

# Public Document Pack

**Mid Devon District Council**

## **Homes Policy Development Group**

**Tuesday, 22 May 2018 at 2.15 pm**  
**Exe Room, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Tuesday, 17 July 2018 at 2.15 pm**

Those attending are advised that this meeting will be recorded

## **Membership**

Cllr W J Daw  
Cllr Mrs E M Andrews  
Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge  
Cllr D R Coren  
Cllr Mrs G Doe  
Cllr R J Dolley  
Cllr P J Heal  
Cllr F W Letch  
Cllr J D Squire

## **A G E N D A**

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **Election of Chairman**  
To elect a Chairman of the Homes Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2018/19.
- 2      **Election of Vice Chairman**  
To elect a Vice Chairman of the Homes Policy Development Group for the municipal year 2018/19.
- 3      **Apologies and Substitute Members**  
To receive any apologies for absence and notice of appointment of substitutes.
- 4      **Declaration Of Interests under the Code of Conduct**  
Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest.

- 5      **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.
- 6      **Minutes** (*Pages 5 - 8*)  
Members to consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 13 March 2018.
- 7      **Chairman's Announcements**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman may wish to make.
- 8      **Performance and Risk Report for 2017-18** (*Pages 9 - 18*)  
To receive a report from the Director of Operations providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2017/18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.
- 9      **Tenant Involvement Strategy** (*Pages 19 - 46*)  
To receive a report from the Group Manager for Housing Services. The Housing Service Tenant Involvement Strategy is now due for review. This work has been completed and the new draft strategy takes account of expected changes to the regulatory framework. It also contains amended priorities which should deliver greater value for money.
- 10     **Tenant Involvement Policy** (*Pages 47 - 56*)  
To receive a report from the Group Manager for Housing. The Housing Service's Tenant Involvement Policy is now due for review. This work has been completed and the draft policy takes account of changes to the regulatory framework and new means of consulting with stakeholders.
- 11     **Community Housing Fund Grant Policy** (*Pages 57 - 82*)  
To receive a report from the Group Manager for Housing. In 2016/2017 Mid Devon District Council was allocated £131,359 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Community Housing Fund. The Council wishes to use this ring-fenced funding to work in partnership with local communities to develop Community Led Housing across the District.
- 12     **State of the District - Homelessness within Mid Devon** (*Pages 83 - 94*)  
To receive a 'State of the District' report from the Housing Options Manager outlining the Council's position statement with regard to Homelessness within Mid Devon.
- 13     **Start time of meetings**  
To agree the start time of meetings for the remainder of the municipal year.

14 **Identification of items for the next meeting**

Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:

- Performance and Risk
- Financial Monitoring
- Revenue and Capital Outturn Report for 2017/18
- Gas Safety Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Corporate Asbestos Policy
- Void Management Policy
- ASB Policy and procedure
- Tenancy Strategy (to be confirmed)

Note: This item is limited to 10 minutes. There should be no discussion on the items raised.

**Stephen Walford**

Chief Executive

Monday, 14 May 2018

Anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings may do so unless the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting or there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman. Any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Member Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.

Members of the public may also use other forms of social media to report on proceedings at this meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to discussion. Lift access to the first floor of the building is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available. There is time set aside at the beginning of the meeting to allow the public to ask questions.

An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, or if you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Sarah Lees on:

Tel: 01884 234310

E-Mail: [slees@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:slees@middevon.gov.uk)

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## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 13 March 2018 at 2.15 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

Mrs E M Andrews, D R Coren, Mrs G Doe,  
R J Dolley, P J Heal, F W Letch and  
J D Squire

### **Apology**

#### **Councillor**

Mrs H Bainbridge

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillors**

C J Eginton and R L Stanley

### **Also Present**

#### **Officers**

Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Tanya Wenham (Lead Officer Public Sector Housing) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

## 59 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge.

## 60 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Councillor Mrs E M Andrews declared a personal interest as she was a tenant living in a Council owned property.

## 61 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

## 62 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 63 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Group that the next landlord event was likely to be 19<sup>th</sup> September and that Members were advised to pencil this into their diaries. More details would be available in due course.

## 64 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK 2017/18 (00:02:50)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Director of Operations providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and

local service targets for 2017/18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and discussion took place regarding the following:

- The building of council houses in Birchen Lane and Palmerston Park – the report stated that the date for completion would be 2018/19 and the comment was made that this seemed to be very vague and clarification was sought as to the need for more accurate timescales. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that it was hoped that the properties in Birchen Lane would be completed by November 2018. Initial building works had had to be demolished due to a number of faults. It was hoped that the Palmerston Park development would also be completed by October / November 2018. There had been a problem of safety on the site and difficult access issues due to there only being one road in.
- The question was asked as to whether there was enough social housing within Mid Devon and how did this Council compare with others? The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that it was hoped a development at Post Hill with affordable housing would be underway soon, however, issues relating to proportion and viability still had to be resolved. In terms of how Mid Devon compared it was explained that some local authorities were not building any social housing but Mid Devon was proactively looking for new sites including redeveloping a number of garage sites.
- Building services were assessing housing need across the district.
- The target in relation to bringing empty homes back into use was doing very well.

Note: \* Report previously circulated, copy attached to the minutes.

## 65 UPDATE ON EMPTY HOMES (00:10:45)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Public Health and Regulatory Services Group Manager providing it with an update on the progress of the Empty Homes Plan.

The Lead Officer for Private Sector Housing informed the Group that since the report had been published with the agenda, the number of properties brought back into use up until the end of February had risen from 111 to 122. This was against a target figure of 25 and as a result the target would be increased to 72 properties for the next two years.

Brief discussion took place with regard to:

- Revenue income being available to the Council generated from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) as all properties brought back into use might be able to qualify for the NHB.
- Generally landlords were very co-operative and there had not been a need to instigate any enforcement action thus far.
- Empty homes were spread throughout the district and were not just concentrated in the three largest towns.

- An updated Empty Homes Plan would be brought before this Group in due course and this would include a listing of exactly where the empty properties currently were (although it was stated that this did go out of date very quickly).

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed minutes.

#### 66 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18 (00:17:25)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a draft report \* by the Chairman of the Group since May 2017, a final copy of this report would be submitted to Council on 25 April 2018.

Note: \* Report previously circulated and attached to the signed minutes.

#### 67 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (00:17:48)**

In addition to the items already listed in the work programme for the next meeting the following was requested to be on the agenda:

- Performance and Risk Outturn for 2017/18
- Revision of the wording relating to the Right to Buy Motion to Council

(The meeting ended at 2.38 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

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**HOMES PDG**  
**22 MAY 2018**

## **PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT FOR 2017-18**

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Ray L Stanley  
**Responsible Officer** Director of Operations, Andrew Pritchard

**Reason for Report:** To provide Members with an update on performance against the corporate plan and local service targets for 2017/18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** That the PDG reviews the Performance Indicators and Risks that are outlined in this report and feeds back any areas of concern to the Cabinet.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** Corporate Plan priorities and targets are effectively maintained through the use of appropriate performance indicators and regular monitoring.

**Financial Implications:** None identified

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** If performance is not monitored we may fail to meet our corporate and local service plan targets or to take appropriate corrective action where necessary. If key business risks are not identified and monitored they cannot be mitigated effectively.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** No equality issues identified for this report.

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Appendix 1 provides Members with details of performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for the 2017/18 financial year.
- 1.2 Appendix 2 shows the section of the Corporate Risk Register which relates to the Homes Portfolio. See 3.0 below.
- 1.3 Appendix 3 shows the profile of all risks for Homes for this quarter.
- 1.4 All appendices are produced from the corporate Service Performance And Risk management system (SPAR).

### **2.0 Performance**

- 2.1 Regarding the Corporate Plan Aim: **Build more council houses:** No new **Council Houses** were completed; however work is progressing on Birchen Lane (4), Palmerston Park (26) and Burlescombe (6). The poor weather has caused delays, but all are due for completion in 2018/19.

- 2.2 Regarding the Corporate Plan Aims: **Facilitate the housing growth that Mid Devon needs, including affordable housing: and Planning and enhancing the built environment:** 32 responses have been received following the latest consultation on the Local Plan (sustainability appraisal). These have been sent to the Planning Inspector so we now await a date for inspection of the Plan (expected to be in the autumn).
- 2.3 **Percentage of Properties with a Valid Gas Safety Certificate** (LGSR): There were seven properties as at the end of March where MDDC has been unable to carry out the annual service and issue a Landlord Gas safety Record, 4 of these have since been serviced. Failure to renew the safety record is centred on tenant issues that have prevented the contractor from delivery of the necessary works. The remainder are all at the legal stage which means that either a letter before action (LBA) has been issued or we are in the process of seeking an injunction.
- 2.4 When benchmarking information is available it is included.
- 3.0 Risk**
- 3.1 The Corporate risk register has been reviewed by Group Managers' Team (GMT) and updated. Risk reports to committees include risks with a total score of total score of 10 or more. (See Appendix 2)
- 3.2 Appendix 3 shows the risk matrix for MDDC for this quarter. If risks are not scored they are included in the matrix at their inherent score which will be higher than their current score would be.
- 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**
- 4.1 That the PDG reviews the performance indicators and risks for 2017/18 that are outlined in this report and feeds back any areas of concern to the Cabinet.

**Contact for more Information:** Catherine Yandle, Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security ext 4975

**Circulation of the Report:** Management Team and Cabinet Member

## Corporate Plan PI Report Homes

Monthly report for 2017-2018  
 Arranged by Aims  
 Filtered by Aim: Priorities Homes  
 For MDDC - Services

## Key to Performance Status:

Performance Indicators:

No Data

Well below  
target

Below target

On target

Above target

Well above  
target

\* indicates that an entity is linked to the Aim by its parent Service

## Corporate Plan PI Report Homes

## Priorities: Homes

## Aims: Build more council houses

## Performance Indicators

Title	Prev Year (Period)	Prev Year End	Annual Target	Apr Act	May Act	Jun Act	Jul Act	Aug Act	Sep Act	Oct Act	Nov Act	Dec Act	Jan Act	Feb Act	Mar Act	Actual to Date	Group to Manager	Officer Notes
<u>Build Council Houses</u>	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Angela Haigh	

## Aims: Facilitate the housing growth that Mid Devon needs, including affordable housing

## Performance Indicators

Title	Prev Year (Period)	Prev Year End	Annual Target	Apr Act	May Act	Jun Act	Jul Act	Aug Act	Sep Act	Oct Act	Nov Act	Dec Act	Jan Act	Feb Act	Mar Act	Actual to Date	Group to Manager	Officer Notes
<u>Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)</u>	31	31	80	n/a	n/a	26	n/a	n/a	59	n/a	n/a	72	n/a	n/a	92	92	Angela Haigh	
<u>Deliver 15 homes per year by bringing Empty Houses into use</u>	33	33	25	7	11	13	23	34	43	54	84	98	111	122	128	128	Simon Newcombe	

## Aims: Other

## Performance Indicators

Title	Prev Year (Period)	Prev Year End	Annual Target	Apr Act	May Act	Jun Act	Jul Act	Aug Act	Sep Act	Oct Act	Nov Act	Dec Act	Jan Act	Feb Act	Mar Act	Actual to Date	Group to Manager	Officer Notes
<u>Number of Successful Homelessness Prevention Cases</u>	295	295	No Target - for information only	n/a	n/a	99	n/a	n/a	159	n/a	n/a	240	n/a	n/a	344	344	Angela Haigh	
	100.00%	100.00%	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

**Corporate Plan PI Report Homes****Priorities: Homes****Aims: Other****Performance Indicators**

Title	Prev Year (Period)	Prev Year End	Annual Target	Apr Act	May Act	Jun Act	Jul Act	Aug Act	Sep Act	Oct Act	Nov Act	Dec Act	Jan Act	Feb Act	Mar Act	Actual to Date	Group Manager	Officer Notes
<u>% Decent Council Homes</u>																	Angela Haigh	
<u>% Properties With a Valid Gas Safety Certificate</u>	99.86%	99.86%	100.00%	99.95%	99.64%	99.87%	99.82%	99.96%	99.91%	99.82%	99.87%	99.82%	99.64%	99.69%	99.69%	99.69%	Angela Haigh	
<u>Rent Collected as a Proportion of Rent Owed</u>	100.18%	100.18%	100.00%	93.76%	95.18%	96.25%	96.87%	99.14%	98.73%	99.08%	98.85%	99.73%	99.37%	99.34%	99.25%	99.25%	Angela Haigh	
<u>Current Tenant Arrears as a Proportion of Annual Rent Due</u>	0.60%	0.60%	1.00%	0.93%	1.06%	1.16%	1.30%	1.26%	1.30%	1.17%	1.33%	1.05%	1.28%	1.32%	0.95%	0.95%	Angela Haigh	
<u>Dwelling rent lost due to voids</u>	0.5%	0.5%	no target - for information only	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	Angela Haigh	
<u>Average Days to Re-Let Local Authority Housing</u>	15.7days	15.7days	16.0days	14.0days	15.7days	16.4days	15.8days	16.1days	16.8days	17.1days	16.6days	16.3days	16.0days	15.0days	15.5days	15.5days	Angela Haigh	

## Homes PDG Risk Management Report - Appendix 2

Report for 2017-2018

For Homes - Cllr Ray Stanley Portfolio

Filtered by Flag: Include: \* CRR 5+ / 15+

For MDDC - Services

Filtered by Performance Status: Exclude Risk Status: Low  
Not Including Risk Child Projects records or Mitigating Action records

Key to Performance Status:

Risks: No Data (0+) High (15+) Medium (6+) Low (1+)

## Homes PDG Risk Management Report - Appendix 2

**Risk: Affordable and Council Housing Demand** Housing supply does not meet local demand or reflect demographic shifts like increased demand for single occupancy

**Effects (Impact/Severity):** • Increased costs for paying for private accommodation to house homeless  
• Increase in number of homeless people in Mid Devon

**Causes (Likelihood):** • Impact of economic downturn and reduced funding has reduced number of affordable housing units being built  
• Under-occupation in existing stock  
• Reduction in number of Right to Buys results in less HRA funding available for new builds

Service: Housing Services

Current Status: Medium  
(12)

Current Risk Severity: 4 -  
High

Current Risk Likelihood: 3 -  
Medium

Service Manager: Claire Fry

**Review Note:** There is still a significant deficit between permissions granted and build-out rates

**Risk: Evictions** Tenants being evicted could become violent.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

Service: Housing Services

Current Status: Medium  
(10)

Current Risk Severity: 5 - Very  
High

Current Risk Likelihood: 2 -  
Low

Service Manager: Claire Fry

**Review Note:** The pre-eviction risk assessment identifies household composition and layout, and any issues such as mental health and drug use relating to the tenant(s) and their families as well as whether or not there are any dogs present at the property.

