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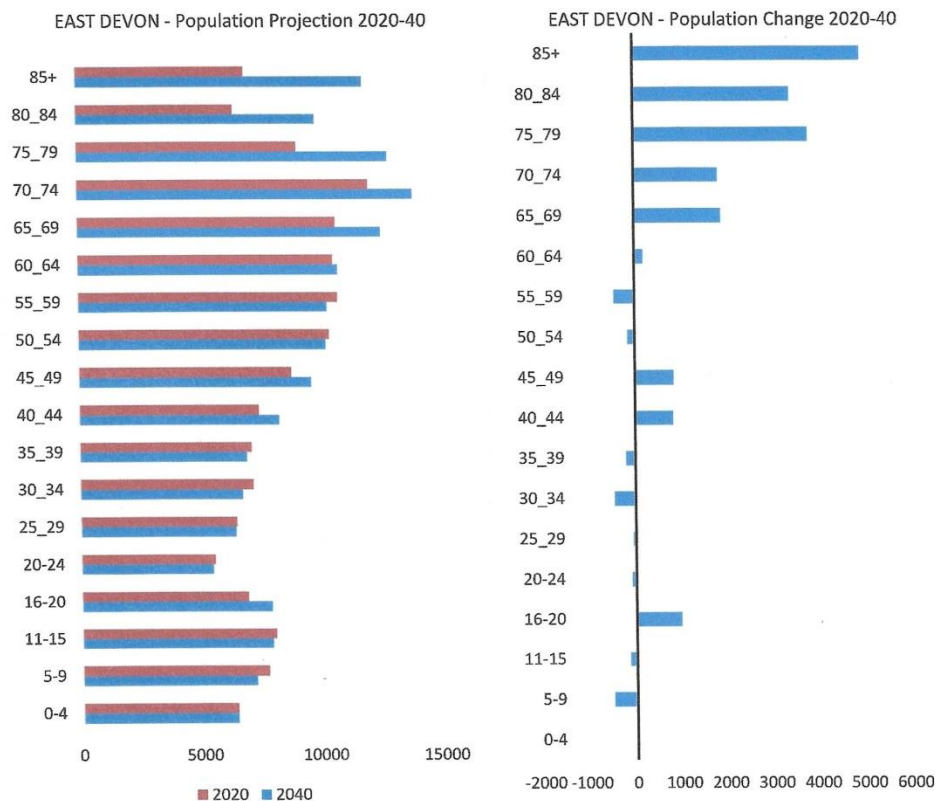
Housing for all stages of life (Policies HN01, HN03 and Policy HN04)

The EDDC draft Local Plan (LP) and the NPPF focus on the diverse needs for housing in the population. The draft Local Plan recommendation is that developers focus on homes with 3-4 bedrooms.

I believe this to be an inadequate, simplistic, policy target. Our Local Plan (LP) and our Corporate Plan must serve the diverse needs of the local population and must be the basis of our decisions about Housing and Economic Development. All NPPF revisions since 2018 have laid greater stress on the need for different types of homes for different types of people and a need to take account of demographic trends

Policy HN01 (Meeting housing needs) summarises a list of needs, which I fully support, but then only focuses on tenure and percentages for affordable homes. However the Age profile trend for the Plan period shows that nearly all growth in the population is in the 65+ age group. (ONS) (2023) and the LP seems to presume that sheltered housing and care homes are the only issue. They are not.

Figure 27: East Devon – Population 2020, 2040 and Change 2020-40 by 5-year cohort (Source: ORS)



Building suitable new homes and supporting the adaptation of the existing housing stock will be critical as the population ages (East Devon Local Housing Needs Assessment 2022).

However there are surprisingly similar requirements among young people and retiring people around the need for small open-plan homes well equipped for broadband fibre-to-premises which will facilitate home-working and/ or telecare. These homes can be open plan 2 bedroom flats, or open plan houses and bungalows if they are accessible and equipped.

