

Whimble Parish Housing Needs Report



Produced by: Devon Communities Together

On behalf of: East Devon District Council

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**Devon Community
Housing Hub**



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Contents

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

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1 Executive Summary

Principal Conclusions

The survey identified a need for at least 4 affordable homes within the next 5 years.

Key findings

Affordability

- The survey found 4 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.
- Three of the four households are older households (over 55).
- There were a further 3 households who either did not provide sufficient details or did not have a local connection. All three households were older households.
- 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	2	2	4
2 bedroom property	0	0	0
3 bedroom property	0	0	0
Totals	2	2	4

For further detailed analysis please see Section 7.

Housing Needs of Older People (Households with someone aged 55 or older).

- The majority 109 (68%) of older households have no plans to move.
- There are a small number of older households (18) who wish to move and remain the Parish, 6 of these need affordable housing of which three have a local connection.

Other Findings

- 808 surveys were delivered and 233 survey forms were returned. The response rate was 29% which is slightly higher than average.
- 51% (119 responses) of those who answered the question said they would be in favour of a small development of affordable housing for local people and 41% (96 respondents) were against. 18 (8%) households did not answer this question.

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 Whimble 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 808 households in the parish. Recipients of the survey were also encouraged to pass on details to anyone that they were aware of that was working in Whimble and needed to move closer to work, or had moved away from the Parish and wished to return due to the cost of housing. 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 6th May 2024.

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

- 233 surveys were returned. An email reminder was sent to those registered for the Parish on the Housing Register with an email address giving further encouragement to complete the survey on 29th May 2024. The response rate was 29%.
- The survey achieved its aim of identifying actual households in need. Out of the returned surveys, 43 were returned with some, or all of Part 2 completed.
- 225 respondents stated that they live in the Parish of Whimble, two stated that they live in Feniton, one in Honiton and two elsewhere in East Devon. A further 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 Whimble.

4.1 Overview of Whimble.

Whimble is a village and Parish situated in East Devon approximately 10 miles from Exeter, and 3 miles from the nearest small town, Ottery St Mary. The centre of the village is around 1.5 miles from the main A30 dual carriageway. The Parish also has a railway station which is on the main line from Exeter to London Waterloo. Trains run approximately once an hour from Whimble to Exeter and London. There are also 5 buses per day between Monday and Saturday between Whimble and Sidmouth on the South Coast. There is also easy access to Exeter Airport.

The parish of Whimble comprises of the main village centred on The Square, and some dispersed outlying dwellings at Strete Raleigh, Hand and Pen and Cobden. The village centre is designated as a conservation area and is surrounded by agricultural land and cider orchards.

The village of Whimble has a primary school and pre-school with the nearest secondary schools in Broadclyst and Cranbrook. There is a local shop and post office, two pubs and a Parish Church.

4.2 Population Figures

In the 2021 census the population of the Parish was 2000 people living in 880 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/#E04012469>. Details from the 2021 have now been published as estimates and rounded to the nearest 100, 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.

The 2011 Census indicates that of the 745 households that were recorded 730 (98%) had at least one usual resident with the remaining 15 homes being either empty homes, second homes or holiday 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 53% of dwellings in Whimble are detached houses and bungalows (compared with 38% in East Devon), which usually represent the more expensive end of the housing market, with only 17% (also 17% in East Devon as a whole) terraced houses, bungalows and flats which represent the entry level property type for many aspiring homeowners. This is a typical profile for rural Devon.

Table 1

Detached house/bungalow	Semi-detached house/bungalow	Terraced house/bungalow	Flat	Caravan / mobile home	Total
393(53%)	200 (27%)	107 (14%)	24 (3%)	21 (3%)	745

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 148 (20%) households from this total that are one person households.

Table 2

1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more	Total
29 (4%)	195 (27%)	246 (34%)	260 (36%)	730

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 June 2024² there were 35 properties for sale within one mile of Whimple with a value of £800,000 or less on the Rightmove website (see note 2). There were 2 one bedroom, 9 two bedroom and 8 three bedroom homes for sale and 16 homes for sale with four or more bedrooms. All the properties except one with 2 or more bedrooms were houses. This stock profile reflects the characteristics of the area with fewer smaller homes available. Of those that are listed the cheapest property was a one bedroomed flat with an asking price of £150,000. The cheapest two bedroom home was £240,000, and the cheapest three bedroom was £260,000.

