

Housing Needs Assessment

Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group, West Devon

April 2017
Final Report

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Glossary of terms used in text | 5 |
| Executive Summary | 6 |
| 1 Introduction | 16 |
| Housing Needs Assessment in Neighbourhood Planning..... | 16 |
| Local Study Context | 17 |
| 2 Approach..... | 18 |
| PPG-Based Assessment | 18 |
| Summary of Methodology..... | 18 |
| Gathering and Using a Range of Data..... | 19 |
| Focus On Demand Rather Than Supply..... | 19 |
| Study Objectives..... | 20 |
| 3 Relevant Data..... | 21 |
| Local Planning Context..... | 21 |
| Characteristics of Population | 33 |
| Household Type | 35 |
| Household Tenure | 37 |
| House prices..... | 38 |
| Local Household Composition | 38 |
| Economic Activity | 42 |
| 4 Conclusions..... | 44 |
| Overview..... | 44 |
| Quantity of Housing Needed..... | 45 |
| Characteristics of housing needed | 50 |
| Recommendations for next steps | 54 |

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Glossary of terms used in text

| | |
|-------|---|
| CSED | Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme |
| DCLG | Department for Communities and Local Government |
| HNA | Housing Needs Assessment |
| HMA | Housing Market Area |
| IPC | Institute of Public Care |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| PPG | Planning Practice Guidance |
| PANSI | The Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information System |
| POPPI | The Projecting Older Person Population Information System |
| SHMNA | Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment |
| SHLAA | Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment |
| WDBC | West Devon Borough Council |

Executive Summary

1. The 2011 Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning, allowing parish councils, town councils, neighbourhood forums and other groups across England to develop and adopt legally binding development plans for their neighbourhood area.
2. As more and more parishes and forums seek to address housing growth, including tenure and type of new housing, it has become evident that draft policies included in the neighbourhood plans need to be underpinned by robust, objectively assessed housing data.
3. In the words of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), establishing future need for housing is not an exact science, and no single approach will provide a definitive answer¹. The process involves making balanced judgments, as well as gathering numbers and facts. At a neighbourhood planning level, one important consideration is determining the extent to which the neighbourhood statistics diverge from those of the local authority, reflecting the fact that a single town or neighbourhood almost never constitutes a housing market on its own and must therefore be assessed in its wider context.
4. The guidance referenced above on housing needs assessment (HNA) is primarily aimed at local planning authorities preparing Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs), which are used to determine housing need at a Housing Market Area (HMA) level. However, it helpfully states that those preparing neighbourhood plans can use the guidance to identify specific local needs that may be relevant to a neighbourhood, but that any assessment at such a local level should be proportionate.
5. Our brief was to advise on data at this more local level to help Okehampton Town and Hamlets Neighbourhood Plan Group (hereafter referred to as the Okehampton Plan Group) understand, among other matters, the type, tenure and quantity of housing needed to inform neighbourhood plan policies.
6. HNA at neighbourhood plan level can be focused on the quantity of housing needed, type of housing need, or both. In most cases, there is a need to focus on quantity where the housing target for the Neighbourhood Plan area being assessed is unclear, for example where the local authority has not set a specific target for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
7. In the case of the Okehampton Plan Area, which covers the area of Okehampton Town and Okehampton Hamlets, this report focuses both on quantity and type of housing needed. In order to understand both topics, we have gathered a wide range of local evidence and summarised it into policy recommendations designed to inform decisions on housing quantity and characteristics.
8. The planning period of neighbourhood plans, can be set by the relevant neighbourhood plan group. This planning period can be aligned with the relevant local plan. In the case of Okehampton Plan Area, this would mean aligning with the emerging Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) which extends from 2014 to 2034. It may be useful for the neighbourhood plan to extend beyond the duration of the Local Plan to provide a period of overlap between the adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Plan.

¹ DCLG (2015) Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic development needs assessments, Paragraph 14 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

9. The PPG states that: "No single source of information on needs will be comprehensive in identifying the appropriate assessment area; careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of each source of information and how they relate to one another. For example, for housing, where there are issues of affordability or low demand, house price or rental level analyses will be particularly important in identifying the assessment area. Where there are relatively high or volatile rates of household movement, migration data will be particularly important. Plan makers will need to consider the usefulness of each source of information and approach for their purposes."
10. It continues: "Plan makers should avoid expending significant resources on primary research (information that is collected through surveys, focus groups or interviews etc. and analysed to produce a new set of findings) as this will in many cases be a disproportionate way of establishing an evidence base. They should instead look to rely predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance."
11. Compared with the 2001 Census, the 2011 Census gathered data in a number of new categories and across a range of geographies that are highly relevant to planning at the neighbourhood level and helpful if a PPG-based approach is being used.
12. Like much of the data forming the housing policy evidence base, the Census information is quantitative. However, at a local level, qualitative and anecdotal data, if used judiciously, also have an important role to play, to a perhaps greater extent than at local authority level. We have gathered data from as wide a range of sources as practicable in order to ensure robustness of conclusions and recommendations arising from the analysis of that data. Gathering a range of data, some more recent than Census 2011, also ensures allowance is made for the Census now being five years old.
13. Our approach is to provide advice on the housing required based on need and/or demand rather than supply. This is in line with the PPG, which states that *"the assessment of development needs should be an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints."*
14. For this reason, we advise that the conclusions of this report should be assessed against supply-side considerations (including, for example, factors such as transport infrastructure, landscape constraints, flood risk and so on) as a separate and follow-on study. This would include review of the SHLAA as a capacity-based analysis.
15. Three separate projections of dwelling numbers for Okehampton between 2011 and 2034 have been identified (see **Figure ES1**).

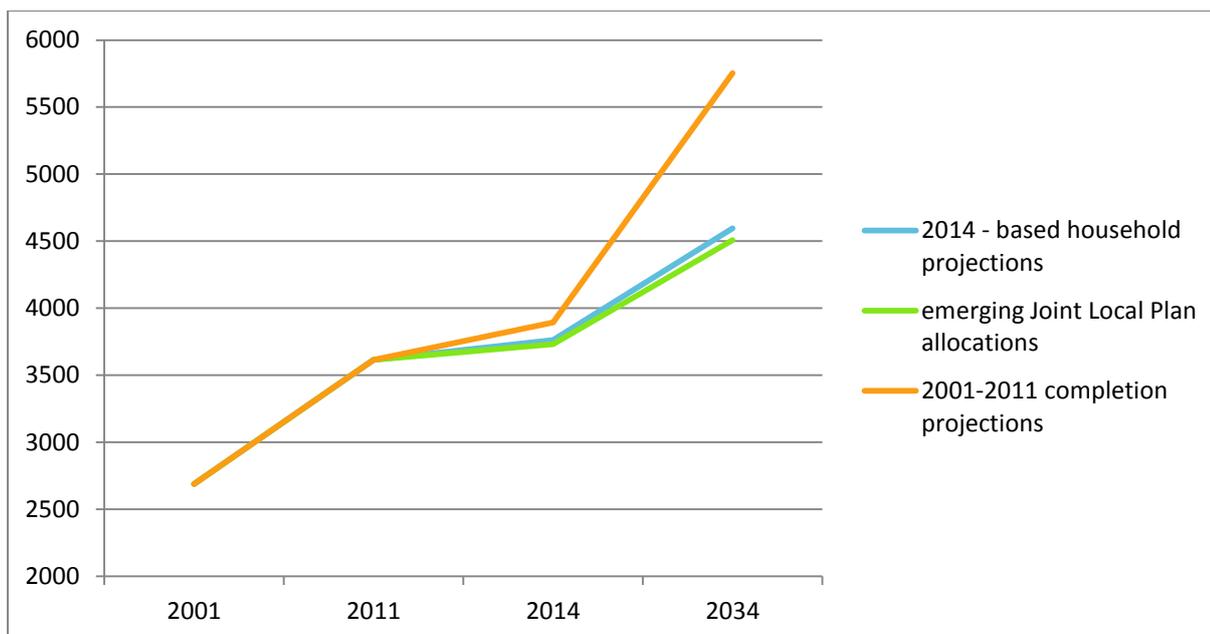


Figure ES1: Okehampton housing projections

16. These are based on:

- A figure derived from the emerging Joint Local Plan (which gives a total of 775 new dwellings, or approximately 39 per year);
- The Government's 2014-based household projections, extrapolated to Okehampton, translated from households to dwellings (which gives 981 new dwellings, or approximately 49 dwellings per year);
- A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2001-2011, (which gives 1,860 new dwellings, or 93 per year)

17. A summary of the findings of the data gathered is shown in **Table ES1**. The source for each factor with particular relevance to the neighbourhood is shown, together with the AECOM assessment of whether that factor is more likely to increase (↑), decrease (↓) or have no impact on (↔) the neighbourhood plan area's future housing need. Following PPG guidance, the factors relate both to housing price and housing quantity.

18. With regard to selecting a specific housing target from the three projections shown in **Figure ES1**, AECOM would advise against relying on the 2001-2011 dwelling completion rates. Although these can be useful in certain circumstances, in the case of Okehampton Plan Area, the evidence suggests that the delivery rate between 2001 and 2011 was unusually high, and therefore, a housing number based on this projection may result in an oversupply of housing in the future. Consequently this projection should be discounted.

19. Having discounted a projection based on dwelling completion rates, there is then a choice either based on the 2014 based household projection figure of 981 dwellings, or the JLP target of 775 dwellings. AECOM recommends that the most appropriate course of action will be for the Neighbourhood Group to discuss a range of figures with WDBC based on the two projections. The discussion in the following paragraphs outlines issues which should be taken into account.

20. Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet Basic Condition E of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. This requires that the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the relevant Local Plan. With regard to housing numbers for the Okehampton Plan Area, Neighbourhood Plans are considered to meet Basic Condition E as long as they seek to meet the Local Plan target, which is considered a minimum figure. This means that the Neighbourhood Group will be required to allocate 775 new dwellings (the number stipulated by the emerging JLP) as a minimum figure.
21. Taking the above into account, it should be noted that the 2014 based household projection (981 dwellings) is a significantly higher figure, indicating that there may be some unmet need in the future (above that provided by the JLP target). AECOM highlights that this is a demand-side projection only, and in line with government guidance, this estimate needs to be aggregated with the results of the supply-side evidence base, and local constraints on the supply-side such as: landscape, heritage, transport, and infrastructure considerations. As such, the deliverable number may be lower than 981 dwellings.
22. Taking into account the potential for a housing need in excess of the Local Plan target (evidenced through the 2014 household projections), the Neighbourhood Plan Group may allocate some or all of this excess need. It should be noted that any housing number allocated above the Local Plan target is at the discretion of the Neighbourhood Group.
23. AECOM advises that the Neighbourhood Group discuss a range of potential figures with WDBC between the minimum of 775 dwellings, and a potential maximum of 981 dwellings. The most sensible course of action would be to take a midpoint figure of 878 dwellings as a starting point and assess the deliverability of any uplift to the JLP target against the local supply side constraints such as landscape, heritage, transport, and infrastructure considerations.
24. Having estimated the quantity of housing required in Okehampton Plan Area based on the demand-side evidence, the remainder of the assessment focused on the characteristics and/or type of the housing needed. Summaries of the conclusions from all sources are in **Table ES2** below. Factors in the table are in alphabetical but no other order. Note that there is potential for overlap between some factors (e.g. dwelling type and housing for older people) but an inclusive approach has been taken to ensure all relevant factors are covered.

