

Parish of West Down Housing Needs Report



Produced by: Devon Communities Together

On behalf of: West Down Parish Council

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**Devon Community
Housing Hub**



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1 Executive Summary

Principal Conclusions

Affordability

- The survey found 5 households in housing need who could not afford to buy or rent in the open market.

Tenure

- 3 of the households would require affordable or social rented housing.
- 2 of the households has sufficient finances for low cost home ownership (LCHO).

Size of Property Required

- 2 of the households would require one bedroom accommodation
- 3 of the households would require three bedroom family accommodation.

Other Findings

- 344 surveys were delivered and 86 survey forms were returned. The initial response rate was 25%.
- An e-mail reminder was sent to all those on the housing register, and the closing date of the survey extended for one week to encourage those on the housing register to complete the survey. This resulted in a further 7 surveys being completed, making the final response rate 27%
- 77% (68 responses) of those who answered the question said they would be in favour of a small development of affordable housing for local people and 23% (20 respondents) were against. 5 households did not answer this question.

2. Aims of the Survey

- To investigate the housing need, tenure and size of homes required for local people living or working in the parish and those wishing to return.
- To establish the general level of support for new homes in the parish with an emphasis on homes for local people with housing needs.
- To establish the views of the whole community on future housing in the parish.
- To assist the Parish Council and District Council with future planning for the parish.

3. Survey history, methodology and response

3.1 History

West Down Parish Council commissioned this survey to assess future local housing need in the Parish. The survey was posted to every household in the parish. There are 344 residential addresses in the Parish. Parishioners were able to complete the survey on line or return the survey in a reply paid envelope. The deadline for the return of the survey was 4th June 2023.

3.2 Methodology

The survey was carried out using a standard methodology approved by local planners.

The survey form was in 3 parts. The first section asked questions about the respondents' household and their support for affordable housing. All residents were invited to respond to this part of the survey. The second section was aimed at parishioners aged over 55 to gauge the specific needs of older residents. The third part of the survey was designed to be completed by households who intend to move home within the next 5 years and wish to remain living in the parish. Both those who have an affordable housing need and those who wish to buy on the open market were invited to complete this section of the form.

3.3 Response

- 93 surveys were returned which is a response rate of 27% of all dwellings surveyed.
- Part 2 of the survey (for households with members over 55) was completed by 66 of the respondents and Part 3 (for households who are thinking of moving within the next 5 years) was completed by 20 respondents.
- 90 respondents live in the Parish of West Down, 1 in Barnstaple and the remaining 2 respondents did not answer the question.

It should be noted that whilst apparent inconsistencies in responses are followed up, the information given is taken at face value.

4. Introduction and Information about West Down.

4.1 Overview of West Down.

West Down is a small Parish in North Devon. The town of Ilfracombe and large village of Braunton are within four miles of the village. These communities contain shops and services for everyday living (Doctors, Schools, and Dentists. The Parish is also close to beaches that are tourist attractions between Woolacombe and Saunton.

The Parish of West Down has the A361 running through it, and contains the village of West Down, along with the hamlets of Bradwell, Trimstone and Cheglinch. There is a regular bus service which runs along the A361 between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, with a bus stop around half a mile from the centre of the village. This runs between Monday and Friday. There is also a bus service from the village square which runs once a day 5 days a week.

Within West Down there is a Parish Hall, a Church and a Primary School. The Parish Hall hosts a post office counter service three times a week. There is also a community run shop, a community park and a range of clubs in the village.

4.2 Population Figures

In the 2021 census the population of the Parish was 670 people living in 270 households (this total does not include properties which do not have a usual resident). As dwelling and property details from the 2021 Census have not yet been published the following information in paragraphs 4.2 - 4.4 has been taken from the 2011 census. In 2011 there were 249 dwellings with at least one usual resident and 65 dwellings which were either empty, second homes or holiday lets (21%).

4.3 Type of Accommodation start from here

In the 2011 Census the types of accommodation in the parish were broken down as in Table 1 below. The largest category is detached houses or bungalows. There are few terraced houses and very few flats.

Table 1

Detached house/bungalow	Semi-detached house/bungalow	Terraced house/bungalow	Flat	Caravan / mobile home	Total
152 (49%)	86 (27%)	50(16%)	16 (5%)	10(3%)	314

4.4 Bedroom numbers

In the 2011 Census the number of bedrooms per dwelling were broken down as in Table 2 below.¹ The majority of homes (76%) have between 3 and 4 bedrooms with very few smaller 1 bedroom properties (4%).

