

---

**East Devon District Council**

---

**Custom and Self Build**

**Cranbrook Demand  
Assessment**

**July 2018**

---

**Three Dragons**

**FINAL REPORT**



## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	Purpose of the demand assessment for Cranbrook .....	3
	Context for CSB at Cranbrook .....	3
	Local Plan policies .....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>CSB DEMAND ESTIMATES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
	The approach to estimating demand .....	6
	Evidence from the self-build register .....	6
	Modelled demand and use of comparators.....	7
	Current population structure.....	8
	Population structure of comparators .....	9
	Other considerations.....	12
<b>3</b>	<b>POLICY OPTIONS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### **Purpose of the demand assessment for Cranbrook**

- 1.1 East Devon District Council is preparing a DPD to guide the next stages of development at the new settlement of Cranbrook. The Council intends to include a policy in the DPD for the provision of Custom and Self-build (CSB) housing and requires advice on the scale and type of demand for CSB that should be planned for and a review of policy options for the DPD, which reflect this.
- 1.2 Three Dragons is currently preparing a report for the Greater Exeter councils that estimates CSB demand over the next 15 years. This includes a demand assessment for East Devon as a whole as well as setting out the relevant national legislation and guidance (which is not repeated here). The estimate of CSB demand for East Devon is identified as 61 dwellings per annum in years 1 to 5 and 67 dwellings per annum in years 6 to 15.
- 1.3 The current study for Cranbrook draws on the wider assessment of demand for East Devon but needs to take into account the specific circumstances of Cranbrook – in particular, Cranbrook’s current population structure which includes a high proportion of young families. The option of CSB housing in Cranbrook will provide greater diversity in the type of housing in the area.

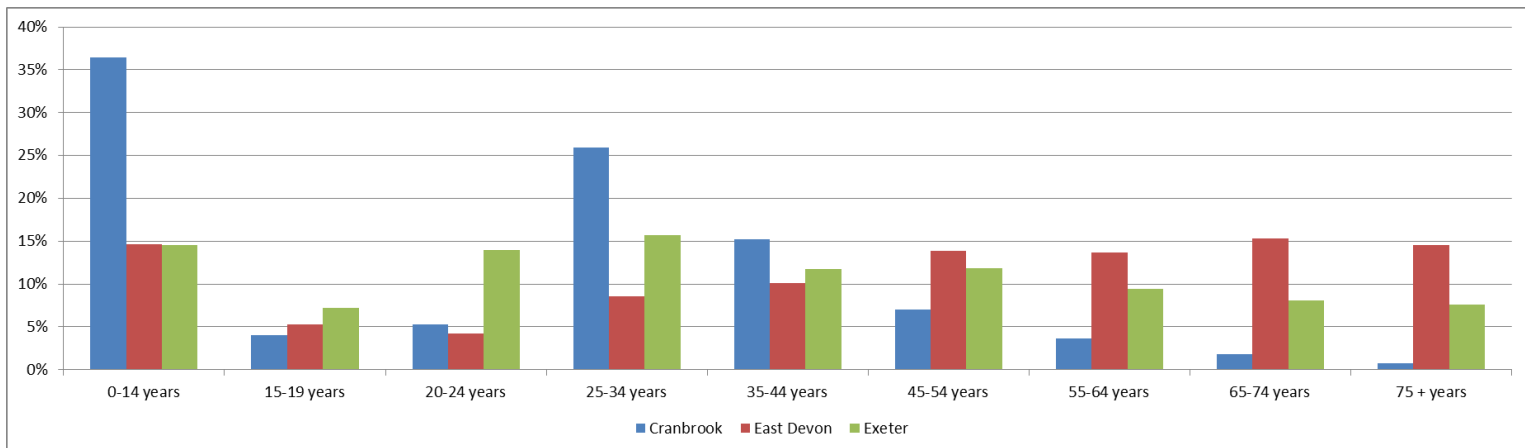
### **Context for CSB at Cranbrook**

- 1.4 Cranbrook is a substantial new settlement within East Devon and situated to the east of Exeter from which it is separated by the M5. Cranbrook has a current Local Plan<sup>1</sup> allocation for some 6,300 dwellings with a further expansion/intensification of Cranbrook to accommodate another 1,550 dwellings, giving a total dwellings to 2031 of 7,850. This number has been agreed with the Council for the purposes of the demand assessment for CSB.
- 1.5 To date, some 1,800 dwellings have been completed at Cranbrook but there has been no provision for CSB.
- 1.6 The people currently living in Cranbrook are generally younger than elsewhere in East Devon (and Exeter). Bespoke data from Devon County Council<sup>2</sup> clearly illustrates this as shown in the chart below.