Table ES1: Summary of factors specific to Okehampton Plan Area with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing quantity

| Factor | Source(s) (detailed in Chapter 3) | Possible impact on future housing need | Rationale for judgement |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Age structure of population | SHMNA, Census, | ↑↑ | The Census shows that proportion of people aged 65-84 in Okehampton Plan Area is significantly higher than the national average, and there is also a higher proportion of those aged 85 or over. Census data |

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| | | | <p>also shows that there have been trends towards this increasing – particularly in the 85 and over age group. Additionally, the SHMNA noted that West Devon is projected to see a considerable increase in the older person population by 2031, which will place greater pressures on existing services and stock. It also noted that Estate Agents perceived that Okehampton Town was in particularly in high demand primarily by retirees and families. AECOM considers that this factor has two rather than three up arrows as older members of the population downsizing from family homes will free up dwellings for younger families and first time buyers.</p> |
| <p>Economic performance</p> | <p>SHMNA, Census,</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The SHMNA notes that West Devon has seen the second lowest level of growth in employment out of the local authorities within the HMA but that the projected job growth until 2030 is higher than that seen between 2001 and 2011. Additionally, census data shows that the proportion of economically active residents in Okehampton Plan Area is higher than in both West Devon and that of England. A sideways arrow has been given here as although economic performance is potentially strong, this forecast has already been embedded into the Local Plan projection.</p> |
| <p>Overcrowding/concealed families</p> | <p>Census, SHMNA</p> | <p>↓ ↓</p> | <p>Census data highlights that there has been a large increase in the number of households with more than 1.5 persons per room but, conversely, there has also been an increase in households with 0.5 to 1, and less than 0.5 persons per room. These increases have occurred at a higher rate than for West Devon and would suggest that the trends in number of persons per room in Okehampton Plan Area</p> |

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| | | | are relatively stable. By contrast, England as a whole is seeing increasing levels of overcrowding. Additionally, the proportion of concealed families is less than both the West Devon and England averages. This data does not suggest that there is significant overcrowding in Okehampton Plan Area. As such, this factor has been given two down arrows to reflect a lack of pressure for additional housing from overcrowding or concealed households in Okehampton Plan Area. |
| Level of new supply in local housing market | Census | ↓ | Between 2001 and 2011 there was a total of 93 new dwellings completed each year in Okehampton Plan Area leading to approximately 40% increase over the ten year period. In comparison, there was a 22% increase for West Devon as a whole. This suggests that the supply of new dwellings has been almost double the amount seen in West Devon. As such, this is likely to result in decreased demand on future housing need. This factor has been given one down arrow as this high level of delivery may be met due to the desirable nature of Okehampton Plan Area. |
| Local housing waiting list/need for affordable housing | Local Housing waiting list, SHMNA, Census | ↑ | The Census shows shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing) is in line with the district average, which in turn is lower than the England average. However, the proportion of socially rented housing is slightly higher than the district level but much lower than the national average. The local housing waiting list for Okehampton Plan Area shows that applications make up 4.6% of the total number of households; this is again slightly higher than the West Devon average. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that in the past |

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| | | | <p>developers have not met the affordable housing requirements detailed in Local Plans, which may push demand higher. This factor has been given one up arrow as it can be seen that affordability indicators (including anecdotal evidence) point to a marginally higher need than the district level, but one which is lower than that which is seen across England on average.</p> |
| <p>House prices relative to wider area</p> | <p>Census, The Land Registry</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>House price data from The Land Registry shows that, that from 1st January 2016 to 31 December 2016, the average sold house price over the past year in Okehampton Plan Area was £245,921. This is slightly lower than the overall West Devon average of £255,898 over the same period, despite anecdotal evidence from local estate agents suggesting that Okehampton Plan Area is in high demand. This suggests that although the demand for homes is healthy relative to the West Devon average, it is not particularly high.</p> |

25. Having confirmed the quantity of housing required in Okehampton Plan Area, the remainder of the assessment focused on the characteristics and/or type of the housing needed. Summaries of the conclusions from all sources are in **Table ES2** below. Factors in the table are in alphabetical but no other order. Note that there is potential for overlap between some factors (e.g. dwelling type and housing for older people) but an inclusive approach has been taken to ensure all relevant factors are covered.

Table ES2: Summary of local factors specific to Okehampton Plan Area with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing characteristics

| Factor | Source(s) (see Chapter 3) | Possible impact on housing needed | Conclusion |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Affordable housing | Census, Local Housing Waiting List, emerging JLP, SHMNA, | <p>WDBC provided data which shows the affordable housing need in Okehampton Plan Area is slightly higher than the West Devon average. Anecdotal evidence also highlights that developers have re-negotiated the affordable housing target in the past, suggesting that the total percentage of affordable homes delivered may be lower than the 30% set out in the JLP.</p> <p>The proportion of shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing), is the same as the West Devon average, and slightly lower the England average. Anecdotal evidence from the Neighbourhood Group did however highlight that in the past, Shared Equity properties have not been seen to be affordable for the local community.</p> <p>It would appear that the level of need (4.6%) would be likely to be met by the outlined affordable housing provision in the adopted Core Strategy.</p> | <p>Based on available evidence there does not appear to be an acute need for affordable housing, however anecdotal evidence does highlight a need for both housing affordable for the local community, and also a wish for safeguards to ensure developer contributions to affordable housing set out in the JLP are met. It is therefore recommended that the Neighbourhood Group work closely with WDBC to ensure that the emerging Joint Local Plan will sufficiently address any requirements for affordable housing in Okehampton Plan Area. Additionally, the group should - in conjunction with WDBC – aim to augment the Local Plan Policy with locally specific detail through the Neighbourhood Plan while ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in conformity with the Local Plan.</p> |
| Dwelling type | SHMNA, Census | <p>West Devon as a whole shows a housing stock profile with considerable proportions of detached property, in excess of the national average level. Census data shows that Okehampton Plan Area has a lower proportion of detached housing than West Devon, but still more than the national average. In contrast, there is a higher proportion of terraced housing than regional and national averages, but fewer flats.</p> | <p>It is recommended that the new dwellings to be provided should be a mix of houses, flats and bungalows, designed to meet the needs of a range of population sectors, but with a particular focus on smaller dwellings, bearing in mind the need for a particular focus on homes for older people.</p> <p>Although it is accepted that the local context suggests a proportion of the new dwellings coming forward would be semi-detached and detached, the neighbourhood plan should seek to avoid an over-provision of new larger (3 + bedroom)</p> |

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| | | | detached dwellings. |
| Dwelling size | Census, SHMNA | Between 2001 and 2011 Okehampton Plan Area saw the highest level of proportional growth in large houses (7+ bedrooms) and also those with two bedrooms. However there was a decrease in the number of 1 room houses. This, combined with an ageing population and wider national trends of decreasing household sizes, is likely to result in a shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to current housing stock distribution in the future. The SHMNA, did note that Okehampton Plan Area is also in high demand from families due to its good schools, so there will also be demand for larger family homes moving forwards. | <p>Support, encourage and/or require the development of a large proportion of smaller (1-2 bedroom) dwellings to meet the needs of older people looking to downsize, and also younger families.</p> <p>Smaller dwellings most likely to be in demand would be houses rather than flats, and could be terraced or semi-detached depending on its local context.</p> <p>There also continue to be a demand for larger detached homes from families, however this need will in part be met through older residents downsizing from under-occupied homes.</p> |
| Housing for older people | Census, SHMNA | Agents perceived that Okehampton Town is in particularly high demand, with a large proportion of the market driven by retirees. Census data shows that the proportion of people aged 65-84 in Okehampton Plan Area (18%) is significantly higher than the average for England (14%), and also that the proportion of people aged 85 and over in Okehampton Plan Area (3%) is larger than the England (2%) average. Data from the SHMNA confirms that the number of older persons (aged 65+) living alone in the Local Authorities is forecast to increase significantly by 2020. West Devon in particular has the highest percentage increase out of any local authority within the HMA. | <p>The choice of housing for older people needs to increase in the future in line with expected demographic changes. There will be increased demand for smaller housing and bungalows from retirees who wish to downsize; and there will also need to be opportunities for specialist and extra care housing.</p> <p>To augment the Plan aspirations, The Neighbourhood Plan group may tackle this by working with specialist providers to provide dwellings suitable for older people, essentially smaller units and/or bungalows with 1-2 bedrooms</p> <p>A policy supporting downsizing for households currently under-occupying larger properties, though aspirational, could at least be a useful statement of intent.</p> <p>Monitor downsizing as it takes place- the more that happens,</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| | | | <p>the lower the need for new family-sized/larger dwellings.</p> |
| <p>Tenure of Housing</p> | <p>Census, SHMNA</p> | <p>The level of owner occupation in Okehampton Plan Area is higher than the England average. Ownership in Okehampton Plan Area has also increased at a higher rate than for the modest level of growth in West Devon, and the contraction at the national level (2001-2011). However, shared ownership, which is an indication of a lack of affordable housing, increased in Okehampton Plan Area at a rate broadly in line with the national average but at a rate of almost a third of that seen in West Devon. This suggests affordability issues in Okehampton Plan Area are slightly smaller than the national average and not as acute as seen in West Devon.</p> <p>The proportion of socially rented housing (rented from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord) is higher than the West Devon average but lower than the national average. Between 2001 and 2011 the increase in social rentals in Okehampton Plan Area has been much larger than the national average, and comparable to that seen in West Devon,</p> <p>There are also a higher proportion of privately rented units in Okehampton Plan Area compared to the West Devon and England averages, but the increase in private rents have been comparable to West Devon but lower than the national average.</p> | <p>There is a high proportion of home ownership in Okehampton Plan Area, and there does not appear to be as acute affordability issues relative to England. However, relative to the data for West Devon there appears to be a higher need for both social and market rented housing. Large increases in shared ownership between 2001 and 2011 also suggest issues with affordability.</p> <p>As previously discussed, the ageing population may also result in an increased demand on social and private rents as older residents may wish to down size.</p> <p>It may also be pertinent for the Okehampton Plan Group (as an action outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan policies) to consider other forms of housing tenure, delivered through community led projects. See appendix A for further information on this.</p> <p>Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan should work closely with West Devon Borough Council to ensure that local need for both social and market rented housing is met.</p> |

