

Plymtree Parish Housing Needs Report



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**Devon Community
Housing Hub**



Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Aims of the Survey**
- 3. Survey History, Methodology and Response**
- 4. Introduction and Information about Plymtree**
- 5. General Survey Findings**
- 6. Assessment of those wishing to move home within the next 5 years**
- 7. Assessment of those in need of affordable housing**
- 8. Housing Aspirations of Older People**
- 9. Conclusions - Future Housing Need for Plymtree**

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1 Executive Summary

Principal Conclusions

The survey identified a need for at least 5 affordable homes within the Parish of Plymtree in the next 5 years.

Key findings

Affordability

- The survey found 5 households with a local connection in housing need who could not afford to buy or rent on the open market and are not in adequate housing.
- There is a further one household identified that wanted to move within social housing but appeared to be adequately housed.
- A breakdown of the size and tenure requirements is provided below.

Type of Property	Social / Affordable Rented Housing	Low-cost home ownership	Totals
1 bedroom property	4	0	4
2 bedroom property	0	1	1
3 bedroom property	0	0	0
Totals	4	1	5

For further detailed analysis please see Section 7.

Housing Needs of Older People

- The majority 39 (62%) of older households (where respondents had a least one member of the household that was aged 55 or over).
- There are a small number of older households (6) who wish to move and remain the Parish, 4 of these need affordable housing and have a local connection.

Other Findings

- 257 surveys were delivered and 82 survey forms were returned. The response rate was 32%.
- 77% of respondents that completed the survey were over 55 years old.

2. Aims of the Survey

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

3. Survey history, methodology and response

3.1 History

East Devon District Council in conjunction with Plymtree Parish Council commissioned this survey to assess future local housing need. After discussions with both Councils survey forms were finalised and survey forms were posted to all of the 257 households in the parish. Parishioners were able to return the survey in a reply paid envelope. The survey was also available for completion online. The deadline for the return of the survey was 4th April 2025.

3.2 Methodology

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

The methodology is based on identifying actual numbers of households in housing need and is not used to project future need.

3.3 Response

- 82 surveys were returned. An email was sent to those registered for the Parish on the Housing Register with an email address giving further encouragement to complete the survey on 25th March 2025. The response rate was 32%, which is a better response rate than average which was 25% for surveys carried out in 2024/25.
- The survey achieved its aim of identifying actual households in need. Out of the returned surveys, 22 were returned with some, or all of Part 2 completed.
- 76 respondents stated that they live in the Parish of Plymtree, 3 live in East Devon, but outside of the Parish and 3 did not answer the question.

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

4. Introduction and Information about Plymtree.

4.1 Overview of Plymtree.

Plymtree is a small village and Parish situated in East Devon approximately 3.5 miles from Cullompton. It is 12 miles from Exeter City Centre and around 10 miles from Honiton and the A30. The centre of the village is around 3.5 miles from Junction 28 of the M5. The nearest railway stations are Feniton (5.1 miles away) and Whimble (6.5 miles away) (local) and Honiton and Tiverton Parkway (11 miles away) which are main line stations. There are no footpath or cycle paths to link the Parish to the train stations. There are also two infrequent bus services which connect Plymtree to Honiton, Cullompton, Feniton and Exeter. There is also easy access to Exeter Airport which is 11 miles away.

The village of Plymtree has a primary school. The closest secondary schools are in Cullompton and Cranbrook. There are two churches, a community shop, a public house, a village hall and a range of clubs and societies. The post office is open twice a week for 2½ hours on a Tuesday and Friday.

4.2 Population Figures

In the 2021 census the population of the Parish was 610 people living in 250 households (this number only includes homes that have a main resident). More information can be found at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/>. Details from the 2021 have now been published as estimates and rounded to the nearest 10, which means that the total number of households varies slightly depending on the data set that is being used. As the detailed results from the 2021 Census at Parish level are not yet readily available the following information is taken from the 2011 Census, with comparisons to the 2021 data highlighted where relevant.

The 2011 Census indicates that the usually resident population of Plymtree was recorded as 624 in 244 households. Of these, 241 (99%) had at least one usual resident and 3 (1%) had no usual residents. These are holiday homes, second homes and empty homes.

