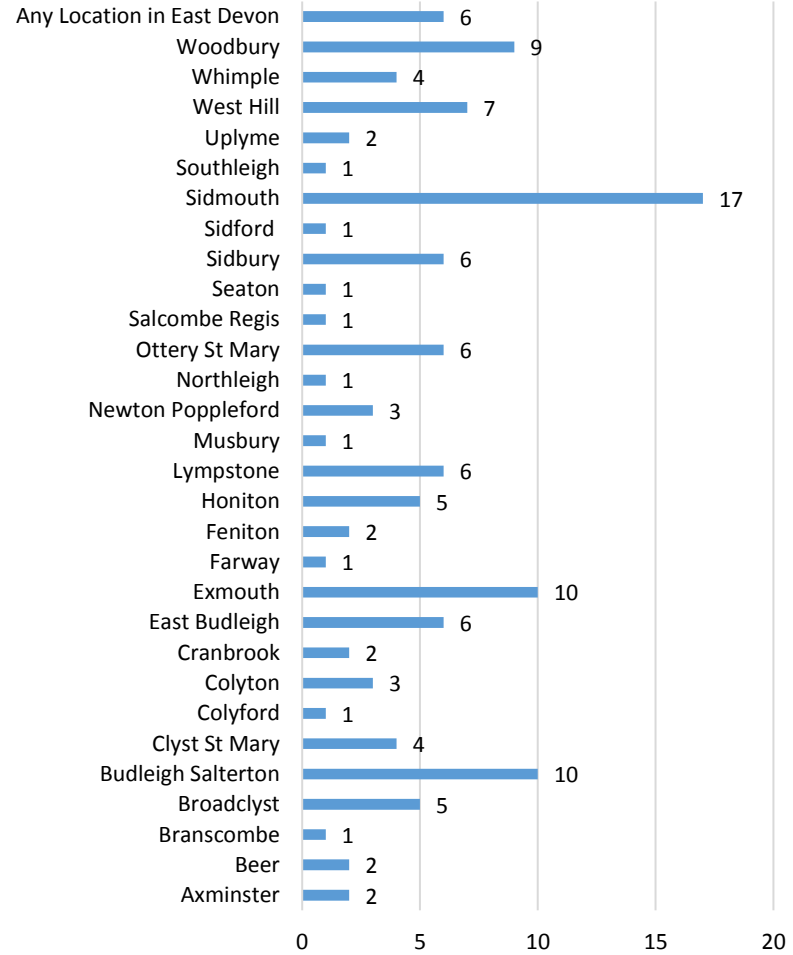
In which settlement would you like to acquire a serviced plot?



Note: more than one location was chosen in most cases

**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

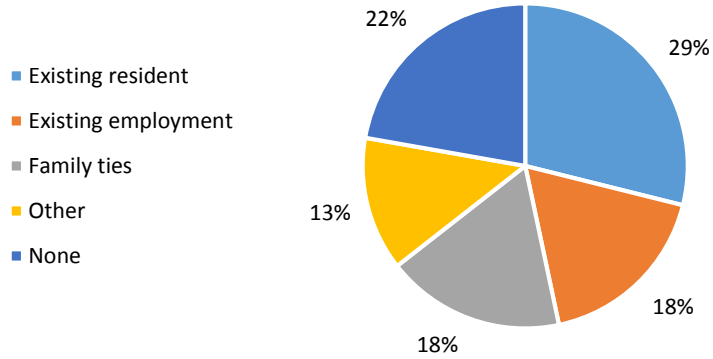
In which settlement would you like to acquire a serviced plot?



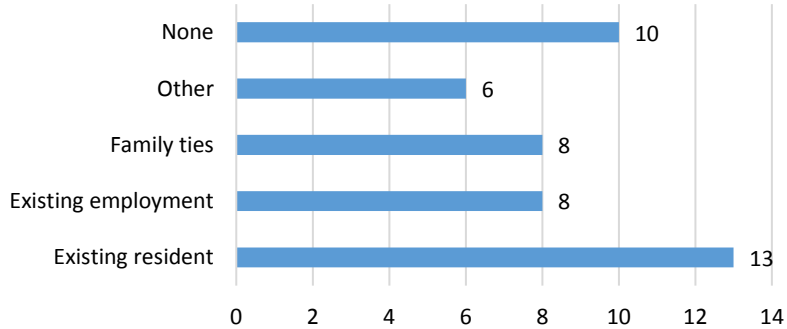
Note: more than one location was chosen in most cases

**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

Do you have any existing links to this settlement?