1 Introduction

Housing needs assessment in neighbourhood planning

26. The 2011 Localism Act introduced neighbourhood planning, allowing parish councils, neighbourhood forums and other groups across England to develop and adopt legally binding development plans for their neighbourhood area.
27. As more and more town councils, parishes and forums seek to address housing growth, including tenure and type of new housing, it has become evident that developing policies need to be underpinned by robust, objectively assessed housing data.
28. In the words of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), establishing future need for housing is not an exact science, and no single approach will provide a definitive answer². The process involves making balanced judgments, as well as gathering numbers and facts. At a neighbourhood planning level, one important consideration is determining the extent to which the neighbourhood diverges from the local authority average, reflecting the fact that a single town or neighbourhood almost never constitutes a housing market on its own and must therefore be assessed in its wider context.
29. The guidance quoted above on housing needs assessment (HNA) is primarily aimed at local planning authorities preparing Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs), which are used to determine housing need at a local authority level. However, it helpfully states that those preparing neighbourhood plans can use the guidance to identify specific local needs that may be relevant to a neighbourhood, but that any assessment at such a local level should be proportionate.
30. Our brief was to advise on data at this more local level to help Okehampton Plan Group understand, among other matters, the type, tenure and quantity of housing needed to inform neighbourhood plan policies.
31. Forthcoming changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will affect housing policies at a local authority level, and by extension a neighbourhood level.
 - Broadening the definition of affordable housing, to expand the range of low cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own their new home
 - Increasing residential density around commuter hubs, to make more efficient use of land in suitable location
 - Supporting sustainable new settlements, development on brownfield land and small sites, and delivery of housing allocated in plans
 - Supporting delivery of starter homes
32. Additionally, implementation of the Housing and Planning Act³ which makes provision about housing, estate agents, rent charges, planning and compulsory purchase will also affect housing policies at a local authority level, and by extension a neighbourhood level.

² DCLG (2015) Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic development needs assessments, Paragraph 14 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

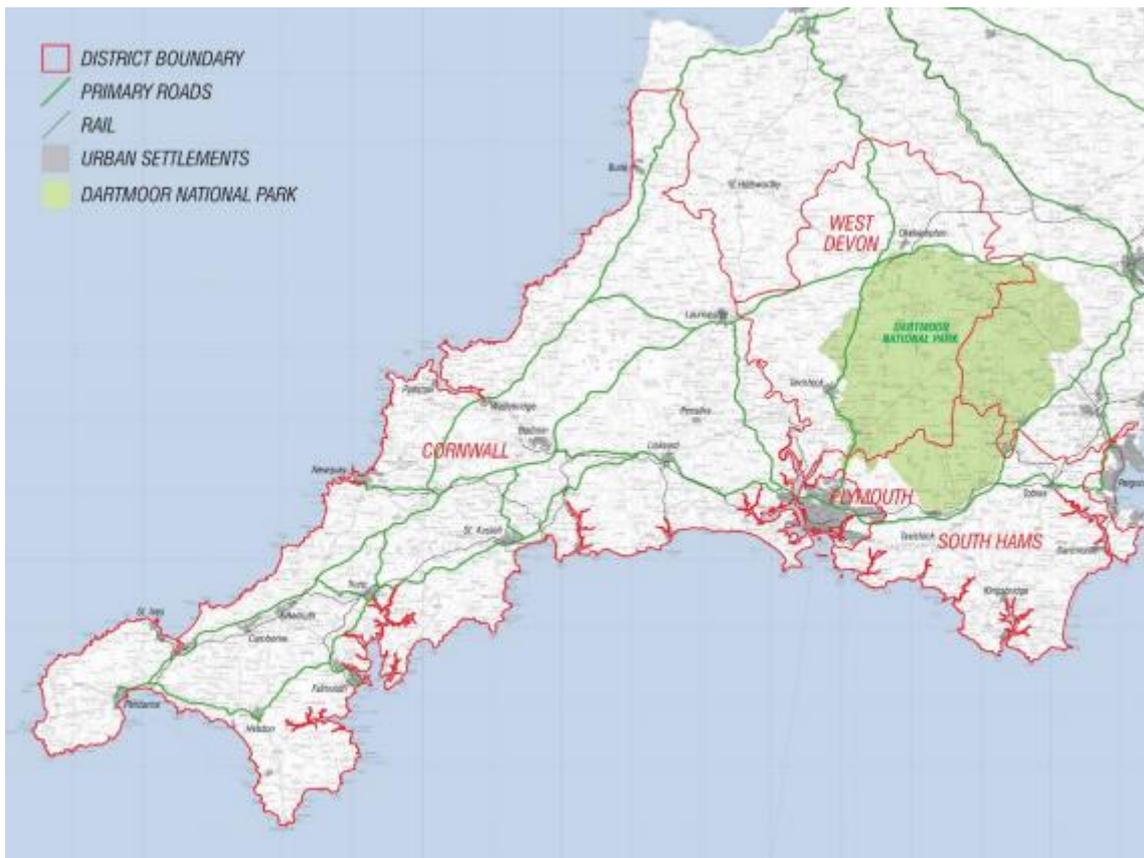
³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/contents/enacted>

Local Study Context

33. Okehampton Plan Area is made up of two parishes in West Devon with a total population of 7,792 (2011 Census). The parishes comprise of Okehampton Town, and Okehampton Hamlets Parish, which surrounds the town and includes the hamlets of Meldon, Stockley, Brightley and Southcott.
34. The Okehampton Plan Area is located on the northern edge of Dartmoor National Park and the local authority is West Devon Borough Council (WDBC). It is approximately 1.2 km to the A30, which provides a road link to Exeter.
35. Okehampton Plan Area is served by various bus services from Exeter, Bude, Newquay and Tavistock. Stagecoach service six links from Exeter Bus station via Exeter St David's to Okehampton and then to Bude. Other services from Exeter Bus station include the 6A service via Exeter St David's, which continues to Launceston.
36. Okehampton also has a railway station and is on the former northerly rail route from Exeter to Plymouth via Tavistock. In summer and at weekends throughout the year the Dartmoor Railway operates a heritage railway service between Okehampton Plan Area and Meldon Quarry.
37. For planning purposes, Okehampton Plan Area is covered by the emerging Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). The Neighbourhood Plan Area is the same as the combined area of Okehampton Town and Okehampton Hamlets Parish. This greatly simplifies the gathering of statistics, as all are available at parish level.
38. The JLP notes that Okehampton Town is the second largest market town in West Devon. It is situated in the north of the Borough, and has a close relationship with the surrounding Okehampton Hamlets Parish. The JLP also notes that the Okehampton Plan Area is well located for access to the A30 road network, connecting the area with the city of Exeter and the M5. Its location enables good opportunities for business and commercial development, as well as tourism. The JLP specifies 775 dwellings for the Okehampton Plan Area.
39. Okehampton Plan Area is located within West Devon and as such, the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA) produced for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority⁴ is relevant to this housing needs analysis and will be interrogated as appropriate. **Figure 1** displays the geography considered as part of the SHMNA.

⁴ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Figure 1: Geography considered as part of the SHMNA



Source: GVA (2013)⁵

2 Approach

NPPG-based assessment

40. This objective and independent housing needs advice note follows the PPG approach where relevant. This ensures our findings are appropriately evidenced. The PPG advises that assessment of development needs should be thorough but proportionate and does not require planners to consider purely hypothetical future scenarios, only future scenarios that could be reasonably expected to occur.

Summary of methodology

41. HNA at neighbourhood plan level can be focused either on quantity of housing needed, type of housing need, or both. In the case of Okehampton Plan Area, this report focuses both on quantity and type of housing needed. In order to understand both topics, a wide range of data and local evidence has been and summarised it into policy recommendations designed to inform decisions on housing quantity and characteristics.
42. The planning period of neighbourhood plans, can be set by the relevant neighbourhood plan group. This planning period can be aligned with the relevant local plan. In the case of

⁵ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Okehampton Plan Area, this would mean aligning with the emerging Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) which extends from 2014 to 2034. It may be useful for the neighbourhood plan to extend beyond the duration of the Local Plan to provide a period of overlap between the adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Plan.

Gathering and using a range of data

43. The PPG states that:

*"No single source of information on needs will be comprehensive in identifying the appropriate assessment area; careful consideration should be given to the appropriateness of each source of information and how they relate to one another. For example, for housing, where there are issues of affordability or low demand, house price or rental level analyses will be particularly important in identifying the assessment area. Where there are relatively high or volatile rates of household movement, migration data will be particularly important. Plan makers will need to consider the usefulness of each source of information and approach for their purposes."*⁶

44. It continues:

*"Plan makers should avoid expending significant resources on primary research (information that is collected through surveys, focus groups or interviews etc. and analysed to produce a new set of findings) as this will in many cases be a disproportionate way of establishing an evidence base. They should instead look to rely predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance."*⁷

45. Compared with the 2001 Census, the 2011 Census gathered data in a number of new categories and across a range of geographies that are highly relevant to planning at the neighbourhood level and helpful if a PPG-based approach is being used.
46. Like much of the data forming the housing policy evidence base, the Census information is quantitative. However, at a local level, qualitative data, if used judiciously, also has an important role to play, to a perhaps greater extent than at local authority level. Data has been gathered from as wide a range of sources as practicable in order to ensure robustness of conclusions and recommendations arising from the analysis of that data.

Focus on demand rather than supply

47. Our approach is to provide advice on the housing required based on need and/or demand rather than supply. This is in line with the PPG, which states that:

"The assessment of development needs should be an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new

⁶ DCLG (2015) Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic development needs assessments, Paragraph 9 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

⁷ DCLG (2015) Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic development needs assessments, Paragraph 14 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints.”⁸

48. For this reason, it is advised that the conclusions of this report should be assessed against supply-side considerations (including, for example, factors such as transport infrastructure, landscape constraints, flood risk and so on) as a separate and follow-on study.⁹

Study objectives

49. The objectives of this report are summarised as:
- Collation of a range of data with relevance to housing need in Okehampton Plan Area relative to West Devon and England as a whole;
 - Analysis of that data to determine patterns of housing need and demand; and
 - Setting out recommendations based on our data analysis that can be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan’s housing policies.
50. The remainder of this report is structured around the objectives set out above:
- Chapter 3 sets out the data gathered from all sources; and
 - Chapter 4 sets out our conclusions and recommendations based on our data analysis that can be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan’s housing policies.