---

<sup>1</sup> East Devon Local Plan, 2013 to 2031, Adopted 2016

<sup>2</sup> Data from Devon County Council - Public Health Intelligence. Data relates to Mid 2018

**Figure 1.1: Population by age band – Cranbrook, East Devon and Exeter compared**

- 1.7 The population of Cranbrook is younger than in East Devon or Exeter, with higher proportions of children and of 25 to 44 year olds. This implies a significant representation of families at Cranbrook and, as can be seen, fewer older people. People aged 45 years and above represent about 13% of the population in Cranbrook, compared with 57% in East Devon as a whole and 37% in Exeter. As a general rule, the population structure of Exeter sits between that of Cranbrook and East Devon.
- 1.8 The demographic characteristics of Cranbrook have important implications in assessing CSB demand. The stereotypical self-build or custom build household is an older couple (45 to 64 years) without children. This is a household type less well represented in Cranbrook than nationally and in East Devon or Exeter.
- 1.9 There is some other useful information about Cranbrook residents from an annual Community Survey undertaken by the Council along with Action East Devon. The 2016/17 survey (by post and electronically) produced 280 returned questionnaires (a response rate of about 20%). Survey results therefore provide a useful indication of the views and personal characteristics of Cranbrook residents but care is needed in interpreting the results as, with a 20% response rate, they may not be statistically significant.
- 1.10 The survey reflects the relative youth of the Cranbrook population with 66% of respondents being aged 26 to 49 which is a reasonable reflection of the population of Cranbrook as a whole.<sup>3</sup> Most of those taking part in the survey (81%) moved to Cranbrook from somewhere else in Devon – 47% came from Exeter, 20% from elsewhere in East Devon and 14% from other parts of Devon. Quoting from the survey report, *“People mainly moved to Cranbrook as it is close to Exeter but still in the countryside, it was an opportunity to have a brand new home, they could afford to buy for the first time and it’s close to their place of work.”*

<sup>3</sup> Using the population data from Devon County Council, we estimate that around 70% of people aged 15 and older are aged 26 to 49.

## Local Plan policies

- 1.11 The East Devon Local Plan does not have a specific policy for the delivery of CSB at Cranbrook. However policy H2 encourages a variety of housing provision in new developments generally in East Devon and states:

**Policy H2:** Range and Mix of New Housing Development says that *“Planning permission will not be granted for new residential development which provides for 15 dwellings or more, or is situated on a site of 0.5 ha or larger, unless it contains a mix of dwelling sizes or comprises predominantly, or totally, of smaller dwellings..... To ensure a variety of housing provision, where possible, developers will be encouraged to make at least 10% of plots available for sale to small builders or individuals or groups who wish to custom build their own homes.”*

- 1.12 **Para 16.30** of the Plan notes the high number of single plot permissions which are likely to be for CSB dwellings. The paragraph goes on to say that “Developers of larger sites will be encouraged to set aside a proportion of plots for sale to individuals or groups wishing to build their own homes”.

## 2 CSB DEMAND ESTIMATES

### The approach to estimating demand

- 2.1 To provide estimates of demand for CSB at Cranbrook we make use of our demand assessment model that informed the study for the Greater Exeter councils. We consider the level of demand given the current population but then assess how this could evolve as the population matures.
- 2.2 We begin however by analysing data from the council's self-build Register to consider if there is already demand for CSB plots that a scheme at Cranbrook could help meet.