4.3 Type of Accommodation

In the 2011 Census the types of accommodation in the parish were broken down as in Table 1 below. It is of note that 60% of dwellings are detached houses and bungalows, which usually represent the more expensive end of the housing market, with only 14% terraced houses, bungalows and flats which represent the entry level property type for many aspiring homeowners.

Table 1

Detached house/bungalow	Semi-detached house/bungalow	Terraced house/bungalow	Flat	Caravan / mobile home	Total
146 (60%)	63 (26%)	29 (12%)	5 (2%)	1 (<1%)	244

4.4 Bedroom numbers

In the 2011 Census the number of bedrooms per dwelling were broken down as in Table 2 below.¹ See note below. It is of note that 4% of dwellings with a 'usual resident' are one bedroom homes, whilst there are 44 (18%) households from this total that are one person households, 9 of which live in a 4 or more bedroom property. The estimated number of single person households in the 2021 census is also 18%. The comparative percentages of size of homes in the 2021 census is 1 bedroom 3%, 2 bedroom 12%, 3 bedroom 39% and 4 or more bedrooms 46%. There does not appear to be a significant change in the proportion of smaller properties between the two census dates.

Table 2

1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more	Total
9 (4%)	29 (12%)	88 (37%)	115 (48%)	241

When viewed together these tables indicate that there is a significant under-representation of semi-detached and terraced houses in the Parish and the proportion of one bedroom homes (4%) does not reflect the number of single person households. These are often the types of homes that enable entry to the housing market.

4.5 Property Prices and Rent

To assess whether a household can afford to buy or rent in the open market it is necessary to look at the cost of an entry level property in the local market. For open market purchase information on recent house sales and current listings is analysed. For rented housing information on current rent costs provided by respondents to the housing needs survey are compared with rents of properties currently on the market. From this information, we can establish typical housing costs to assess affordability.

When background research was carried out on 13th April 2025² there were 22 properties for sale or sold subject to contract within 3 miles of the centre of Plymtree with a value of £800,000 or less on the Rightmove website (see note 2). 13 of these were within 1 mile of the village, with the majority of the remainder being on the outskirts of Cullompton. The cheapest property within a 3 mile radius of the centre of the Parish was a 1 bedroom flat with an asking price of £90,000 in Cullompton. The cheapest property available within 1 mile of the centre of the Parish was a 2 bedroomed semi detached home with an asking price of £220,000. Of the 13 properties advertised within 1 mile of the Village there were 1x two bedroom home, 4x three bedroom homes and 8x 4 bedroom or larger homes. In the wider area there were a further 2x one bedroom home, 4x two bedroom home, 1x three bedroom home and 2x four or more bedrooms homes.

This stock profile within 1 mile of Plymtree Parish reflects the characteristics of the area with fewer smaller homes available. It is possible that sales values will be higher within the Parish.

Research to establish rental costs was also carried out on 13th April 2025 when there were no properties advertised for rent within 1 mile of the centre of the Parish of Plymtree, there were 11 properties within 3 miles of the centre of the Parish. No additional information was provided through the survey responses. Information on rent levels from the research of Rightmove has been relied on to establish entry level rent costs in the Parish. It is possible that rent levels for

¹ This table only gives details for 241 of the total 244 dwellings. This is because there is no data on bedroom numbers for the 3 empty homes, second homes or holiday lets in this dataset.

² Information on both properties for sale and rent was taken from Rightmove.co.uk on 13th April 2025. Retirement, Park Homes and properties over £800,000 in value are not included as comparators.

lettings closer to the Parish will be higher due to the lack of homes to rent in the area. There were 1 one bedroom, 6 two bedroomed and 2 three bedroomed rented properties and 2 four bedroomed properties available within 3 miles of the centre of Plymtree Parish. It is of note that the local housing allowance is significantly lower than the market cost of rented housing, making accessibility even harder for households who are dependent on benefits to meet their housing costs, especially those with larger families.

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

Table 3

Size	Property price	Weekly rent	Local Housing Allowance
1 bedroom	£112,500	£155.77	121.97
2 bedroom	£200,000	£193.85	157.64
3 bedroom	£423,000	£291.34	189.86

There are 10 social rented homes within the Parish boundary, all owned by East Devon District Council. There were no housing association homes recorded by Devon Homechoice when data was collected in 2021. This means that social housing represents around 4% of total stock which is significantly below the national average (17% across the UK). There have been no lettings of Council and Housing Association homes in the last 2 years. It is not anticipated that lettings of current affordable housing stock will have any impact on future need figures.