⁸ DCLG (2015) Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic development needs assessments, Paragraph 4 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

⁹ Such an approach, clearly separating housing need assessment (demand-side) from dwelling capacity assessment (supply side) , was recently endorsed by the Government for calculating housing need at local authority level in the ministerial statement and press release ‘Councils must protect our precious green belt land’ (DCLG, 4 October 2014, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-must-protect-our-precious-green-belt-land>)

3 Relevant Data

Local planning context

Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment¹⁰

51. The PPG states that neighbourhood planners can refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the local planning authority as a starting point. As Okehampton Plan Area is located within West Devon, the starting point was the SHMNA produced for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority.¹¹ It informs housing policies at a local authority level, including affordable housing policy.¹²
52. As population and household projections are only published at a local authority scale, it is accepted standard practice to group local authorities in a 'best fit' to the housing market area (HMA). Generally speaking, the benefits of focusing below local authority level are outweighed by the complexities and multiple assumptions necessary to model housing need at this more local level.
53. For the purposes of local plan preparation, it is important that there is a consistent assessment of development needs across the plan area. Therefore the SHMNA report deals principally with development needs in West Devon as a whole, as well as the wider HMA. To ensure a clear, comprehensive analysis, the SHMNA conclusions are broken down by topic area into a number of relevant sub-headings in order of their appearance in the document, as follows:
 - economic drivers of the market;
 - housing stock and future housing market;
 - housing affordability; and
 - housing requirements of specific groups.

Conclusions on economic drivers of the market

54. The level and type of employment available in an area can play an important role in determining the levels of income available to households, and consequently the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market. The availability of employment opportunities can also serve as an important factor for people migrating between different areas, and represents a key driver in determining housing demand.
55. Regarding the growth in employment levels (expressed in full time equivalent jobs), the SHMNA highlights that between 2001 and 2010 Plymouth showed a 5.4% decrease in total

¹⁰ : Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority (GVA, 2015)

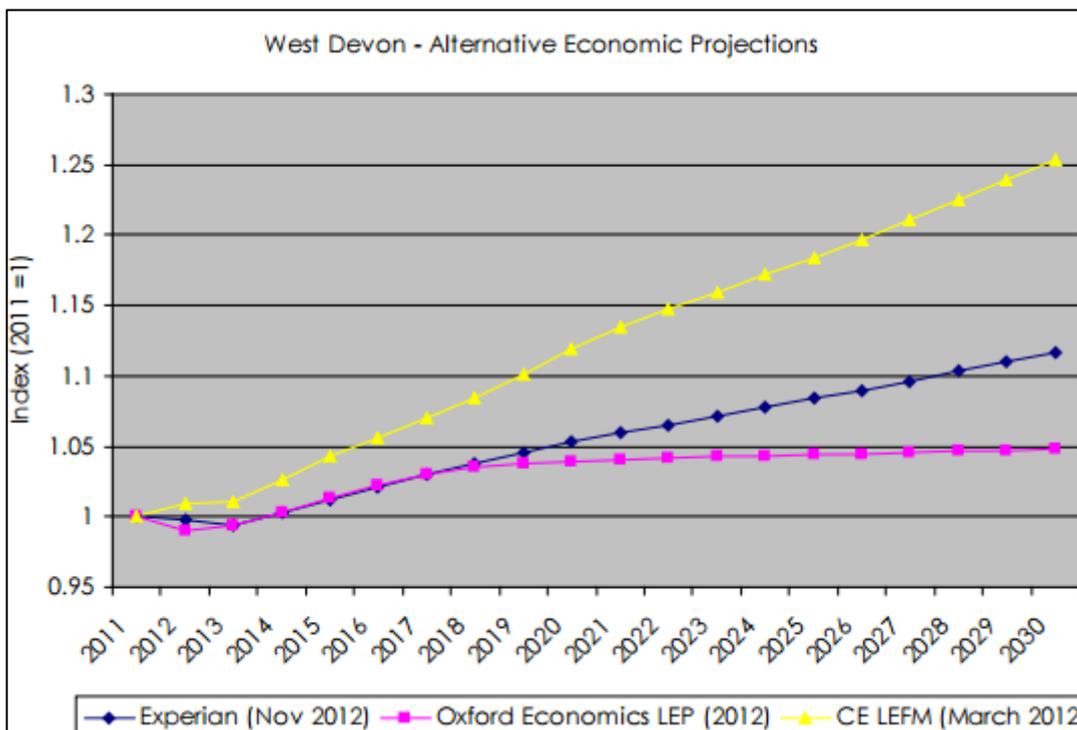
¹¹ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

¹² Here and throughout this report, we have defined affordable housing according **only** to the standard definition found in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), namely: 'Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.' We have avoided the definition of affordable housing in its colloquial sense of 'relatively cheaper market housing'.

employment, while the remainder of local authority areas all showed increases in total employment: (Cornwall (9.5%), South Hams (8.1%), West Devon (6.0%)). West Devon has seen the lowest level of growth. Changes in total employment do not reveal the quality of employment opportunities being created or wage potential.

- 56. **Figure 2** shows that there is a projected growth of approximately 110 to 240 jobs per annum on average in West Devon. Historic job growth between 2001 and 2010 was around 120 jobs per year on average, which is at the bottom end of this range.

Figure 2: Economic projections for West Devon



Source: GVA (2013)¹³

Conclusions on housing stock and future housing market

- 57. The SHMNA notes that the number of net dwelling completions peaked in 2007/08, and has generally declined and showed a more variable trend since.
- 58. **Table 1** shows the overall proportion of decent homes within each local authority of the HMA. As can be seen, West Devon has 37.3% of homes failing to meet 'decent' condition. This is the second lowest proportion (after Plymouth) of homes considered not to be in decent condition. This compares with a figure of 35% for England as a whole. The SHMNA research showed that the most common reason for this higher than average proportion in West Devon were issues with thermal properties (e.g. issues with effective insulation and efficient heating). The SHMNA considers that across the HMA, social rented stock has improved but states that the quality of privately owned or rented stock is more difficult to assess in detail, with investment and improvements dependent upon investment by owners or landlords.

¹³ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Table 1: Quality of dwellings in the HMA

| | Overall non decent homes (%) | Reasons for non-decency | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------------|
| | | Repair | Thermal | Modern | Cat 1 hazards |
| Plymouth | 32.0% | 11.90% | 22.4% | 0.7% | 7.7% |
| Cornwall | 55.0% | 10.80% | 31.0% | 4.1% | 41.5% |
| South Hams | 40.0% | 7.90% | 37.9% | 0.5% | 19.7% |
| West Devon | 37.3% | 8.50% | 33.1% | 0.6% | 4.1% |

Source: GVA (2013)¹⁴

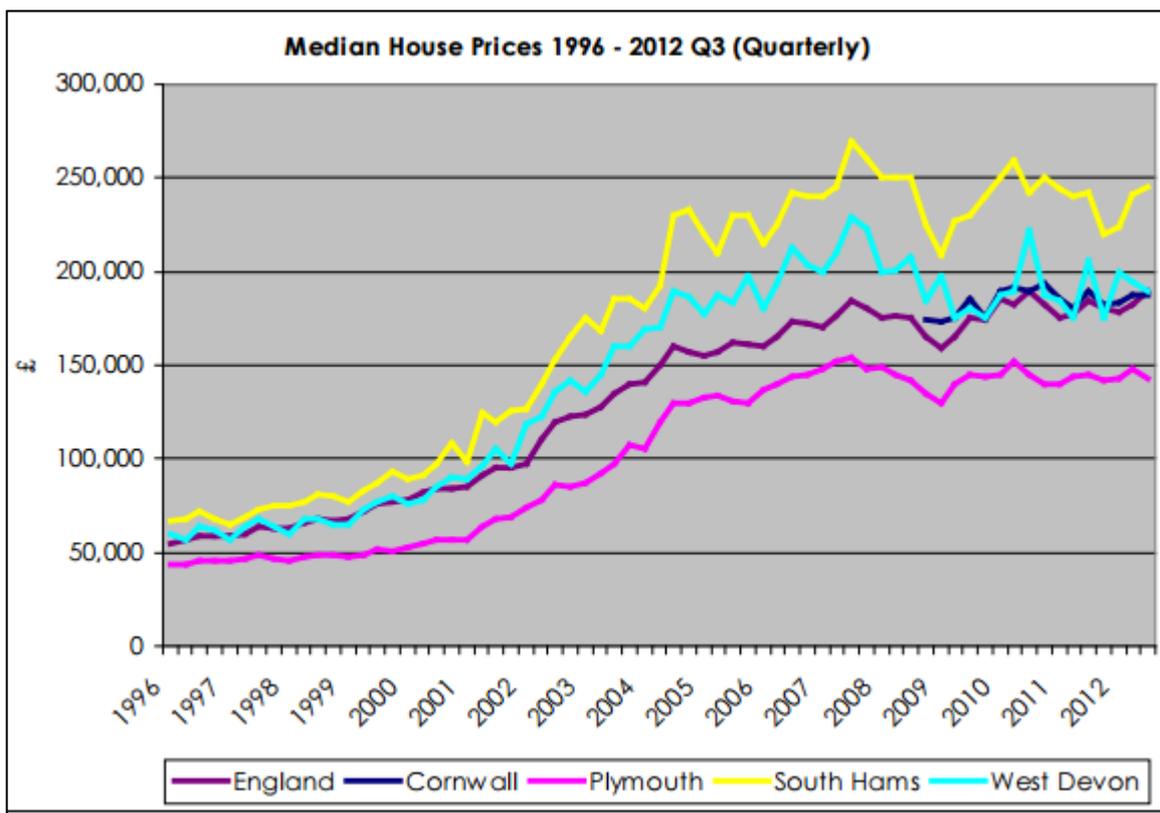
59. The SHMNA also gathered a range of data from local estate agents. Agents perceived that Okehampton Town (along with Tavistock) as being particularly high in demand, with the market driven primarily by retirees and families. The latter are attracted by the good schools in the area. Sales prices have fluctuated slightly, on a slight downward trend, which one agent estimates were in line with the majority of the rest of Devon. Rents, however, remained fairly static in the two years leading up to the SHMNA publication (2011-2013). Agents feel that a proportion of renters wish to buy but are unable to do so as a result of the current barrier imposed by requirements for higher deposits and a lack of mortgage availability. Agents also stressed that there remained a lack of first-time buyers within the market in West Devon.

Conclusions on housing affordability

60. The SHMNA assessed a range of factors, which relate to housing affordability. As shown in **Figure 3**, within the HMA, West Devon has typically seen the second highest median house prices after South Hams. Between approximately 2001 and 2009 West Devon generally saw a higher house price than the England average. Since 2009 this difference has been less pronounced however generally prices in West Devon are seen to be above the national average.