### Evidence from the self-build register

- 2.3 In accordance with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the council maintains a register of individuals and associations of individuals "*who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land*".
- 2.4 Information from the Register held by East Devon District Council for the period 30 March 2016 to June 2018, shows that 89 households joined the Register. No community groups has registered to date.
- 2.5 One of the questions registrants were asked was, "*In which East Devon settlement would you like a serviced plot?*" In response to this question, of the 89 households:
- 3 specifically mentioned Cranbrook;
  - 13 other households would consider 'anywhere in East Devon';
  - A further 9 households mentioned a parish or settlement close to Cranbrook (typically an adjoining parish e.g. Broadclyst).
- 2.6 This demonstrates that Cranbrook is not currently identified as a specific focus of demand for CSB plots but is a preferred location for some households and is a location that could help meet the demand for serviced plots in East Devon, particularly if the plots can be attractive to households who are relatively flexible in their area of search. In total, 25 current registrants for CSB in East Devon might consider Cranbrook as a suitable location for a CSB development plot (including those who are flexible in their preferred location and those who specifically mentioned Cranbrook or a settlement/parish closeby).
- 2.7 On this basis, it could be reasonable in the short term, for the Council to consider a pilot of, say, 10 serviced plots at Cranbrook to meet the demand already identified and to demonstrate the suitability of Cranbrook for CSB development. This could also attract demand from households in Exeter who have not registered with East Devon; as the Community Survey highlighted, many households are making the move from Exeter to Cranbrook already and this could include moving to take up CSB.

2.8 There are many examples of successful schemes of a similar scale that have been brought forward elsewhere. We provide three very different examples to illustrate this<sup>4</sup>:

- Stoke on Trent Council sold land no longer needed for a road scheme as 6 serviced plots for self-build. The land sale was conducted by private auction to individual bidders in December 2013 and all homes were built out by early 2016. The council has 3 further sites that it intends to provide for CSB homes in the same way;
- At Beaully in the Scottish Highlands, the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust secured discounted land which was sold as 10 affordable serviced plots for self-builders on lower incomes;
- Cherwell Council delivered 21 custom (self-finish) shared ownership homes at Newton Close in Bicester. The site was acquired in 2012 and all homes were complete by 2015.

2.9 Of the 25 households on the Register identified as the potential 'immediate' demand that Cranbrook might help meet:

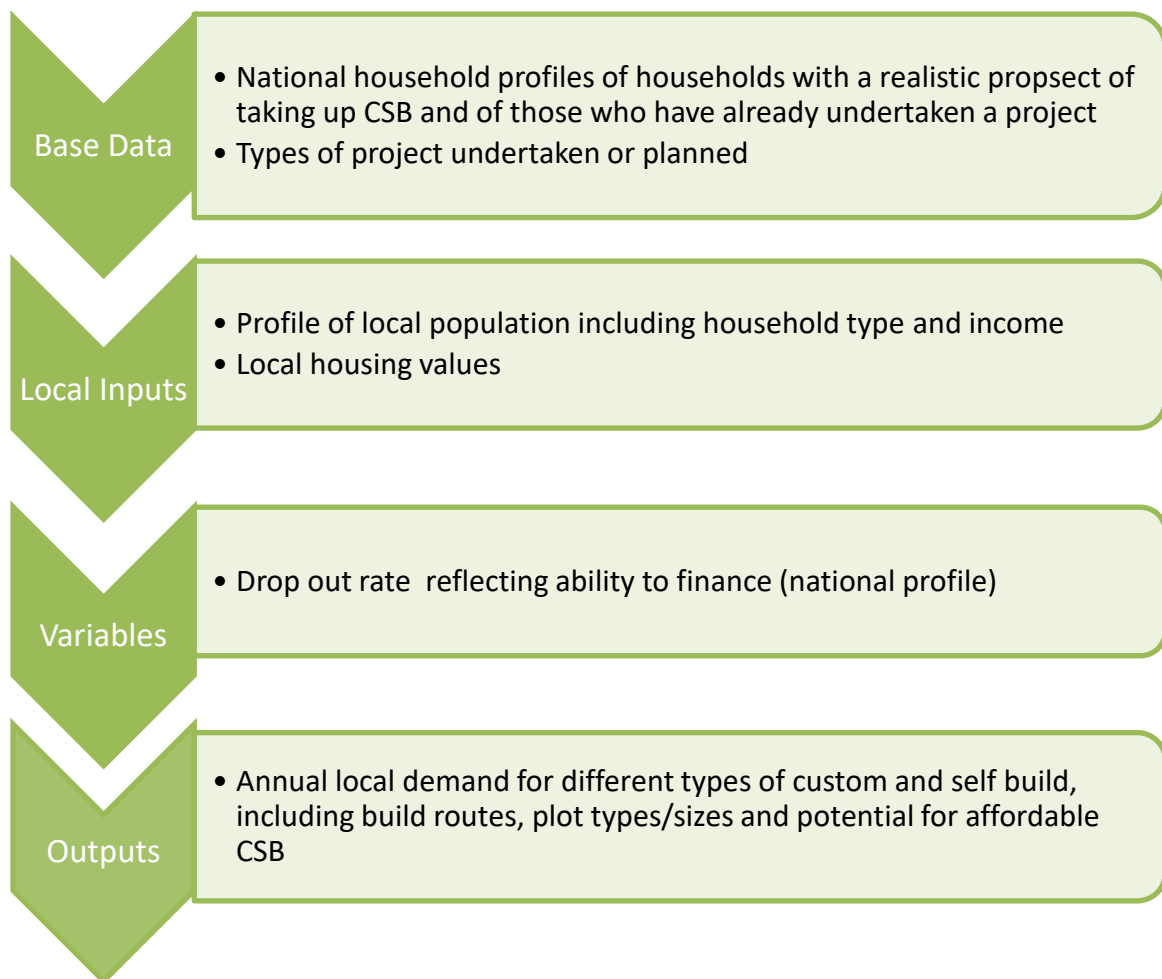
- Both self-build and custom build options are being sought;
- There is a mix of household types;
- There is demand for a range of plot sizes but households are typically seeking a plot that will deliver a 3 or 4 bed room detached property.