Policies HN03 and HON4 require careful review in the LP regarding market housing, rentals, and affordable homes for all ages and abilities, while adhering to NPPF guidelines. Strategic Planning Committee should change HN04 to require 30% of new homes to meet M4(3) requirements for wheelchair accessible dwellings not 5% because this lower target does not improve on the present inadequate national and local level.

While young people are not the only victims of the housing shortage in Britain, they are some of the most severely affected. Reduced home ownership rates, increased rent prices and living with parents all impact a young person's employment opportunities and chances of starting a family.

A key policy challenge is therefore to improve the suitability and availability of housing for young people, with studies pointing towards two specific areas of improvement. First, a healthier housing-for-rent policy must be developed that provides for both young people's housing needs and meets the demands of landlords. Second, policy makers, landlords and house-builders need to offer housing which is better suited to the growing phenomenon of shared accommodation among younger adults

These planned 3-bedroom larger homes are beyond the reach of first-time buyers,

In contrast, the well-being of older adults and those with disabilities has been neglected by our local planning policy. Policy HN03 is too restrictive since it limits such housing to within 400 meters walking distance of local facilities and shops. This policy really only applies to sheltered housing for the frail. HN03 policy as it stands is ageist. Older people use cars and internet just as much as younger adults. Programmatic, and clinical interventions prove the need for good housing is an important social determinant of older adult function and quality-of-life.

There is a key health issue here: extending life expectancy means housing wealth increasingly funds longer periods in retirement and ill-health. Any lack of such assets produces disadvantage within our current social welfare system. Poor housing and inadequate resources for home-care are associated with more hospitalisations, nursing home admissions, and earlier mortality. The National Health and Aging Trends Study shows half of community-living older adults with low- and moderate-incomes have a self-care, household, or mobility disability.

Housing characteristics for the old and young and disabled, is a domain that has previously been neglected in discussions at Strategic Planning Committee level and consequently in our Local Plan. A change of required housing and specifications would help address this deficit.

There is an aspect of the LP influence on our EDDC housing market which we can use to advantage to meet the real needs of our residents:

Where people over 55 are looking to release equity and move to smaller homes, there has been little progress in improving housing options for older people. For such house-movers, health, and family issues become more important with age, and financial reasons are least important. So we should avoid framing the housing shortage as just an issue of affordability or an intergenerational war where the young can prosper only by triumphing over the old. (see Housing needs of young people 2024 report House of Lords Library). By providing more smaller homes would help “downsizers” move into a nearby and smaller home in their own neighbourhood. This would mean that people will retain their social and health community support networks, yet houses will be released for the families which need them.

When it comes to facilities, both young and old now need internet connections as much as they need electricity and water. Telehealth services are becoming a key way of developing home welfare, access to work and welfare electronically. Systems now allow health and care professionals to monitor and communicate with people in their own homes and for people to manage their own health conditions using remote technology. Smart technology and meters that allow individuals to review or control energy consumption, heating and security; and home sensors to monitor and provide information about the condition of homes, such as damp or carbon monoxide, will improve health issues. Since 1990 Rates of building specialised housing have declined, leading to fewer opportunities for older people to choose.

Building smaller, smarter and energy efficient market, affordable and social homes for older people would reduce demand on health and care services, but will require homes that support new technologies and are safe, accessible and adaptable. All homes will need to adapt to accommodate new technologies and have sufficient space for care provision. For example, telecare applications will need sufficiently high speed Internet to work. (DCLG analysis)

In regard of Social housing needs: poverty rates in England are typically higher amongst households containing disabled people. Half the households in poverty have a disabled family member, yet only 5% of homes have the required features needed for disabled access. This LP intends that deficit to continue. Yet of the

remaining 95% of homes, more than half would require internal structural or major alterations to make them suitable for frail or disabled people.

Nationally 26% of people have a disability, and in Devon it is 29.5% (JSNA 2018) yet it's estimated that less than 6% of the national housing supply is designed to be accessible. ESA claimants in the EDDC area numbered 3490 at December 2021 of 149100 in the population. Levels of dementia diagnosis in Devon highlight a potential gap of unmet need where 2 in 5 people aged 65 and over are estimated to have dementia but are undiagnosed (JSNA 2021)

It seems that our plans that only 5% of new homes have M4(3) standards is sadly inadequate.