## Homes PDG Risk Management Report - Appendix 2

**Risk: Five year housing land Supply** Risk: Housing land supply. Inability to demonstrate the required 5 year housing land supply (+20% ) until Local Plan Review approved

**Effects (Impact/Severity):** Effects (Impact /severity):

- Receipt of speculative housing applications in unplanned locations with less community benefit and less infrastructure / coordination compared with allocated sites.
- Objections
- Pressure on major application appeal performance (Government indicator of quality of decision making). Risk of intervention: loss of fee and less local control over major application decision making.

**Causes (Likelihood):** - Lack of sufficient housing completions, housing market conditions.

**Service: Planning**

**Current Status: No Data**

**Current Risk Severity: 3 - Medium**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 5 - Very High**

**Service Manager: Jenny Clifford**

**Review Note:** Found to not have sufficient housing supply at appeal. Mitigation principally via new Local Plan once adopted. Close monitoring of applications, decisions and associated appeal performance.

**Risk: Hoarding** Some tenants are known hoarders but we have policies in place and we do regular inspections.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

**Service: Housing Services**

**Current Status: Medium (10)**

**Current Risk Severity: 5 - Very High**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 2 - Low**

**Service Manager: Claire Fry**

**Review Note:** Staff are trained to respond to such issues and we have a policy setting out our approach to this type of management issue.

**Risk: Homelessness** Insufficient resources to support an increased homeless population could result in failure to meet statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone who is homeless.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):** - Dissatisfied customers and increase in complaints.

- This will involve an increase in officer time in dealing with Homelessness prevention and early intervention.
- Possible increase in temporary accommodation usage.

**Causes (Likelihood):** - Social and economic factors like the recession and mortgage reposessions increase the number of homeless.  
- Lack of private sector housing.

**Service: Housing Services**

**Current Status: High (16)**

**Current Risk Severity: 4 - High**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 4 - High**

**Service Manager: Claire Fry**

## Homes PDG Risk Management Report - Appendix 2

**Review Note:** Homelessness strategy to be reviewed early 2018.

**Risk: Impact of Welfare Reform and other emerging National Housing Policy** Changes to benefits available to tenants could impact upon their ability to pay.  
Other initiatives could impact upon our ability to deliver our 30 year Business Plan.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

Service: Housing Services

**Current Status: High  
(15)**

**Current Risk Severity: 5 - Very  
High**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 3 -  
Medium**

Service Manager: Claire Fry

**Review Note:**

**Risk: New Homes** A low housing build rate would equal less affordable housing resulting in a reduction in potential New Homes Bonus

**Effects (Impact/Severity):** - Loss of Affordable Housing Income Section 106

- Failure to meet targets in Development Plan

- Potentially unallocated sites being developed as 5-year housing supply reduces

**Causes (Likelihood):**

Service: Planning

**Current Status: Medium  
(12)**

**Current Risk Severity: 4 -  
High**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 3 -  
Medium**

Service Manager: Jenny Clifford

**Review Note:**

**Risk: Reputational re Council Housing Stock** Handling a disaster/mistake properly would prevent any reputation damage.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

Service: Housing Services

**Current Status: Medium  
(10)**

**Current Risk Severity: 5 - Very  
High**

**Current Risk Likelihood: 2 -  
Low**

Service Manager: Claire Fry

**Review Note:**

**Risk: Stress** The physical and mental well-being of Officers could be affected by work environment and pressures caused by work demands and work relationships.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

## Homes PDG Risk Management Report - Appendix 2

**Service:** Housing Services

**Current Status:** Medium  
(12)

**Current Risk Severity:** 4 -  
High

**Current Risk Likelihood:** 3 -  
Medium

**Service Manager:** Claire Fry

**Review Note:** In the case of potential stress and related conditions, Managers should undertake regular supervision meetings to monitor the situation and provide support.

**Risk: Tenants with Complex Needs** As our housing stock shrinks, the proportion of such tenants will increase.

**Effects (Impact/Severity):**

**Causes (Likelihood):**

**Service:** Housing Services

**Current Status:** Medium  
(12)

**Current Risk Severity:** 4 -  
High

**Current Risk Likelihood:** 3 -  
Medium

**Service Manager:** Claire Fry

**Review Note:** Good links with other partners including the Police, Social Services, support agencies etc.

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**Print Date:** 06 May 2018 17:25



# Risk Matrix Homes Appendix 3

## Report For Homes - Cllr Ray Stanley Portfolio Current settings

<b>Risk Likelihood</b>	<b>5 - Very High</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>
	<b>4 - High</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>2 Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>
	<b>3 - Medium</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>4 Risks</b>	<b>1 Risk</b>
	<b>2 - Low</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>3 Risks</b>	<b>1 Risk</b>	<b>3 Risks</b>
	<b>1 - Very Low</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>No Risks</b>	<b>6 Risks</b>
		<b>1 - Very Low</b>	<b>2 - Low</b>	<b>3 - Medium</b>	<b>4 - High</b>	<b>5 - Very High</b>
		<b>Risk Severity</b>				

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## HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 22 MAY 2018

### REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICE TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Ray Stanley  
**Responsible Officer:** Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing Services

**Reason for Report:** The Housing Service tenant involvement strategy is due to be reviewed in 2018. This work has been completed and the new draft strategy takes account of expected changes to the regulatory framework; it contains amended priorities which should deliver greater value for money.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that Homes Policy Development Group review the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy relating to tenant involvement and to recommend to the Cabinet that it is adopted.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The efficient and effective management of our housing stock is a priority within the corporate plan and this strategy supports work to achieve this. It ensures compliance with the regulatory framework for social housing.

**Financial Implications:** There is a budget in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) set aside for tenant involvement activity.

**Legal Implications:** The Housing Act 1985 contains provisions relating to tenant consultation and reference is made to this in the Council standard tenancy agreement. The regulatory framework for social housing contains a Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard which sets out a number of required outcomes and specific expectations.

**Risk Assessment:** The Housing Service must take account of the views of tenants, offering them opportunities to scrutinise performance and to comment on the service offer, in accordance with the regulatory framework for social housing. Failure to consider their views could result in increased complaints, which upheld, could result in reputational damage. The Regulator for Social Housing expects tenants to be offered opportunities to be involved and could order an investigation if there is evidence that regulatory obligations are being ignored.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** The Housing Service collects data on the diversity of tenants and endeavours to tailor services to meet the needs of all tenants. With regard to tenant involvement, our activities take into account the needs of those involved. For example, we have a tenant expenses scheme and the cost of childcare, travel or other reasonable expenses can be reimbursed in accordance with this in order to remove any barriers to involvement.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The existing strategy relating to tenant involvement requires review. It was agreed in 2015 and became due for review in January 2018.

- 1.2 The revised version (version 5) is shown at Annex A. A change of template has meant that the draft would not have been very easy to read with tracked changes. For this reason, the existing strategy and the new draft have been provided, and tracked changes will be made available upon request showing what has been deleted from the existing strategy and what has been included as part of the revision.

## 2.0 **CONTEXT**

- 2.1 Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) which operates a regulatory framework. The framework consists of a number of regulatory standards and each of these includes a number of required outcomes and specific expectations.
- 2.2 The standards are divided into two groups: there are economic standards and consumer standards. Local authority landlords are obliged to ensure that they meet the needs of the consumer standards.
- 2.3 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard is a consumer standard, as are the Home, the Tenancy, and the Neighbourhood and Community Standards.
- 2.4 The RSHs role is to set the consumer standards and to intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.
- 2.5 The RSH operates a co-regulatory approach. This means that Councillors who govern the Council's service delivery are responsible for ensuring that the Council is meeting the regulatory standards, and for being open and accountable in how the Council meets its objectives.
- 2.6 Co-regulation also requires providers to support tenants in the shaping and scrutiny of service delivery and in holding Councillors to account.
- 2.7 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard states that RPs shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the work of their landlord. This will include the formulation of housing-related policies and strategic priorities, the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards and agreeing local offers for service delivery.
- 2.8 In addition, landlords are expected to offer opportunities to tenants to enable them to scrutinise performance, and to suggest how performance might be improved.
- 2.9 The specific expectations set out in the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard relating to Involvement and Empowerment include the need for RPs to support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for these areas; to consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery; and to consult tenants at least once every three

years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.

### **3.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The strategy was originally written on an earlier version of the corporate policy template and this has now been addressed.
- 3.2 Proposals are in hand to survey tenants about a variety of matters including the best way of involving them in the running of the Housing Service, and reference to this is made in the new draft strategy. There is a regulatory requirement to engage with all tenants on a regular basis.
- 3.3 The aims and objectives as set out in the existing strategy have been amended to ensure that they better reflect the requirements of the regulatory framework.
- 3.4 The new draft strategy acknowledges the need to ensure that there is a range of ways in which those interested in the work of the Housing Service can get involved. The menu of involvement remains unchanged allowing tenants to get involved as much or as little as they would like.
- 3.5 In the years since the existing strategy was agreed, the way in which stakeholders interact with the Housing Service has changed. Social media has assumed a greater importance as a channel of communication and 579 people now "follow" the MDDC Housing Facebook page. Most of our posts generally reach 100 to 400 people but there have been posts that have reached a lot more people. The strategy acknowledges that the way in which stakeholders wish to interact with the Housing Service is changing and, for this reason, there is a commitment to promote opportunities for tenant involvement using a variety of media channels, which will include print and other electronic means of communication.
- 3.6 The new draft strategy includes an additional paragraph entitled: "Increasing Involvement" which explains that the Housing Service will pay legitimate expenses to those who wish to engage in involvement activities. This demonstrates the commitment of the service to increasing involvement; in addition, it also means that our approach is inclusive. By covering expenses incurred as a result of tenant involvement activity, hopefully no tenant will feel excluded or unable to participate if they would like.
- 3.7 Paragraph 6.4 in the new draft strategy refers to the Code of Conduct which is used to ensure that anyone who is involved with the work of the Council is respectful of the views of others and does not make any comments which may be offensive. It also explains that our Scrutiny Group, Tenant's Together, has terms of reference which have been agreed by the Group.
- 3.8 The Housing Service has a newsletter, Housing News 4U, which is edited by tenants. In order to reduce the cost of production and despatch, the new draft strategy states that greater emphasis will be placed on sending this out electronically. Furthermore, it is understood that not all tenants will

necessarily see information published by the Housing Service via social media. However, as some of this may be useful, the new draft strategy contains a commitment to using the newsletter to bring together information circulated elsewhere, predominantly on the MDDC Facebook page.

- 3.9 There is no longer a regulatory requirement to publish an annual report. Last year, the information was published as an insert in Housing News 4U. The resources involved in putting together an annual report do not justify the outcome, especially as the Housing Service already publishes performance data. Therefore, the section in the existing strategy relating to the annual report has been amended to show that the Housing Service will publish annual performance information setting out how the Regulatory Standards have been met, in the future. This will be available on-line and other information will be made available to tenants using other channels of communication which may include Housing News 4U, the tenant newsletter.
- 3.10 The other changes to the menu of involvement are relatively minor.

#### 4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Tenants Together group will be consulted on the new draft strategy at their meeting on 10 May 2018 and the Group Manager for Housing will update the PDG as part of her verbal report on it, at the meeting on 23 May 2018.

**Contact for more Information:** Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing Services, telephone 01884 234920 / [cfry@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:cfry@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:** Councillor Ray Stanley, Cabinet Member for Housing

#### List of Background Papers:

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/628396/Tenant\\_Involvement\\_and\\_Empowerment\\_Standard.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628396/Tenant_Involvement_and_Empowerment_Standard.pdf)

How should social housing landlords change after Grenfell? – Comment by Greg Campbell, Social Housing, 10 January 2018  
<https://www.socialhousing.co.uk/comment/comment/how-should-social-housing-landlords-change-after-grenfell-53861>

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Tenant Involvement Strategy**

Policy Number: HSG{number}

{HSG – Housing & Property Services}

**April 2018**

## Version Control Sheet

*Title:* Tenant Involvement Strategy

***Purpose:* To set out the Council's plan for increasing tenant involvement to ensure that service delivery meets the needs of tenants and leaseholders, and to support them in making a difference to the quality of service provided**

***Owner:* Group Manager for Housing Services, Claire Fry**

***cfry@middevon.gov.uk***

***Telephone number 01884 234920***

***Date:* April 2018**

***Version Number:* 5**

***Status:* Draft**

***Review Frequency:* Every 4 years or sooner if required and in accordance with legislation and/ or the regulatory framework for social housing**

***Next review date:* April 2022**

***Consultation* This document was sent out for consultation to the following:**

Management Team

Cabinet Member for Housing

The Tenants Together Housing Scrutiny Group

## Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Director of Operations	10 April 2018	
Leadership Team		
Tenants Together		
Homes PDG*		
Cabinet*		

\*- Delete if not applicable



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This new strategy for 2018-2022 builds on previous tenant involvement strategies.
- 1.2 The purpose of tenant involvement is to identify the priorities of our tenants and this includes leaseholders. The Housing Service is committed to listening to tenant's views and to ensuring that tenants are able to advise on future service delivery by scrutinising performance and identifying areas for improvement. During 2014, we surveyed tenants asking them how they wanted to engage with us. A further consultation is planned with a view to identifying any issues or themes which may require further investigation.
- 1.3 The main aims and objectives of our strategy are to make sure that tenants:
- Can contribute to the debate about how we use the resources available to us in such a way as to deliver services appropriate to their needs
  - Have opportunities to identify issues relating to service delivery and to advise on service improvement
  - Feel that they have been listened to and their views considered
  - Have confidence in the Housing Service and are satisfied with the service which they receive

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all those with an interest in the Housing Service:
- Elected members
  - Tenants, residents and leaseholders of Mid Devon
  - Mid Devon District Council employees
  - Organisations working in the community and voluntary sector
  - Partners and other stakeholders

## **3. Related Documents**

- a. The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard in the regulatory framework for social housing
- b. The Housing Act 1985
- c. The Council's suite of tenancy agreements
- d. The Tenant Involvement Policy

## **4. The Statutory & Regulatory Framework**

- 4.1 The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing operated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) contains a National Standard relating to Tenant Involvement and Empowerment. This contains certain expectations and, as a result, registered providers of social housing (RPs) must:
- Tailor our services to meet the needs of our tenants
  - Treat all tenants with respect and fairness

- Ensure tenants are given opportunities to be involved in shaping services to reflect local priorities
- Give tenants opportunities to identify areas for improvement and delivery
- Offer training and support to tenants to help them develop their skills and capacity so that they can make a meaningful contribution

## **5. Meaningful Involvement**

- 5.1 Our approach is to encourage as many tenants as possible to have their say, to become engaged and to participate in the running of the Housing Service. However, we acknowledge that it is necessary to support involvement activities by working to maximise participation and accountability. We accept that the extent to which tenants wish to get involved will be affected by many factors and, for this reason, a menu of involvement options is used to ensure that they can get involved to the extent and in the way that suits them best.
- 5.2 Tenant involvement can be described as how the Housing Service engages with tenants and other residents, including leaseholders, across the District. That may be through both formal and informal routes, to provide information and to receive feedback on our services. It is to engage tenants in our activities from a strategic level through to a neighbourhood level.
- 5.3 The Housing Service needs to reach as many tenants as possible. To this end, we will promote opportunities for tenant involvement using a variety of media channels, including print, social media, and the web. We will also use our customer knowledge to understand the preferred channels of engagement. We recognise that the way in which people wish to use new technologies, where possible, to increase access to information, and to receive feedback, ideas and information. This will include, but is not limited to, the use of the web, social media, mobile apps, email lists and text SMS.