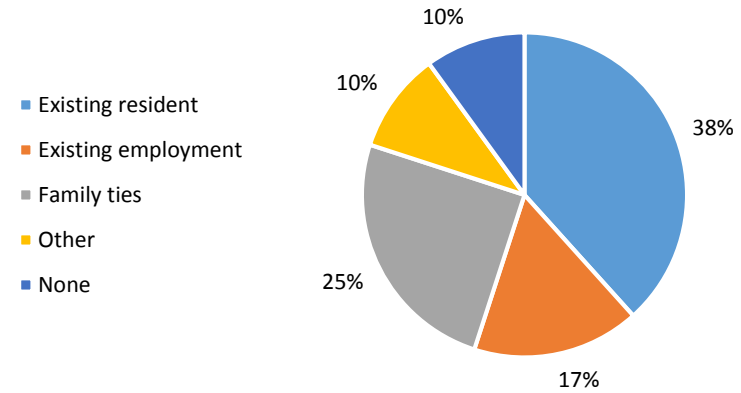
Do you have any existing links to this settlement?



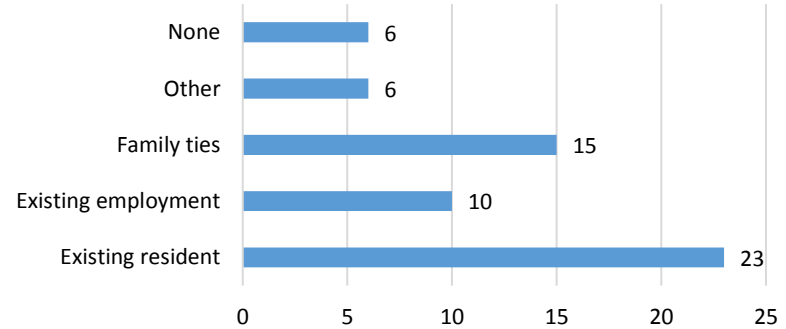
Note: some gave more than one response

**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

Do you have any existing links to this settlement?



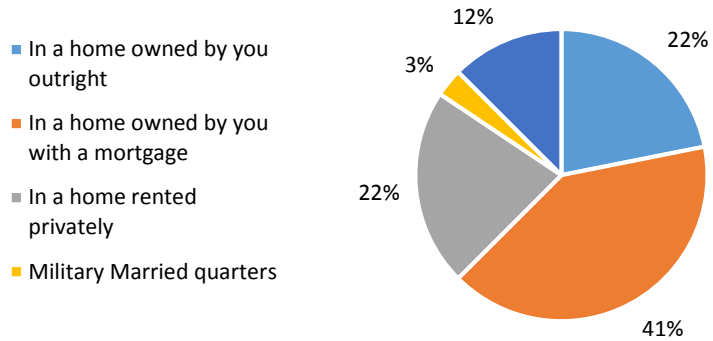
Do you have any existing links to this settlement?



Note: some gave more than one response

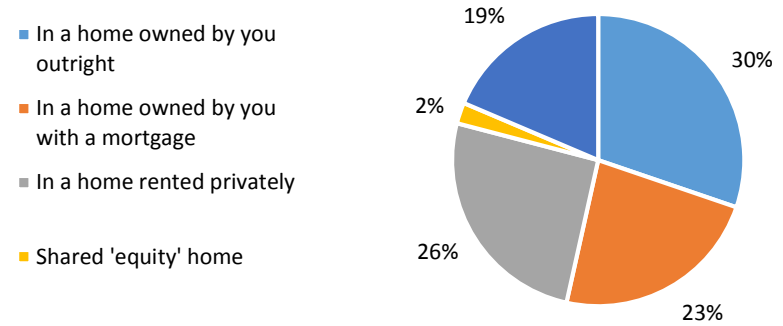
**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

**In what type of house do you currently live (housing tenure)?**

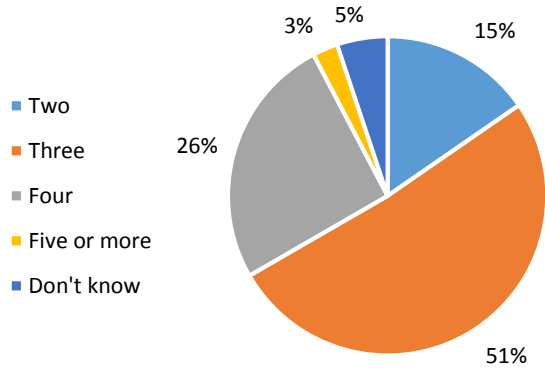


**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

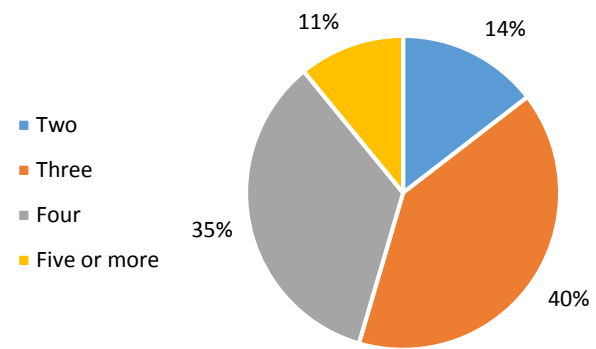
**In what type of house do you currently live (housing tenure)?**