Table 2

1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more	Total
9(4%)	49 (20%)	96 (38%)	95 (38%)	249

¹ These tables only give details for 249 dwellings, this is because there is no data for empty homes in this dataset.

When viewed together these tables show that there is a lack of smaller, cheaper accommodation in the parish with detached dwellings and properties of 3 bedrooms plus being the most prolific. This is likely to restrict access to housing for those on low incomes to buy or rent. It is also of note that 19% of households in the Parish are single person households, however this is not reflected in the profile of the housing stock.

4.5 Property Prices and Rent

To assess whether a household can afford to buy or rent in the open market it is necessary to look at the cost of an entry level property in the local market. This is done by comparing information on recent house sales and homes for rent currently on the open market.

When background research was carried out (21st June 2023, and 4th July 2023²) there were 20 property listings for properties for sale or sold subject to contract (STC) within 3 miles of West Down (excluding homes over £800,000, retirement homes and park homes). 4 of these were in the Parish of West Down.

Properties for sale.

Four of the sample properties were in the Parish of West Down, with the remaining 16 being in the neighbouring communities of Ilfracombe and Braunton.

Of those that are listed within 3 miles of West Down the cheapest property is a one bedroomed flat with an asking price of £95,000. There were 13 properties for sale and under offer with 3 or more bedrooms costing between £165,000 and £700,000.

There were three 2 bedroom home listed, with asking prices ranging from £120,000 to £325,000.

There were three 1 bedroom flats listed, all in Ilfracombe. They had a price range of between £95,000 and £125,000.

It is important to note that of the 20 properties used as comparators only 6 (30%) were one and two bedroomed homes, and 4 (20%) were within the Parish. Whilst the lower quartile prices have been used to assess affordability in section 8, this illustrates that there is also a significant issue with availability of properties (particularly smaller and therefore cheaper) on the open market in the Parish.

Properties for Rent

In this survey average rents are identified by analysing information provided by respondents in their survey responses. A comparison is then made with properties that are advertised on Rightmove for rent within a 3 mile radius. In total information was available on 9 rental properties from Rightmove and 3 from the survey responses. These included 4 one bed properties, 3 two beds and 5 three beds. The local housing allowance (LHA) which is used to calculate housing benefit for tenants renting from private landlords is £98 per week for a one bedroom home, £127 for a two bed and £150 for a three bed. The figure used to assess affordability for rented property is the cost of an entry level property based on the sample used.

² Information on both properties for sale and rent was taken from Rightmove.co.uk on 21/6/23 and 4/7/23

The figures used to assess affordability are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Size	Property price	Weekly rent
1 bedroom	£100,000	£112.00
2 bedroom	£175,000	£153.00
3 bedroom	£250,000	£200.00

There are currently 11 council/housing association owned properties in West Down. There are 2 two bedroom and 9 three bedroom homes. There has been 1 letting in the last two years and it is not anticipated that lettings of current affordable housing stock will have any impact on future need figures.

5. General Survey Findings

5.1 In favour of a small local development

Respondents were asked if they would be in favour of a small number of homes for local people being built if the need for affordable housing were proven. 68 (77%) of those answering the question said they would be in favour. 20 (23%) said they were against any development. It should be noted that 5 households did not respond to this question.

5.2 Site suggestions and general comments

31 individuals made suggestions for possible housing sites within the parish and / or made more general comments about housing in the parish. This information will be provided to the Parish Council in a separate document.

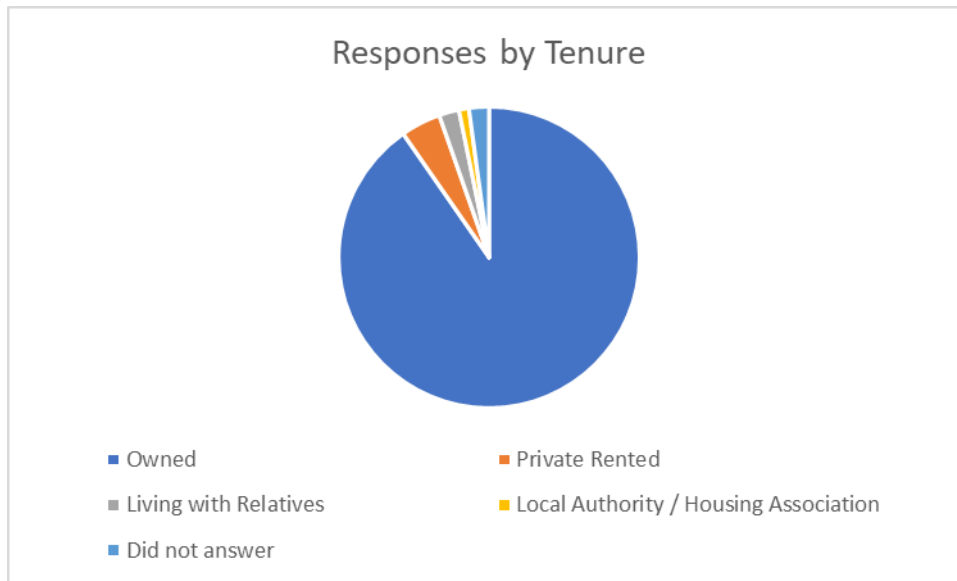
5.3 Knowledge of those who have left parish in last 5 years