## **6 Menu of Involvement**

- 6.1 The menu of involvement for 2018-2022 is set out below, and more detailed information about delivery is contained in Appendix A and B of this strategy.



Our programme of involvement is divided into three parts:

- Staying informed (low level of demand on time)
- Being consulted (some demands on time)
- Participating in decision making (higher level of demand on time)

## 6.2 Staying Informed

- Website
- Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media
- Service Business Plan and Performance Information
- Annual Report
- Letters to individual tenants about their tenancy and work to their home
- Housing News 4U

### 6.3 Being Consulted

- Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media
- Surveys and web polls
- Email group
- Neighbourhood Walkabouts
- Estate Representatives
- Tenants and Residents Groups
- Neighbourhood Based events

### 6.4 Participating in Decision Making

- Tenants Together (TT)
- Attending the Homes Policy Development Group (PDG) meetings
- Attending the Housing Performance & Improvement Board meetings
- Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media
- Tenants inspectors for Voids
- Tenant Inspectors for Planned Maintenance
- Short-term Focus/ Working Groups
- Editorial Group
- Local Tenants and Residents Groups

### 6.5 Scrutiny Arrangements

6.5.1 The Regulatory Framework encourages landlords and tenants to work together to improve the levels of service delivered. We are committed to offering opportunities for tenants to scrutinise the work of the Housing Service and have a well-established scrutiny group, known as Tenants Together. This group's role is to:

- Monitor and check performance
- Challenge and improve services
- Ensure the Housing Service runs the business well and that it meets the needs of its tenants

## 7 Training

7.1 We recognise the need for targeted training and development opportunities for tenants and staff. We give new staff a briefing about tenant involvement as part of the induction process. We also encourage and support tenants to access training activities. This enables our tenant representatives to have an understanding of current housing issues. Training has been focused on individuals but group training is also available, if a need is identified.

## 8 Increasing Involvement

8.1 The Council appreciates that there may be barriers which may limit the involvement of tenants. These may include transport issues or caring responsibilities. In order to encourage greater involvement, the Housing Service operates an expenses scheme in relation to any out of pocket expenses for travel and other reasonable costs. The aim of this scheme is to enable tenants to attend events and to participate in activities, appropriate to their role. The Housing Service has an obligation to deliver value for

money and, for this reason, expenditure will be monitored to ensure that only the cost of legitimate expenses is covered.

### **9 Supporting Involvement**

- 9.1 Any tenant who is interested in working with the Housing Service should seek more information; there is a dedicated email address, [tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk) or they can telephone the Lead Officer using 01884 255255.
- 9.2 Those engaged in involvement activity will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct.
- 9.3 Those tenants working as part of our Tenants Together Scrutiny Group will be bound by clear guidelines which have been agreed by the Group. This includes the Code of Conduct and terms of reference.

### **10 Conclusion**

- 10.1 Performance relating to tenant involvement will be monitored by the Housing Performance & Improvement Board and by the Tenants Together Group. This strategy will be reviewed in 2022.

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## APPENDIX A: MENU OF INVOLVEMENT

<b>Staying Informed</b>	<b>Details</b>
Website	Provides a range of information and links
Social Media	Provision of information and links to websites. Useful in the event of severe weather events, for example, to provide timely and relevant updates
Service Business Plan & Performance Information	Provide information relating to performance, available on website, via social media, in our offices or posted upon request
Annual Report	The Housing Service provides updates on how the regulatory standards have been met over the previous 12 months on our website, via social media and in the newsletter
Housing News 4U	Tenant newsletter produced periodically bringing together a range of information which may include news which may have been circulated previously using other means such as social media.
Other	Tenants receive individual information about their tenancies including rent and charges; tenants and leaseholders receive information regarding works to their homes; tenants receive a tenant handbook
<b>Being Consulted</b>	
Social media	Tenants can be asked for feedback and views on service improvements. We use Facebook to provide information on available homes and other matters of interest.
Surveys & web polls	These provide an opportunity to consult tenants in a variety of ways
Email Group	This can provide a useful means of collecting feedback on a variety of topics
Neighbourhood Walkabouts	Tenants and other residents are invited to attend these estate inspections which take place on a six monthly basis; dates are published in advance on our webpages. Other stakeholders including Councillors and the Police may also attend.
Tenants and Residents Groups	Neighbourhood Officers will support these groups if required
Neighbourhood Based Events	These can be used to gather feedback on particular initiatives such as issues relating to parking
<b>Participating in Decision Making</b>	
Tenants Together (TT)	Membership consists of a maximum of up to twelve independent tenants (and one of those tenant places is reserved exclusively for a leaseholder). The Chair of the Homes Policy Development Group (PDG) is also invited to attend. The TT reviews policy, scrutinises performance and undertakes service reviews,

	making recommendations relating to possible improvements, as appropriate.
Homes Policy Development Group (PDG)	Tenants are invited to attend the PDG
Social media	This is a useful tool for providing information regarding performance, policies, service improvements etc and seeking views
Tenant Inspectors for Planned Maintenance	Tenant Inspectors can act as a point of contact between the tenant whose home is being improved and the Planned Maintenance team and can be involved in contract management.
Short-term focus/ working groups	Such groups could be involved in discussions about particular nuisance issues in a specific area or to inform specific policy reviews such as a review of our ASB policy
Editorial Group	This group consists of tenant volunteers involved in editing the newsletter, Housing News 4U
Local Tenants & Residents Groups	Neighbourhood Officers will support such groups, if required



## APPENDIX B: TENANT INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018/2022

This Action Plan is a working document for the Housing Service. The actions in this plan are designed to make sure that our work in 2018/2022 achieves the aims and objectives set out in the Tenant Involvement Strategy

ACTION REQUIRED	COMPLETION DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE/ OUTCOME
Promote and develop online services and the use of social media to engage with the wider community by updating the tenant involvement web, Facebook and Twitter pages and any other social media platforms on a regular basis, as appropriate.	Ongoing	Tenants will be informed Involvement opportunities will be promoted Improved, 24/7 access to information for service users
Produce information on service delivery	Ongoing	To demonstrate how the regulatory standards are being met. This may be included in the tenant newsletter, Housing News 4U, which is published periodically, and may also be provided using other channels of communication
Promote Neighbourhood Walkabouts on our website, social media accounts, newsletters and elsewhere, as appropriate	Annually	To increase levels of tenant satisfaction at a local level by enabling local people to engage with their Neighbourhood Officer, be involved in discussions about possible improvements and to provide opportunities for them to raise issues of concern
Improve our knowledge of those who are living in our homes	Ongoing	Use customer knowledge to understand the needs of tenants and to help us to tailor our services as appropriate. It also informs the work of the Neighbourhood teams who may be able to signpost or refer tenants to other services operated by local partners
Support Tenants and Residents Groups, as appropriate	Ongoing	Tenant involvement in such groups has the potential to deliver greater community cohesion, increased engagement in shaping service delivery, higher levels of tenant satisfaction and improved neighbourhoods
Identify and promote opportunities for tenant representatives to access training relevant to the role	Ongoing	In order to ensure that involved tenants are informed about matters upon which they may be asked to make a decision; and to provide them with skills, knowledge and experience which is transferable to other areas of their lives.

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# **TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2015 - 2018**

**February 2015**

## **Content**

## **Page**

1.0 The Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

2.0 Who is responsible for delivering this strategy?

3.0 The Statutory & Regulatory Framework

4.0 Menu of involvement

- Staying informed
- Being consulted
- Participating in decision making

5.0 Scrutiny arrangements

6.0 Training

7.0 Conclusion

Appendix A – Menu of Involvement

Appendix B – Tenant Involvement Action Plan 2015/2016

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 The Aims and Objectives of the Strategy**

This new strategy for 2015-2018 builds on previous tenant involvement strategies. The purpose of tenant involvement is to find out the priorities of our tenants and this includes leaseholders. This will enable us to focus on listening to tenants' views and aspirations and to ensure tenants are able to influence future service delivery by scrutinising performance and identifying areas for improvement. During 2014 we surveyed tenants asking them how they wanted to engage with us. We have incorporated their views within this strategy.

The main aims and objectives of our strategy are to make sure tenants:

- Can contribute to the debate about we use the resources available to us in such a way as to deliver services appropriate to their needs
- Have opportunities to identify issues relating to service delivery and to influence service improvement
- All have an opportunity to participate in the work which we do
- Feel that they have been listened to and their views considered
- Find it easier to get involved and have their views heard
- Have the confidence in the housing service and are satisfied with the service they receive

### **2.0 Who is responsible for delivering this strategy?**

To make this strategy a reality we need help from all those with an interest in the housing service:

- Elected members
- Tenants, residents and leaseholders of Mid Devon
- Mid Devon District Council employees
- Community and voluntary sector
- Partners and other stakeholders

### **3.0 The Statutory & Regulatory Framework**

The National Standard relating to Tenant Involvement and Empowerment contains certain expectations and as a result RP's must:

- Tailor our services to meet the needs of our tenants
- Treat all tenants with respect and fairness
- Ensure tenants are given opportunities to influence and be involved in shaping services to reflect local priorities
- Give tenants opportunities to identify areas for improvement and delivery
- Offer training and support to tenants to help them develop their skills and capacity so that they can make a meaningful contribution

### **4.0 Menu of involvement**

The menu of involvement for 2015-2018 is set out below, and more detailed information about delivery is contained in Appendix A and B of this strategy.



Our programme of involvement is divided into three parts:

- Staying informed (low level of demand on time)
- Being consulted (some demands on time)
- Participating in decision making (higher level of demand on time)

### **Staying informed**

Housing News 4U

Website

Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media

Service Business Plan and Performance information

Annual Report

Letters to individual tenants about their tenancy and work to their home

## **Being consulted**

Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media  
Surveys and Web Polls  
Email Group  
Neighbourhood walkabouts  
Estate Representatives  
Tenants and Residents Groups  
Neighbourhood based events

## **Participating in decision making**

Tenants Together (TT)  
Attending the Decent and Affordable Homes Policy and Development Group (PDG) Meetings  
Facebook, Twitter, electronic email and any other forms of social media  
Tenant Inspectors for Voids  
Tenant Inspectors for Planned Maintenance  
Short-term Focus/Working Groups  
Editorial Group  
Local Tenants and Residents Groups

## **5.0 Scrutiny arrangements**

The Regulatory Framework encourage landlords and tenants to work together to improve the levels of service delivered. We are committed to offering opportunities for tenants to scrutinise the work of the Housing Service and have a well-established Scrutiny and Improvement Group. This group's role is to:

- Monitor and check performance
- Challenge and improve services
- Ensure the Housing Service runs the business well and that it meets the needs of its tenants

## **6.0 Training**

We recognise the need for targeted training and development opportunities for tenants and staff. We give new staff a briefing about tenant involvement as part of the induction process. We also encourage and support tenants to access training activities. This enables our tenant representatives to have an understanding of current housing issues. Training has been focussed on individuals but group training is also available, if a need is identified.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

This strategy has outlined the Council's principles and approach to tenant involvement. The Tenant Involvement Strategy will be monitored by the Scrutiny and Improvement Group annually. This strategy will be reviewed January 2018.

## APPENDIX A: MENU OF INVOLVEMENT

Staying Informed	Details
Housing News 4U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant magazine providing information on current issues/events and services</li> <li>• Newsletter can be provided in a range of formats such as large print, audio or electronic</li> </ul>
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of information and links</li> <li>• Dates and details of tenant involvement activities</li> </ul>
Performance and Business Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In depth information relating to performance</li> <li>• Available on our website, in our offices or sent out on request</li> </ul>
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In depth information relating to how our service have performed over the past 12 months</li> </ul>
Receive information from various teams on a regular and ad hoc basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants receive individual information about their tenancy including rent and charges</li> <li>• Tenants and leaseholders receive information regarding any major improvements works to their homes</li> <li>• Tenants receive a Tenant Handbook</li> </ul>

Being Consulted	Details
Surveys and Web Polls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants can take part in completing surveys by telephone, text messaging, over the Internet or in person</li> </ul>
Email Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish a group of tenants who wish to be consulted by email</li> </ul>
Local Estate Based Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation takes place in various locations across the district to inform and consult tenants on a on a variety of issues.</li> </ul>
Social Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants asked regularly for feedback and views on service improvements</li> </ul>



Neighbourhood Walkabouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We visit each area at least every six months to meet tenants and check for repair needs. Tenants are invited to join officers and elected members as they walk around their area to raise any concerns and share ideas for improvement</li> </ul>

Participating in decision making	Details
Tenants Together (TT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership consists of a maximum of up to twelve independent tenants (and one of those tenant places is reserved exclusively for a leaseholder) and the Lead Member for Tenants' from the Decent &amp; Affordable Homes Policy and Development Group (PDG). The group examine, in detail, how we manage the service and how we deliver these services to tenants and for them to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Housing, the PDG and the Cabinet to improve the service</li> </ul>
Tenant Inspectors for Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recruit tenants that inspect our standard of repair for our void properties and ensure they are up to the Decent Homes Standard</li> </ul>
Short-term Focus/Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad hoc groups are held as and when necessary to consult on issues relating to a service</li> <li>These groups are ideal for tenants who have a particular interest in areas of interest to them</li> </ul>
Tenant Inspectors for Planned Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recruit tenants to check our Planned Maintenance works. The role of Tenant Inspector is to assist in the 'liaison' between the tenant and the Planned Maintenance Team</li> </ul>

Editorial Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group consists of tenant volunteers who are involved in editing newsletters</li> </ul>
Tenants and Residents Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants and Residents Groups are where local tenants and residents get together and discuss housing issues in their neighbourhood</li> </ul>
Estate Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants can represent the interests of their neighbours in a block of flats, street or any other agreed specified area within their neighbourhood</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX B: TENANT INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2015/2016**

This Action Plan is a working document for the Housing Service. The actions in this plan are designed to make sure that our work in 2015/2018 achieves the aims and objectives set out in the Tenant Involvement Strategy.

