

Teignbridge District Council
Executive
6th January 2025
Part i

The Report of the Devon Housing Commission

Purpose of Report

This report is intended to draw Members attention to the recently published report of the Devon Housing Commission which seeks to investigate the housing crisis in Devon and the acute need for more affordable housing. It makes a series of recommendations about how these issues can be addressed.

Recommendations

That the Executive resolve to –

1. Continue its dialogue with partners on the Devon Housing Commission to help deliver the recommendations contained within their report.
2. Prioritise work on delivering affordable housing and the 'Homes 4 Teignbridge' initiative (formerly known as the T100) and the Rural 5 programme.
3. Work across service boundaries including Planning to explore further options to maximise affordable housing opportunities.
4. Reviews its capital programme to identify further capacity for new affordable housing schemes.
5. Lobby Devon County Council for Second Homes Council Tax to be spent on Affordable Housing as was originally intended.
6. Work with the combined DCC / Torbay authority and the DTHAG (Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group) to maximise affordable housing schemes in Teignbridge.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to this report at this stage pending outcome of recommendation 4.

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Legal Implications

There are no legal implications to this report.

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

There are no environmental / climate change implications to this report.

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Councillor Richard Buscombe, Portfolio Holder for the Teignbridge 100.

1. Introduction

1.1 All Local Authorities across Devon recognise the significant impacts that housing has across multiple strands of service delivery, across tiers of Local Government and across the wider public services.

1.2 Close collaborative working across Devon saw the setting up of the Devon Housing Task Force. A significant early piece of work undertaken by the task force was the creation of the Housing Commission, the remit of which was to investigate and understand the causes of the “Devon Housing Crisis” and to recommend policy and other remedial changes.

1.3 The Devon Housing Commission was Chaired by Lord Richard Best a well-known and respected figure, Social Housing Leader and Member of the House of Lords.

1.4 The Commission was supported and partly funded by the University of Exeter and took place between May 2023 and June 2024. The final report was published and launched on 19 July 2024.

1.5 Part of the Commissions work included a visit to Teignbridge where Officers from Housing and Planning gave a presentation of the context from a Teignbridge perspective. The presentation is replicated as Appendix A.

2. The Report

2.1 The work of the Housing Commission looked at a broad range of policy decisions, housing data and the results of research in order to assess the state of the current Devon housing market.

A copy of the report can be found here:

[2024EI047-Devon-Housing-Commission-Final-Report-v8.pdf \(exeter.ac.uk\)](#)

The report is set out across nine chapters:

- A Picture of Devon’s Housing Crisis – A Lack of Affordable Housing
- Rural and Coastal Communities

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- Devon's Demography, Housing for Older People
- Supported Housing and Temporary Accommodation
- Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Housing
- Housing Need and Delivery
- Planning
- The Role of the Proposed Combined County Authority (CCA)

The outcome of the work and report is a comprehensive set of recommendations, comprising:

- Overarching Recommendations
- Recommendations to Devon's local authorities
- Recommendations to the Proposed Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority
- Recommendations to Homes England
- Recommendations to Government
- Recommendations for other bodies

3. A Resume of the Recommendations under the various categories is as follows.

Officer comments added to the Devon Councils recommendations.

3.1 Overarching Recommendation.

- More affordable housing in Devon

3.2 Recommendations to Devon Councils

- **Employ dedicated Housing Enabling Officers.**

Teignbridge currently employ two part time Housing Enabling Officers but both posts are externally funded with uncertainty remaining over their long-term future.

- **Planners to “manage” land prices to stop high land values causing viability to reduce Affordable Housing delivery.**

The new Teignbridge Local Plan Policy GP8 (Viability) sets out more stringent policy tests regarding viability testing. However, whilst viability testing at Development Management stage remains a part of national policy, this objective is not entirely within the control of local planning authorities.

- **Planners to ensure local need is prioritised over market demand.**

The new Teignbridge Local Plan sets specific requirements for housing size and type to meet evidenced need for both affordable and market housing, specifically meeting the demand for smaller households.

- **Increase delivery of temporary accommodation to reduce homeless pressures.**

Officers actively pursuing opportunities as part of T100 delivery pipeline.