5. General Survey Findings

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

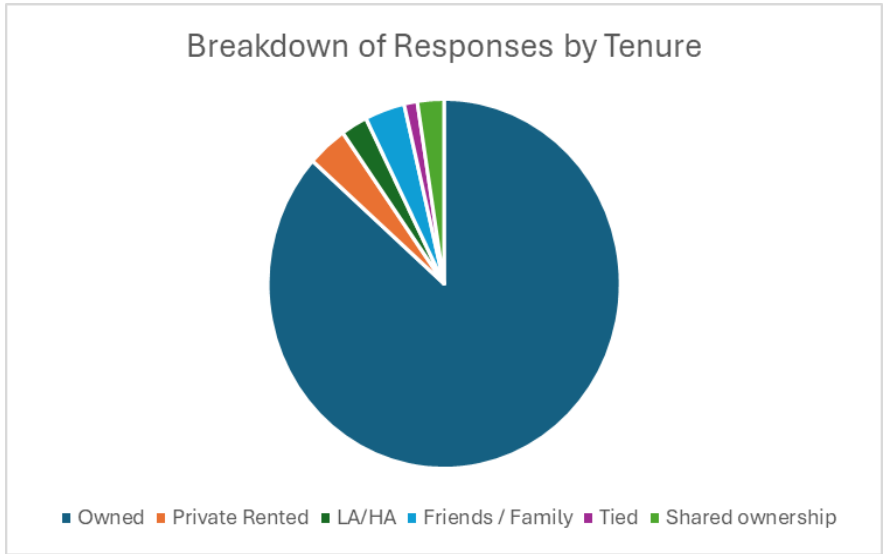
Respondents were asked if they knew of anybody who had to leave the parish in the last 5 years due to lack of suitable housing. They were also asked to indicate if they knew of anyone who was working over 16 hours per week in the Parish and were looking for housing within Plymtree. They were asked to pass on the link to the survey to anybody who was seeking housing in the Parish so that their needs could be incorporated.

- 12 households replied that they did know of someone who had left the Parish due to a lack of suitable housing;
- 2 households responded that they knew of someone who was working in the Parish and needed accommodation in Plymtree.

5.2 Current tenure

All respondents provided details of the tenure of their home. 71 (87%) own their own home and 3 (4%) rent from a private landlord. 2 (2%) households rent from a housing association or local authority, 3 (4%) live with relatives or friends. One (1%) lives in tied accommodation and 2 (2%) were in a shared ownership home. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of responses by tenure.

Figure 1



5.3 Main or second home

Of the 81 respondents who answered the question all stated that they occupied their property as their main home. 1 respondent did not answer the question.