	ACTION REQUIRED	COMPLETION DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE / OUTCOME
1	Promote and develop on-line services and the use of social media to engage with the wider community by updating the tenant involvement web, Facebook and Twitter pages on a regular basis. Publish involvement activities, survey results, outcomes etc	On going	Web pages will be current and more informative for tenants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants kept informed</li> <li>• Encouraging involvement opportunities</li> <li>• Improved, 24/7 access to information for service users</li> </ul>
2	Produce four newsletters per year with tenant editors and one representative from the Scrutiny and Improvement Group (SIG)	January April July October	Newsletters published and sent out to all tenants and are promoted on our web, Facebook and Twitter pages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping all tenants informed</li> <li>• Encouraging involvement opportunities</li> </ul>
3	Produce the Housing Service Annual Report	Annually	Sent out to all council households by the required date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing tenants on how well we performed last year</li> </ul> Encouraging tenant engagement
4	Promote and increase tenant involvement with Neighbourhood Officers and Community Housing Support Officers by facilitating and supporting the use of social event such as coffee sessions, , keep fit sessions, healthy lifestyle events, gardening clubs and other events which promote greater sustainable communities	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving wider aspiration of tenant, residents and all service users and their communities</li> <li>• Improve residents lifestyles and build sustainable communities in our neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
5	Promote Neighbourhood Walkabouts on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages, newsletters and on communal notice boards	Annually	Increase involvement on our estates. Evidence outcomes and publish on website, communal notice boards, newsletters etc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better tenant satisfaction at a local level</li> <li>• Tailoring services to suit the needs of tenants in local areas</li> <li>• Improving neighbourhoods</li> </ul> Help create communities where people want to live

6	Increase engagement with young people by working in partnership with agencies who engage with young people	On going	Young people's views being incorporated in the service delivery
7	Increase tenant profiling	On going	Use customer knowledge to identify services most relevant to tenants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture views from current under- represented groups</li> <li>• Increased scope for inclusion</li> <li>• Tailor our services to meet tenants' needs</li> </ul>
8	Continue to support Tenants and Residents Groups and promote the need for more involvement groups to reach the 'hard to reach' groups. Ensure all are accessible for people across the seven strands of diversity. Use tenant profiling information to target specific groups	On going	Promote the work of the current Tenant and Residents Groups across the district by having good news articles on our website, Facebook, Twitter pages, communal noticeboards and in newsletters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased numbers of groups in our neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Leading to better community cohesion</li> <li>• Increased involvement in shaping service delivery</li> <li>• Better tenant satisfaction</li> <li>• Improving neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
9	Increase tenant involvement, especially from the tenants in rural communities	On going	More partnership working with Parish Councils. Promote estate representatives in the rural areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help create communities where people want to live</li> <li>• Ensuring the views of rural tenants' are being captured</li> <li>• Better tenant satisfaction locally</li> <li>• Tailor service to meet tenants' needs</li> </ul>

10	Continue to support existing Tenant Inspectors for Voids and Planned Maintenance and encourage more to come forward	On going	Promote the work of the Tenant Inspectors across the district by having good news articles on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages, communal noticeboards and in our newsletters
11	Continue to support existing Estate Tenant Representatives and encourage more to come forward	On going	<p>Promote the work of the Estate Reps across the district by having good news articles on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages and in the newsletters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help create communities where people want to live</li> <li>• Views of rural tenants' being captured</li> <li>• Better tenant satisfaction locally</li> <li>• Tailor service to meet tenants' needs</li> </ul>

## HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 22 MAY 2018

### REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICE TENANT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Ray Stanley  
**Responsible Officer:** Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing

**Reason for Report:** The Housing Service's tenant involvement policy was due for review in April 2018. This work has been completed and the draft strategy takes account of changes to the regulatory framework, and new means of consulting with stakeholders.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Homes PDG is asked to agree the revised policy relating to tenant involvement and to recommend to the Cabinet that it is adopted.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The efficient and effective management of our housing stock is a priority within the corporate plan and this strategy supports work to achieve this and to ensure compliance with the regulatory framework for social housing.

**Financial Implications:** There is a budget in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) set aside for tenant involvement activity.

**Legal Implications:** The Housing Act 1985 contains provisions relating to the consultation of tenants and reference is made to these in the Council's standard tenancy agreements. The regulatory framework for social housing contains a Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard which sets out a number of required outcomes and specific expectations.

**Risk Assessment:** The Housing Service should take account of the views of tenants, offering them opportunities to scrutinise performance and to comment on the service offer, in accordance with the regulatory framework for social housing. Failure to take on board their views could result in increased complaints, which if upheld, could result in reputational damage. The regulator for social housing expects tenants to be offered opportunities to be involved and could order an investigation if there is evidence that regulatory obligations are being ignored.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** The Housing Service collects data on the diversity of tenants and endeavours to tailor services to meet the needs of all tenants. With regard to tenant involvement, our activities take into account the needs of those involved. For example, we have a tenant expenses scheme and the cost of childcare, travel or other reasonable expenses can be reimbursed in accordance with this in order to remove any barriers to involvement.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The existing policy relating to tenant involvement requires review. It was agreed in 2015 and was due for review in April 2018.

- 1.2 The revised version (version 4) is shown in Appendix 1 with tracked changes showing what has been deleted from the existing policy and what has been included as part of the revision.

## 2.0 **CONTEXT**

- 2.1 Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing which operates a regulatory framework. The framework consists of a number of regulatory standards and each of these includes a number of required outcomes and specific expectations.
- 2.2 The standards are divided into two groups: there are economic standards and consumer standards. Local authority landlords are obliged to ensure that they meet the needs of the consumer standards.
- 2.3 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard is a consumer standard, as are the Home, the Tenancy, and the Neighbourhood and Community Standards.
- 2.4 The Regulator of Social Housing's role is to set the consumer standards and to intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.
- 2.5 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard states that RPs shall ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the work of their landlord. This will include the formulation of housing-related policies and strategic priorities, the making of decisions about how housing-related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards and agreeing local offers for service delivery.
- 2.6 In addition, landlords are expected to offer opportunities to tenants to enable them to scrutinise performance, and to suggest how performance might be improved.
- 2.7 The specific expectations set out in the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard include the need for RPs to support their tenants to develop and implement opportunities for these areas; to consult with tenants on the scope of local offers for service delivery; and to consult tenants at least once every three years on the best way of involving tenants in the governance and scrutiny of the organisation's housing management service.
- 2.8 The fire at Grenfell tower last June occurred in a block of flats managed by a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). Since the fire, residents of the TMO have stated that they raised concerns about fire safety and other issues which were ignored by their landlord.
- 2.9 Informed commentators are now suggesting that the Government may act as a result of this to ensure that tenant involvement is given higher priority by RPs, in future, and cite the roadshows undertaken by the previous Minister with responsibility for Housing, Alok Sharma, as evidence of this (Campbell, 2018). In addition, there are suggestions that the regulatory framework is



likely to be amended to strengthen the requirement for RPs to organise meaningful engagement with tenants.

### **3.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE POLICY**

- 3.1 The proposed changes to the existing Tenant Involvement policy are shown in Appendix 1 as tracked changes.
- 3.2 Members will note that only a few changes have been made.
- 3.3 The revised draft policy more closely reflects the strategy set out in the revised draft Tenant Involvement Strategy, also on the agenda for decision at this meeting.
- 3.4 In particular, reference has been made in the revised draft policy, to the use of new technologies for engaging with tenants, in the summary at paragraph 8. The world has changed since 2015 and we are aware that technological advances will continue. The way in which many people access the news, for example, has changed, with many people using social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook to do this (Wakefield, 2016). For this reason, the Housing Service intends to continue using social media, and any other new channels which may be developed in the future, for promoting matters deemed to be of importance to tenants.
- 3.5 This approach has been working; the insights tool on Facebook gives us some useful information regarding posts on our MDDC Housing page. There are 579 people following the page. We advertise homes for rent using the tag line: "Property of the Week". These posts routinely reach 400 - 700 Facebook users. A post on 9 April 2018 regarding scams also reached approximately 1800 people.
- 3.6 Further changes to the revised draft policy can be found in section 9 which relates to Equality and Diversity. This section now includes reference to the Tenant's Expenses Scheme and other adjustments which can be made to enable people from different sections of society to participate in tenant involvement activity.

### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Tenants Together group will be consulted on the new draft strategy at their meeting on 10 May 2018 and the Group Manager for Housing will update the PDG as part of her verbal report on it, at the meeting on 23 May 2018.

**Contact for more Information:** Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing, Telephone 01884 234920 [cfry@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:cfry@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:**

**List of Background Papers:**

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/628396/Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628396/Tenant_Involvement_and_Empowerment_Standard.pdf)

Social media “outstrips TV” as news source for young people – Jane Wakefield, BBC website, 15 June 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36528256>

How should social housing landlords change after Grenfell? – Comment by Greg Campbell, Social Housing, 10 January 2018

<https://www.socialhousing.co.uk/comment/comment/how-should-social-housing-landlords-change-after-grenfell-53861>

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Tenant Involvement**

Policy Number: HSG v4

**April 2018**

## Version Control Sheet

*Title:* Tenant Involvement Policy

*Purpose:* To inform residents of our approach to tenant involvement

*Owner:* **Group Manager for  
Housing Services\_**  
[cfry@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:cfry@middevon.gov.uk)  
**Telephone number 01884 234920**

*Date:* April 2018

*Version Number:* v4

*Status:* Review of Policy

*Review Frequency:* 4 yearly

*Next review date:* **April 2018**

*Consultation* **This document was sent out for consultation to the following:**

Cabinet Member for Housing  
Tenants Together Group  
Leadership Team  
Homes PDG

## Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Director of Operations		
Cabinet Member for Housing		
Tenants Together Group		
Leadership Team		
Homes PDG		
Cabinet		

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

All registered providers of social housing must meet the consumer standards contained within the regulatory framework for social housing. One of these standards is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard. The regulatory framework for social housing, operated by the Regulator for Social Housing requires outcomes for this standard in relation to:

- Customer service
- Choice and complaints, Involvement and empowerment
- Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

## **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to how we will develop greater involvement of tenants in the decision-making processes of the Housing Service leading to service improvement and improved tenant satisfaction.

## **3. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Tenancy Agreement
- Section 105 of the 1985 Housing Act
- The regulatory framework for social housing in England
- The Housing Service Tenant Involvement Strategy

## **4. The POLICY**

This policy demonstrates our commitment to tenant involvement and to providing better homes and communities. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the structure adopted by the Council delivers effective involvement with tenants, and this includes leaseholders, in developing and improving services to meet their needs, ensuring that tenants have a chance to scrutinise the work of the Housing Service, and to strengthen our communities.

- This policy has been developed to ensure that relevant legislation and the regulatory framework informs the work of the Housing Service. We will demonstrate this by:
- Working in partnership with tenants in all aspects of housing management, by offering a menu of involvement shaped around the diverse needs of our tenants and by offering opportunities to review the work of the Housing Service and to make recommendations to elected members
- Creating and developing a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between all parties at all levels
- Making the best use of the resources available being mindful of the need to spend funds available wisely
- We will involve tenants in housing management by a wide range of methods including:

- Making information easy to access, written in Plain English and, where possible, jargon free

- Acknowledging that many tenants do not wish to get involved and respecting their right not to do so. We will provide formal involvement methods, whilst promoting maximum inclusion through other less formal methods
- Finding the most appropriate way to consult individually and collectively and being clear about the choices on offer

## **5. INFORMATION**

Tenants will be provided with information in a variety of ways, regarding the following:

- Issues affecting their homes and tenancies
- Housing management policies and practice
- Any proposals for change
- Rent increases

## **6. CONSULTATION**

The Council is obliged to consult secure tenants on certain aspects of housing management. The Housing Service issues a variety of different tenure types. The majority of our tenants have secure tenancies but may have flexible tenancies which are a form of secure tenancy. Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 requires public sector landlords to have arrangements to inform and consult secure tenants who are likely to be affected by some proposed changes in matters of housing management. We also have a commitment to keeping tenants informed about other matters and to offering choices and opportunities to make recommendations to elected members. We will therefore provide information about:

- Major improvement or repair programmes
- Changes to policy and strategies
- Performance targets and priorities
- Activities for tenant involvement
- The timetable for newsletters
- How the Housing Service is meeting the requirements of the regulatory framework for social housing

## **7. PARTICIPATION**

Tenants will have ample opportunity to participate and play an integral part in:

- Scrutinising and challenging how service are managed and provided
- Giving us their opinion on how to improve service delivery
- Reviewing policies and strategies
- Meeting Councillors to discuss service delivery

## **8. SUMMARY**

Establishing meaningful involvement is not always about attending a meeting or saying yes to every idea put forward. It is about working in partnership to make better decisions in the work that we do to improve our Housing Service for all tenants. Tenants will be able to give us their views by various methods.

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- Social Media and email
- Face to face
- Telephone
- Written
- Tenant involvement events

We will use new technologies to increase access to information and to receive feedback, ideas and information and this may include, but is not limited to, use of the web, mobile apps, email lists, text SMS, as well as social media.

### **9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

As a registered provider of social housing, the Council has an equality duty and is bound by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. This means that the Housing Service must ensure that there will be no discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of gender (or gender reassignment), background (e.g. gypsies and travellers, asylum seekers) race, colour, ethnicity or national origin, faith, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, age, disability, social position, politics, trade union membership or social disadvantage. We will not tolerate any discriminatory remarks or actions and will challenge anyone who behaves in that manner. Tenants will be excluded from any further involvement if they continue to behave in an offensive or discriminatory manner.

The Housing Service understands that some tenants may find it difficult to participate due to issues relating to travel and caring responsibilities. There is a tenant expenses scheme and reasonable costs can be reimbursed to enable those tenants interested in getting involved to do so.

In addition, reasonable adjustments can be made to remove barriers to involvement and these might include changing the time of meetings to enable them to be more inclusive, ensuring that there are vegetarian options available if food is to be provided for tenant representatives and that all the venues for meetings are accessible.

### **10. REVIEW**

This Policy has been written in line with and meets current relevant legislation. Unless there are changes to such legislation beforehand, the next review of this policy is due 2022



## HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 22 MAY 2018

### THE HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE – COMMUNITY LED HOUSING FUND GRANT POLICY

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Ray Stanley  
**Responsible Officer:** Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing

**Reason for Report:** In 2016/2017 Mid Devon District Council was allocated £131,359 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Community Housing Fund. The Council will use this ring-fenced funding to work in partnership with local communities to develop Community Led Housing across the District.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the Cabinet recommends to Council that:**

- 1) **The Community Led Housing Fund Grant Policy is adopted and endorsed so that it can be used within the Council's District.**
- 2) **That members support the framework for the allocation of grants as presented within the report.**
- 3) **Should any disagreements occur then the final decision should be delegated to the Director of Operations in conjunction with the Cabinet Member.**

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** MDDC Visions priority 1 & 2. The Council is committed to building more homes in the District and to facilitating the housing growth that Mid Devon needs, including affordable homes in rural parishes, by working with local communities to encourage them to support themselves and working with town and parish councils.

