

North Tawton Housing Needs Survey

November 2014



This document has been prepared by West Devon Borough Council on behalf of North Tawton Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Group.

NORTH TAWTON HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Background

In October 2014 a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken for the parish of North Tawton. The results of this survey will form part of the evidence to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and any subsequent planning applications. This survey was carried out by West Devon Borough Council on behalf of the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Group and its primary purpose is to provide evidence about the likely future affordable housing need in the parish.

The questions asked are intended to provide a headline figure only to advise what affordable housing provision may be needed within the town over the next 5 years and is based upon the answers which have been provided. A full breakdown of the results will be provided to the town council. The names of those completing the survey will be confidential to West Devon Borough Council and have been removed from the analysis.

The Council is currently preparing to consult on a new strategic plan for the Borough to 2031 which will set out minimum development requirements for communities of West Devon. This survey looks specifically at affordable housing needs rather than open market housing needs.

North Tawton is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan and the community are being actively encouraged to be involved with this. This plan will inform what is important to the community and will help to shape development policies for the town to 2031.

This survey will be a key piece of evidence to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. It is to be used in conjunction with Devon Home Choice as evidence to illustrate demand for housing changes. The Neighbourhood Plan will be able to provide further detail on the types and tenures of housing as the plan evolves.

This survey is a guideline for the next 5 years but can be revisited within this time if the Neighbourhood Plan Group feels that this is appropriate and in consultation with the Council's Affordable Housing Officer. Housing need, whether this is for privately owned, rented or for those unable to afford housing in the area changes over time, therefore this needs to be reviewed to ensure that the results reflect the local need.

The Survey

The Neighbourhood Plan area has been designated and the group are now collecting the required evidence to prepare their plan. The North Tawton Neighbourhood Planning group sent out a survey to every household in the Parish to identify what is important to residents in the area during the month of October 2014. The Housing Needs Survey was distributed to every household in the Town. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to complete the survey on line through Survey Monkey. Responses could be returned confidentially in ballot boxes which were located at the Town Council Offices and the Spar shop.

Analysis

In total 875 households were sent the survey and an article was placed in the Roundabout which is distributed throughout the Town. There were 101 responses to the survey which equates to a 12%

return rate. This return rate may not have been as high as expected due to the timing of the Neighbourhood Plan Survey which was recently carried out.

In addition to this, a 100% affordable housing scheme at Barkers Way was delivered in 2013 by DCH. As well as this there are 61 dwellings which are currently being developed at Batheway Fields by Wainhomes. Within that development there is provision for 40% affordable accommodation which equates to 24 affordable homes comprising 19 social rented units and 5 discount market sale properties. The affordable element of these homes, once built, will be available for people who meet the local connection criteria for North Tawton. Wainhomes are currently receiving interest from applicants wishing to purchase Discount Market Sale properties who meet the local connection criteria. West Devon Borough Council and Wainhomes have a procedure in place to ensure that these are allocated correctly to those applicants who qualify.

Of those who responded, 78% were from owner occupiers and only 12% of those returning surveys rented from a housing association. There appeared to be a very small return from private renters in the area. This is an area which may need to be looked at more closely as there is an understanding that there is a reasonable amount of private rented accommodation in the town.

All of the applicants who completed the survey lived within North Tawton parish and many also had relatives in the area. Therefore all applicants responding met West Devon Borough Council's Local Allocation Policy and would meet the local connection criteria set out for the area. Of those who did privately rent, the amount of rent paid was between £600 and £800 per calendar month. This is likely to be for larger properties and would be within the local housing allowance rate (housing benefit that can be paid) for the area.

Of the responses received, 42% live in accommodation which had more than 3 bedrooms. The remainder of the respondents lived in smaller properties. This has provided evidence that the housing stock in that area is somewhat skewed to the larger properties and is reflective of a wider Borough trend

34 applicants stated that they were in housing need and they provided their main reason for moving was because their current home was too large or too small for their household. Many respondents also requested single level/bungalow accommodation. It needs to be born in mind that a number of bungalows will be delivered on the Batheway Fields development and therefore once this is complete a different response may be received and this issue may need to be explored in more detail. A number of applicants also stated that they were renting but would like to buy. Again there are opportunities at Batheway fields through the discounted market properties for people to rejoin the property ladder.

Most people stated their wish to move within 3 – 5 years. In light of the new development and the build out period of the site, it would be wise to revisit this survey as suggested within 3 – 5 years. This is likely to provide us with very different results.

Suggested sites

A number of sites were suggested for potential housing especially at the Woollen Mill along with advice that when developing new homes the infrastructure needed to be taken into consideration.

Devon Home Choice Register

There are a number of households who have registered with Devon Home Choice. A table of these households is detailed below. It should be noted that additional households will apply for housing when a development is being built. Reviews of the housing register do take place but households may not automatically inform us when they move.

Those in need by bedroom size and band living within North Tawton:

Table 1: Households in need by bedroom size and band currently living in North Tawton (source Devon Home Choice)

Bedroom size	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E
1	0	0	1	7	15
2	0	1	2	2	15
3	0	0	6	3	7
4	0	0	1	0	1

This does not include those people who live outside of North Tawton who may wish to return to the parish.

The table above shows a number of applicants have been placed in Band E. These households may not meet the definition of a housing need as per Devon Home Choice, however they may be spending a significant amount of money on their housing costs and wish to remain in North Tawton.

Turnover

The turnover of affordable home properties in the last 2 years was quite high and can be partly attributed to the 11 new properties at Barkers Way. There have been 2 x one beds, 17 x two beds and 3 x three beds provided on this scheme. The profile of the stock in the area only includes a very small amount of one bedroom accommodation. With the benefit changes that have been introduced it is important to note that smaller properties are required to meet the needs of the elderly or emerging households.

Timescales for Housing Need Survey

This survey would generally have a shelf life of 3 – 5 years. The community is carrying out a Neighbourhood Plan, and this Survey is an important part of the evidence to inform and support the plan through the process.. There are a number of affordable homes currently under construction and likely to be built within the life of this Housing Needs Survey. It is therefore suggested that another survey is undertaken on or before 2020 to provide updated information. The data is likely to be more informative at that point as the Batheway Fields development will be completed.

Conclusion

The number of new homes needed to meet “local needs” is currently zero, largely due to the development currently being constructed at Batheway Fields. This takes into account the number of

homes which are currently in the planning process and the provision of 11 units at Barkers Way which was completed recently. On the basis of the results of this survey, these units will adequately meet the affordable housing needs of the local community for the next 3-5 years. However, this does not mean that any future development does not need to provide affordable housing either on-site or through a financial contribution. Any applications submitted will be required to demonstrate how they meet the policies set out in the Council's adopted development plan and the neighbourhood development plan. Each application will be considered on its own merits and will need to take account of the most up to date information available at the time. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with the Council's Affordable Housing Officer at the earliest opportunity.

It is important to note that needs change over time, therefore there may be a wish for the community to address this before the five year period if information provided within the Neighbourhood Plan changes.

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