**How many bedrooms would you like?**

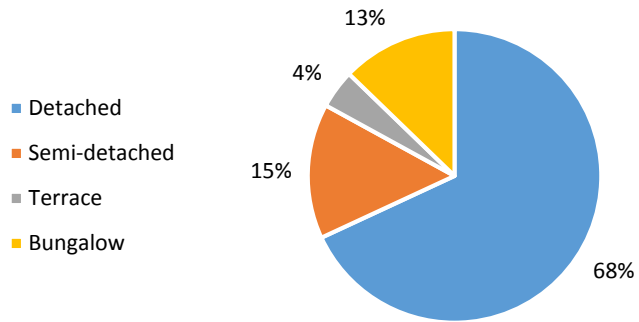


**How many bedrooms would you like?**



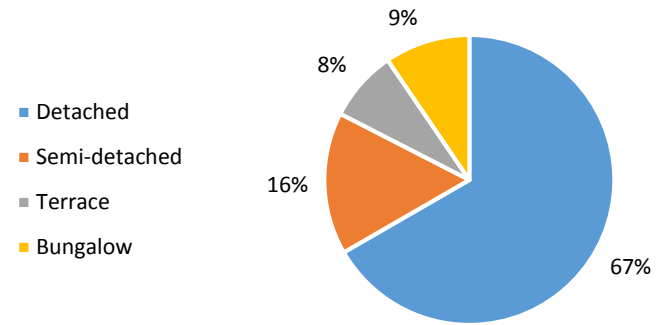
**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

**What type of home do you want to build?**

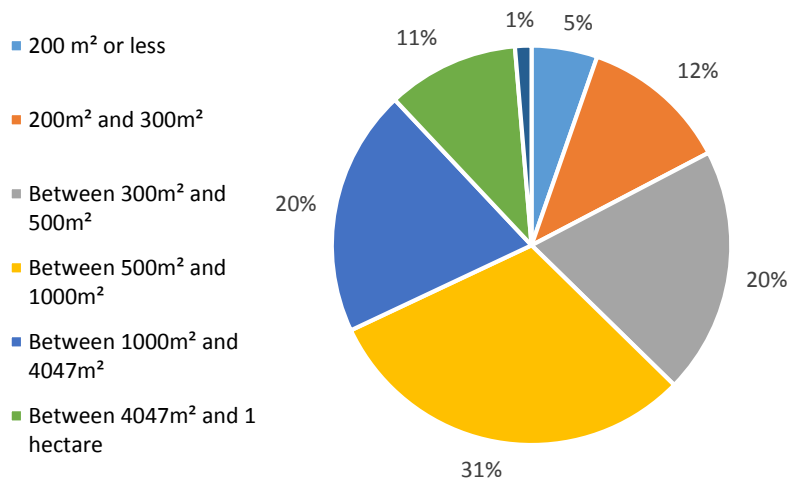


**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

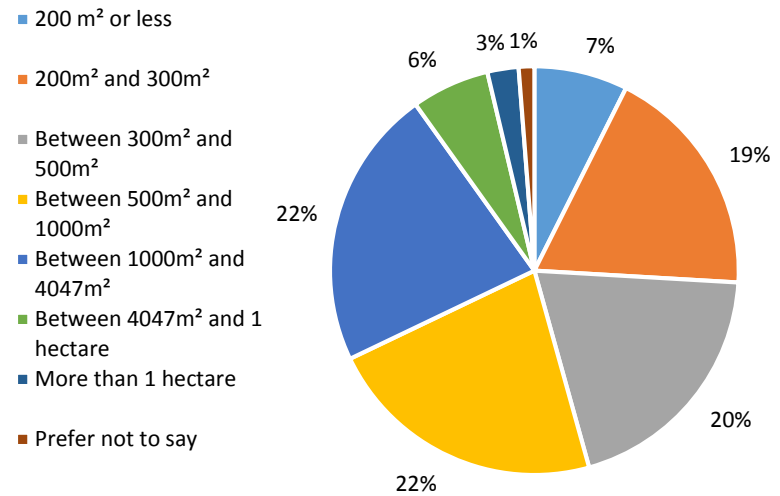
**What type of home do you want to build?**