¹⁴ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Figure 3: Median house prices in the HMA

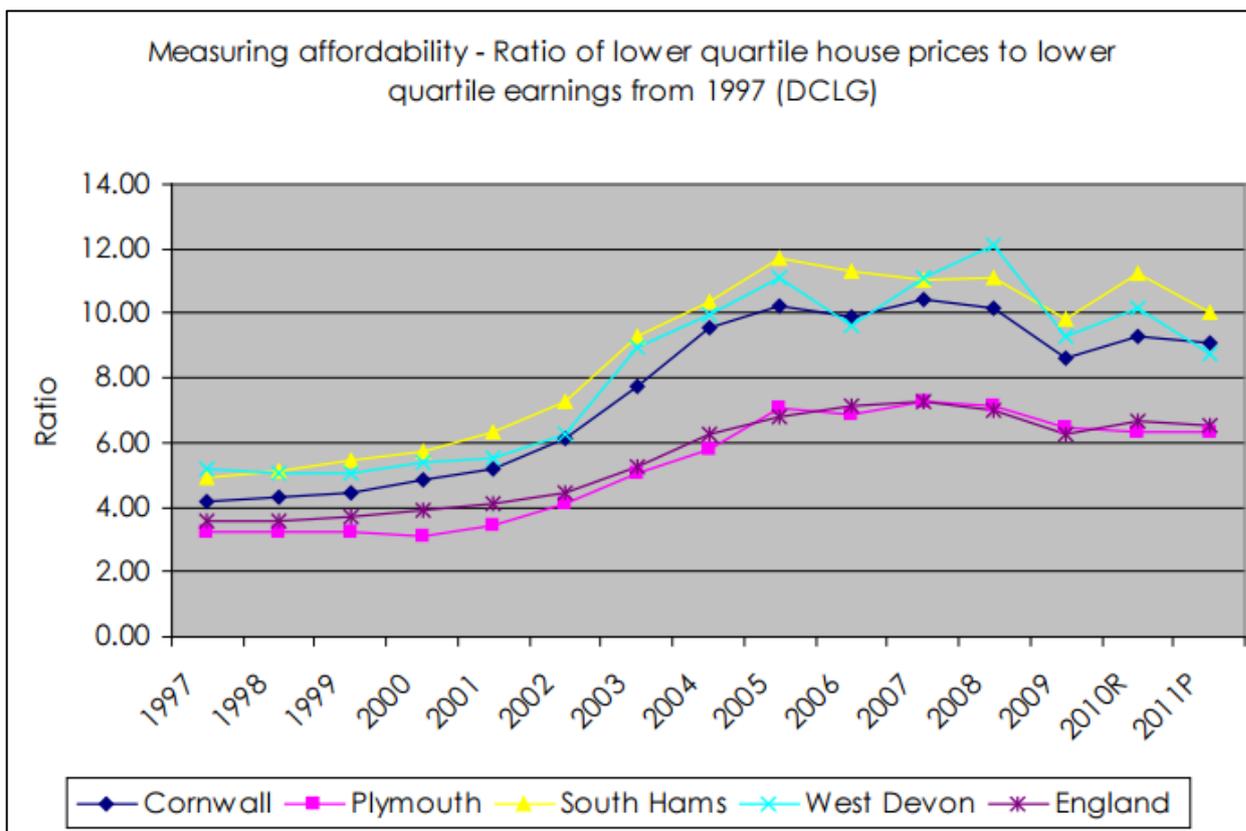


Source: GVA (2013)¹⁵

61. The SHMNA also investigated the ratio of house prices to incomes across the HMA. **Figure 4** charts the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile household incomes between 1997 and 2011. This demonstrates that affordability issues have not considerably eased across the Local Authorities within the HMA. This is primarily due to the ongoing resilience in house prices even at the most affordable entry level (i.e. lower quartile) end of the property market coupled with low average earnings. Consequently in 2011 West Devon had a lower quartile house price of approximately nine times the income of a household earning the lower quartile salary (a ratio of 8.75). This significantly exceeded the national ratio of 6.5. The result is that many lower income households will be priced out of entering the private housing market, unless they have considerable deposits.

¹⁵ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Figure 4: House prices and affordability



Source: GVA (2013)¹⁶

62. **Table 2** shows the average private rental levels which were researched by the SHMNA in the year 2011 / 2012. Although, as discussed above, house prices in West Devon are shown to be high relative to the national average and also other local authorities within the HMA; private rental costs at the time of the SHMNA research were slightly lower than the national average, and the second lowest within the HMA. This would suggest that (relative to the wider HMA) within West Devon there is less demand pressure on the existing stock of privately rented homes.

Table 2: Average private rental levels 2011/2012 per calendar month

| | Plymouth | Cornwall | South Hams | West Devon | England |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|---------|
| All properties | £475 | £595 | £625 | £560 | £575 |

Source: GVA (2013)¹⁷

63. The SHMNA also investigated the need for Social Housing within the HMA. In this respect, it acquired data from the two housing associations, which deliver social housing within the

¹⁶ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

¹⁷ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

HMA area. These are Devon Home Choice, which covers the Local Authorities of Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon (and areas of the Dartmoor National Park therein), and Cornwall Home Choice, which covers Cornwall in its entirety. Both systems each provide a single Housing Register for social housing, and cover both Council stock and homes owned by Registered Providers (RPs). All household applications to register for either Housing Register are assessed and placed in one of five priority bands. This is based on an assessment of housing need, and whether or not the household has a local connection to the area.

64. The bands are:

- Band A: Emergency Housing Need;
- Band B: High Housing Need;
- Band C: Medium Housing Need;
- Band D: Low Housing Need; and
- Band E: No Housing Need.

65. **Table 3** shows the percentage of households within each local authority of the HMA which have registered as being in need of social housing. This shows that broadly speaking, West Devon has the lowest requirement for social housing within the HMA. There are no households in emergency need of social housing, and fewer in high need relative to the other Local Authorities. This would suggest that within the HMA, there is a lesser demand for Social Housing than that of the other Local Authorities – data collected by the SHMNA does not allow for a comparison with the national average.

Table 3: Households on waiting list in housing need, January 2013

| Local Authority | Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Total number |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|
| West Devon | 0% | 12% | 30% | 57% | 952 |
| South Hams | 0% | 19% | 30% | 50% | 889 |
| Plymouth | 0% | 19% | 24% | 57% | 6,342 |
| Cornwall | 1% | 19% | 53% | 27% | 11,997 |

Source: GVA (2013)¹⁸

66. **Table 4** demonstrates that the greatest level of housing need at the time of the SHMNA research for all Local Authorities within the HMA was for smaller 1 bedroom dwelling stock, followed by 2 bedroom stock. This suggests that typically those on housing waiting lists are more likely to be younger couples, those living alone and older people, rather than families.

¹⁸ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

Table 4: Households on Waiting List in Housing Need (by band) & Bedroom requirement – January 2013

| Local Authority | Bands A-D: Maximum Dwelling Size Requirement | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | 1 bedroom | 2 bedroom | 3 bedroom | 4 + bedroom |
| West Devon | 63% | 22% | 12% | 3% |
| South Hams | 58% | 27% | 11% | 4% |
| Plymouth | 62% | 25% | 10% | 3% |
| Cornwall | 46% | 31% | 15% | 9% |

Source: GVA (2013)¹⁹

Conclusions on housing requirements of specific groups

67. The SHMNA assessed the future need for specific groups within the population, which may have additional needs in terms of housing in the future. In particular, this included older people (aged 65 +) and those with disabilities.
68. The SHMNA notes that older person households exhibit particular requirements and needs that require consideration by the Local Authorities, such as adaptations and support in the home to remain living independently. It is therefore important that the housing requirements of this group are understood. It is evident that all Local Authorities are projected to see a considerable increase in the older person population by 2031, which will place greater pressures on existing services and stock.
69. The SHMNA used data from The Projecting Older Person Population Information System (POPPI) developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC) for the Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme (CSED) to provide a more detailed picture of the changing population age profile of the Local Authorities. This is shown in **Table 5**. The dataset confirms that the number of older persons (aged 65+) living alone in the Local Authorities is forecast to increase significantly by 2020. West Devon in particular has the highest percentage increase out of any local authority within the HMA.
70. Research into the impact of loneliness and isolation carried out by Age UK²⁰ has confirmed that key influences on the life stages of older residents including loss of employment, family, friends, income, mobility and health make those over the age of 65 more likely to suffer loneliness and isolation than other age groups. It also showed that loneliness can have a significant impact on mental and physical health and also has significant economic and social costs. As such, it is advised that the Okehampton Plan Group should consider planning for ways to mitigate for these impacts through housing provision (such as provision of sheltered accommodation).

¹⁹ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

²⁰ Age UK (undated) loneliness and isolation evidence review [online] available at: http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/evidence_review_loneliness_and_isolation.pdf?dtrk=true

Table 5: Forecast Population Aged 65+ Living Alone – Local Authorities, 2012 – 2020

| Local Authority | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 | % Change 2012-2020 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Plymouth | 15,987 | 16,583 | 17,116 | 17,600 | 18,229 | 14% |
| Cornwall | 44,286 | 46,781 | 48,740 | 50,934 | 53,397 | 21% |
| South Hams | 7,585 | 7,873 | 8,182 | 8,588 | 8,982 | 18% |
| West Devon | 4,670 | 5,060 | 5,445 | 5,608 | 5,954 | 27% |

Source: GVA (2013)²¹

71. **Table 6** shows the forecasted population aged 65+ who will be living in a care home up to 2020. Here it can again be seen that West Devon will see the largest increase out of any Local Authorities within the HMA.

Table 6: Forecast Population Aged 65+ Living in a Care Home – Local Authorities, 2012 – 2030

| Local Authority | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 | % Change 2012-2020 |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| Plymouth | 2,179 | 2,276 | 2,379 | 2,499 | 2,654 | 22% |
| Cornwall | 4,766 | 5,065 | 5,382 | 5,730 | 6,122 | 28% |
| South Hams | 892 | 926 | 954 | 993 | 1,070 | 20% |
| West Devon | 573 | 602 | 653 | 694 | 758 | 32% |

Source: GVA (2013)²²

72. The Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information System (PANSI) developed by the IPC for the CSED provides projections of future numbers of households with physical and learning disabilities. In addition, the POPPI dataset provides similar information for older person households. These households, alongside others, are likely to require some form of support within their properties. This therefore provides a useful indication of the levels of demand on existing stock and future requirements to deliver new suitable properties and / or adaptations.
73. The PANSI dataset suggests that between 2012 and 2020 the number of individuals aged 65+ in the Local Authorities with learning difficulties is anticipated to rise considerably. The PANSI system suggests that the number of individuals aged 18+ with a learning disability will increase in all Local Authorities, with the exception of South Hams, between 2012 and 2020.

