

HOUSING

1. Within its outstanding natural environment, part of the character of Exmouth is in the varied mix of styles of its housing. This is detailed in the Built Environment chapter. In the main Exmouth has avoided the over-massing and modernisation blight which has affected other seaside towns. The challenge now is to deal with the pressures for more residential accommodation enshrined in the Local Plan and to establish policies which protect the quality of life, by addressing development proposals in a realistic way.
2. Exmouth is the largest town in Devon with a population of 36,000 and growing. As stated in the chapter on Economy and Employment, about 45% of the working population work in the Exeter area, commuting by either bicycle, car, train or bus. It is also a retirement 'hot spot' where developers prioritise apartment blocks which appeal to the downsizing retirement market.
3. Further development is restricted by the location. The town is bounded to the south by Lyme Bay, to the west by the Exe Estuary, to the north west by the Green Wedge separating Exmouth from the village of Lypmstone and the north east and south east by land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with much owned by the National Trust.
4. Housing policies must be future-proof. There are plans under discussion for a "Greater Exeter Strategic Plan" area which would have implications for Exmouth, particularly affecting the town's infrastructure. Exmouth has grown without a balance of employment and housing. It now serves as a commuter hub for Exeter and as an attractive retirement destination. This raises infrastructure problems for the town. Housing policies, as well as policies for employment and transport, are a vital part of the solution.
5. Another issue when looking to the future is that when new built development is being planned, attention needs to be given to making it energy-efficient. Solar panels on appropriate roofs and water harvesting are important features for all new development. Rainwater swilling over yet more paved areas will be a frequent hazard as the winters become wetter and warmer. Modern plumbing can easily divert rain from gutters to water tanks for use in washing and flushing of toilets. On new housing

estates, consideration should be given to a site for food-growing areas, with consideration also of a wild-flower meadow and nesting for birds and bats. To save energy and for diminution of light pollution outdoor lights should be angled downwards and be switched off earlier.

6. Provisions in the Local Plan require housing development to be sufficient for the next five years and with no extension beyond the BUAB. To achieve the vision of Exmouth as a green town with protection of areas and corridors for wildlife, the tendency towards 'garden grabbing' for infilling developments will have to be constrained.
7. The overall objective of the Plan is to engage with all residents within Exmouth and its surrounding boundaries, so that any development reflects the best of Exmouth's local character, history, architecture and landscaping, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
8. The central issue is to establish housing policies which help to secure a healthy mixture of age groups and income levels - a balanced community. Experience of housing developments in the town this century has made it clear that, left to the market, that balance will not be achieved. The implications for the quality of social, cultural and economic life of Exmouth are evident. It is essential to have a vibrant town that is inter-generational, providing for all ages and abilities.
9. Housing for people on average local incomes is a continuing problem. The first issue has been identified by EDDC as the immediate requirement for at least 607 socially rented dwellings.
10. The data from East Devon District Council (2016), which is regularly updated and relates to those individuals and families who have specified Exmouth as where they wish to reside for family, social support and work reasons, is as follows:
 - a. 52% of registered applicants for Social Housing require 1-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 411 properties.
 - b. 28% require 2-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 112 properties.
 - c. 13% require 3-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 55 properties.
 - d. 6% require 4-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 24 properties.

- e. 1% require 5-bedroom dwellings. This equates to 5 properties.

The aim has therefore to be to identify strategies to provide at least 607 socially rented dwellings. This is being addressed by EDDC building or purchasing suitable properties or by use of private accommodation.

11. But this is only a part of the problem. With low average local wages, even people in full-time employment struggle to afford local house prices for their first homes or to move when necessary to accommodate a growing family. Development space in Exmouth is limited, so this Plan supports the firm application of the current requirement to have 25% affordable homes in any residential development of more than 10 units, which would preferably be more than 4 units, and a clear, realistic definition of what qualifies as an affordable price, taking into account the average wage in the locality.

12. Housing policies are needed which:

Enable young people, with or without children, to get on the first rung of the housing ladder

Allow senior citizens living in the town to move into less expensive, appropriately designed accommodation

Ensure that new affordable accommodation, as defined in EDDC housing policies, is occupied by people who have a local connection or will live in the community and engage with it in social and economic terms. (the local plan sets 25% affordable housing to be provided normally by 'pepper-potting' or, if this is not possible, a commuted sum is negotiated).

Provide an amount of 'supported housing' not just for older people to make a down-sizing move, but also for young people who may be moving out of care or out of their family home and need to learn life-skills before they move into their own accommodation

Provide housing to enable those who have a variety of health problems or disabilities to be as independent as possible.

Policies

The following Policies are designed to meet the need to create more affordable

dwellings to address identified housing needs, whilst recognising geographical constraints and the social and economic implications.

Objective: To support local residents, who wish to live within Exmouth but are unable to access the open housing market, new developments should seek to deliver a substantial amount of affordable housing.

Policy H1: To meet the identified housing need all housing development within the BUAB, on sites of 4 properties or above, should seek to deliver as a minimum, 25% affordable units which will be subject to a local connection clause.

Priority for new housing development should be to deliver one and two bedroom dwellings to meet the identified need (ref paras 9a & 9b).

Action HA1: To ensure an appropriate level of affordable housing within Exmouth, regular research in to the housing need of residents within the town will be undertaken.

Objective: Given the increasing demographic of Exmouth towards the elderly (Ref: Census 2011) priority should be given to developments which can be easily adapted for life long accommodation rather than age-restricted developments. Beyond the 150 Care/Extra Care home spaces allocated for Exmouth in the Local Plan (Strategy 36), priority should be given to Accessible and Adaptable homes to ensure that the town has a balanced demographic.

Policy H2: Beyond the delivery of the Care and Extra Care housing identified in Local Plan Strategy 36, there is a presumption in favour of Accessible and Adaptable homes, rather than limited older people's accommodation, to ensure a balanced housing stock for a range of age groups within the town.