Respondents were asked if they knew of anybody who had had to leave the parish in the last 5 years due to lack of suitable housing. 46 households replied that they did know of someone. The survey form asked respondents to ask for a form to be sent out, or pass on the online link to the survey where this was the case.

5.4 Current tenure

91 respondents provided details of their current tenure status, 84 (92%) own their own home and 4 (5%) rent from a private landlord. 1 household rents from a housing association or local authority and 2 households live with relatives. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the breakdown of tenure. 2 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 1



5.5 Main or second home

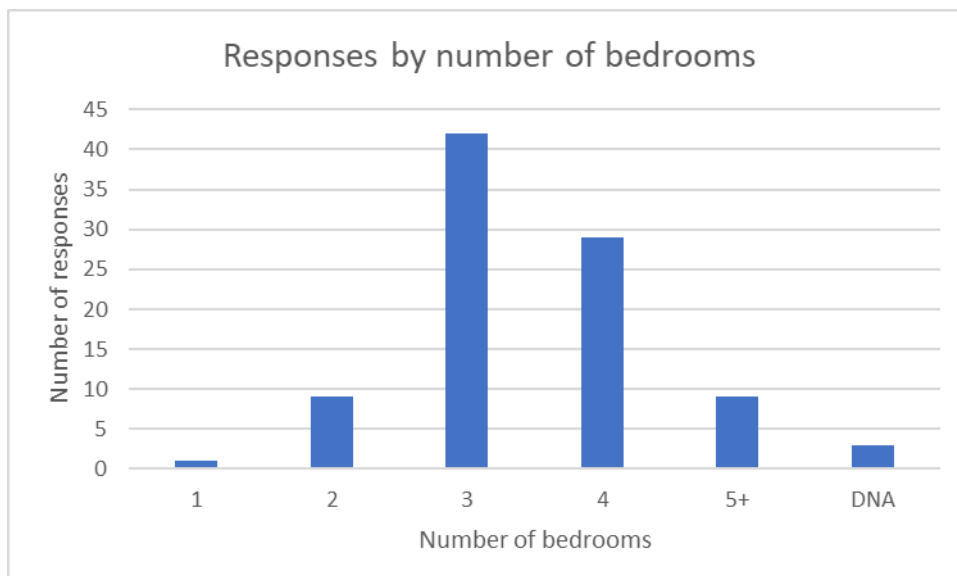
91 respondents stated that they lived in their property as their main home. 2 respondents did not answer the question.

5.6 Parish of Residence

90 respondents live in the Parish of West Down and 1 in Barnstaple. 2 respondents did not answer the question.

5.7 Number of bedrooms in current home

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their current home has. The responses are shown in Figure 2 below.



5.8 Future plans

Respondents were asked whether they intended to move home within the Parish within the next 5 years. If they answered yes to this question they were asked to complete Part 3 of the form.

- 12 households stated they did intend to move within the Parish within the next 5 years

5.9 Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

Respondents were asked whether they would consider becoming a member of a CLT.

- 12 households showed an interest and 9 gave their contact details which will be passed on to the Parish Council and 3 indicated that they were already a member of the existing CLT.

6. Housing needs and aspirations of older residents

Part 2 of the questionnaire was directed at residents over the age of 55. The number of people over the age of 55 is set to rise significantly across the UK over the next 20 years. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics published population projections for the next 20 years. These figures show that by 2034 the percentage of people over the age of 55 will have increased by 23% across Devon.

65 (70%) respondents had a least one member of the household that was aged 55. 23 of the 66 households were single occupancy.

6.1 Age of Respondents to Part 2 survey

Respondents were asked to give the ages of each of their household who were aged over 55 in 10 year bands. As can be seen in Table 4 , the majority of those who replied (78%) were aged between 55 and 75.

Table 4

Age Group of individuals within household	55-65	66-75	76-85	Over 86
Number	48	36	17	7

6.2 Future Housing Plans

Households with someone over 55 were asked about their future housing plans.