**What size plot are you looking for?**



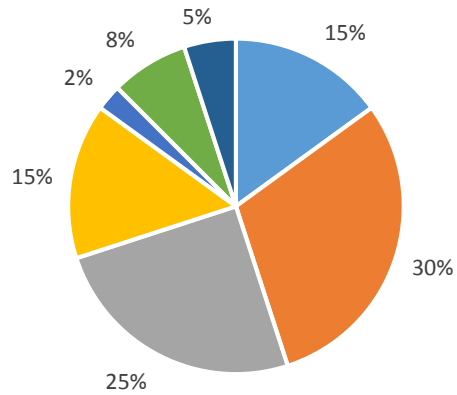
**What size plot are you looking for?**



**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

**Budget for acquiring a plot**

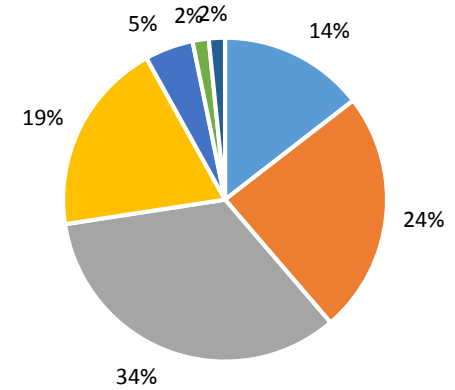
- Less than £50,000
- Between £50,000 and £100,000
- Between £100,000 and £200,000
- Between £200,000 and £300,000
- Over £400,000
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say



**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

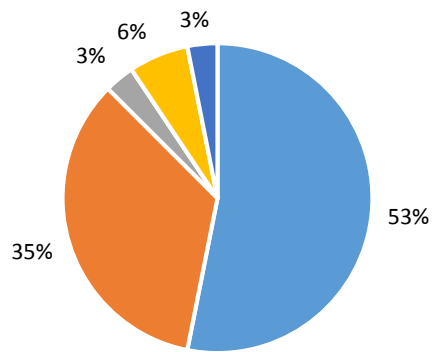
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- Over £400,000
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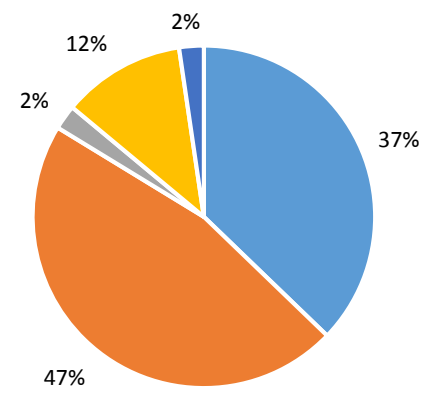
**How would you finance your house?**

- Owned outright without a mortgage
- Owned by you with a mortgage
- Part owned with a housing association to share cost of project
- Owned outright without a mortgage/



**How would you finance your house?**

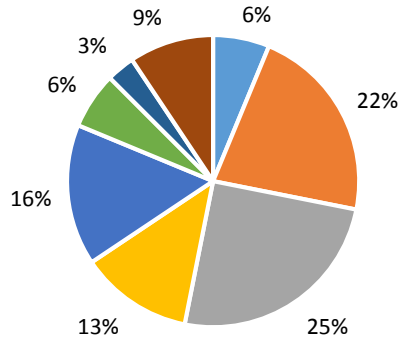
- Owned outright without a mortgage
- Owned by you with a mortgage
- Part owned with a housing association to share cost of project
- Owned outright without a mortgage/  
Owned with a mortgage



**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

**Budget for total cost of house building project**

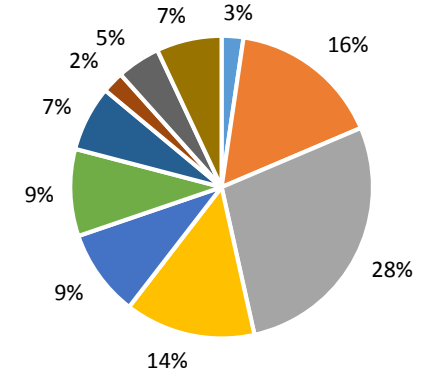
- Up to £100,000
- £100,001 - £200,000
- £200,001 to £300,000
- £300,001 to £400,000
- £400,001 to £500,000
- £500,001 to £600,000
- £600,001 to £700,000
- £700,001 to £800,000
- Unsure/No response



**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

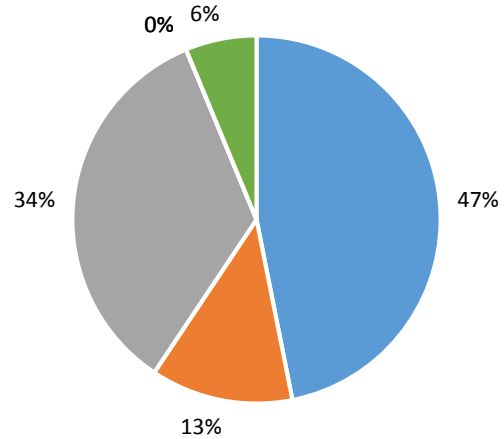
**Budget for total cost of house building project**