Community-led housing will increase the supply of housing across Mid Devon including affordable housing for rent and shared ownership. It will help to support economic growth and keep communities vibrant.

Community-led housing also has the potential to promote health, wellbeing and independence. Through this type of scheme there are also opportunities for communities to develop schemes to help local people (including older and vulnerable people) to retain their independence. It will also offer local people opportunities to gain knowledge and new skills relating to, for example, project management, housing development and consultations.

**Financial Implications:** The Community-Led Housing Fund grant of £131,359 is ring-fenced for delivery of Community Led Housing. The Government has advised that grant funding will be available for a further three years but the level of funding and how this will be allocated has yet to be confirmed. There is no assurance that the grant will come to local authorities in future years. The policy will therefore need to be reviewed before the end of the financial year (2019/20) to ensure that it is still relevant and appropriate.

The Community Led Housing Fund Allocation policy includes criteria and grant caps for each funding stage, which requires applicants to demonstrate Value for Money and to seek match funding from other sources to mitigate financial risks. Communities are also subject to providing a service level agreement (SLA) with the local authority.

**Legal Implications:** Grant recipients may be required to repay the grant should their use of the award fail to comply with the conditions set out by the Council.

**Risk Assessment:** Failure to have an efficient and effective process in place for administering the fund could result in adverse publicity for the Council.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Community-led housing will help to support the needs of vulnerable people, including older people, and reduce inequality by helping to provide the right type of housing solutions to meet the needs of local communities.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2016, the Government announced a new annual £60 million fund to help almost 150 councils to tackle the problem of high levels of second homeownership in their communities. The monies were available to support the development of community-led housing.

South Hams	Devon	£1,881,307
West Dorset	Dorset	£1,365,432
East Devon	Devon	£1,210,418
Purbeck	Dorset	£910,456
North Devon	Devon	£667,869
Teignbridge	Devon	£581,303
West Somerset	Somerset	£574,760
Sedgemoor	Somerset	£485,174
Torridge	Devon	£448,434
Weymouth & Portland	Dorset	£430,315
Christchurch	Dorset	£417,229
South Somerset	Somerset	£263,222
West Devon	Devon	£247,620
North Dorset	Dorset	£238,057
East Dorset	Dorset	£158,034
<b>Mid Devon</b>	<b>Devon</b>	<b>£131,359</b>

- 1.2 The Community-Led Housing Fund offers local groups opportunities to lead on, and help them to deliver, affordable housing aimed at first-time buyers in response to the problem second homes can cause in reducing supply.
- 1.3 The funding will be targeted at the community-led housing sector and distributed to groups via local Councils. The rationale for this is that local authorities have the relevant knowledge to enable them to deliver the sort of housing needed in communities in their areas.
- 1.4 Allocating the funding to these housing organisations will place local communities in a position to identify what type of housing is most needed in each area. It will also offer an income stream to community organisations, in turn allowing them to reinvest in more housing or in other activities or services which will benefit their areas.
- 1.5 Local authorities will work closely with community-led housing groups and other stakeholders which is likely to include the Community Land Trusts network or the Home and Communities Agency, to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and support is available to ensure efficient delivery of new houses in subsequent years.
- 1.6 Community-led housing has many benefits. Planning applications from this sector are currently approved more often than other applications. Local concerns about building new homes can be allayed more easily because of local involvement from the start.
- 1.7 The groups can also be an important link between the community and local authorities, as they can increase credibility among residents and directly represent the needs of the community.
- 1.8 In 2016/2017 Mid Devon District Council was allocated half of the allocated funding of £131,359 from the DCLG Community Housing Fund. To receive the second tranche

of funding the Council had to explain how it would use the funds, to receive the remaining monies. The Council submitted its explanation and the remaining funds were awarded.

- 1.9 The Council will use this ring-fenced funding to work in partnership with local communities to develop Community Led Housing across the District. Further grant funding may be allocated over the next four years.
- 1.10 Implications on existing staffing capacity to secure, deliver and oversee the funds that are allocated to the Council will be monitored and, if insufficient, this will be reported as part of an overall monitoring report.
- 1.11 The Policy governance will be overseen by the Community Housing Fund Project Group chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing. The group will comprise of Cabinet Member for Housing and three other Cabinet Members. The group will receive recommendations from Group Manager for Housing, Housing Options Manager and the S151 Officer or designated representative from finance. The Group will meet on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of community groups and consider applications for funding.

## **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Council's Community-led Housing Fund Grant Policy which will set out the criteria for the allocation of this funding to communities and organisations involved in the delivery of Community Led Housing schemes across Mid Devon over the next four years.
- 2.2 The Council is using £3250 (per year, over 4 years) of the funding to continue the joint working with Wessex Community Housing. The Council already has a proven track record with Wessex Community Housing arising from the successful Community Land Trust project in Hemyock. This will enable Wessex Community Housing to provide additional community development support, to work with the Council and communities to deliver more developments with Community Land Trusts.
- 2.3 The Wessex Community Housing Project is also tasked to generate interest and lead a dialogue with other community groups across Mid Devon around Community-led Housing as an additional step towards delivering additional housing on housing development sites and rural exception sites across the District.
- 2.4 The remaining grant allocation will be used to offer support to communities seeking to progress a Community-Led Housing scheme. The fund will be used to support local communities to set up a community organisation, undertake initial feasibility work and to cover project management costs.
- 2.5 The Community-Led Housing Fund Allocation policy sets out who is eligible to apply for this funding, what will be funded and how applications will be assessed and funding awarded.
- 2.6 The Community-Led Housing Fund will be available to communities to allow them to succeed in building new homes in the community. The criteria which grant applications will be assessed will be stringent. It will require applicants to:
  - Demonstrate how the project meets the Council strategic objectives
  - Evidence that other avenues have been explored
  - Provide a business case for the CLT
  - Report to the Council on the progress of the development/project

- 2.7 The impact of the programme will be monitored and evaluated by officers in the Housing Options Team and a report will be presented to the Homes PDG as and when required.
- 2.8 Appendix A sets out the Guidance and Criteria to help communities apply for the grants together with the application forms.

**Contact for more Information:** Mike Parker, Housing Options Manager  
Telephone: 01884 234906 [mparker@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:mparker@middevon.gov.uk)

**Circulation of the Report:** Councillor Ray Stanley, Cabinet Member for Housing

## **Appendix A Community Led Housing Fund Guidance and Criteria – (2018-2020)**

### **1. About Community-Led Housing**

- 1.1 Community-led housing is intended to bring social and economic benefits to local communities through the provision of housing developed by members of the local community with support. The community must be integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions. It does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes itself, although it may choose to do so.

### **2. About the Grant**

- 2.1 Mid Devon District Council was awarded £131,359.00 from a Government Fund aimed at helping local authorities to respond to high levels of second home ownership in their areas. Community-led housing includes all types of housing including homes for outright sale, rent and shared ownership
- 2.2 The Community Housing Fund will be available to communities looking to develop new housing and/or purchase, refurbish and bring back into effective use, empty properties. Any funding provided is used to benefit the local area and/or specific community on a clearly defined and legally protected way in perpetuity. Communities will be expected to work with Registered Providers as development partners. However, there may be situations where the community works with another development partner to deliver a community-led scheme.

### **3. Who Can Apply – Eligibility Criteria**

- 3.1 **Community Organisations:** These will be community groups based in communities involved in the development of a community-led housing scheme. Community groups will need to be constituted to receive direct funding. The community group could be an existing charitable trust or development trust or similar body. Examples of community-led housing organisations include Community Land Trusts; Cohousing schemes; housing cooperatives and other similar organisations.

Where a new community group is established to develop a scheme, then funding will be provided to help establish the group.

Communities also have access to a wider range of other grant funding sources, which can assist in the delivery of Community Led Housing

schemes. These grants are not available to Registered Providers or other public sector bodies. Support and advice will be provided to communities both through the Council and specialist advisors on these alternative sources of funding.

### **3.2 Community Organisations will need to:**

- Be a legal entity, or be part of a legally constituted consortia agreement
- Be appropriately constituted (examples might include; a registered charity, community interest company or charitable incorporated organisation, not for profit company or Industrial and Provident Societies for the Benefit of the Community).
- Have stated community benefit objectives
- Be non-profit distributing; any surpluses must be reinvested to further its social aims/community benefits

**3.3 Registered Providers:** Funding will be provided to Registered Providers who are involved in the development of an identified community-led scheme. Funding for Registered Providers can be in the form of a grant. Funding from the Community Housing Fund for Registered Providers can be made available in addition to funding from the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP).

**3.4 Registered Providers** can be involved in a community-led housing scheme in a number of ways. These can range from acting as purely a development partner and providing a design and build service to a community through to leading on the development of the scheme and providing the on-going management of the housing. However, it is essential that whatever role a Registered Provider has in a community-led scheme that the community takes a long-term role in the ownership, management or stewardship of the homes, for it to be a genuine community-led housing scheme.

**3.5 Other development partners:** In most cases, communities will be expected to work with Registered Providers as development partners. However, there may be situations where the community works with another development partner to deliver a community-led scheme. The Council may provide direct funding to alternative development partners in certain circumstances.

*(If you are applying for a Community Development / Set up Grant)* Where no constituted body has yet been created, then the Council will accept applications from one of the following:

- The Parish or Town Council for that area;
- The appointed Community Support Organisation; or
- Another agency with strong links to the local community

## **4. What the grants are for**

**4.1 Community Development Work:** Funding will be used to support community engagement work with local communities to enable them to set up a community organisation and to develop the organisation. Specific community capacity working could include:

- Set up costs for the group including legal structures and governance
- Advising the group on community-led housing models and the most appropriate models and approaches for their community/development
- Any training requirements
- Identifying other funding opportunities
- Assistance with funding applications and other support
- Longer term group and business development
- Any other specialist support

**4.2 Initial Feasibility Work:** Funding will be allocated to undertake initial feasibility work to identify the potential to develop a community-led housing scheme. Initial feasibility work could include:

- Feasibility studies
- Identifying and assessing potential sites and opportunities, costs and values
- Local Housing Needs Surveys
- Developing the initial project proposal
- Advice on early project planning/management and business plan development

**4.3 Project management costs:** Project management costs will cover any work undertaken on a specific site prior up to and including start on site of a scheme. This will include:

- All professional costs: Design and Architectural costs, Quantity Surveyor, site surveys and investigations etc.
- Planning fees and any specialist planning advice
- Legal costs

- Procurement costs
- Site Management costs
- Site acquisition
- Any abnormal costs: e.g. contamination, site clearance etc.

**4.4 Other costs:** The Council will consider use of the fund for specific one-off costs for a particular site, without which the scheme could not be developed or be viable, including gap funding.

**4.5 Other organisations:** Funding will be provided to other organisations to fund specific pieces of work. These can include funding to consultants for feasibility work, business planning, planning consultants, supporting housing needs surveys etc.

#### **4.6 Items Which Will Not Qualify**

The fund cannot be used for the following:

- Any development which does not meet the basic principles for a community-led housing scheme as set out previously
- Any organisation that does not meet the criteria listed previously
- Any development that has already commenced
- Any retrospective costs, which have already been incurred by the organisation

### **5. How much money can we apply for?**

#### **5.1 Amount of Funding to be Allocated**

The Council currently has a sum of £131,359 available. The level of funding available in the future will be determined by the amount of grant allocated to the council by Central Government.

There are three grants available:

- Community Development / Set-Up Grant
- Feasibility Grant
- Development Grant

The grant funding available for each stage of a scheme is set out below. This is capped and it is expected that community organisations will also access other funding streams.



## **5.2 Community Development / Set-Up Grant**

Grant funding of up to £3,000 per community (in addition to support from Wessex Community Housing Project) is available to help develop a group to the stage where it is constituted and to undertake initial community consultation. This funding is only available to groups with a clear community focus and an interest in providing housing which meets the needs of their local community.

This funding can support:

- Room hire for meetings and consultation events;
- Housing need survey materials;
- Training requirements;
- Identification of other funding opportunities;
- Fact finding visits to other community-led housing schemes; and
- Secretariat time to support the group;
- Advice on constituting a community-led housing body
- Administrative/legal costs required to set up a group

## **5.3 Stage 2: Feasibility Fund**

Before accessing this fund, community groups will be expected to have been formed and constituted. They must also be able to demonstrate a good level of community support for the project and have clear evidence of the local housing needs that any proposed housing scheme is intended to meet.

In addition, potential site(s) will have been identified that may be suitable for a community housing scheme.

*(If the organisation has accessed a Community Development / Set-Up Grant then)* A statement of all setup grant expenditure will need to be prepared and 'signed off' by the Council prior to the submission of a (Feasibility grant) application.

Grant funding from £5,000 up to £15,000 per scheme (in addition to support from Wessex Community Housing Project) can be made available to support a feasibility appraisal and to develop a project plan. In exceptional circumstances requests for funding greater than the £15,000 limit may be considered if the applying community can demonstrate a clear rationale why additional funding is required, how it offers value for money and that the

funding cannot be secured by other means. At this stage, the type of work which funding could support could include:

- Feasibility study (this is an essential component of the application);
- Commissioning of a development agent to progress the scheme to a planning application;
- Identification and initial assessment of site/sites;
- Development of project plan, including a financial plan and identification of match funding;
- 'Pre application' planning advice;
- Scheme design including all relevant drawings appropriate for a planning application;
- Preparation of surveys and reports in advance of a formal planning application;
- Identification of any abnormal costs or site specific issues which would require further exploration; and
- Further community engagement.

To access this funding, groups are required to submit an application form (Annex A).

The funding can be used to fund work, reports and surveys that can progress a scheme all the way through to the stage prior to a full planning application. A date for the production of the feasibility study will be agreed with the applicant at the time the application is approved. It should be noted that at least 20% of all costs must be accessed from an alternative source to the Community Housing Fund.

The Council reserves the right to incorporate some of the development costs incurred at this stage into the total scheme costs identified at stage 3.

#### **5.4 Stage 3: Development Fund**

Grant up to £15,000 may be available either to top up public subsidy or provide gap funding for capital costs to contribute towards project management costs and construction costs.

Before accessing this fund community groups will be expected to have produced a project plan, have an identified site/sites and a clear understanding of the people (e.g. elderly/young adults etc.) who will benefit from the scheme.