- 8 older households plan to move within the next five years. Of these 5 households would like to remain in West Down and 3 are planning to move away from Devon.
- Of the 5 households wanting to remain in West Down. 4 households are owner-occupiers and would therefore only be eligible for being allocated affordable housing if they had exceptional circumstances. One household is likely to need affordable housing to meet their needs.
- Of the 5 households wishing to move locally 1 expects to move within the next 12 months, one expects to move within 1 -3 years, and 2 within 3-5 years. One respondent did not answer the question.

- Of the remaining respondents 7 have considered moving, but do not expect to do so within the next 5 years and 49 (75%) have no plans to move. 1 respondent did not answer the question.

6.3 Adaptability of current home

Respondents were asked if their current home was adaptable to meet changing needs.

- 47 households said their home was adaptable
- 15 households said their home was not adaptable
- 3 did not answer the question.

6.4 Type of Accommodation preferred by older persons

Older households who were expecting to move within 5 years were asked what type of accommodation they may need in the future. 20 preferred a home better suited to their needs but not specially designed for older people and 5 preferred a specifically designed home. 40 did not answer the question. The numbers in (brackets) represent the answers that were given by those who were planning to move within the next 5 years and stay in the Parish. Preferences are shown below.

Table 5

Type of Accommodation Preferred by Older Persons	Number
Home better suited to needs but not specifically designed for older people	20 (5)
Home specially designed for older people	5 (0)
Residential / nursing home	0 (0)

The preference for accommodation which is suited to older persons needs, but is not specially designed for older people is of note. There is a preference for a property that is designed for accessibility, but not designated older persons accommodation.

6.5 Considerations when choosing next home

Households who were expecting to move within 5 years were asked to list the most important considerations when choosing a new home. Whilst this question was aimed at respondents who were planning to move within 5 years other respondents answered the question. The numbers in brackets relate to the respondents who are planning to move within the Parish in the next 5 years. Respondents could give more than one reason. The reasons are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Most important consideration	Number
Need to downsize to a smaller more manageable home	9 (4)
Cheaper running costs	11 (5)
Proximity to shops/amenities	11 (3)
Proximity to public transport	5 (1)
Need to be near family / carers	12 (4)
Need one level for medical reasons	9 (5)

6.6 Conclusion - Older Persons Needs

The older persons' survey shows that the majority of older households 49 (75%) have no plans to move home. However, the parish does have a small number (5) of older households who wish to move within the Parish.

The survey indicates that 1 of the 5 households that expect to move home within the next 5 years and remain in West Down will need affordable housing. The remaining 4 are all owner-occupiers and are unlikely to be eligible for affordable housing. They will however be likely to be looking for suitable accommodation in the Parish on the open market. It would be important to give consideration to how any open market properties can be identified for local people.

7. Assessment of those wishing to move to a new home in West Down within the next 5 years

Part 3 of the survey was aimed at those who expect to need to move home within the next 5 years and remain in West Down. It includes all households including older households. It asked questions regarding size and make-up of the new household, local connection and financial circumstances. This information helps to identify the number of households that are eligible for both open market and affordable housing in the parish and the size, tenure and type of homes required.

11 households indicated that they intended to move within the next 5 years. However 21 completed some, or all of Part 3 of the survey. Two of these households are planning to move away from the area, and have therefore not been included in the more detailed analysis. The needs of the remaining 19 households have been included in this section of the survey.

7.1 Minimum bedroom preference

Respondents were asked the minimum number of bedrooms they would require in their new home. Table 7 below shows the breakdown. It should be noted that this reflects the preferences of the respondents rather than their eligibility. There are criteria relating to affordable housing that set the number of bedrooms that a household are eligible for based on the number of adults and children in that household. 3 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 7

1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
2	4	9	1

7.2 Timescales for moving

Households completing this part of the form were asked to identify when they would need to move.

- 3 households indicated a current need to move.
- 7 households indicated a need to move within the next 1-3 years.
- 6 households indicated a need to move within the next 3-5 years.
- 3 households did not answer the question

7.3 Housing tenure

Respondents were asked what type of accommodation they would consider moving to. This gives an indication of respondents' aspirations rather than confirming which type of housing they are eligible for. The results are shown in table 8 below. Respondents could choose more than one option.

Table 8

Shared ownership/ equity	Affordable housing for rent	Self-build	Discount market	Rent to buy	Open market
4	6	8	6	3	11

7.4 Reasons for moving

Respondents were asked why they wished to move home. They could tick more than one box.