The desire to age in place reflects the importance of maintaining social connections that are linked to the home's location. Moving had a small but significant negative effect on health status among older adults, even when they were relocating to a location that offered more support. There is a need to combine a traditional spatial focus on home, housing, and neighbourhood with an intersectional one that is focused in age and disability(see McKee et.al. 2024)

This needs-based policy area affects many aspects of EDDC Housing provision. It seemed right and very important, to have housing/ welfare/ public health and Planning Policy views integrated with experiences from Planning officer views to see how more granular specifications can be introduced into either policy HN03 and Policy HN04, to specify our approach to meeting the real needs of all ages and abilities in East Devon.

We have historically encountered weaknesses in the **standards of housing design policy** especially in regard to minimum sizes of house rooms and accessibility The NPPF has specified a need to look closely at the **density and efficient use of Land**, and these suggestions will improve our compliance with this policy.

Therefore a review of our Local Plan policies on types of housing is essential to ensure new housing is suitable for each population segment. At present HN03 is just focused on residential care and nursing homes or sheltered accommodation rather than spelling out clear standards for young, old or disabled in general market housing (which is only a passing mention in HN03)

While the acute needs of housing accommodation seekers are put as low as 200+ in East Devon, this figure does not necessarily reflect the needs of single people and young families living in parent's homes. In addition, the increasing need for more frail older people to move to sheltered or similar accommodation needs to be firmly anchored in clear policy interpretation.

The NPPG chapter on Health and Wellbeing seeks neighbourhoods where healthy and active lifestyles can be enjoyed by both young and old. It specifically states that the Government supports: "*the creation of healthy living environments for people of all ages which supports social interaction. It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.*"

The Government has encouraged an integrated policy to public healthcare. Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, Health and Wellbeing Board, and other local health and adult social care commissioning reports and documents have provided useful background data. But these have not been reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee. The local need and future areas for investment with regard to older people and the young is clear. Unfortunately the East Devon District Council approach is not compliant with this Integration policy if it does not take account of the housing design and neighbourhood facilities needed for frail older people and disabled. A focus on sheltered and institutional accommodation is there, but it does not specify sufficient housing with wheelchair accessibility, nor local leisure facilities such as benches for people who cannot walk far. Consequently there is less opportunity to encourage healthy walking.

During the development of the previous and current Local Plan, studies were done and made public about different needs at different ages in our population. These do not appear in the evidence base. Yet the Council has extensive information from the poverty working group. Should we now bring in more radical policies for creating affordable small homes? Should we promote single-story homes even though the NPPF emphasises density? **Is it necessary to strengthen age diversity within housing standards policies?** I am hopeful that the results of a review of the Regulation 19 Plan by Officers and Members will resolve these issues.

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Long-term health problems or disability

East Devon wards

Area	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities limited a lot
Axminster Rural	286	224
Axminster Town	574	446
Beer and Branscombe	210	138
Broadclyst	458	356
Budleigh	922	622
Clyst Valley	268	190
Coly Valley	594	361
Dunkeswell	281	185
Exe Valley	231	129
Exmouth Brixington	689	601
Exmouth Halsdon	781	583
Exmouth Littleham	1,072	1,025
Exmouth Town	743	565
Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh	783	644
Feniton and Buckerell	245	132
Honiton St Michael's	762	572
Honiton St Paul's	628	520
Newbridges	318	212
Newton Poppleford and Harpford	248	137
Otterhead	244	137

Area	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities limited a lot
Ottery St Mary Rural	425	285
Ottery St Mary Town	537	353
Raleigh	231	165
Seaton	1,097	909
Sidmouth Rural	298	188
Sidmouth Sidford	870	599
Sidmouth Town	784	617
Tale Vale	214	136
Trinity	285	199
Whimple	215	160
Woodbury and Lypstone	469	278
Yarty	263	146
Total	10,731	7979
Overall Total		18710