### **Modelled demand and use of comparators**

2.10 We have used our demand assessment model to provide a series of estimates of the longer term demand for CSB at Cranbrook to 2031 i.e. the end date for the current Local Plan. An outline of the model is shown below.

---

<sup>4</sup> Other examples can be found at <http://righttobuildtoolkit.org.uk/case-studies/#>

**Figure 2.1: Outline of the demand assessment model*****Current population structure***

- 2.11 We have first estimated the notional demand that 7,850 households would generate, with the same population structure as now. This provides a 'baseline' minimum demand profile. We do not have information about the types of household at Cranbrook today but have applied the pattern of household types (by age) found in East Devon to the age profile specific to Cranbrook. We appreciate that this involves a series of steps and assumptions and that the estimates of CSB demand derived from this method need to be treated with caution.
- 2.12 Using the model and the above estimates of households structure, we estimate that CSB demand at Cranbrook would be:
- An equivalent of 11 plots per annum to meet the needs of Cranbrook at the current Local Plan target of 7,850 dwellings. Of this number, 1 unit should be as affordable housing.**
- 2.13 We recognise that Cranbrook is part completed and our assessment is based on a total scheme of c7,850 dwellings. On the basis of a further 13 years through to the end of the Local Plan period, the total provision at Cranbrook for CSB would be c140 plots. Were this figure to also take account of the lack of provision to date and to

meet the full demand – around a further 30 plots<sup>5</sup> would be required giving a total provision of 170 plots (of which c15 should be affordable).

- 2.14 Data from the SHMA was used to generate the estimate of demand for intermediate CSB plots i.e. 1 unit per annum<sup>6</sup>. We appreciate that this is a relatively small number but is consistent with the preferences of those on the Council’s self-build register where only three of the 89 households that have registered listed ‘affordable’ when asked about the type of CSB they were seeking.

***Population structure of comparators***

- 2.15 We have then considered how the population of Cranbrook might change over time and what impact this could have on the demand for CSB plots. In the absence of Cranbrook specific population forecasts through to 2031 (the end of the Local Plan period) we have identified an alternative household structure for Cranbrook by reference to a series of comparators. These are large-scale new developments which are either free-standing settlements or urban extensions. They are of a similar size to Cranbrook (although two are smaller); developments commenced at a similar date (to each other) and have a similar relationship to a major ‘centre’ as Cranbrook does to Exeter. We also wanted the comparators to be well into their development programme at the time of the 2011 Census (so we could obtain information at a similar point in their development as Cranbrook will be in 2031).
- 2.16 There is no single list of comparators that is ideal but we selected three that broadly fitted our criteria. These were:
- Cambourne in South Cambridgeshire;
  - Hampton in Peterborough;
  - Fairford Leys in Aylesbury Vale.