²¹ GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

²² GVA (2013) Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment: Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority [online] available at: <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/4334/Strategic-Housing-Market-Needs-Assessment>

West Devon Borough Council Local Planning Documents

74. West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) is in the process of producing a Draft Joint Local Plan with Plymouth City Council and South Hams District Council. It will cover the period from 2014 to 2034. The emerging plan is currently undergoing consultation and is expected to be adopted in autumn 2017 while the current Local Plan is the adopted Core Strategy (2011).
75. Basic Condition E²³ of neighbourhood planning requires the neighbourhood plan's policies on housing type to be in general conformity with those of the relevant Local Plan, bearing in mind that some strategic local policies may be outside of the local plan. In the case of Okehampton, the adopted Core Strategy housing targets are not in conformity with the NPPF (introduced in 2012). As such, for the purposes of Basic Condition E, the Neighbourhood Plan housing target should be in strategic conformity with the targets set by the emerging JLP which sets out targets until 2034. However, as the pre-submission version of the emerging JLP is still under consultation, the Adopted West Devon Core Strategy will also be reviewed for relevant evidence.

Adopted West Devon Core Strategy (2011)

76. The adopted Core Strategy set out the broad approach to the distribution of development across the plan area and also contains a number of development management policies. Specifically there are three policies within the adopted Core Strategy which are relevant to Okehampton Plan Area.
77. Policy SO21 'Okehampton' requires that development should:
- "a. Deliver an appropriate level and mix of new homes, including affordable housing, to meet a significant proportion of the Borough's housing needs;
 - b. Ensure new housing development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and services;
 - c. Build on levels of self-containment by increasing opportunities for people to live and work locally;
 - d. Allocate additional employment land in an accessible location where there is the greatest opportunity of attracting high quality job opportunities and maximising use of sustainable transport links;
 - e. Promote high quality, locally distinctive developments which integrate well with the existing town via a range of walking, cycling and public transport links;
 - f. Manage traffic more effectively around the town centre through the provision of a second access road and improved town bus services;
 - g. Have regard to the impact of development on the Dartmoor National Park and areas of conservation and archaeological importance;
 - h. Enhance the attractiveness of the town centre."

²³ Online, available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draft-neighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

78. Strategic policy 20 'promoting high quality design' states that the requirement to achieve high quality design of both buildings and landscaping is a priority for all development proposals. It states that support will be given for proposals which have regard to the following requirements:

- "a. Provide an attractive, accessible, functional and inclusive development;
- b. The distinctive character of the area, including the local context, design, landscape, natural and historic environment and incorporate public art where appropriate;
- c. Take account of the need to reduce the opportunities for crime and fear of crime;
- d. Promote safe and user friendly environments;
- e. Encourage access through sustainable forms of transport;
- f. Provide appropriate public open spaces;
- g. Make efficient use of resources;
- h. The retention and enhancement of biodiversity on the site"

Pre-Submission Joint Local Plan (JLP) (March 2017)

79. The emerging JLP defines the Okehampton Town as a 'Main Town'. These towns are at the top of the settlement hierarchy, and which the JLP envisages will be:

"Thriving, prosperous and resilient centres with a strong degree of self-containment, and providing a diverse mix of services and amenities that support a number of surrounding rural communities. The towns will have developed and benefitted from strong strategic links with larger towns and cities."

80. The Hamlets which are found in the Okehampton Hamlets Parish are defined as 'Sustainable Villages' in the emerging JLP. It states that these will be *"characterised by strong social networks and traditions. Development will have contributed to enhancing their character and local distinctiveness, and helped to provide a more balanced demographic profile and greater resilience to change for rural communities."*

81. The emerging JLP highlights that it is *"important to strike a balance so that development maintains or improves the viability of the villages whilst also being of an appropriate scale and meeting the needs of local people."* To this end, it does not identify sites for development in these settlements; rather, it aims to enable development to come forward through locally produced Neighbourhood Plans.

82. Through Strategic Objective SO7, the JLP aims to deliver *"a quantity and mix of new homes that responds positively to local housing needs"*. In this context, the JLP allocates 775 dwellings for the Okehampton Plan Area. These are to be located on an urban extension to Okehampton Town, located in the Okehampton Hamlets Parish, east of Okehampton Town. It states that this land benefits from existing planning permissions, under references 01089/2013 and 2731/15/OPA.

83. With regard to the type and tenure of housing to be delivered, the JLP requires that within rural areas and those with special designations, all residential developments of 6 to 10

dwellings should provide an off-site commuted sum to deliver affordable housing to the equivalent of 30% of the total number of dwellings in the scheme. Developments of 11 dwellings or more are required to provide 30% affordable housing on site.

84. Regarding development within Main Towns it states that outside of areas with special designations, a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing will be sought for all schemes of 11 or more dwellings. The JLP includes social and affordable rent, shared ownership, innovative housing models that meet the local demand/need, such as rent-to-buy, starter homes and shared equity, as potential forms of affordable housing.

DCLG Household Projections

85. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) periodically publishes household projections. The PPG recommends that these household projections should form the starting point for the assessment of housing need, albeit that this advice is likely aimed more at local authorities than neighbourhood planners, particularly neighbourhood planners able to derive a dwellings target from the Local Plan, as is the case for Okehampton Plan Area.
86. Nevertheless, an exercise extrapolating the household projections to Okehampton Plan Area will still be helpful in determining number of houses to plan for within the neighbourhood plan, particularly as the housing number in the emerging Local Plan is currently provisional and may be subject to change.
87. The most recent (2014-based) household projections were published in July 2016²⁴, and extend to 2039. Although population projections are only available at a local authority level, a calculation of the share for Okehampton Plan Area is nevertheless possible for the household projections based on the neighbourhood's household numbers in 2011.
88. At the 2011 Census, West Devon had 22,725 households and Okehampton Plan Area had 3,346 households, or 14.72% of the West Devon total. In the 2014-based household projections, the projection for 2034 is for 28,725 households in West Devon. Therefore in 25 years there is projected to be a growth of 6,000 households. This equates to 240 households per year.
89. Assuming Okehampton Plan Area continues to form 14.72% of the West Devon total, Okehampton Plan Area's new total number of households would be 4,228²⁵ and therefore 882 new households would have formed in Okehampton Plan Area over the Plan period.
90. Number of households does not, however, equate precisely to number of dwellings, with the latter usually slightly higher. In Okehampton Plan Area in the 2011 Census, there were 3,346 households but 3,615 dwellings. This gives a ratio of 0.92 households per dwelling. In the case of Okehampton Plan Area, then, a projection of 4,228 households translates into a total of 4,596 dwellings.²⁶ This would result in a total of 981 new dwellings in Okehampton Plan Area over the Local Plan period or approximately 49 dwellings per year.
91. This projection is an entirely unconstrained figure comprising a relative proportion of the overall projected increase, and thus, does not take into account political, economic,

²⁴ See 2014-based DCLG Household Projections live tables at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections>

²⁵ Ibid9

²⁶ Ibid9

demographic or any other drivers that might have influenced, or may in future influence, the Local Plan distribution across West Devon and hence the difference between this figure and the Local Plan-derived figure.

Dwelling growth 2001-2011

92. The dwelling growth for Okehampton Plan Area between 2001 and 2011 can be determined using census data. The 2001 Census showed 2688 dwellings and Census 2011 showed 3615 dwellings, this equates to a ten-year growth rate of 927 dwellings, or approximately 93 dwellings per year.
93. If this rate of completion was projected forward for the period 2014-2034 (the Local Plan period), a dwelling requirement of (20 x 93) i.e. 1,860 dwellings would be the result. Taking growth between 2011 and 2014 into account, this would result in a new total of 5,754 dwellings.

Local housing waiting list (Okehampton, January 2017)

94. AECOM contacted WDBC for information on the local housing waiting list in the Okehampton Plan Area. WDBC were able to provide an assessment of households currently on the West Devon Home Choices waiting list within the EX20 postcode area (which covers Okehampton town and Okehampton Hamlets). This provides a useful indication of whether the emerging JLP target of 30% affordable housing on sites of 11 or more dwellings is sufficient to meet present affordable need.
95. As the waiting list is only a snapshot in time, conclusions on whether affordable need will be met in the future should be treated with caution.
96. West Devon Home Choices advise that currently there are 352 household applications on the waiting list for Okehampton Plan Area. Devon home choice splits these applications into four separate bands. The different bands and number of household applications within each are shown below. Of these applications in Okehampton Plan Area, the split is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Band A: (emergency need): 1 | Band D (low need): 82 |
| Band B: (high need): 35 | Band E: (no housing need): 198 |
| Band C (medium need): 36 | |
97. As can be seen, 198 of these application are in Band E and therefore deemed to have no housing need, if Band E applications are then discounted, this leaves a total of 154 households in some form of housing need. When this number is considered against the total number of households in Okehampton Plan Area (3,346), it shows that the number of households in need (154) makes up 4.6% of the total number of households in Okehampton Plan Area. This level is slightly higher than the West Devon average of 4.2%.
98. Bearing in mind that that the need for affordable housing in Okehampton Plan Area is slightly above that of West Devon, it would still seem that in principle the affordable housing delivery of 30% affordable homes for developments over 11 dwellings (as set out in the emerging JLP) should be sufficient for addressing future affordable housing need.

99. On this point, it is however important to highlight that anecdotal evidence provided by the Neighbourhood Plan group, suggests that previously, developers have re-negotiated the affordable housing target set by the adopted Core Strategy. This suggests that the total percentage of affordable homes delivered may be lower than the 30% set out in the JLP. Additionally, the Neighbourhood Group feels that in the past, Shared Equity properties have not been affordable to a local people.
100. The above evidence suggests that affordable housing may be in higher need in reality, than the evidence from the Local Housing Waiting List may suggest. The Neighbourhood Plan should therefore include policies relating to affordable housing need and delivery should the Neighbourhood Group feel that this is a particularly important issue for the area.
101. Note that even after the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, WDBC's affordable housing policy will continue to apply within Okehampton Plan Area, and as such it will still be the Council that controls the housing waiting list and negotiate affordable housing commitments with developers as part of the development management process.

Characteristics of Population

102. Through analysis of Census 2001 and 2011 data, the population of Okehampton Plan Area has been investigated to determine whether it differs from that of West Devon and England averages.
103. **Table 7** gives the population and number of households in Okehampton Plan Area, West Devon and England, as recorded in the 2011 census. In 2011, Okehampton Plan Area had a population of 7,792, and an average household size of 2.33 persons. This household size is broadly comparable to West Devon but slightly lower than the national average.

