



27th February 2020

Geoff Skinner/Madam

Affordable Housing SPD

Please find attached the response of the Exmouth Community Association to your consultation on the draft SPD for Affordable Housing

Yours faithfully



On behalf of Geoff Skinner, Chairman of the Exmouth Community Association

Response of the Exmouth Community Association to the consultation on Affordable Housing in East Devon

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Council's report on affordable housing in East Devon. Our Association has the following points to make:-

- Whilst it is accepted there is justification for this report to cover the whole of the District area, we suggest that there are huge variations from settlement to settlement in the need/supply of such housing that should be identified to ensure the housing is provided where it is needed.
- The Neighbourhood Plan for Exmouth addresses this issue – copy of the relevant section is attached. The Exmouth Town Council with the support of local community group representatives has set itself the task of implementing the Plan's policies/actions. To aid this process it is essential that the need and supply of affordable housing within the town of Exmouth is closely monitored and the Town Council appropriately informed. In this way hopefully the particular needs of Exmouth's community can be properly served.
- The "right to buy" was a political decision and has to be accepted at least for now. Good to see the Council is using receipts from this as well as from off-site commuted sums to provide extra affordable housing. However, comparing the annual figure of 25 houses "lost" from the "right to buy" provision to the 20 affordable houses actually purchased each year by the Council with the resulting receipts, does not make good reading, especially given these are figures for the District as a whole. It would be helpful to know if the Council is legally able explore and use alternative funding to provide affordable housing.
- The report helpfully sets out the various ways by which affordable housing can be provided. However, it is of concern that there are a number of references to the need for "negotiation" and "viability testing" between the Council and housing developers after planning permission has been granted. It is imperative that, whenever such negotiation takes place, any requirement of the original planning permission for the provision of an element of affordable housing should not be reduced.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Objective: To support local residents, who wish to live within Exmouth but are unable to access the open housing market, new developments should seek to deliver a substantial amount of affordable housing.

11. Housing for people on average local incomes is a continuing problem. The first issue has been identified by EDDC as the immediate requirement for at least 607 socially rented dwellings. Strategy 35 of the Local Plan sets out "local connection" criteria which are to be applied in priority order when affordable housing becomes available. These criteria, beginning with permanent residency in Exmouth for a continuous period of three years will be used when new affordable housing becomes available.

Policy H2: To meet the identified housing need all housing development within the BUAB, on sites of more than 10 properties, should seek to deliver as a minimum, 25% affordable units. The majority of affordable units should provide 1 or 2 bedroom housing. Occupancy will be subject to a local connection clause.

Objective: To support plans for the provision of housing by East Devon Local Housing Authority (EDLHA) to ensure that the need for various sizes of homes at an affordable rate, for those on a Council waiting list, can be met, on the basis that they can buy and build, working in partnership with Housing Associations.

ACTION HA2: The Neighbourhood Plan supports the work of EDDC in providing up to date information on the appropriate level of affordable housing within Exmouth.

Responsibility: EDDC, ETC,

Wards benefiting: All

12. A 'snapshot' of data from Devon Homes Choice³⁷ showed that in November 2016 individuals and families have specified Exmouth as the place where they wish to reside for family, social support and work reasons (rental element only), as follows:
- 52% of registered applicants for Social Housing require 1-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 411 properties.
 - 28% require 2-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 112 properties.
 - 13% require 3-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 55 properties.
 - 6% require 4-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 24 properties.
 - 1% require 5-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 5 properties.

The aim has therefore to be to identify strategies to provide at least 607 socially rented dwellings. This is being addressed by EDDC building or purchasing suitable properties or by use of private accommodation.

13. But this is only a part of the problem. With low average local wages, even people in full-time employment struggle to afford local house prices for their first homes or to move when necessary to accommodate a growing family. Development space in Exmouth is limited, so this Plan supports the firm application of the current requirement to have 25% affordable homes in any residential development of more than 10 units.

ACTION HA3: To ensure an appropriate level of affordable housing is provided within Exmouth, regular research to establish the housing tenure needs of residents within the town will be undertaken by relevant organisations.

Responsibility: EDDC, ETC,

Wards benefiting: All



Affordable housing seen at the rear forms part of the Cyprus Gardens development

NG IDENTIFIED NEEDS

ing policies are needed which:

enable young people, with or without children, to get on the first rung of the housing ladder

allow senior citizens living in the town to move into less expensive, appropriately designed accommodation

ensure that new affordable accommodation, as defined in EDDC housing policies (EDLP)¹, is occupied by people who have a local connection or will live in the community and engage with it in social and economic terms (the local plan sets 25% affordable housing to be provided normally by 'pepper-potting' or, if this is not possible, a commuted sum is negotiated).

Provide an amount of 'supported housing' not just for older people to make a down-sizing move, but also for young people who may be moving out of care or out of their family home and need to learn life- skills before they move into their own independent accommodation

- Provide housing to enable those who have a variety of health problems or disabilities to be as independent as possible
15. In this section the policies and community actions are designed to meet the need to create more affordable dwellings to address identified housing needs, whilst recognising geographical constraints and the social and economic implications. Priority for new housing development should be to deliver one and two-bedroom dwellings to meet the identified need while also responding to the needs of families.

ACTION HA4: For relevant organisations to ensure the provision of one-bed properties to meet the evidenced need of residents below retirement age.

Responsibility: EDDC, ETC,

Wards benefiting: All