Research to establish rental costs was carried out on 13th and 26th June 2024 when there were 9 properties advertised for rent within 1 mile of Whimple, all except 2 of these were not in the Parish. Additionally, information on rent costs was provided by 6 survey respondents who are in private rented accommodation in the Parish. Information on rent levels from both sources has been relied on to establish entry level rent costs in the Parish. It is possible that rent levels for new lettings will be higher. There were no one bedroom rented properties available within 5 miles of Whimple, except those within Exeter which are not a suitable comparator. The entry level value for a one bedroom property has been estimated based by applying a 17.5% increase to the local housing allowance which reflects the difference between the LHA and average entry level costs for the two and three bedroom homes. It is of note that the local housing allowance is 10% lower than the estimated entry level cost for two bedroom properties and around 25% lower for three bedroom homes, making accessibility even harder for households who are dependent on benefits to meet their housing costs.

¹ This table only gives details for 730 of the total 745 dwellings. This is because there is no data on bedroom numbers for the 15 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 and 26th June 2024. Retirement, Park Homes and properties over £800,000 in value are not included as comparators.

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

Table 3

Size	Property price	Weekly rent	Local Housing Allowance
1 bedroom	£160,000	£170.00	144.99
2 bedroom	£310,000	£201.00	182.96
3 bedroom	£325,000	£278.00	218.63

There are currently 74 council/housing association owned properties recorded within Whimple. This represents 10% of the 745 dwellings detailed in the 2011 census data included in table 1. 9 of these are 1 bed homes, 39 two beds and 26 three beds. It is possible that there are more council / housing association properties in the Parish as not all housing associations return information on their stock. There have been 2 lettings in the last 2 years, both in June 2022 (1x two bedroom home and 1x three bedroom home). 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 In favour of a small local development

Respondents were asked if they would be in favour of a small number of homes for local people being built if the need for affordable housing were proven. 119 (51%) of those answering the question said they would be in favour. 96 (41%) said they were against any development. It should be noted that 18 (8%) households did not respond to this question.

5.2 Site suggestions and general comments

104 individuals made suggestions for possible housing sites within the parish and / or made more general comments about housing in the parish. These suggestions and comments will be made available to the local Council on a separate document.

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

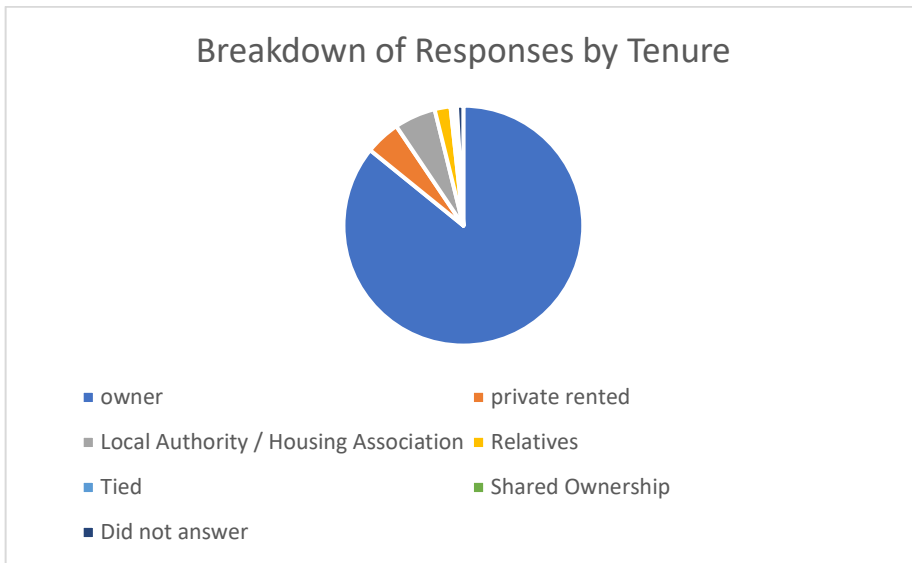
Respondents were asked if they knew of anybody who had to leave the parish in the last 5 years due to lack of suitable housing. They were also asked to indicate if they knew of anyone who was working over 16 hours per week in the Parish and were looking for housing within Whimple. They were asked to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

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

5.4 Current tenure

Of the 231 respondents who provided details, 200 own their own home and 11 rent from a private landlord. 13 households rent from a housing association or local authority, 5 live with relatives, 1 is living in a shared ownership property and 1 is in tied accommodation. 2 respondents did not answer the question. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of responses by tenure.