Table 9

Reason for wishing to move	No of respondents
Need to move to a home with more bedrooms	1
Need to downsize to a home with fewer bedrooms	6
Need to move for health/mobility reasons	3
Will be leaving home and do not expect to be able to rent or buy privately	3
You are struggling to afford your current home	1
You need to move for work	0
Wish to move back to the parish and have a strong local connection	1
Home is in poor condition	1
Your private tenancy is ending	3
Sharing kitchen and / or bathroom	2
Want to be closer to amenities	1
Current property will be sold	1
Want a different choice of fuel	1

7.5 Budget for new home

Respondents who wished to purchase a home were asked about their budget. Table 10 below shows the breakdown of replies. 6 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 10

Less than £150,000	£150,001 - £200,000	£200,001 - £250,000	£250,001 - £300,000	£300,001 - £350,000	£350,001 +
1	1	3	2	0	6

8. Assessment of those in affordable housing need

This section of the survey looks at the number of households who would qualify for an affordable home in the parish, based on their household income and savings.

8.1 Exclusions

13 of the households who expressed a need to move within the next 5 years and remain in West Down have been assessed and have been excluded for the following reasons:-

- They already own their own home so do not qualify for affordable housing.
- They did not provide financial information to enable an affordability assessment to be carried out.

This leaves 6 households to be assessed for affordable housing.

8.2 Local Connection

To qualify for affordable housing, respondents must have a local connection to the Parish of West Down. This connection is determined by North Devon Council and is set out below:-

- (a) at least one adult in the household was resident continuously in the Parish for a minimum of five years immediately prior to occupation;
- (b) at least one adult of the household was resident in the Parish for five years within the previous ten years immediately prior to occupation;
- (c) at least one parent, guardian, child or sibling of at least one adult in the household, has been resident in the parish for a minimum of 5 years immediately prior to occupation; or
- (d) at least one adult in the household has been in continuous employment for at least 16 hours a week in the parish for at least five years immediately prior to occupation.

4 of the households identified have a local connection, 1 has not provided sufficient information to assess whether there is a local connection and 1 does not.

8.3 Housing Options

The housing options available to the households identified as being in need of affordable housing have been reviewed.

Respondents provided information on income and savings along with household size which allows an assessment of what type of affordable housing is best suited to the household's financial circumstances. Two households have sufficient income and / or savings to access low cost home ownership, and three households require affordable rented housing (two met the local connection criteria, and the third is also likely to meet the criteria, but this cannot be determined from the answers given) This households housing need is shown in brackets. The remaining household does not have a local connection and is in a financial position to purchase outright on the open market. The breakdown of housing needs of the 5 households that were identified as having a need for affordable housing are shown in the table below.

Table 11

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
Affordable / Social rent	2	(1)	0	0
Low cost home ownership	0	2	0	0

8.4 Other evidence of housing need

As well as this survey other evidence of housing need should be considered. The housing waiting list or register for Devon is called Devon Home Choice. Applicants are given a banding from A to E depending on their level of need. There are 7 households registered for West Down Parish on Devon Home Choice.

Table 12

Devon Home Choice band	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Band A (Emergency need)	0	0	0	0	0
Band B (High)	0	1	0	0	1
Band C (Medium)	1	0	0	0	1
Band D (Low)	3	0	0	0	3
Band E (No Housing Need)	1	1	0	0	2
Total	5	2	0	0	7

Three of the respondents indicated that they are registered on Devon Homechoice. All 7 applicants on DHC were e-mailed individually to encourage them to complete the survey.

8.5 Housing Mix

The suggested mix of housing is shown in Table 13 below. This takes account of the family makeup as declared on the survey form and the type of housing required.

Table 13

Type of Property	Social / Affordable Rented Housing	Low cost home ownership	Totals
1 or 2 bedroom property for single people or couples	2	0	2
2 bedroom property for families	1	2	3
3 bedroom property for families	0	0	0
4 bedroom property for families	0	0	0
Totals	3	2	5

9. Conclusion - Future Housing Need for West Down

Overall, it must be remembered that this Housing Needs Survey represents a snapshot in time. Personal circumstances are constantly evolving. Any provision of affordable housing, would, by necessity, need to take account of this. The survey has identified a need in the near future for up to 4 to 5 units of affordable housing.

As the needs of households are constantly changing the level and mix of need in this report should be taken as a guide. In particular it may be appropriate to vary the mix of sizes provided. This report remains appropriate evidence of need for up to five years. However, if there is a significant development of affordable housing in the parish which is subject to a local connection requirement and substantially meets the need identified in the report it may be necessary to refresh the parish before any further development to address local needs is considered.