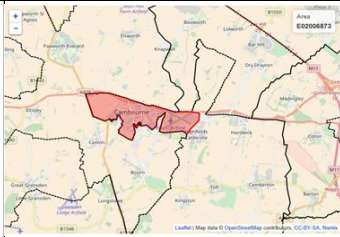
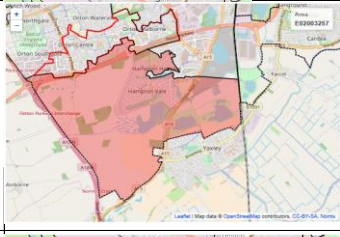
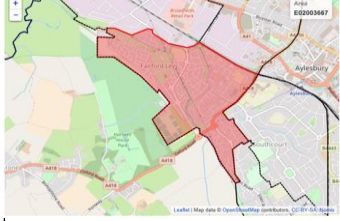
---

<sup>5</sup> To calculate this figure, we have noted that 1800 or c23% of the total dwellings are already complete. We have then assumed that were plots delivered before at the same rate as needed in the future, a further 23% CSB plots will be required 2018 to 2031. This gives a figure of 32.2 plots which we have rounded down to 30 as a conservative estimate.

<sup>6</sup> Based on affordable housing shortfall identified in the SHMA at table 11-3 (955) and percentage of these that are recommended to be available as intermediate housing, para 13.5.7 (25%). This produces an overall requirement for 238 intermediate affordable housing. As a percentage of the total housing requirement of 2384 (again using Table 11-3), this gives a percentage requirement for intermediate housing of c10% of the total requirement. The percentage however varies between authorities and we have modelled authorities at 10% East Devon; 13% Exeter; 8% Mid Devon; 9% Teignbridge

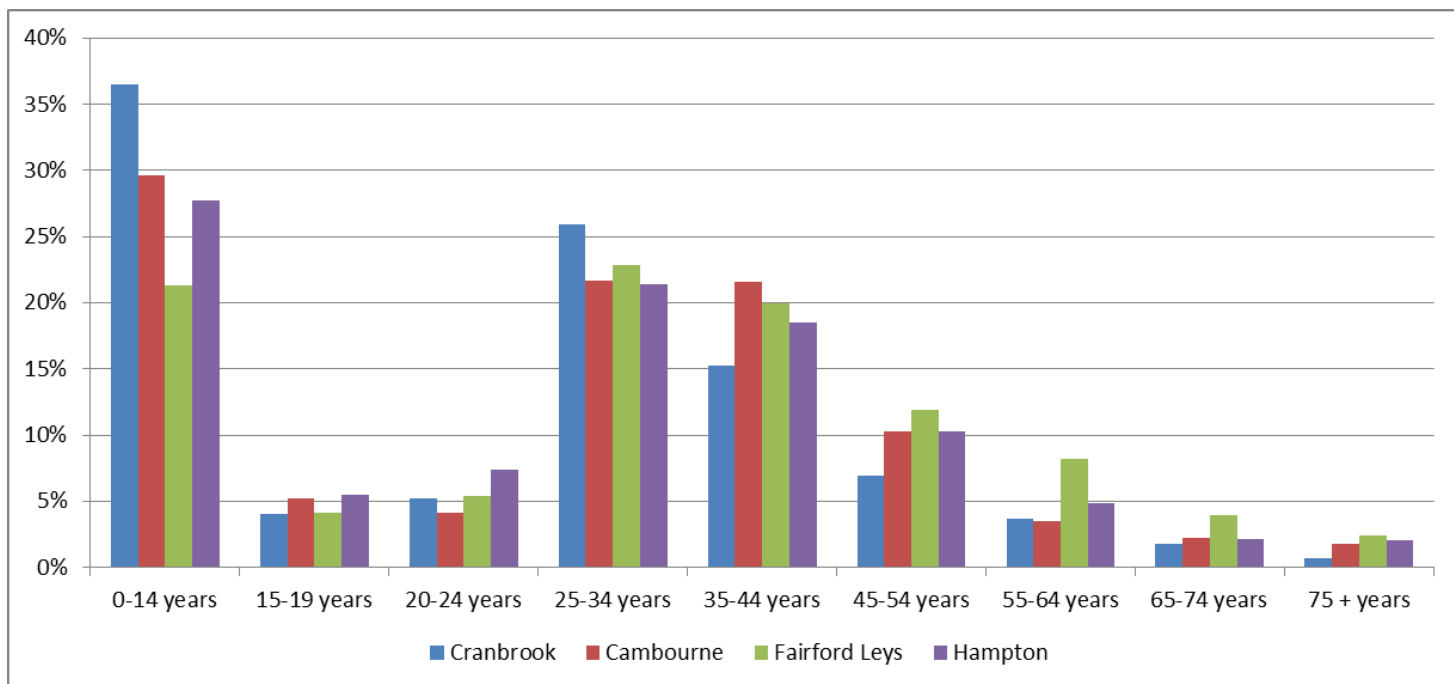
2.17 The chart below provides a brief description of each.

