

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **11 June 2024**

Title: **Housing – Parish Profiles**

Portfolio Area: **Housing - Cllr Mark Renders**

Wards Affected: **all**

Author: **Isabel Blake** Role: **Head of Housing**

Contact: **Telephone 01822 813551/email:
Isabel.blake@swdevon.gov.uk**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Hub Committee ENDORSE the Parish Profile approach.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 To provide an alternative to traditional housing need surveys officers have created the Parish Profiles. This easily digestible short document provides information from secondary data for use by developers, Registered Providers (RP's) and Members on a defined parish. It will present the facts in relation to house sale prices, tenures, availability on Devon Home Choice and numbers of people waiting for housing. It will also have further information on school availability and children on roll in receipt of free school meals.
- 1.2 The data will provide greater understanding of each demographic within a community and where those areas of need are.
- 1.3 The information will be publicly available on the Council website and updated annually.

2. Background

- 2.1 The traditional methodology for creating housing needs surveys relies heavily on people completing a form that is usually posted to an address in the parish and asks questions relating to housing need.

- 2.2 One of the fundamental issues with collecting data in this way is that response rates are normally low and people who have had to leave the parish due to availability and affordability of local housing are not easily represented. We have also attended events where people wishing to speak to a Housing Advisor about their circumstances are intimidated or embarrassed due to louder, often affluent voices who are anti-development and have left without the advice or support they often need.
- 2.3 While it is recognised that housing needs surveys are flawed, it is important to collate evidence in relation to housing that people can use to inform decisions and support the mix, size, tenure of any future development, whilst also understanding the local needs of a particular parish. Responding to this need Katie West, our Housing Data Officer, created parish profiles.
- 2.4 It is the intention to use parish profiles to support the responses by the Council in relation to affordable housing as a statutory consultee. Also to share them with our RP partners to support the need for development when seeking approval for funding bids through Homes England and through internal Boards. It will also support development on exception sites that may be brought forward through the West Devon Housing Offer.
- 2.5 To ensure these are as useful as possible these profiles will be publicly available on the Councils website so that they are accessible to all. Ward Members will be invited to comment on their parish profile and share widely as required.
- 2.6 As a pilot the Parish Profiles were trialled alongside the traditional Housing Needs Survey. The profiles were enthusiastically received by RP's and utilised by both the dedicated Affordable Housing Planner and the affordable housing team immediately.
- 2.7 It is the intention that these are refreshed annually and that if further information is felt to be of use this is reviewed as part of the work of the Housing Advisory Group.

3. Options available and consideration of risk:

- 3.1 The Council wishes to adopt an evidence-based approach to housing need, without the reliance on traditional housing needs surveys. It is fully accepted that there may be times where these are appropriate however the information supplied within parish profiles is a clear indication of housing need in a specific location from accepted secondary data sources.
- 3.2 It will be useful information for elected members, RP's and developers to understand the housing requirements of a specific

location and as useful evidence for planning officers and committee members in determining applications.

- 3.3 It is intended to use the Housing Advisory Group to consider any improvements that could be made to the parish profile, including any additional information. Each Member will be invited to comment on their own parish profile.

4. Proposal and Next Steps

- 4.1 It is the intention to launch the Parish Profiles on the Council website once wider Members have had the opportunity to review their local profiles.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	N/A
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	N	The Parish Profiles rely on secondary data from several publicly available evidence sets. The approach offers better value for money than the traditional housing needs surveys, both those done in house and those completed by a third-party contractor.
Risk	Y	The Council is adopting Parish Profiles as an approach to capture housing need on an individual parish level. It may be that for some developments, particularly in the AONB or Dartmoor National Park that it is beneficial to also capture evidence through a traditional housing need survey. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	Homes
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	Y	Local Ward Members will be sent their own Parish Profile to review. The Member Housing Advisory Group will also discuss the content and make recommendations as appropriate.
Climate Change - Carbon /	Y	The parish profiles have reduced the reliance on paper forms, postage costs and milage. The

Biodiversity Impact		information will be readily available electronically and only printed by request.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	None as a result of this report
Safeguarding	N	None as a result of this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	None as a result of this report
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	None as a direct result of this report
Other implications	N	None as a result of this report

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A: Sample Parish Profile for Hatherleigh