- Up to £100,000
- £100,001 - £200,000
- £200,001 to £300,000
- £300,001 to £400,000
- £400,001 to £500,000
- £500,001 to £600,000
- £600,001 to £700,000
- £700,001 to £800,000



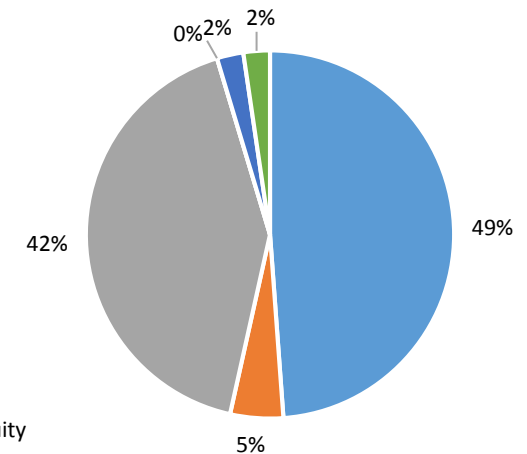
**Self-build/Custom-build**

- Self-build
- Custom-build
- Self or custom-build
- Affordable shared equity
- Group self-build
- Self-build/custom build/affordable shared equity



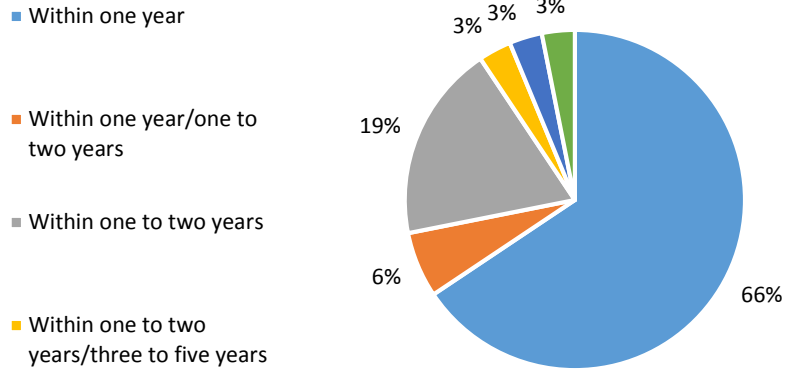
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- Self-build/custom build/affordable shared equity



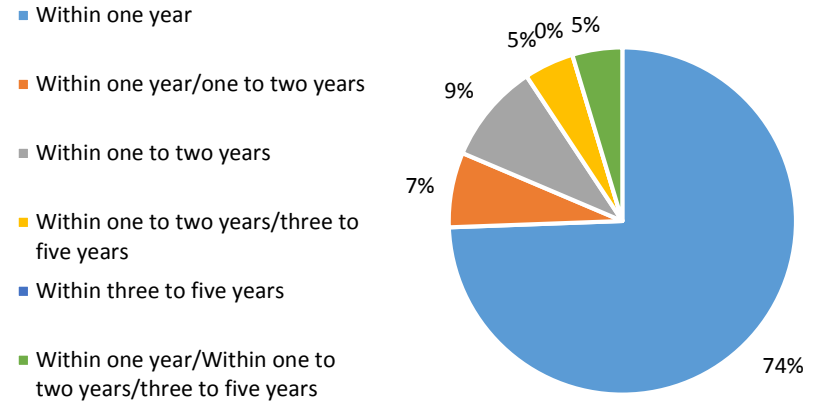
**1<sup>st</sup> Base Period**

**Timescale ready to self or custom build**

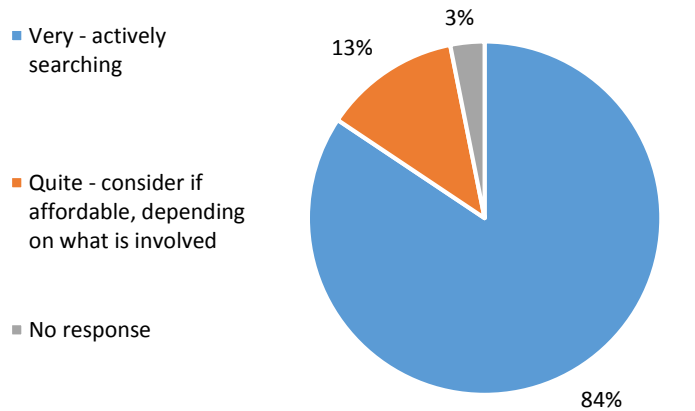


**2<sup>nd</sup> Base period**

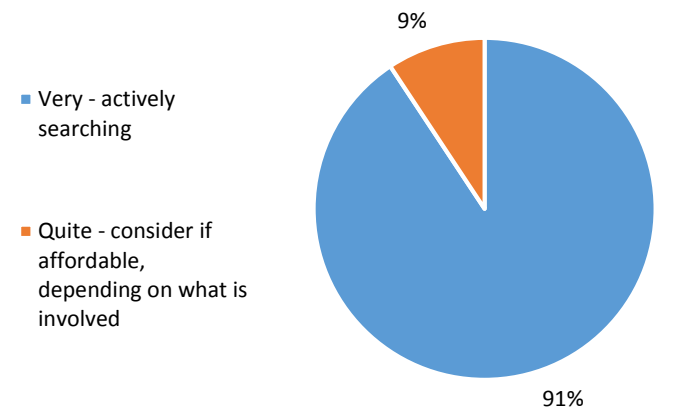
**Timescale ready to self or custom build**