**Figure 2.2: Comparator Schemes**

Sites	Local Authority	Map	Site information
Cambourne, Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire		<p>The original consent for Cambourne had provision for 3,000 homes, with a contingency of an additional 10% (3,300).</p> <p>Work started on site in 1998 with the first residents moving in in 1999. At the 2001 Census there were 1,200 residents and at the 2011 Census there were 8,186 residents. In 2011 an outline application for a further 950 homes, within the boundaries of the original application, was approved. It is thought that the majority of these are now built and occupied.</p>
Hampton, Peterborough	Peterborough		<p>Outline planning consent was granted in 1993. To date it is thought that 5,200 homes have been completed.</p> <p>The settlement is split into a number of neighbourhoods. These include Hampton Hargate (1,700 homes) which was the first to be built, followed by Hampton Vale (1,900 homes).</p> <p>From aerial photos of the site much of the new houses at Hampton Hargate were completed by 2002 with residential development underway in the Hampton Vale neighbourhood. This was completed by 2012.</p>
Fairford Leys, Aylesbury	Aylesbury Vale		<p>Fairford Leys is an urban extension of Aylesbury of approximately 1,900 homes. Planning for the settlement ran through the 80's and 90's, and the first residents moved into their homes in 1998. It is thought that the final residential units were completed by 2007.</p>

2.18 Importantly, the three comparators all started development around 1997/98 so development had been underway for each of them for some 13 to 14 years at the time of the 2011 Census.

2.19 The age profiles of each of the comparators, compared with Cranbrook, is shown in the following chart. Data for the three comparators is from the 2011 Census but uses the 2018 Devon County Council data for Cranbrook.

**Figure 2.3: Age Structure for Cranbrook Alongside its Comparators**

- 2.20 While all four large-scale settlements have a population structure indicating a high proportion of families amongst their households, there are subtle differences between the four. The three comparator settlements have higher proportions of people in their middle years (35-54 years) and fewer children. This is most likely explained by households remaining in the 'place they moved to as a young household'. The population of Fairford Leys is slightly older than the other two comparators, likely reflecting the fact that it was completed slightly ahead of them.
- 2.21 Having reviewed the data for the three comparators, we decided to derive a composite population profile of the three to approximate to the population characteristics of Cranbrook towards 2031. We did this rather than rely on any one comparator, so that the specific features of any settlement did not over-influence the results.
- 2.22 For each of the comparators, we derived an estimated household profile to match the profile used in the CSB demand assessment model. We then amalgamated the profile for the three and applied this to the 7,850 dwellings planned for Cranbrook i.e. we have said, "*what sort of place would Cranbrook be in 2031 if the population matured as it has done in three very similar places over a similar timescale*".
- 2.23 Using the data about comparators, we estimate that CSB demand at Cranbrook with 7,850 dwellings completed would be :
- An equivalent of 10 plots per annum to meet the needs of Cranbrook at the current Local Plan target of 7,850 dwellings. Of this number, 1 unit should be as affordable housing.**
- 2.24 These numbers are marginally below those obtained using the current population structure for Cranbrook and as set out in 2.12 above. Examination of the model and the different data sets shows that as the population matures, different groups in the population that are more or less likely to take up CSB, increase or decrease and

broadly balance themselves out over time. While older households may be more likely to take up CSB, as the population ages, there are more single people who are less likely to take up CSB than couples/families. This gives some reassurance that the suggested number of plots required and set out in para 2.12 holds across the time Cranbrook is in development.

- 2.25 The estimate of demand for 170 CSB plots through to the end of the plan period (i.e. 2031) is a baseline figure. Further demand could be encouraged through positive promotion of CSB and delivery of a high quality CSB environment.

### **Other considerations**

- 2.26 Besides meeting an actual demand for CSB housing in Cranbrook, provision of CSB will broaden the range of housing options and add diversity to the market. It can also offer opportunities for lower income households to enter the sale market and it can meet the needs of community groups that wish to develop together.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.27 Providing serviced plots at Cranbrook in a high quality environment could also help meet the needs for plots across a wider area than East Devon.