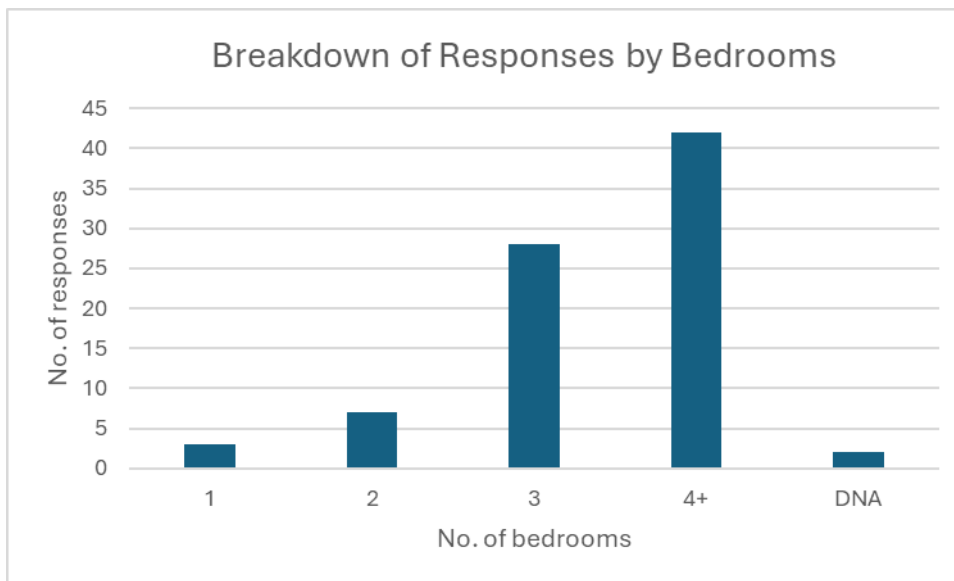
5.4 Parish of Residence

Respondents were asked which parish they lived in. 76 respondents stated that they live in the Parish of Plymtree, 3 stated that they live in East Devon, 2 of which did not specify where and 1 indicated that they live in a coastal parish within the area. 3 did not answer the question.

5.5 Number of bedrooms in current home

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their current home has. The responses are shown in Figure 2. 2 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 2



5.6 Future plans

If respondents indicated that they were intending to move within 5 years they were asked to give a timeframe for this and asked to complete part 2 of the form which includes more detailed questions regarding their housing plans. 12 respondents indicated that they were hoping to move within the next 5 years.

6. Assessment of those wishing to move to a new home in Plymtree within the next 5 years

Part 2 of the survey was aimed at those who expect to move home within the next 5 years and remain in Plymtree Parish. It includes all households including older households. It asked questions about size and make-up of the new household, local connection and financial circumstances. This information helps identify the number of households that require both open market and affordable housing in the parish and the size, tenure and type of homes required.

12 respondents indicated that they were intending to move within the Parish within the next 5 years, however 22 respondents completed some or all of Part 2 of the survey. The needs of these 22 households have been included in this section of the survey.

6.1 Minimum bedroom preference

Respondents were asked the minimum number of bedrooms they would require in their new home. Table 4 below shows the breakdown. It should be noted that this reflects the preferences of the respondents rather than their eligibility. There are criteria relating to affordable housing that set the number of bedrooms that a household are eligible for based on the number of adults and children in that household. 5 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 4

1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
3	7	4	3

6.2 Timescales for moving

Households completing this part of the form were asked to identify when they would need to move. 4 households did not answer the question.

- 4 of the households indicated a current need to move.
- 5 households indicated a need to move within the next 1-3 years.
- 9 households indicated a need to move within the next 3-5 years.

6.3 Housing tenure

Respondents were asked what type of accommodation they would consider moving to. This gives an indication of respondents' aspirations rather than confirming which type of housing they are eligible for. Respondents could select more than one option. 7 of the 10 respondents indicating that they would like open market housing were only interested in this tenure option. 3 of the 6 households were only interested in affordable rented housing. The results are shown in table 5.

Table 5

Shared ownership/ equity	Affordable housing for rent	Self- build	Discount market	Rent to buy	Open market
1	6	5	2	2	10

6.4 Reasons for moving

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

Table 6

Reason for wishing to move	No of respondents
Need to downsize to a home with fewer bedrooms	9
Need to move for health/mobility reasons	5
Need to move to a home with more bedrooms	4
Wish to move back to the parish and have a strong local connection	3
Closer to family for support / carers / childcare	3
Home is in poor condition	2
You are struggling to afford your current home	2
Need to move for work	1
Other - want self build	1
Will be leaving home and do not expect to be able to rent or buy privately	1
Other - live in tied accommodation	1
Sharing kitchen and / or bathroom	1
Private Tenancy is ending	0

6.5 Budget for new home

Respondents were asked about their budget. Table 7 below shows the breakdown of replies. 10 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 7

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

As can be seen in table 3 the average entry level property prices in the Parish and surrounding area are £112,500 for a 1 bed, £200,000 for a 2 bed and £423,000 for a 3 bed home.

6.6 Conclusion

22 respondents completed some or all of Part 2 of the survey, with the majority of respondents in this section planning a move within 3 - 5 years. Most were interested in Open Market Housing as a tenure option and felt that they needed to downsize.

7. Assessment of those in affordable housing need

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

7.1 Exclusions

15 of the households who expressed a wish to move within the next 5 years and remain in Plymtree have been assessed and have been excluded for the following reasons:-

- They stated they were only interested in open market housing;
- They gave insufficient details to assess their eligibility;
- They already own their own home.

This leaves 7 households who have been assessed for affordable housing. 3 of these households are in private rented homes, 2 are in local authority/housing association accommodation and 1 is living with relatives and 1 is living in tied accommodation.