**Level of Interest**



**Level of Interest**



APPENDIX B Self-build Register Survey December 2017 – Summary of Responses

Question	Summary of Responses
<b>Q1 - Have you secured a plot on which to build your own home in East Devon?</b>	One person had secured a plot for £250,000 and one 'hoped to start looking' in 2018.
<b>Q2 - Have you secured a plot on which to build your own home outside of East Devon?</b>	One person had secured a plot in a neighbouring county.
<b>Q3 – If you have secured a plot how was this achieved? For example did you buy it on the open market with planning permission or obtain planning permission on land you already owned.</b>	Both plots were purchased on the open market, one with a planning permission and the other on a site where planning permission had lapsed and has subsequently been granted.
<b>Q4 - If you have not secured a plot what do you consider to be the biggest hurdle? For example lack of finance to afford a plot or lack of plots available.</b>	Many respondents cited a lack of affordable plots.
<b>Q5 - One of the main areas being planned for development in East Devon is the new town of Cranbrook – would you be interested in self-building at Cranbrook if plots were made available for sale?</b>	Around 30% of respondents would consider self-building in Cranbrook. Reasons for not wanting to build here included wanting to live nearer to the sea and not wanting to live on a housing estate. One existing Cranbrook resident was very keen to self-build at Cranbrook.
<b>Q6 - If you would be interested in self-building at Cranbrook, would you prefer any sites to be located with other self-builders?</b>	Most people who expressed an interest in self-building at Cranbrook would prefer to be located with other self-builders.
<b>Q7 - Would it be helpful for the Council to provide any of the following?</b> a. A self-build newsletter setting out any national and/or local initiatives?	There was general support for an electronic newsletter.
b. An East Devon self-build forum that met occasionally/regularly to share experiences and provide 'self help'?	Most expressed support, but one pointed out that national events with experts were available.
c. A local councillor to act as a 'lead councillor' for self-build? See existing list of 'lead councillors with responsibilities at Lead councillors - East Devon	Many thought it would be good to have a point of contact, if they were enthusiastic supporters of self-build.



<b>d. Detailed planning guidance on self-build similar to that offered in Teignbridge?</b>	There was general support for this.
<b>Q8 - Do you have any other suggestions for how the Council could help you to self-build?</b> Answers have generally been included in full, but have been summarised in some cases to avoid including responses that could lead to an individual being identified.	
Provide early details of plots coming up for purchase	
Local directory of plots for sale? Or a database of available land.	
Providing reasonably priced plots. Not insisting on "conversion" when the existing building is a derelict farm building that needs to be pulled down. Most self-builders will want to build energy efficient modern houses, not convert something substandard that will never be an energy efficient home.	
Areas/maps of prospective land/sites for domestic self build could be made public to your registered list of names. Developers seem to get hold of land before self-builders have a chance. Developers then seek planning permission and the charge for land increases putting it out of the reach of many self-builders. Encouraging the formation of a self-build co-operative, to build energy efficient new homes. So many larger construction companies own huge sites and then build uninspiring "towns of boxes", which are often low-cost driven, and poorly landscaped, and rely on fossil-fuelled heating systems. Self-builders are usually ahead of the game and carefully select components to incorporate into their build. They want lower heating bills and higher insulation values in their homes, better use of space and are very creative in design, all making a better house to live in and eventually to be sold on. In desperation I have even resorted to viewing weekly Council Planning Application lists for new-build applications and contacting architects/owners directly to enquire if the land is to be sold/retained once planning has been granted. Obviously it goes without saying how hard it is to find affordable, good quality land for small builds and any help is welcome. Good luck.	
For us ideally we would like some help being notified of potential land with planning permission to self-build. It is hard to know what to look at / what might have potential and due to this we can't risk buying land in case we would not get permission and then our money tied up in land that is no use to us. If that makes sense. If you were able to update us on potential land / initiatives / guidance / help us know if certain land on the market would be likely to have planning permission to self build.	
Given preference to homebuilders that want to live in the house as opposed to building to sell on. Offer support from land purchase to completion of self-build on requirements that the Council require.	
Yes - offer us some affordable plots please. I have never been offered a single thing or heard from anyone outside of this email.	
We did find the S106/CIL situation really complex but I guess we were there when the various court cases were progressing so it may be much clearer for people now. In general, self-builders have a lot of questions and anything that helps is really useful - that Teignbridge document is a great idea and anything that expands on that, maybe adding stuff on getting utilities connected, would be great.	
We are still looking for a plot in East Devon and we would be very interested in Cranbrook. Our biggest hurdle to date is finding a plot at a sensible price. Most of the advertised plots are far too expensive for an ordinary 3 bed room house and are more suited to a 'grand design.' We are looking for a plot on a small development of about 20 houses which is the average size for new builds. Preferably it would be fully serviced, so that we can get on and build a house or bungalow in keeping with everything around us but individualised to a higher standard	