---

<sup>7</sup> See the Government's White Paper '*Fixing our broken housing market*' which supports the growth of custom and self-build housing to help drive the diversification of the housing market in England, boost housing supply and give more people more choice over the design of their own home.

### 3 POLICY OPTIONS

- 3.1 We have been reviewing the planning policies of local authorities that have recently adopted or published their local plans. Increasingly councils have specific policies for CSB housing and they becoming more prescriptive.
- 3.2 In general, policies adopted by local authorities are either:
- General enabling policies that give *support* for custom and/or self-build on certain types of site (or on all sites where delivery is in accordance with existing policies) but do not set out specific targets; or,
  - Policies that set out a *specific number or percentage* of CSB homes to be delivered on sites, usually on larger sites over a specified size.
- 3.3 Policies for provision of CSB plots for strategic sites are defined in terms of site size e.g. 100 dwellings or 500 dwellings. The requirement for CSB plots on strategic sites is typically between 2% and 5% and we have not identified more ambitious policies. In the case of Cranbrook this would provide for 157 to 392 plots (out of an allocation of 7,850 dwellings) meaning that the demand we have identified using the model is within this range; towards the lower end.
- 3.4 CSB policies vary in their level of detail and the guidance given to developers. The following is one of the more comprehensive policies we have reviewed.

***Policy H4 : Promoting Self and Custom House Building***

*As part of meeting housing need, proposals for self and custom house building, to be occupied as homes by those individuals, will be supported where they are in conformity with all other relevant local and national policies.*

*On strategic sites (sites 5ha and above) developers will be required to supply at least 5% of dwelling plots for sale to self builders or to small/custom house builders subject to appropriate demand being identified. Plots should be made available at competitive rates, to be agreed through Section 106 agreements, which are fairly related to the associated site/plot costs. In determining the nature and scale of provision the Council will have regard to viability considerations and site-specific circumstances.*

*These schemes will:*

- *be individually designed employing innovative approaches throughout that cater for changing lifetime needs;*
- *provide for appropriate linkages to infrastructure and day to day facilities; and*
- *include a design framework to inform detailed design of the individual units where more than one self/custom build unit is proposed.*

*Where a developer is required to provide self and custom build plots the plots should be made available and marketed for at least 12 months. Where plots have been appropriately marketed and have not sold within this time period these plots may be built out as conventional plots for market housing by the developer.*

*Communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans will be encouraged to consider the identification of sites for self and custom build projects within their neighbourhood plan area.*

City of York Local Plan - Publication Draft, February 2018

- 3.5 To date, planning inspectors do not often comment on CSB policies but where they have done so, it tends to be when they identify a lack of evidence to support the policy proposed. The example from Cornwall illustrates this (but is the exception rather than the rule):

*“.....The Council’s published change on this policy (J.1, 46) was too prescriptive in requiring larger developments to provide at least 5% of development as serviced plots for self-build/custom-build. There is not yet the evidence to justify this level of prescription and there must be considerable uncertainty as to whether plots on large new housing estates would be attractive to self-build/custom-builders. There are substantial opportunities for self-build/custom-build from the anticipated small site windfalls ” (Inspector’s report - September 2016).*

- 3.6 This indicates that any policy for CSB provision on strategic sites has to be justified and set in the context of likely provision from other opportunities, including single dwelling plots. In the case of East Devon, historically this source of CSB supply has been relatively important, which we have estimated at about 50 dwellings per annum.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Provision of CSB at Cranbrook will help in diversifying the range of housing opportunities in the new settlement, attractive to a range of household types.
- 4.2 There is already demand for CSB plots in and near to Cranbrook and we have proposed that the Council promotes a pilot project of, say, 10 plots to demonstrate how CSB plots can be delivered and to provide further reassurance that there is a demand for CSB in Cranbrook.
- 4.3 Using our demand assessment model, and taking into account how the population may change over time, we estimate that provision should be made to 2031 for around 170 CSB plots (across the full 7,850 dwelling target). Of this number, about 15 should be for affordable housing (e.g. intermediate market).
- 4.4 A range of plot sizes and types will be needed, including the option for community groups to develop at Cranbrook.