Figure 1



5.5 Main or second home

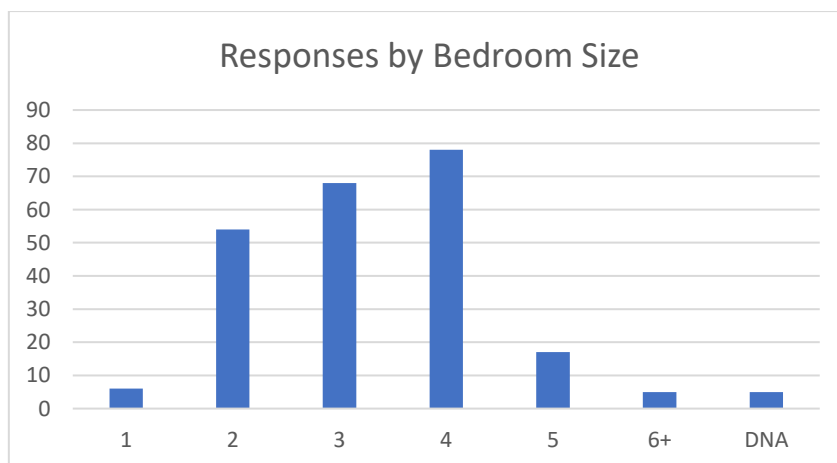
Of the 230 respondents who answered the question 226 stated that they occupied their property as their main home and 4 as their second home. 3 respondents did not answer the question.

5.6 Parish of Residence

Respondents were asked which parish they lived in. 225 respondents stated that they live in the Parish of Whimble, 2 live in Feniton, 1 lives in Honiton and 2 indicated that they live within East Devon, but did not provide details. 3 did not answer the question.

5.7 Number of bedrooms in current home

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their current home has. The responses are shown in Figure 2. 5 respondents did not answer the question.



5.8 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.

- 32 (14%) stated they did intend to move within the Parish within the next 5 years
- 186 (80%) of those households who answered the question stated they did not intend to move within the Parish within the next 5 years
- 15 (6%) households did not answer the question.

6. Assessment of those wishing to move to a new home in Whimple 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 Whimple 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.

32 respondents indicated that they were intending to move within the Parish within the next 5 years, however 43 respondents completed some or all of Part 2 of the survey. The needs of these 43 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. 11 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 4

1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
7	12	11	2

6.2 Timescales for moving

Households completing this part of the form were asked to identify when they would need to move. 11 households did not answer the question.

- 6 of the households indicated a current need to move.
- 19 households indicated a need to move within the next 1-3 years.
- 7 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. 9 of the 16 respondents indicating that they would like open market housing were only interested in this tenure option, and a further 3 respondents were only interested in self-build or open market housing. 2 households were only interested in affordable rented housing and one further household was only interested in either affordable / social rented or rent to buy. 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
9	11	9	7	8	16

6.4 Open Market Housing preferences

Of the 12 respondents who were only interested in open market or self build housing 6 had a local connection with the Parish. Seven respondents were anticipating purchasing at £300,000 or above, and the remaining 5 did not answer the question. Four respondents anticipated purchasing a 2 bedroom home, seven a 3 bedroom home and one a 5 bedroom home. 2 were looking to move either now or within the next 12 months, 7 in between 1 and 3 years and 3 within 3-5 years.

6.5 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	13
Need to move for health/mobility reasons	10
You are struggling to afford your current home	9
Wish to move back to the parish and have a strong local connection	5
Need to move to a home with more bedrooms	4
Other - general comments	4
Will be leaving home and do not expect to be able to rent or buy privately	2
Need to move for work	2
Other-Relationship Breakdown	2
Home is in poor condition	1
Other - bigger garden	1
Other - Closer to family for childcare	1
Other - different amenities	1
Sharing kitchen and / or bathroom	0
Your private tenancy is ending	0

6.6 Budget for new home

Respondents were asked about their budget. Table 7 below shows the breakdown of replies. 20 respondents did not answer the question. All of those expecting to spend under £150,000 are expecting to need affordable housing and 4 of the 4 require a one bedroom home. 5 households expecting to spend over £350,000 expect to purchase on the open market and 2 did not answer the question about tenure preferences. 4 of these households require a 3 bedroom home and 1 requires a 5 bedroom home.

Table 7

Less than £150,000	£150,001 - £200,000	£200,001 - £250,000	£250,001 - £300,000	£300,001 - £350,000	£350,001 +
5	2	3	2	4	7

As can be seen in table 3 the average entry level property prices in the Parish are £160,000 for a 1 bed, £310,000 for a 2 and £325,000 for a 3 bed home.

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

35 of the households who expressed a wish to move within the next 5 years and remain in Whimble 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 so do not qualify for affordable housing.
- Indicated that despite completing Part 2 they wish to move away from Whimble

This leaves 8 households who have been assessed for affordable housing. 4 of these households are in private rented homes, 3 are in local authority/housing association accommodation and 1 is living with relatives.