- **Double council tax on second home**

On 27 February 2024, Council approved proposals to levy the maximum 100% premium on furnished properties that are not used as anyone's sole or main residence. The new premium will take effect from 1st April 2025.

- **Councils release their land for social rented homes.**

T100 delivery on Teignbridge land has been and is proposed to be on Council brownfield sites.

- **Encourage use of Community Land Trusts.**

Teignbridge currently has four Community Land Trusts active in Teignbridge in Broadhempston (2), Christow and Ashburton

- **Maximise Rural Exception Sites and consider open market units to cross subsidise.**

Covered by Policy H7 in Reg 19 Local Plan currently at Public Examination stage.

- **Local Plans to prioritise older persons housing to free up family housing.**

The Local Housing Needs Assessment has identified a need for an additional 1,075 specialist older person dwellings by 2040. The emerging Local Plan includes various provisions to meet this demand, through a combination of allocated sites for extra care housing, a requirement for 35% of new homes to be built to higher accessibility standards and a permissive approach to older persons housing developments outside of settlement limits.

3.3 Recommendations to proposed Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority

- Overarching Devon Housing Strategy (DHS)
- Successor body to the Devon Housing Task Force to monitor DHS.
- Countywide Development Corporation
- Housing Intelligence Unit for data analysis
- Provide career path for Planners.

3.4 Recommendations for Homes England

- Robust strategy to support rural areas.
- Policy for supporting Rural Exception Sites
- Close working with proposed CCA

3.5 Recommendations for Government

- Increase funding for affordable housing, especially social rent.
- Full cost recovery for planning applications.
- Expand LAHF programme.
- Uprate LHA.
- Funding for Rural Housing Enablers and Community Housing Fund.
- LAs to determine R2B discounts.
- Exempt stamp duty for those over pension age.
- Upgrade Building Regs re M4(2) adapted homes and requiring highest energy ratings for new homes.
- Initiation of decent homes programme
- Measures to improve private rented sector (Renters Rights Bill)

3.6 Recommendations for other bodies

- Charter for Social Housing Regulator re disposals.
- Integrated Care Board and Public Health to have formal data sharing structures in place with Housing.

4. Whilst looking at the key recommendations for Devons Councils please find below some key statistics and trends in Teignbridge affecting the demand for affordable housing.

This data was explained more fully in the presentation given by the Portfolio Holder to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th November 2024 and is replicated as Appendix B.

4.1 Devon Home Choice, Homelessness, Bed and Breakfast costs and Temporary Accommodation data.

Devon Home Choice

- 1624 active applications as of 1st November 2024 with a further 400 applications awaiting assessment or supporting evidence to be submitted.
- This represents 54% increase of active applications since 2021/2022.
- 51% of the register require one-bedroom homes which equates to 828 households.
- 9.5% require 4 bedroom or larger which equates to 154 households – only 7 were advertised in 2023/24.

4.2 Homelessness

- 615 homeless applications taken in 2023/2024.
- We have seen 22.2% increase on 22/23 figures in those who are already homeless and seeking temporary accommodation.
- This is 26.4% increase on 2021/22 demand.
- We have taken 361 homeless applications this financial year.

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- We have 15 units of accommodation for rough sleepers who will need to be moved on into settled accommodation when ready to do so.
- Overall, we are seeing far higher numbers of single people or couples that are homelessness.
- Households that are homeless and need 4-bedroom homes simply have very limited opportunities to bid on social housing or secure affordable private rented housing.

4.3 Bed & Breakfast Costs

- In 2023/24 we spent £457,226 on Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless households
- We are projected to spend £417,284 this financial year.

5. Key data from the report which may be of interest to Members

- In 1997 average house price in Teignbridge £60,000 now £300,000.
- Total Social Housing in Teignbridge is 6,623.
- Total Right to Buy sales 1981 to 2023 is 3,020.
- There are more Community Land Trusts in Devon than any other County.
- 388 Extra Care units are needed in Teignbridge by 2033.
- Residential land values in Teignbridge are currently £2m per hectare 87 times agricultural value.
- The peak years for people leaving Devon is when they are in their 20's
- The peak years for people moving into Devon is when they are aged between 55 and 65.
- Devons current average age is 50 years of age, nationally its 40 years of age.
- Devon has 9% of total housing stock designated as affordable housing, nationally it is 18%.