Table 7: Population and household size in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011²⁷

| | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Population | 7,792 | 53,553 | 53,012,456 |
| Households | 3,346 | 22,725 | 22,063,368 |
| Household size | 2.33 | 2.36 | 2.40 |
| Dwellings | 3,615 | 24,677 | 22,976,066 |

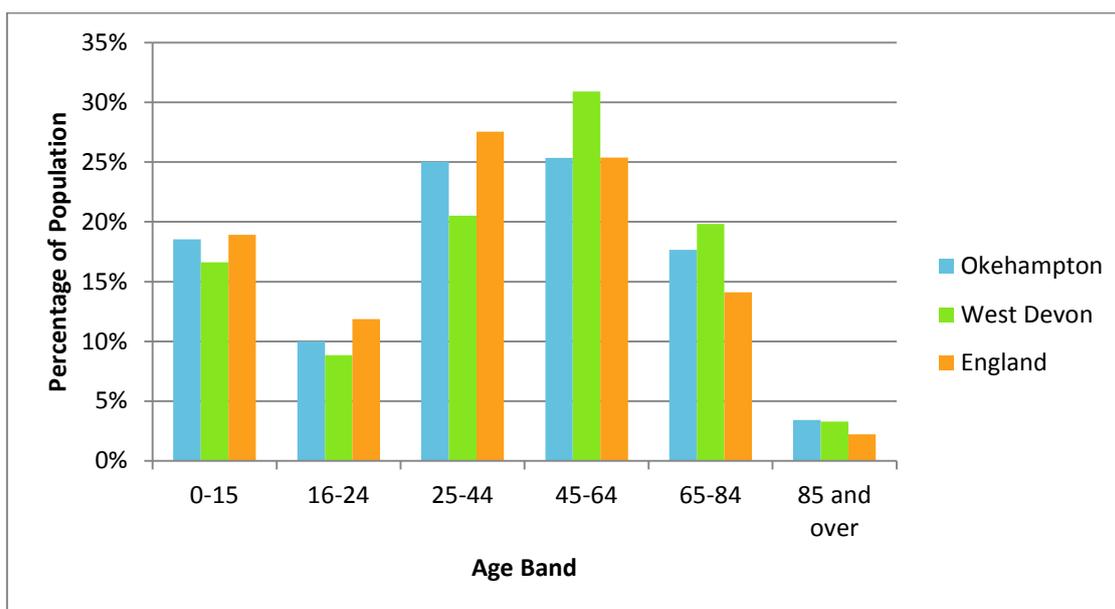
Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

104. As illustrated in **Figure 5** below, the largest age group in the Okehampton Plan Area is those aged 45-64, at 25%. This is lower than the figure for West Devon (32%) but the same as the national average. The proportion of the population in the 0-15 age group is the same as the national average, which is larger than the proportion for West Devon. Those aged between 16-24 and 25-44 make up a larger proportion of the population than the West Devon average, but a slightly lower proportion than the national average. However, the proportion of people aged 65-84 in Okehampton Plan Area (18%) is lower than the West Devon proportion (20%) but significantly higher than in England (14%). The proportion of people aged 85 and over is the same in Okehampton Plan Area (3%) as in West Devon (3%) which is larger than the national (2%) average.

²⁷ ONS, Census 2011, Population Density (QS102EW); Household Size, 2011 (QS406EW).

105. **Table 8** shows the rate of change of the population by age band. It shows that the largest increase has been seen in the 85 and over age group (43.8%). This increase is greater than the increase seen in West Devon (30.1%) and nationally (23.7%). There have also been larger increases in the 16-24 and 65-84 age groups. The proportion of residents aged 16-24 has increased by 38.1% compared to West Devon (18.5%) and national (17.2%) increases. The 65-84 age group has increased by 35.3% in Okehampton Plan Area, relative to 27.7% in West Devon and 9.1% nationally. The proportion of residents within the 45-64 and 25-44 age groups have grown at a slower rate (22.2% and 15.0% respectively), however this is still at a faster rate than in West Devon and England as a whole.

Figure 5: Age structure in Okehampton Plan Area²⁸



Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

Table 8: Rate of change in the age structure of Okehampton Plan Area population, 2001-2011²⁹

| Age group | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-------------|------------|------------|---------|
| 0-15 | 23.5% | -0.8% | 1.2% |
| 16-24 | 38.1% | 18.5% | 17.2% |
| 25-44 | 15.0% | -7.2% | 1.4% |
| 45-64 | 22.2% | 15.2% | 15.2% |
| 65-84 | 35.3% | 27.7% | 9.1% |
| 85 and over | 43.8% | 30.1% | 23.7% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

²⁸ ONS, Census 2011, Age Structure (KS102EW)

²⁹ ONS, Census 2011, Age Structure (KS102EW); ONS, Census 2001, Age Structure (KS02)

106. **Table 9** shows that Okehampton Plan Area is home to a greater proportion of people born outside the UK than the West Devon average but less than in England, and that correspondingly, the Born in the UK category is less than the West Devon average but greater than the England proportion.

Table 9: Country of birth and length of residence

| Place of birth | Population breakdown | | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Born in the UK | Total | | 94.3% | 95.2% | 86.2% |
| Born outside the UK | Total | | 5.7% | 4.8% | 13.8% |
| | EU | | 3.1% | 2.0% | 3.7% |
| | Other | | 2.6% | 2.7% | 9.4% |
| | Length of residence | Less than 2 years | 0.8% | 0.4% | 1.8% |
| | | 2-5 years | 1.5% | 0.6% | 2.2% |
| | | 5-10 years | 0.9% | 0.6% | 2.9% |
| 10 years or more | | 2.4% | 3.1% | 7.0% | |

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

107. Of the 5.7% of Okehampton Plan Area residents who were born overseas, the majority (2.4%) have lived in the UK for ten years or more.

Household Type

108. **Table 10** shows that there has been a large increase in households with 7 rooms, and those with 8 rooms or more. This increase has been much greater than the increase seen in West Devon and nationally. There has also been a large increase in households with 2 rooms compared to the West Devon and England averages. In contrast, households with 1 room have decreased at a larger rate than the decrease in the England average, and compared to the growth seen in West Devon. Households with 3 bedrooms increased at a rate comparable to West Devon and England, while households with 4, 5 and 6 rooms also showed large increases.

Table 10: Rates of change in number of rooms per household in Okehampton Plan Area, 2001- 2011³⁰

| Number of Rooms | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-----------------|------------|------------|---------|
| 1 Room | -8.3% | 11.4% | -5.2% |
| 2 Rooms | 47.7% | 34.2% | 24.2% |
| 3 Rooms | 21.9% | 23.3% | 20.4% |
| 4 Rooms | 14.1% | 8.1% | 3.5% |
| 5 Rooms | 12.0% | 3.4% | -1.8% |
| 6 Rooms | 16.3% | 10.2% | 2.1% |
| 7 Rooms | 63.5% | 18.1% | 17.9% |
| 8 Rooms or more | 51.9% | 21.4% | 29.8% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

109. The PPG states that factors such as overcrowding, concealed and shared households, homelessness and the numbers of people in temporary accommodation demonstrate unmet need for housing. Increases in the number of such households may be a signal to consider increasing planned housing numbers.
110. **Table 11** demonstrates that in Okehampton Plan Area there has been a large increase in the number of households with over 1.5 persons per room. Taken in isolation, this would suggest that overcrowding may be becoming an issue in Okehampton Plan Area. However, it should be noted that there has been a decrease in rooms with between 1 and 1.5 persons per room, and an increase in households with up to 0.5 persons per room. This would suggest that the trends in number of persons per room in Okehampton Plan Area are relatively stable. By contrast, England as a whole is seeing increasing levels of overcrowding.

³⁰ ONS, Census 2011, Number of Rooms (QS407EW); ONS, Census 2001, Number of Rooms (UV57)

Table 11: Trends in number of persons per room in Okehampton Plan Area, 2001-2011³¹

| Persons per room | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|---|------------|------------|---------|
| Up to 0.5 persons per room | 22.9% | 15.3% | 7.9% |
| Over 0.5 and up to 1.0 persons per room | 26.8% | 3.4% | 7.0% |
| Over 1.0 and up to 1.5 persons per room | -14.3% | -9.8% | 27.3% |
| Over 1.5 persons per room | 33.3% | 11.1% | 2.5% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

Household Tenure

111. The PPG states that housing needs studies should investigate household tenure in the current stock and in recent supply, and assess whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs. Plan makers should therefore examine current and future trends in tenure.

Table 12: Tenure (households) in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011³²

| Tenure | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Owned; total | 66.9% | 73.2% | 63.3% |
| Shared ownership | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.8% |
| Social rented; total | 12.8% | 9.5% | 17.7% |
| Private rented; total | 18.6% | 15.0% | 16.8% |

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

112. **Table 12** shows that the level of owner occupation in Okehampton Plan Area is lower than the West Devon average but higher than the England average. The proportion of socially rented housing (rented from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord) is higher than the West Devon average but lower than the national average. In contrast, there are a higher proportion of privately rented units in Okehampton Plan Area compared to the West Devon and England averages.

113. **Table 13** shows how tenure has changed in Okehampton Plan Area between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Home ownership in the area has increased at a higher rate than for the modest level of growth in West Devon, and the contraction at the national level. Note also

³¹ ONS, Census 2011, Persons Per Room - Households (QS409EW); ONS, Census 2001, Persons per Room - Households (UV58)

³² ONS, Census 2011, Tenure - Households (QS405EW)

how shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing) increased in Okehampton Plan Area at a rate broadly in line with the national average but at a rate of almost a third of that seen in West Devon. This suggests affordability issues in Okehampton Plan Area are similar to the national average but not as acute as seen in West Devon. The increase in social rentals in Okehampton Plan Area has been much larger than the national average, and comparable to that seen in West Devon, while the increase in private rents have been comparable to West Devon but lower than the national average.

Table 13: Rate of tenure change in Okehampton Plan Area, 2001-2011

| Tenure | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Owned; total | 20.0% | 8.3% | -0.6% |
| Shared ownership | 27.8% | 80.5% | 30.0% |
| Social rented; total | 19.8% | 21.4% | -0.9% |
| Private rented; total | 65.2% | 65.6% | 82.4% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011, AECOM calculations.

House prices

114. Demand for home sales can be determined through house prices. House price data from The Land Registry³³ shows that from 1st January 2016 to 31 December 2016, the average sold house price over the past year in Okehampton Plan Area was £245,921. This is slightly lower than the overall West Devon average of £255,898 over the same period. This suggests that although the demand for homes is healthy relative to the West Devon average, it is not particularly high.

Local Household Composition

115. **Table 14** shows that the proportion of single person households in Okehampton Plan Area is broadly comparable to both the West Devon and England averages. By contrast, the proportion of households with a single family occupancy is marginally lower than the West Devon average but slightly higher than the average for England.