7.2 Local Connection

Respondents were asked about their local connection to the Parish, using the following criteria set out by East Devon District Council in their policy on Rural Exception Sites.

- i) Persons who have been permanently resident therein for a continuous period of three years out of the five years immediately prior to the affordable dwelling being offered to them; or
- ii) Being formerly permanently a resident therein for a continuous period of five years at some time in the past
- iii) Having his or her place of permanent work (normally regarded as 16 hours or more a week and not including seasonal employment) therein for a continuous period of at least 12 months immediately prior to being offered the affordable dwelling; or
- iv) Persons who can demonstrate a close family connection to the District in that the person's mother, father, son, daughter or sibling has been permanently resident therein for a continuous period of five years immediately prior to the affordable dwelling being offered to them and where there is independent evidence of a caring dependency relationship

6 of the households identified have a current local connection to Plymtree. The remaining household does not currently live in the Parish and is therefore unlikely to establish a local connection.

7.3 Housing Options

Of the 22 households that completed Part 2, 15 have been excluded for the reasons given in Paragraphs 7.1. This leaves 7 respondents who require an assessment to establish whether they have a local connection to the Parish. One of these households does not currently have a local connection. An assessment of the housing options of the remaining 6 households who are eligible has been carried out by carrying out an affordability assessment to establish their housing need.

Respondents provided information on income and savings along with household size which allows an assessment of what type of affordable housing is best suited to the household's financial circumstances.

The breakdown of housing needs of the 6 households that were identified as having a need for affordable housing are shown in Table 8.

All of the 6 households were either couples or single person households. 4 of the households were over 55, and their needs have also been included in the section regarding older persons

housing need. 2 of the households expressed a preference for a two bedroom home, and one expressed a preference for a three bedroom property.

One of the 6 households that were identified as needing a one bedroom affordable rented home appears to be adequately housed as they are living in a local authority / housing association property of the same size that they require and has been excluded from table 10.

One of the respondents assessed as needing one bedroom accommodation has stated that they require level access accommodation.

The respondent that was assessed as being able to access low cost home ownership expressed a preference for two bedroom accommodation and has the financial resources to afford this size of accommodation. They have been shown as needing a 1 bedroom home in table 8, but the recommendation in table 10 shows them requiring a two bedroom home.

Table 8 - Affordable Housing Requirement based on need.

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Social / Affordable rent	5	0	0
Low cost home ownership	1	0	0

7.4 Other evidence of housing need

As well as this survey other evidence of housing need should be considered. The housing waiting list or register for Devon is called Devon Home Choice (DHC). Applicants are given a banding from A to E depending on their level of need. A breakdown of the number of applicants on the housing register (Devon Home Choice) from 20th March 2025 is provided below. Applicants can be registered for a Parish without having a local connection. 2 of the 6 respondents for whom an affordability assessment was carried out stated that they were registered with Devon Home Choice. It is possible that households who have been assessed as not being in housing need may be eligible for some forms of rural affordable housing.

Table 9

Devon Home Choice band	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	TOTAL
Band A (Emergency Need)	0	0	0	0	0
Band B (High need)	1	0	0	1	2
Band C (Medium need)	0	1	0	0	1
Band D (Low need)	2	0	0	0	2
Band E (No need)	2	1	2	0	5
TOTAL	5	2	2	1	10

7.5 Housing Mix

The suggested mix of housing is shown in Table 10 below. This takes account of the family makeup as declared on the survey form and the type of housing required. A definition of the tenure types is provided in the footnote below.³ The household that appears to be adequately housed has been excluded from these figures. The household that expressed a wish for two bedroom home and is able to afford it has been included for this size of accommodation.

Table 10 - Affordable Housing Requirement

Type of Property	Social / Affordable Rented Housing	Low-cost home ownership	Totals
1 bedroom property	4	0	4
2 bedroom property	0	1	1
3 bedroom property	0	0	0
Totals	4	1	5

7.6 Conclusion

Of the 22 households that completed some or all of part 2 15 were excluded leaving 7 respondents requiring an affordability assessment. 1 of these households did not have a local connection to the Parish. 1 household appeared to be adequately housed. The needs of the remaining 5 households are shown above in Table 10.