and quality than the national builders. The affordability of the plot is based on could I buy the plot and build for the same price as a national builder is selling for, but achieve the specification and layout that suits us.

Just looking for plots to be made available to individuals, rather than to developers.

The Council needs to recognise that self builders could make a significant contribution to the areas. All the self builders I have met want to build highly efficient eco-friendly houses that are better for the environment than standard commercial built houses and contribute more to the local economy due to the higher use of local labour. Forcing commercial developers to include an element of self build polts in large houseing sites is one method to increase the availability of self build plots but the plots tend to be of poor quality as commercial builders are not interested in self builders. However a far better way would be for the Council to provide sites specifically for self builders. The cost of the site and installation of services/roadways would be met by sale of the individual plots so the scheme would be, at worst, cost neutral, to the council. Example of such a scheme is: <https://gravenhill.co.uk/> . Planning permission would be via the use of plot passports.

To help people buy plots in locations where people with large garden plots want to sell off some of their gardens. Often you hear that Councils will not grant outline planning to help them sell potential plots.

More land for self-build.

Providing self-build plots is generally the main useful thing the Council can do. If provided they should be restricted in size to focus on smaller dwellings (perhaps even be offered to those on the housing waiting list in the first instance as affordable self build).

Your comment “we generally grant more than enough planning permissions for single dwellings each year to meet the need indicated on the register” is interesting. I would like to share our experience of trying, for the last couple of years, to buy a suitable plot for self build – also covered very well in the Government analysis document - link from your East Devon Planning Website:

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/housing-issues/self-build-and-custom-build/what-is-the-self-build-and-custom-house-building-register/> (explanatory memorandum). I've also attached the relevant section to this email. Whilst enough planning permissions for single dwellings may be granted to meet the demand indicated on the register, unfortunately (for us and other aspiring self builders) there are considerably more speculative builders and developers that easily eat up that supply of approved single plots. Furthermore, most builders and developers have relationships in place with agents, estate agents etc. and a high percentage of plots that are approved do not even get openly advertised. The key is having plots approved specifically for self build, but obviously this is the dilemma since developers/builders only make their money when they build and sell a house...not 'selling on' a plot for self builders to build there own. The small numbers of plots that do come to the open market, as we have experienced, have a fairly predictable outcome. In the large majority of cases, an informal tender is issued, but that never leads to a formal tender, or any other kind of open market advertising at all. Despite this, within a few months the site is being developed by a builder...and not a 'self builder'. A very small number go to auction but it is very obvious that developers are prepared to buy for the future and will then sit on the plot for 2 or 3+ years and wait for house prices to increase before starting to build. This is not something a self builder can or wants to do. I suspect that the steadily increasing numbers on the register would suggest many others have the same frustrating experience as us. As far as we can see, there are two ways to help....either many more single plots are approved to cover the demand from both professional builders/developers and self builders or a significant number of single plots are approved specifically for self build...or both. Final thought would be to add some 'flexibility' in the decision making when considering applications specifically for 'self build' only (the nearest I could think of might be the decision process regarding 'permitted developments' for agricultural

buildings?). This kind of 'flexibility' would be especially relevant given that nearly 50% of those on the register are looking for a plot of between 1/8 and 1 acre (i.e. more likely to be a single plot rather than one on med/large housing development?)

I have a number of suggestions based on my search over the last 18 months. In order to address the issue of identifying appropriate, increasingly expensive single plots, please consider allocating larger plots for multiple self-build projects. A good example of this is Graven Hill near Bicester in Oxfordshire. The scale of this concept may exceed the geographical possibilities in East Devon, however the idea of creating a new community driven by self-builders could be very attractive especially if it also permitted a relaxation in the planning considerations allowing for a more eclectic approach to architectural style. The possibility of establishing a community collective which co-ordinates supply of certain materials, such as renewable energy sources (eg. solar panels, air-source heat pumps, and turbines), could attract a wider audience of cost-conscious builders. Advice on finance and possibly access to or advice on specialist finance companies which understand the self-build market similar to the NSBRC in Swindon could also 'simplify' the self-build finance requirements. Most self-builders are novices (including myself) and would benefit from the possibility of workshops/ mentors to ensure that all legal and building regulations are complied with. I appreciate that in the spirit of this note EDDC Planning are working hard to facilitate a change in approach which could make self-build a more comprehensive pillar in the local housing development strategy and would be very happy to discuss this in more detail including the possibility of become part of an informal group/self-build forum of self-builders if you would like to co-ordinate this.