7.2 Local Connection

To qualify for affordable housing within the Whimble Parish, respondents must have a local connection. This connection is determined by East Devon Council and is set out overleaf:-

Local connection requirements to occupy affordable housing on a Rural Exception Site Local connection to the parish or parish grouping (in order of priority)

- 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

5 of the households identified have a current local connection. Of the remaining 3 households 2 may have a local connection but did not provide sufficient information to confirm this as they state that they have family in the area, but do not provide details. One further household currently lives in the Parish, but not for the required 5 years, but may establish a local connection if they remain in the Parish during the period of this report.

7.3 Housing Options

Of the 43 households that completed Part 2, 35 have been excluded for the reasons given in Paragraphs 7.1. This leaves 8 respondents who require an assessment to establish whether there is a housing need by carrying out an affordability assessment. Three of these households do not currently have a local connection, or have not provided insufficient information to establish whether they meet the criteria. The housing options of all 8 households have been reviewed.

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 8 households that were identified as having a need for affordable housing are shown in Table 8, with the three households without a determinable local connection and the one household which is already adequately housed (included in the three bedroom column) being shown in brackets.

Of the 6 households that were identified as needing a one bedroom home 2 preferred a two bedroom home, but this was not financially viable for them.

6 of the 8 households identified are older (over 55) households and their needs have been included in the section regarding older persons housing need. 3 of these households have a local connection.

Table 8

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Social / Affordable rent	4 (2)	1 (1)	1(1)
Low cost home ownership	2	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) is provided below. Applicants can be registered for a Parish without having a local connection. Bands A-D are those who have been assessed as being in housing need, there are 22 of these applicants. All of the applicants for whom there was an available e-mail address (29 out of the 33) were written to separately to encourage them to complete the survey.

Table 9

Devon Home Choice band	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	TOTAL
Band A (Emergency Need)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Band B (High need)	3	1	0	0	1	5
Band C (Medium need)	2	1	1	0	0	4
Band D (Low need)	12	1	0	0	0	13
Band E (No need)	7	2	1	1	0	11
TOTAL	24	5	2	1	1	33

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 It excludes the households that have not provided sufficient information to confirm whether they have a local connection and the household that was already adequately housed (in brackets in table 8).

Table 10

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

160 (69%) 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 age 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	90	95	61	14

8.2 Future Housing Plans

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

- 25 (16%) households plan to move within the next five years. 18 households would like to remain in Whimple, 5 are planning to move away from the Parish but remain in East Devon and 1 plans to move further away but remain in Devon. One respondent did not answer the question.
- Of the 18 households wanting to remain in Whimple, 12 already own their own home. The remaining 6 households are in private rented accommodation (4) or local authority/housing association accommodation (2). All 6 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 for the report. 3 have a local connection and 3 have not provided sufficient details to determine, or do not have a local connection.
- Of the 18 households wishing to move locally, 3 expect to move within the next 12 months, 12 within 1 -3 years and 2 within 3-5 years, and one did not answer the question.
- Of the remaining respondents 25 (16%) have considered moving, but do not expect to do so within the next 5 years, 109 (68%) have no plans to move and one did not answer the question.

8.3 Adaptability of current home

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

- 110 households said their home was adaptable
- 43 households said their home was not adaptable
- 7 did not answer the question.

8.4 Type of Accommodation preferred by older persons

Older households who were expecting to move at some point were asked what type of accommodation they anticipated moving to. Most respondents 101 (63%) either did not expect to move or did not answer the question. Of those that did anticipate a move 46 preferred a home better suited to their needs but not specially designed for older people, 9 preferred a specifically designed home and 4 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	46
Home specially designed for older people	9
Residential / nursing home	4

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 better suited to older persons needs, 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 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	39 (18)
Cheaper running costs	27 (16)
Proximity to shops/amenities	34 (16)
Proximity to public transport	31 (17)
Need to be near family / carers	21 (7)
Need one level for medical reasons	11 (6)

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 109 (68 %) have no plans to move home. The parish does have a small number (25) of older households who wish to move, 18 of whom want to move within the Parish. An older persons household are those with someone of over 55 living within them. 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 6 of the 18 older households that expect to move home within the next 5 years and remain in Whimple will need affordable housing in the Parish, 3 have a local connection and 3 either have not provided sufficient detail to determine, or do not have a local

connection. These have been included within the numbers detailed in the affordability section (table 10). The remaining households have stated that they will be looking to the open market for alternative housing within 5 years, already own their own home or do not have a local connection.

9. Conclusion - Future Housing Need for Whimple

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 4 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.