Funding is only available to the following types of organisations:

Fully constituted community groups – the group can be an existing charitable organisation or similar body, social enterprise or set up specifically for this project.

Registered housing provider or non-registered housing association – as long as there is clear community involvement in the scheme (as set out in the policy statement)

## **6. How we assess applications - What we look for**

### **6.1 Basic eligibility criteria**

The applicant must be a legally constituted organisation (see above)

The scheme must clearly demonstrate that it meets local needs (evidence of recent Housing Needs Survey or equivalent)

The scheme must be community-led

For a scheme to be 'community-led' it will need to meet the following criteria:

- The community must be integrally involved throughout the process in key decisions. It does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes itself, although it may choose to do so;
- There will be a presumption in favour of community groups that demonstrate in their applications that they are taking a long-term, formal role in the ownership, management or stewardship of the homes; and
- Any funding provided is used to benefit the local area and/or specific community on a clearly defined and legally protected way in perpetuity

### **6.2 The applicant will also need to demonstrate:**

- Strong governance arrangements by operating through open and accountable, co-operative processes, with strong performance and management systems
- Appropriate skills and capacity exist within the organisation, or available to the organisation to undertake the project
- Clear, realistic financial plans for the development of the housing scheme where applicable
- Clear, realistic financial plans for the future management of the housing scheme

- The scheme offers good value for money, in particular that the scheme is accessing other sources of funding and finance (see below)
- Community support for the proposals
- How the organisation will comply with any relevant legislation and statutory requirements

Assessment for a Development Grant will be subject to a more detailed appraisal process, which will include the following, on top of those already listed:

- Deliverability
- Allocations Policy
- How the scheme will be managed and maintained
- Robustness of the business model and financial viability

## **7. Value for money**

### **7.1 Applications for Community Housing Fund**

Applications for Community Housing Fund Stage 1 and 2 funding will need to demonstrate how the group intends to spend the money and provide a breakdown of costs.

Applications for Community Housing Fund Stage 3 funding will require the submission of a financial plan, outlining what revenue and capital support is required. The project plan should also outline what professional support is required to deliver the scheme and how this will be procured.

Community Housing Fund Project Plans will be expected to outline where match funding will be sourced from to make the scheme viable. The Community Housing Fund Group expects groups to demonstrate they have taken appropriate measures to reduce the amount requested from the Fund and will expect evidence that the applicant has considered the following alternative funding streams (where applicable):

Borrowing on rental income; this is capital funding borrowed over the long term, (typically 25 years), using projected rental income streams to service the debt

Sales receipts: this is capital funding secured from the proceeds of projected house sales

Homes England; this is grant made available from the HCA (soon to be renamed Homes England) in accordance with their Affordable Housing funding programmes

Land donations or use of existing community land; this is land offered at 'nil' or below market value

Local authority commuted sum fund; this is capital funding taken from the fund which accounts for financial contributions from developers in lieu of 'on-site' affordable housing

## **8.0 How to Apply**

### **8.1 Requests for funding**

Requests for Community Housing Fund Stage 1 and 2 funding should be sent to the Group Manager (Housing Services) using the appropriate application form (attached at Annex A).

Requests for Community Housing Fund stage 3 funding must be made through a completed project plan covering:

- the legal constitution of the group and the principal contacts
- evidence of community engagement
- a financial plan, identifying the sources of funding for the project
- identification of a site/sites
- a basic site designing indicating the number of types of housing to be delivered through the project
- an outline of who the new homes will be for and how that meets a local need
- what professional support is required to take the project forward and how these professionals will be appointed/procured
  - what role the community group will play once the homes are complete

## **9. Supporting Documents**

**9.1** Annex A must contain the supporting documents as detailed in section 8.1

## **10. How to Submit**

**10.1** Applications must be sent to the Group Manager (Housing Services) at Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, Devon, EX16

6PP. Applications must be supported by the relevant documentation as detail above.

## **11. What happens after you submit your application**

- 11.1** Requests for **Community Development / Set-Up grant** will normally be considered by the Group Manager (Housing Services) within 10 working days of receipt of the completed application form (unless otherwise agreed) (see Annex A).

Requests for **Feasibility Grant** will normally be considered by the Community Housing Fund Project Group within 30 working days of receipt of the application form (see Annex A). Please note that this may generate further questions or requests for clarification prior to a written decision being sent out to the group to inform them whether they have been successful or not.

Request for a **Development Grant** will also be considered by the Community Housing Fund Project Group following receipt of a project plan. An initial check of the project plan will be undertaken within 10 working days by the Group Manager (Housing Services). Should it be deemed to require further detail, applicants will be notified accordingly and asked to resubmit. Subject to any additional questions or requests for clarification, the group will receive written notification of whether they have been successful or not.

The policy will be overseen by the Community Housing Fund Project Group chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing that will comprise of:

- Cabinet Member for Housing
- Three Cabinet Members

The group will be supported by the following group after receiving recommendations from

- Group Manager (Housing Services)
- Housing Options Manager
- S151 Officer or designated representative from finance

The Group will meet on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of community groups and consider applications for funding.

### **11.2 Payment of Grant**

### **11.3 Stage 1: Community development set-up grant**

Grant payments will normally be paid following the agreement of the Community Housing Fund Project Group with receipt of grant claim form and invoices for works carried out; payment of grant will be paid after 30 days of being approved. However, it is recognised that some community groups may not yet be fully constituted or have very limited cash resources.

#### **11.4 Stage 2: Feasibility fund**

Grant payments will normally be paid on receipt of grant claim form and invoices for work carried out.

#### **11.5 Stage 3: Development fund**

Payments from the Development Fund will normally be made on a staged basis as follows:

- 50% to be paid on start on site of the scheme 50% to be paid on scheme completion
- The Council will consider alternative staged payments in certain cases where there may be cash flow issues. However, it is expected that applicants will have sufficient development finance in place to ensure that they are able to manage their cash flow throughout the duration of the project.
- Where the grant funding is being used to provide gap funding, then payment will normally be made to the applicant once that cost has been met by the applicant and upon receipt of evidence of payment of the cost by the applicant.
- There will be no funding available for cost overruns.

#### **11.6 Grant Agreement**

Grant recipients will be required to enter into a standard grant agreement with the Council, which will stipulate a number of requirements including:

**11.7 Monitoring Arrangements:** We will require grant recipients to provide regular monitoring information as per the grant agreement.

**11.8 Use of Grant and details of works required:** The grant agreement will set clear what the grant can be used for and details of the works required.

**11.9 Withholding, suspending and repayment of grant:** The grant agreement will also set out the circumstances in which grant may be withheld, suspended or repaid. This will include disposal of the properties within a certain timescale, use of grant for purposes other for which the grant has been awarded etc. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other examples the Council will use its discretion.

#### **11.10 Monitoring and Clawback**

Groups awarded Community Housing Fund Stage 1 funding will be monitored by the Wessex Community Housing Project, who will report back to the Community Housing Fund Project Group on a regular basis.

Groups awarded Community Housing Fund Stage 2 and Stage 3 funding will be expected to submit a brief update report at least once every two months. They will also be monitored by the Wessex Community Housing Project, who will report back to the Community Housing Fund Project Group.

The Council reserves the right to seek repayment of any grant awarded, should any homes provided through this programme be taken out of community ownership within 10 years of the completion of the scheme, unless written permission is given by the Group Manager (Housing Services).



**MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/SET-UP FUND**

PLEASE READ THE CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE NOTES BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE HOUSING OPTIONS MANAGER ON 01884 234906

**Application for Community Development/Set Up Funds – Stage 1**

<b>Name of Existing/Proposed Organisation</b>	
<b>Contact Details/Name:</b>	
<b>Contact email:</b>	
<b>Contact Address:</b>	
<b>Contact Tel no(s):</b>	
<b>Position Held:</b>	
<b>Correspondence Address:</b>	
<b>Organisation Details:</b> Type of existing/proposed organisation	

<b>Organisation bank account?</b> (Please provide bank account name, address, sort code & account number.)	Account Name:	Sort Code:	Account No:
--	---------------	------------	-------------

<b>Are you an established organisation with legal documents to establish that you have legal authority?</b> (For example a Parish Council, Community Land Trust) <b>What is the legal form of the organisation?</b>	
--	--

<b>Scheme Details:</b> <b>Please provide details about your project?</b> (eg What are you proposing to build – how many houses, type of tenure? Why are you seeking support from the Community Housing Fund? How will this help you with your next steps? What will the Housing Fund help you to do which you are not able to achieve otherwise? Is this within a Neighbourhood Plan area?)	
--	--

<b>Funding requirements - Please set out the funding you need to progress this scheme to Stage 2 (Feasibility)</b>	
--	--

Type of funding	Estimated Cost	Details (including name of service provider/consultant/contractor if known)

<p><b>Have you identified a site?</b> Please provide information (eg condition of the site, current use, the address of the site)</p>	
---	--

<p><b>Have you carried out any consultation with the wider community about your proposals (not including members of your group)?</b> What level of support or opposition have you received (for example Parish Council, local authority, other local voluntary or business groups.)? We understand that all schemes have their objectors, and detailing any opposition you have had to your proposals will not prejudice your application for support.</p>	
--	--

<p><b>Have you had any engagement or discussion with a Registered Provider/Housing Association about your proposals?</b> What response have you had?</p>	
--	--

<p><b>Are you receiving specialist advice about this project (ie Wessex Community Housing Project)? Please provide their name &amp; contact details.</b></p>	
--	--

### **Equalities**

Under the Equalities Act 2010 the Council has a legal duty to ensure that different groups are not disadvantaged from applying for or receiving our grants funding. We also want to ensure that people who benefit from our grants programme represents the makeup of the local population.

Please indicate which (if any) of the following groups will particularly benefit from your project and give details where you think this is relevant

- People with physical disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- Older people
- Unemployed people
- People who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
- People from a particular ethnic background
- Younger people
- Carers

### **Checklist**

- Completed all sections of the application form [ ]
- Provided Bank Account details [ ]
- Provided details of the legal identity [ ]
- Provided details of funding costs [ ]

## **Declaration**

The information you have provided will be used by the Council to assess and process your application and to enable us to contact you about your application. Your information will be held securely within the Council and only passed to others within the Council for the purposes of assessing this grant application. Information will be destroyed in line with the Council's Information Retention Policy.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information in this application form is true and complete.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(This can be your group's chairman, treasurer, secretary or equivalent post)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Position held in group

\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosures

- Copy of governing document
- Accounts/Bank statement

Return to:

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PHOENIX HOUSE, PHOENIX LANE  
TIVERTON, DEVON EX16 6PP

<b>Certification</b> I certify that this funding required is directly associated with the development of a community led housing scheme(s) and that the information contained within this application form is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and reliable.	<b>Signature:</b>  <b>Date:</b>  <b>On behalf of:</b>
---	---

If the certification has not been completed by a recognised signatory of the proposed community housing organisation then please indicate the organisation that person represents

**Application for Development/ Feasibility fund – Stage 2/3**

<b>Name of Existing Organisation</b>	
--------------------------------------	--

<b>Contact Details/Name:</b>	
------------------------------	--

<b>Contact email:</b>	
-----------------------	--

<b>Contact Address:</b>	
-------------------------	--

<b>Organisation Details:</b> <b>Type of organisation:</b> <b>Date of incorporation:</b>  (please provide a copy of your constitution or other documentary evidence of your governance arrangements) <i>Please note that your organisation must normally have a minimum of 5 members (from different addresses in your community) and have either an open membership policy (or one which has restrictions that help to fulfil its overall aims and objectives)</i>	
---	--

<b>Please provide a brief summary of the organisation's aims and objectives:</b>	
--	--

<b>Bank account:</b> (Please provide bank account name, address, sort code & account number.)	<b>Account Name:</b>	<b>Sort Code:</b>	<b>Account No:</b>

## **Application for Development/ Feasibility fund – Stage 2 / 3**

### **Declaration**

The information you have provided will be used by the Council to assess and process your application and to enable us to contact you about your application. Your information will be held securely within the Council and only passed to others within the Council for the purposes of assessing this grant application. Information will be destroyed in line with the Council's Information Retention Policy.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information in this application form is true and complete.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(This can be your group's chairman, treasurer, secretary or equivalent post)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Position held in group

\_\_\_\_\_

Enclosures

- Copy of supporting documents

Return to:

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PHOENIX HOUSE, PHOENIX LANE  
TIVERTON, DEVON EX16 6PP

<b>Certification</b> I certify that this funding required is directly associated with the development of a community led housing scheme(s) and that the information contained within this application form is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and reliable.	<b>Signature:</b>  <b>Date:</b>  <b>On behalf of:</b>
---	---

If the certification has not been completed by a recognised signatory of the proposed community housing organisation then please indicate the organisation that person represents

**ELIGIBILITY CHECK**

**Application for Community Development/Set Up Funds – Stage 1 / 2 / 3**

CLT Details	
Contact Name	
Parish	
Grant Stage	
Grant Requested	

Evidence Support	Of	Yes / No	Documentation Supplied	
------------------	----	----------	------------------------	--

Eligibility

	Yes	No	?	Comment(s)
Is the application form complete and all relevant information supplied?				
Is the organisation eligible to apply?				
Are the project objectives eligible for funding?				
Is there sufficient detailed breakdown of costs so we know what the funding will be spent on?				
Is there evidence of support from at least one local parish / town Council?				
Is the amount higher than the eligible costs?				
Does the scheme / project warrant additional funding?				
Has the project already received funding?				
Is the project able to proceed with funding?				



**Supplementary Questions / Clarifications Needed:**

--

**SCORING CHECK**

Need	Comments <i>Please score from 1 to 5 1 being lowest – does not fulfil a local need 5 being highest – completely fulfils a local need</i>	Score
Is there a Housing Need in village/Parish?		
Is this back by the community/Parish?		
Is the organisation working with Wessex?		
Has a housing need survey been completed?		