I am happy to do a lot of work myself so do not want to be spoon fed and overly supported but would like to hear when Council land and properties are available for self build.

I think the Council needs to look at self-build in a series of categories. Those looking to get onto the housing market at the lowest possible cost probably first-time buyers. Those enthused by the idea of self-build as a way of moving up the property ladder. Those seeking to achieve something of a grand design type property. This is the sector I fall into.

It was interesting to note that when I completed the registration form, the only options to select for preferred areas were the bigger towns. Village and rural locations were not listed. However, given the category I am looking for, this seems where the opportunities might exist. There seems no way of securing such a plot although I know of sites that afford such an opportunity, and benefit the community financially. Let me give an example.

I live in a village and the Parish Council owns a site of about an acre which currently has a no build covenant on it. The Council is proposing to gain planning permission for affordable rental properties and are intending to sell the land for £3,000 per plot to a CLT/Housing Association providing the covenant imposed by EDDC can be lifted. I have argued that if it can be lifted for affordable homes it could be lifted under the 2016 Self-Build and Custom Homes Act. I also demonstrated that a similar sized plot was on the market for £310,000 (July 2017) and sold very quickly. Also, if several larger open market houses were built, then a CIL payment would also be payable. Clearly there is a significant financial uplift to the Council selling it for Open Market development. In my opinion, the site is not well suited for affordable homes as it is 4 miles from the nearest town, has no facilities and no regular public transport services.

The point I am getting to is I believe there is a strategic initiative required to be undertaken by EDDC to review all land it (and the sub councils) owns in all locations and determine the best use for that asset, be it social housing, affordable housing or open market property. I believe try to tease out sites on a case by case basis isn't the best approach. It is my opinion that this holistic approach would produce more opportunity for self-build within a mix of other properties. Allowing Parish Councils to determine what gets built might satisfy a very local, specific need, but may not be the best use of a particular site when considered in the wider perspective.

Simply reserve land for the sole use of self-builders. Allow self-builders to be a little more creative. Embrace new designs, move with the times. Also why when rebuilding/converting an agricultural building... why is it so important the new build looks similar to an old cattle shed for example? that once stood, unused and abandoned on the site for decades?? Seems ridiculous to think that any new building wouldn't look much nicer than what was already there. So less restrictions on what people are allowed to build be helpful.

As we are relatively early in the process, I don't know what I don't know yet. From what I have noted so far it is the availability of plots that is going to be most difficult, followed by obtaining planning approval - knowing what the Council are more likely to approve and the details of the planning strategy. However some of this would be addressed if the items on Q7 were addressed.

The biggest hurdle for us and countless others in our position, is cost of land. As we put forward to Paul Lowe last year we have a perfectly practical low cost idea that will benefit the Council financially in the long term. If our idea is piloted people, such as ourselves, caught in the 'middle bracket' who are not priority with social housing nor able to afford to build will not have to apply for rent subsidies/benefits thus saving millions being currently spent out of EDDC's annual budget. We need a serviced Council owned plot to put our own low cost but substantial kit home on. We said the building of and the building itself would be the responsibility of the home owner/plot tenant in terms of maintenance. The low cost building may, after its 80-100 years guaranteed lifespan, be easily replaced with the same by the plot tenant/s who reside there as there only home. Unlike current social housing it is the plots of Council land we are in need of and as said earlier would mean that tenants would not be caught up in paying astronomical private uncapped rents, which are not sustainable long term without employment or low Casual/0 hours income. As our idea is for wooden lodge homes. I understand that the Council has no money to buy land but we have been led to believe that this may have changed as the Government is/has released more money regarding self build schemes. I have been informed, through a personal connection, that Councils and utility Companies do own parcels of land but that there is not definitive map of such areas and this is another angle that may need exploring.

Land should be made available for self build that EDDC will allow permission on, East Devon has become very restrictive in every sense. House building is both a personal and important thing. Which we need to vastly improve in standard and quantity. The big companies produce houses but in my experience having owned 2 to a very poor standard. Self build seems to be seen as evil by many when In fact a true self builder wants to build in harmony with the area and live there for many years to come. It is the builders and large companies that are to be avoided in this regard as they care not of the area or the house just the money to made from it. The council could vastly help by making serviced plots available of a good size not a postage stamp in an area that isn't just left over that no one else wanted. A self builder doesn't just want to build a house for the sake of it they still want to be somewhere worth being.