8. Housing needs and aspirations of older residents

Part 3 of the questionnaire was directed at residents over the age of 55. The number of people over the age of 55 is set to rise significantly across the UK over the next 20 years. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics published population projections for the next 20 years. These figures show that by 2034 the percentage of people over the age of 55 will have increased by 23% across Devon. In East Devon 30.4% of people are aged over 65, and 4.7% of people are aged over 85 (ONS Local Authority Aging Statistics, mid year population estimates June 2020). In Plymtree the percentages are 26% and 5.1% respectively according to the 2021 census.

63 (77%) of respondents had a least one member of the household that was aged 55 or over and completed Part 3 of the survey.

8.1 Age of Respondents to Part 3 of the survey

Respondents were asked to give their age in 10 year bands. The breakdown is shown in table 11 below.

Table 11

Age Group of individuals within household	55-65	66-75	76-85	Over 86
Number	39	34	24	4

³ Rented Housing – the rent for the property equates to between 60% and 80% of Open Market Value (OMV)
Low Cost Home Ownership – any product which enables a household to own a portion of their home.

8.2 Future Housing Plans

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

- 13 (21%) older households plan to move within the next five years. 6 households would like to remain in Plymtree, 4 are planning to move away from the Parish but remain in East Devon and 3 plan to move away from Devon.
- Of the 6 households wanting to remain in Plymtree, 2 already own their own home, 2 are in private rented housing, 1 is in tied accommodation and 1 is living with relatives. All 4 of the older households that are not owner occupiers are likely to need affordable housing in the Parish and have been included in Part 2 of the report. All four have a local connection.
- Of the 6 households wishing to move locally, 2 expect to move within the next 12 months, 1 within 1 -3 years and 2 within 3-5 years, and one did not answer the question.
- Of the remaining respondents 9 (14%) have considered moving, but do not expect to do so within the next 5 years, 39 (62%) have no plans to move and 2 (3%) did not answer the question.

8.3 Adaptability of current home

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

- 46 households said their home was adaptable
- 12 households said their home was not adaptable
- 5 did not answer the question.

8.4 Type of Accommodation preferred by older persons

Older households who were expecting to move in the future were asked what type of accommodation they anticipated moving to. Most respondents 38 (60%) either did not expect to move or did not answer the question. Of those that did anticipate a move 19 (30%) preferred a home better suited to their needs but not specially designed for older people, 4 (6%) preferred a specifically designed home and 2 (3%) were anticipating moving to a residential / nursing home when it was necessary for them to move. Preferences are shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12

Type of Accommodation Preferred by Older Persons	Number
Home better suited to needs but not specifically designed for older people	19
Home specially designed for older people	4
Residential / nursing home	2

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

8.5 Considerations when choosing next home

Households were asked to list the most important considerations when choosing a new home. They could give more than one reason. The numbers in brackets are the responses from those who indicated that they were likely to move in the Parish within 5 years. The reasons are listed in Table 13.

Table 13

Most important consideration	Number
Need to downsize to a smaller more manageable home	15 (7)
Proximity to shops/amenities	14 (6)
Proximity to public transport	13 (4)
Cheaper running costs	10 (6)
Need to be near family / carers	10 (4)
Need one level for medical reasons	3 (2)

The most important considerations overall were that older persons wished to move to a property which is smaller and more manageable, with proximity to amenities and public transport also being an important consideration.

8.6 Conclusion - Older Persons Needs

The older persons' survey shows that the majority of older households 39 (62%) have no plans to move home. The parish does have a small number (13) of older households who wish to move in the next 5 years, 6 of whom want to move within the Parish. The main drivers for those who anticipate moving at some point are having a smaller, more manageable home and being close to amenities including public transport. There is a preference for a home which is suitable for older people, but not necessarily specifically designed for this age group.

The survey indicates that 4 of the 6 older households that expect to move home within the next 5 years and remain in Plymtree will need affordable housing in the Parish, all of whom have a local connection. These have been included within the numbers detailed in the affordability section (table 10).

9. Conclusion - Future Housing Need for Plymtree

Overall, it must be remembered that this Housing Needs Survey represents a snapshot in time. Personal circumstances are constantly evolving. Any provision of affordable housing, would, by necessity, need to take account of this. The survey has identified that there is currently a need for at least 5 units of affordable housing within the next 5 years.

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