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation	£	Comments
Fund in Full		
Fund in Part		
Fund with Conditions		
Defer		
Do not fund		

**Comments/Notes**

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**State of the District Report -**

**Homelessness within Mid Devon: Position Statement**

**By Mike Parker**

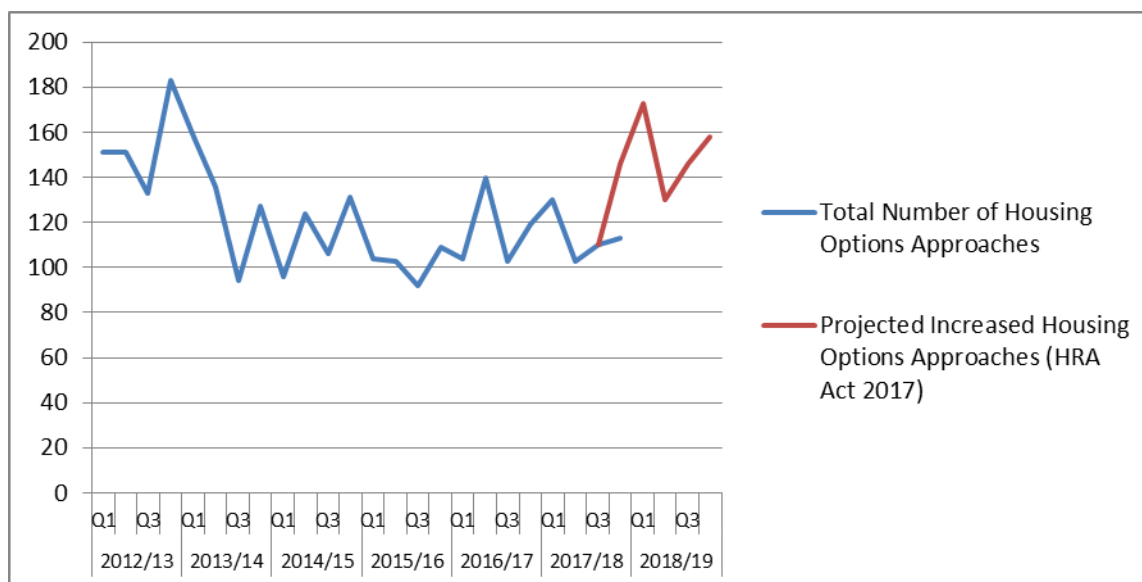
**April 2018.**

**Version 1.7**

## 1.0 State of the District Report - Homelessness within Mid Devon.

- 1.1 As a strategic housing authority, the Council is obliged to offer homeless households assistance in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996. There is a main duty to secure permanent accommodation (which may be a private rented tenancy), although the obligation may entail providing advice and assistance, for example, through housing advice or referrals to other housing providers.
- 1.2 Local authorities do not have a duty to provide accommodation for all homeless people, only for those who are judged to fall within certain categories of 'priority need'. The categories of priority need are specified in section 189 of the Housing Act 1996 and were expanded in 2002. Local authorities have a duty to make the necessary enquiries to ascertain what level of duty they owe to an applicant.
- 1.3 In 2017/18 within Mid Devon, there were over 450 approaches made to the local authority, compared to 2008/09 when we had over 700 approaches. Temporary accommodation budget spend has reduced since 2011/12 with officers spending more time assessing applicants to move out of bed and breakfast. However, over the last four years the demand and costs for temporary accommodation has increased to over £103k in 2018.

## 2.0 Housing Options Approaches 2012-2018

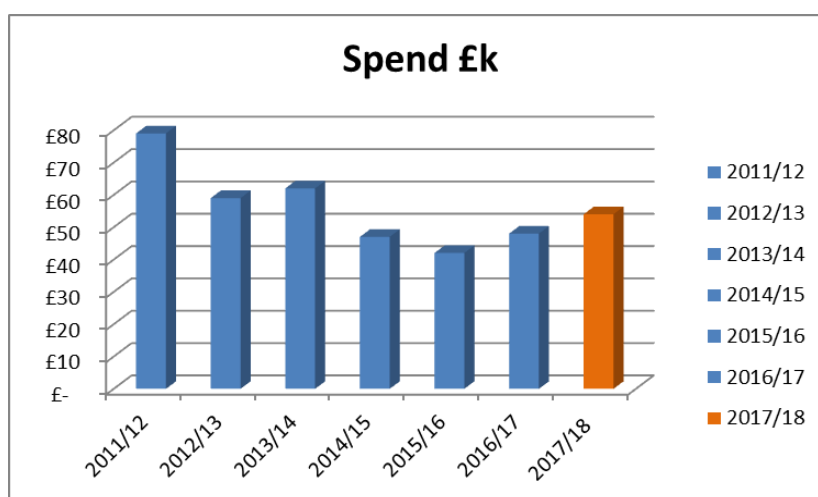


- 2.1 The new Homelessness Reduction Act was implemented with effect from the beginning of April 2018. It is estimated that the changes being introduced by this legislation will increase the applicants presenting as homeless. It is expected that local authorities will be placing more people into temporary accommodation for longer periods. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has estimated that there will be a 33% increase in these applications due to the fact that the Council will have a legal

duty to assist applicants when they are threatened with homelessness. These legislative changes will mean that the Council's spending on homelessness will increase.

- 2.2 The cost of helping applicants to secure existing or alternative accommodation in the District has dropped over the last few years; however, it has become more difficult to assist applicants in this way, due to landlords often being unwilling to assist those applicants referred by the Council. One example of this would be where a landlord has accepted a referral in the past and then the tenant has gone into rent arrears. In these situations landlords are reluctant to take another referral. It has been noted that some landlords prefer to rent their properties to people who are working and not those whose income is derived from welfare benefits.

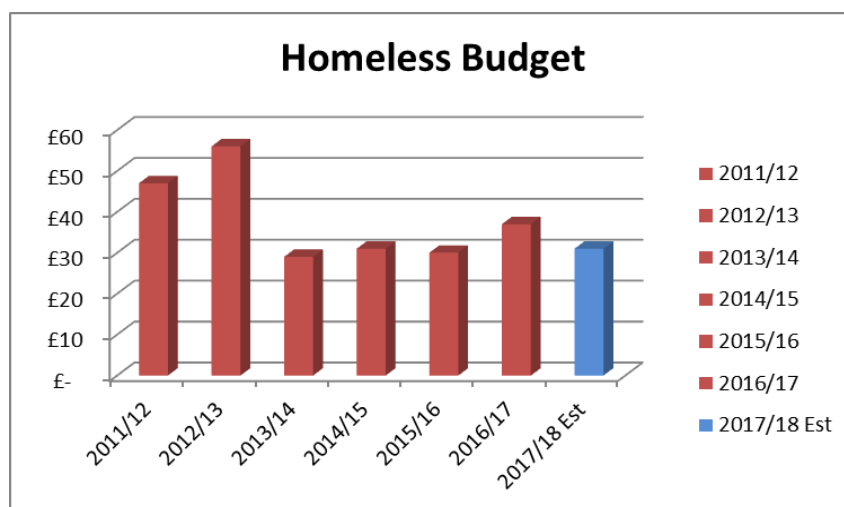
### 3.0 Deposit and Advance Rent Budget Summary:



- 3.1 This diagram shows spending on our Deposit and Advance Rent Scheme (DARS) over the period from 2011/12 – 2017/18. This scheme is used to assist applicants to secure accommodation in the private sector. The Council can assist with payments for deposits, bonds or advance rent. Payments are made in the form of a loan and applicants are expected to pay them back. Action to recover these debts is pro-active although given that the client group is usually vulnerable, it is usual for the Council to enter into arrangements so that the debt is paid back in instalments.
- 3.2 Spending on temporary accommodation in the District has also increased over the last 12 months after some of the local bed and breakfast providers no longer accept applicants referred by the Council (due to high risks associated with Council referrals/insurance conditions). In addition, there has been a decrease in available accommodation which the Council is prepared to use, due to property standards deteriorating. However, we are currently working

with one provider who is investing to improve a large property and it is anticipated that this situation will improve in 2018/19.

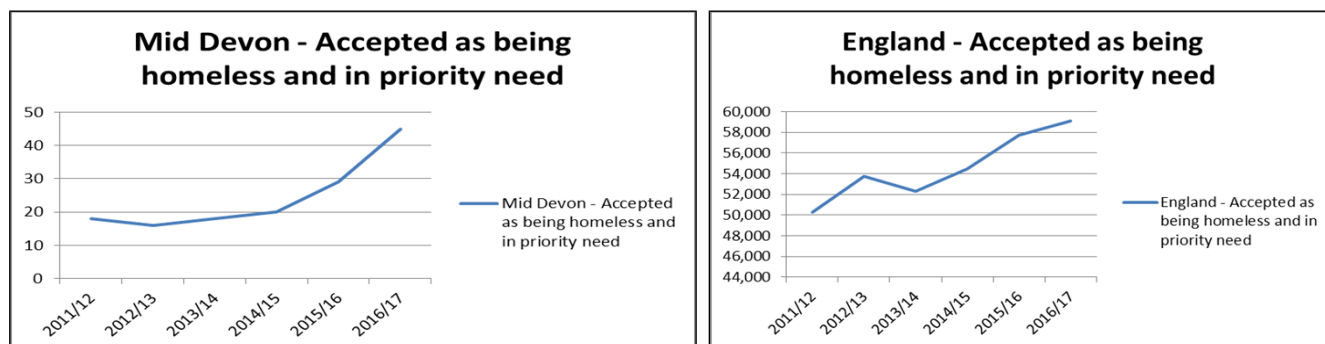
#### 4.0 Temporary Accommodation Budget Summary:



#### 5.0 Statutory Homelessness Decisions

5.1 Local authorities have a duty to make the necessary inquiries to ascertain what level of duty they owe an applicant. Detailed below is a summary of the last 6 years for decisions made under the Housing Act 1996.

#### 6.0 Statutory Homeless Acceptances – Mid Devon



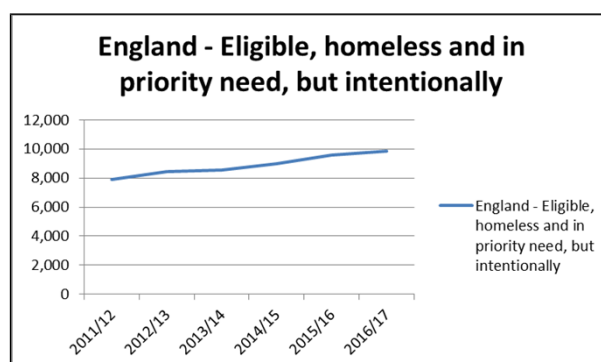
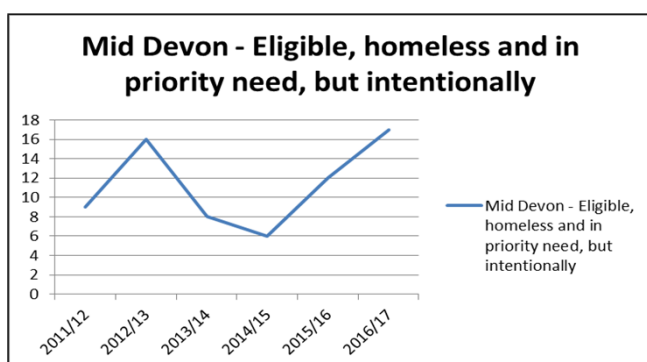
6.1 The Mid Devon figures for statutory acceptances have seen the same trend increases compared with the national averages. Assisting those deemed to be in priority need is a statutory obligation for the Council. When considering these figures, it is important to note that the intervention of the Housing Options team has successfully prevented many other households becoming homeless.

6.2 There can be a lack of affordable private rented accommodation to offer someone threatened with homelessness. Many landlords within Mid Devon are reluctant to take on large families or households where there may be

family members who may exhibit challenging behaviours, therefore leaving the local authority to house those vulnerable households.

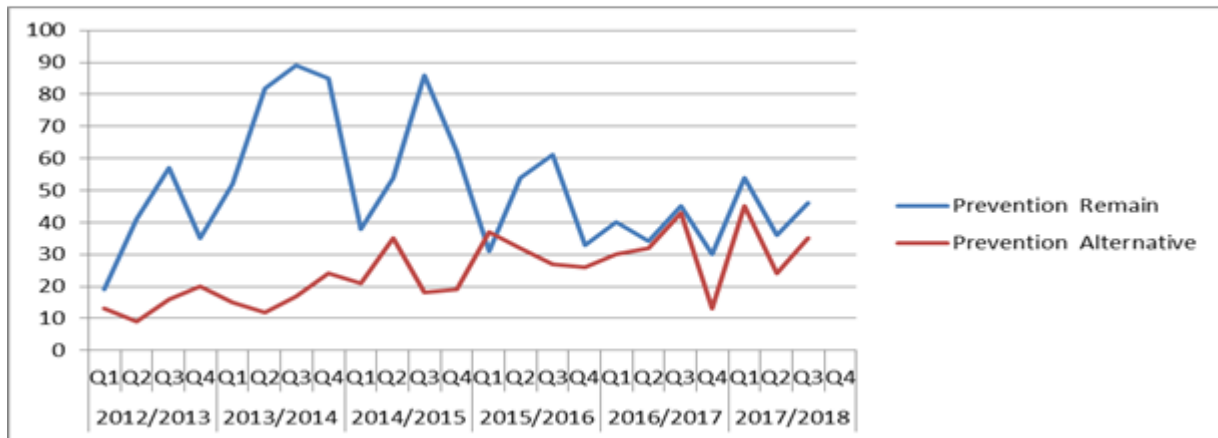
## 7.0 Intentionally Homeless – Mid Devon

- 7.1 The number of households found to be intentionally homeless is increasing within the District and across England. This is due to issues such as high private rents, spare bedroom deduction, welfare reform and universal credit, issues which have resulted in tenants across all tenures failing to make the required rent payments. Increasingly, those seeking assistance have rent arrears and other debts, and do not have the capacity to achieve financial resilience, for various reasons.



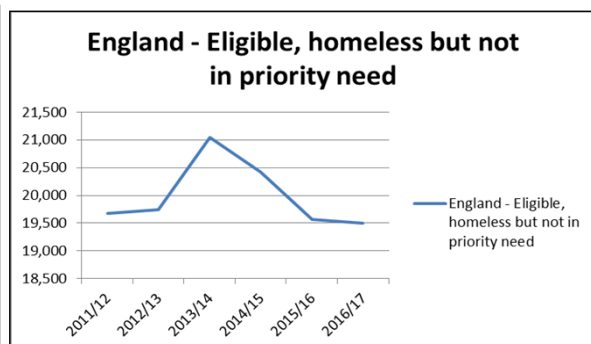
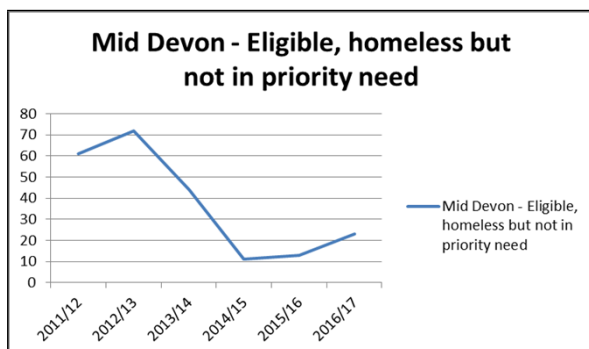
- 7.2 Housing Options officers will always negotiate with either the tenant/s or landlord, to help prevent the tenant from becoming homeless. Early prevention work is key when preventing homelessness, over the last three years; officers have been committed to helping applicants remain in their current accommodation.
- 7.3 Should the local authority find a household intentionally homeless then the local authority will not owe a full housing duty. In such cases, the Council can offer assistance using the DARS scheme and assist such applicants to find alternative accommodation in the private sector. Our Officers will also give advice on applying for a home via Devon Home Choice (DHC).. Other areas of help may be via mediation, financial payments, debt advice, organising a re-payment plan, sanctuary scheme, crisis intervention, negotiations etc.

## 8.0 Prevention Work



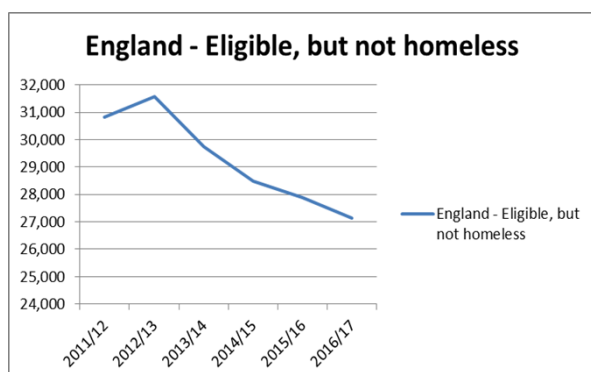
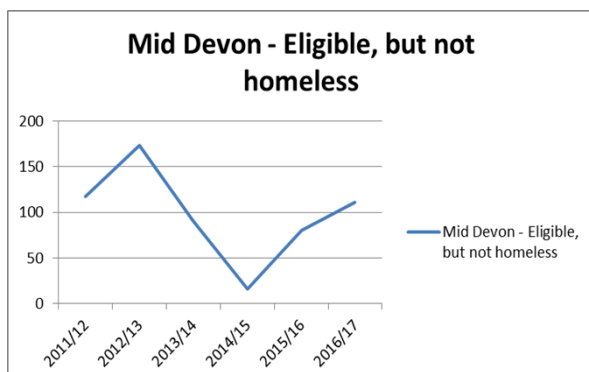
## 9.0 Homeless but not in Priority Need – Mid Devon

- 9.1 Councils across the country have tried to reduce the number of homeless applications over the last few years by offering Housing Options interviews with applicants who may be classed as non-priority; this has decreased the amount of decisions made for applicants who are classed as non-priority under the act.



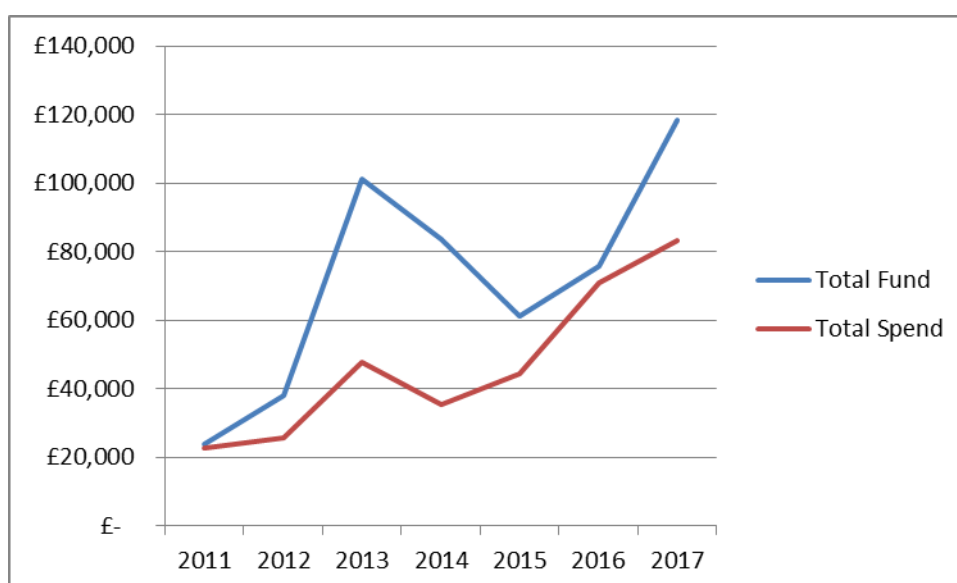
## 10.0 Not Homeless – Mid Devon

- 10.1 Over the last three years, there has been an increase in the amount of homeless prevention work. Officers have been able to intervene at an early stage to help applicants remain in their accommodation or to source alternative accommodation. This has been done by using discretionary Housing Payments of Housing Benefit (DHP) and by using this budget to help tenants to remain in their existing accommodation.

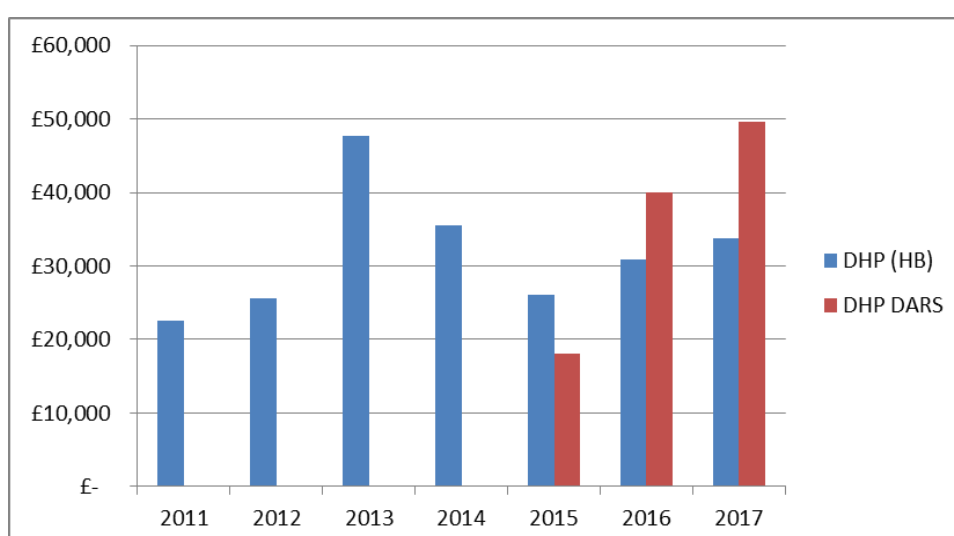




## 11.0 Discretionary Housing Payments



### DHP Split summary



It has only been agreed from 2015 that the Housing Options team have access to the DHP budget, to allow applicants to access DHP to secure funding for housing. Since then the Housing Options have maximised the amount available to them

## 12.0 Rough Sleeping Statistics - Autumn 2017, England

- 12.1 This set of data provides information on the single night snapshot of rough sleeping that is taken annually in England using street counts and intelligence driven estimates. In 2017, as in previous years, estimates have been used. These are intelligence-based assessments relating to people sleeping rough. In order to obtain the estimates, local authorities consult local agencies such as outreach workers, the Police, the voluntary sector and faith groups who

have regular contact with rough sleepers on the street, and who can help with gathering intelligence.

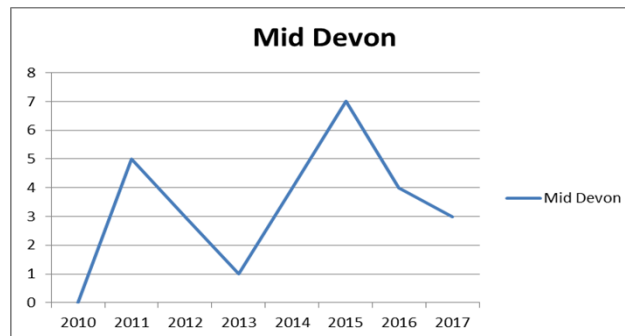
- The autumn 2017 total number of rough sleepers counted and estimated in England was 4,751.
- That was up 617, or 15% from the autumn 2016 total of 4,134.
- The number of rough sleepers increased by 173, or 18% in London and 444 or 14% in the rest of England since autumn 2016.
- London represented 24% of the England total rough sleepers in autumn 2017. This is up from 23% of the England total in autumn 2016.
- 14% of rough sleepers were women, 20% were non-UK nationals and 8% were under 25 years old.

### 13.0 Rough Sleeping – Mid Devon - South West

Local authority / Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Number of households 2017 ('000) <sup>2</sup>	2017 rough sleeping rate (per 1,000 households)
<b>England</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>2,181</b>	<b>2,309</b>	<b>2,414</b>	<b>2,744</b>	<b>3,569</b>	<b>4,134</b>	<b>4,751</b>	<b>23,464</b>	<b>0.20</b>
% change from previous year		23	6	5	14	30	16	15		
<b>London</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>1,137</b>	<b>3,652</b>	<b>0.31</b>
% change from previous year		7	25	-3	37	27	3	18		
% of England total	23	20	24	22	27	26	23	24		
<b>Rest of England</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,752</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>2,002</b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>3,170</b>	<b>3,614</b>	<b>19,812</b>	<b>0.18</b>
% change from previous year		28	1	7	7	31	21	14		
% of England total	77	80	76	78	73	74	77	76		
<b>South West</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>2,402</b>	<b>0.24</b>
% change from previous year		25	-11	2	18	41	5	8		
% of England total	15	15	13	13	13	14	13	12		

13.1 Mid Devon is working in partnership with Julian House, as part of the Trailblazer bid with Exeter, Teignbridge and East Devon District Council. The partnership arrangement will last until March 2019. Julian House provides an outreach service for Mid Devon, where they will engage with any rough sleepers in the District. Workers visit the District in the early hours of the morning to seek reported rough sleepers. They will try to engage with them to encourage them seek help and assistance.

	Cornwall	East Devon	Exeter	Mid Devon	North Devon	Plymouth	South Hams	Teignbridge	Torbay	Torridge	West Devon
<b>2010</b>	65	3	21	0	12	9	5	3	6	10	3
<b>2011</b>	80	8	29	5	16	18	6	8	3	4	4
<b>2012</b>	50	5	30	3	11	10	7	4	6	1	2
<b>2013</b>	77	4	23	1	7	9	8	0	5	3	0
<b>2014</b>	40	6	34	4	11	13	7	4	17	5	2
<b>2015</b>	65	8	27	7	28	12	9	1	21	0	0
<b>2016</b>	99	5	41	4	16	20	3	3	20	2	0
<b>2017</b>	68	6	35	3	20	26	7	3	24	4	0



- 13.2 Although the rough sleeper count in Mid Devon has increased since 2010, it has decreased over the past 2 years. In 2015, it peaked due to there being a couple sleeping rough in the district causing the numbers to rise. The trends indicate that all of our rough sleepers are white British males; aged between 18 and 45. A high percentage of rough sleepers have indicated that they have some mental health, drug or alcohol issues whilst sleeping rough. Often, these applicants tend not to engage with the relevant services for help. This year, two of the three rough sleepers in the District continue not to engage with the Council or Julian House due to various reasons. We are trying to assist the third applicant in partnership with other agencies in the county.



#### 14.0 Partnership Working with East Devon, Exeter, Teignbridge

- 14.1 In late 2016, a partnership of four Local Authorities, Teignbridge, Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council and Mid Devon District Council were successful with a bid to Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) to become a Homeless Prevention Trailblazer. The partnership was awarded £359,000 over a two year period.
- 14.2 The Trailblazer bid includes the following projects:-
- 14.3 Homeless Prevention Champion (HPC) - Project led by Community Housing Aid developing a wide ranging new initiative which seeks to identify, promote and support homeless prevention activity across the four local authority areas. The service will also provide access to a homeless prevention outcomes pot, which will enable voluntary sector agencies to claim payments for their prevention activities.
- 14.4 To deliver this, the HPC will:
- Employ a dedicated Prevention Co-ordinator
  - Host a new website & social media channels, which will offer resources, case studies and provide access to the outcomes 'pot'

- Actively engage with agencies concerned with or affected by homelessness and its prevention.
  - Work with homeless charities in Devon to identify any related training or support needs and respond accordingly
- 14.5 Homeless Advice Guides and E-Learning Platform – Project is led by Citizens Advice Exeter. The platform will empower households to take an active part in resolving their own housing difficulties, by enhancing their options to manage their own property search and a sustainable tenancy. This would include debt advice, property help guides, landlord lists etc. The project will feature instructional videos with a current cohort of homeless people to offer a lived experience insight and improve the credibility of the content. A key component will be the Personal Asset Review, which once completed by clients, will act as a passport to better housing in the private rental market. Through this, applicants will be encouraged to review their situation and focus on a strength-based approach by highlighting what they have to offer a potential landlord. We will also actively encourage enhancement of confidence and wider skills through embedded digital resources derived from the print Advice Guides.
- 14.6 In addition, Citizens Advice Exeter, will research, develop (design and write), distribute and train organisations in using a new suite of Advice Guides to tackle the root causes of homelessness. These advice guides once developed will be available online, with links from other providers to the web page. Our focus will be on producing a series of guides based around life events, including: redundancy, relationship breakdown, birth of a new baby (planned or unplanned), disability or illness, leaving institutions and bereavement. Catering for such ‘life events’, these guides will mitigate homelessness by putting an accurate source of information directly into the hands of a person when they need it most.
- 14.7 Tenancy Rescue Officers, Tenancy Rescue Fund and Landlord Incentive Pot – The Tenancy Officer will respond to landlords’ calls for help when facing difficulties with their tenants. Fast response to issues around rent arrears or anti-social behaviour can resolve the problem before a threat of homelessness is established. A ‘tenancy rescue fund’ will help workers find creative solutions. Intervention before tenancy breakdown removes the emotive barriers that eviction prevention brings once the landlord has started the process.
- 14.8 Landlord Incentive Pot can be drawn down to initiate new shared houses across the four areas, can help pay towards works or incentive for landlord to work with us.

- 14.9 Tenancy Passport Coaching – Led by St Petrocks, this project is designed to deliver tenancy training sessions. These are being held at venues in Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge, on a rolling basis. The course will be available for anyone who is currently experiencing homelessness or in temporary accommodation with referrals made directly through agreed referral agencies to a specific referral email address. The training course will operate on a rotation of 5 separate 2-hour modules and cover various aspects of managing a tenancy and living independently. There will be flexibility to adapt the course schedule and modules in line with level of demand, requirements and attendance rates.

## **15.0 Universal Credit**

- 15.1 The roll out of Universal Credit (UC) has been delayed in Mid Devon until July 2018, following the recent announcements in the Chancellors budget (November 2017). But early indications show UC may cause problems to the service due to delayed payments and DWP & UC administration users.
- 15.2 From May 2018, most working age people living in Mid Devon who need to make a new claim for Housing Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit will have to apply for Universal Credit.
- 15.3 If there are issues with tenants on Universal Credit claiming housing costs, there is a risk that there may be more evictions, thus increasing pressure on budgets relating to homelessness due to the additional statutory obligations on strategic housing authorities.

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