³³ <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd/search>

Table 14: Household composition (by household) in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011³⁴

| | | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| One person household | Total | 29.9% | 28.2% | 30.2% |
| | Aged 65 and over | 13.9% | 14.6% | 12.4% |
| | Other | 16.0% | 13.7% | 17.9% |
| One family only ³⁵ | Total | 64.4% | 66.3% | 61.8% |
| | All aged 65 and over | 11.1% | 12.2% | 8.1% |
| | With no children | 20.0% | 22.5% | 17.6% |
| | With dependent children | 25.3% | 22.8% | 26.5% |
| | All children non-dependent | 8.1% | 8.7% | 9.6% |
| Other household types | Total | 5.7% | 5.5% | 8.0% |

Source: ONS, Census 2011. AECOM calculations

116. The proportion of single person households aged 65 and over in Okehampton Plan Area is marginally lower than the West Devon average but higher than the England average, this is perhaps unsurprising given the age profile of the population (i.e. a higher proportion of older people than the national average).
117. The plan area is home to a lower proportion of families with no children than the West Devon average, this proportion is however still higher than the national average. The proportion of households with dependent children is slightly higher than West Devon averages and comparable to national average. The proportion of households where all children are non-dependent is slightly lower than the West Devon and national average. The proportion of other household types is slightly higher than the West Devon average but significantly lower than the national average.
118. **Table 15** shows how household composition changed in the 10 years between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. Overall, there was an increase in single family households, greater than the increase seen in West Devon and nationally. The majority of this comprised an increase in families with all members aged 65 or over. There was also a large increase in families with dependent children; this increase was larger than that seen nationally, and the slight decline seen in West Devon. The increase of families with non-dependent children was also higher than that seen in West Devon and England.

³⁴ ONS, Census 2011, Household Composition - Households (QS113EW)

³⁵ This includes: married couples, cohabiting couples, same-sex civil partnership couples and lone parents.

119. There has been a large increase in households with one person relative to both West Devon and national averages. The largest percentage increase has been seen in one person households classified as 'other'.

120. **Table 15: Rates of change in household composition in Okehampton Plan Area, 2001-2011**³⁶

| Household type | | Percentage change, 2001-2011 | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------|
| | | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
| One person household | Total | 22.2% | 17.6% | 8.4% |
| | Aged 65 and over | 12.3% | 5.3% | -7.3% |
| | Other | 32.4% | 34.2% | 22.7% |
| One family only | Total | 24.1% | 11.1% | 5.4% |
| | All aged 65 and over | 25.9% | 15.8% | -2.0% |
| | With no children | 21.5% | 14.9% | 7.1% |
| | With dependent children | 25.3% | 4.3% | 5.0% |
| | All children non-dependent | 24.9% | 13.8% | 10.6% |
| Other household types | Total | 22.6% | 6.7% | 28.9% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations.

121. As noted previously, Okehampton Plan Area household size is broadly comparable to West Devon but slightly lower than the national average. **Table 16** shows that the Plan area experienced an increase in its population and number of households over the period 2001-2011. This increase is larger than that seen in West Devon and also nationally. Over the same period there was a small increase in household size. This increase was larger than that of the West Devon decrease, and also than that of the national average (which showed no percentage change in household size).

122. Due to the increasing average age of the population, a decrease in household size would be expected as older residents downsize from family homes, and increasing numbers may be likely to move to extra care accommodation. As Okehampton Plan Area has in fact seen an increase in household size this may suggest that older members of the population are not

³⁶ ONS, Census 2011, Household Composition - Households (QS113EW); ONS, Census 2001, Household Composition - Households (UV65)

downsizing from family sized homes. This may suggest that there could be a lack of suitable homes for older people in the area.

Table 16: Change in household numbers and size in Okehampton, 2001-2011

| Key indicator | Percentage change, 2001-2011 | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|------------|---------|
| | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
| Population | 24.7% | 9.6% | 7.9% |
| Households | 23.5% | 12.6% | 7.9% |
| Household size | 1.0% | -2.6% | 0.0% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations.

123. **Table 17** shows that the proportion of dwellings in Okehampton Plan Area that are detached is lower than the West Devon average, but higher than the national average. However, the proportion of semi-detached dwellings is broadly comparable to the West Devon average but lower than the national average. In contrast, the proportion of terraced homes is higher than both the West Devon and national average. The prevalence of flats in Okehampton Plan Area is much higher than West Devon levels but slightly lower than the national average.

Table 17: Accommodation type (households), 2011

| Dwelling type | | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-------------------------------|--|------------|------------|---------|
| Whole house or bungalow | Detached | 30.0% | 43.2% | 22.4% |
| | Semi-detached | 24.1% | 25.1% | 31.2% |
| | Terraced | 27.9% | 20.9% | 24.5% |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment | Purpose-built block of flats or tenement | 11.5% | 6.3% | 16.4% |
| | Parts of a converted or shared house | 3.7% | 2.5% | 3.8% |
| | In commercial building | 2.0% | 1.3% | 1.0% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

124. A 'concealed family' means any group of people who want to form a new household but are unable to do so, typically for economic reasons such as high house prices or a lack of suitable property. **Table 18** shows that there are only 29 concealed families in the plan area (1.3%); one would normally expect a correlation between lower numbers of people per household and lower numbers of concealed families, and this is indeed the case. The proportion of concealed families is less than both the West Devon and England averages.

Table 18: Concealed families in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011³⁷

| Concealed families | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| All families: total | 2,305 | 16,208 | 14885145 |
| Concealed families: total | 29 | 263 | 275954 |
| Concealed families as % of total | 1.3% | 1.6% | 1.9% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

125. Official statistics do not clarify the overlap, if any, between the Okehampton Plan Area housing waiting list and the stated number of concealed families in West Devon.

Economic Activity

126. **Table 19** shows that the Okehampton Plan Area proportion of economically active residents is higher than in both West Devon and that of England. As would be expected, the number of economically inactive residents is lower than that seen in both West Devon and England. Full-time employment levels in Okehampton Plan Area are higher than the West Devon level, and significantly higher than the England level.

127. In contrast, although part time employment levels are slightly higher than for West Devon, they are significantly lower than the national average. Additionally, the proportion of economically active residents who are self-employed in Okehampton Plan Area is lower than the proportion in West Devon but slightly higher than the proportion for England. The proportion of economically active residents who are unemployed in Okehampton Plan Area is higher than both that of the West Devon and England average.

128. Levels of retired people are lower than the average for Okehampton Plan Area, but higher than the national average. Additionally, the number of economically inactive students is lower than both the West Devon average and national average. A higher proportion of the population is looking after home or family when compared to the West Devon average; however, this is lower than the national average.

129. There are a broadly similar number of long term sick or disabled people in Okehampton Plan Area to the West Devon average which is perhaps surprising given that the population structure for West Devon as whole points towards an older population than Okehampton Plan Area. The proportion of long-term sick or disabled in Okehampton Plan Area is less than that of the national average. This is again surprising given the comparatively older population age structure for the neighbourhood area compared to the national average.

³⁷ NOMIS, LC1110EW - Concealed family status by family type by dependent children by age of Family Reference Person (FRP)

Table 19: Economic activity in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011³⁸

| Economic category | | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Economically active | Total | 72.6% | 68.2% | 69.9% |
| | Employee: Full-time | 38.0% | 31.1% | 13.7% |
| | Employee: Part-time | 16.6% | 15.2% | 38.6% |
| | Self-employed | 10.9% | 16.6% | 9.8% |
| | Unemployed | 4.9% | 3.1% | 4.4% |
| | Full-time student | 2.2% | 2.2% | 3.4% |
| Economically inactive | Total | 27.4% | 31.8% | 30.1% |
| | Retired | 16.4% | 19.6% | 13.7% |
| | Student | 2.4% | 3.3% | 5.8% |
| | Looking after home or family | 4.0% | 3.4% | 4.4% |
| | Long-term sick or disabled | 3.5% | 3.4% | 4.1% |
| | Other | 1.1% | 2.1% | 2.2% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

Table 20: Rates of long-term health problems or disability in Okehampton Plan Area, 2011³⁹

| Extent of activity limitation | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|--|------------|------------|---------|
| Day-to-day activities limited a lot | 8.4% | 8.6% | 8.3% |
| Day-to-day activities limited a little | 10.7% | 11.5% | 9.3% |
| Day-to-day activities not limited | 80.8% | 80.0% | 82.4% |

Source: ONS, Census 2001 and 2011. AECOM calculations

130. The PPG advises taking account in housing need assessment of the number of people with long-term limiting illness. **Table 20** shows that, in general, the proportion of working-age residents of Okehampton Plan Area who are long-term sick or disabled is generally comparable to the West Devon average, but marginally higher than the England average.

131. The proportion of residents in Okehampton Plan Area whose day-to-day activities are not limited by disability is broadly similar to that in West Devon, but higher than that of England.

³⁸ ONS, Census 2011, Economic Activity (QS601EW)

³⁹ ONS, Census 2011, Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (QS303EW)

The proportion of Okehampton Plan Area residents whose day to day activities are limited a little by disability is lower than West Devon, but slightly higher than that of England. For those residents whose day to day activities are limited a lot, the proportion is marginally lower than West Devon, but marginally higher than the England average.

132. **Table 21** shows that, in general, Okehampton Plan Area residents have a longer commuting distance to their place of work when compared to the national average. Typically, a higher proportion of Okehampton Plan Area residents travel less than 10km to their place of work when compared to West Devon averages, however this is a lower proportion than nationally. By contrast, the proportion of people who are required to travel up to 30km to their place of work is slightly higher than national levels but lower than West Devon levels. The number of residents who commute over 30km is higher than West Devon averages which in turn is higher than the national level. The number of people working from home in Okehampton Plan Area is marginally higher than national levels but significantly lower than the West Devon average.

Table 21: Distance travelled to work, 2011⁴⁰

| Location of work | Okehampton | West Devon | England |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Less than 10km | 46.2% | 33.9% | 52.3% |
| 10km to less than 30km | 11.3% | 23.4% | 21.0% |
| 30km and over | 21.2% | 12.3% | 8.0% |
| Work mainly at or from home | 12.6% | 20.8% | 10.3% |
| Other | 8.7% | 9.6% | 8.5% |

Source: ONS, Census 2011, AECOM calculations

4 Conclusions

Overview

133. This housing needs assessment has interrogated a wide range of data sources, which, taken together, can inform key trends and messages relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies.
134. In this first section of the conclusions recommendations are made on the overall quantum of housing growth required.
135. In the second section, an assessment is presented based on the data uncovered, and indications of the components and characteristics of future housing based on the data analysed.
136. In line with recommended best practice, our preferred methodology is to present the projections our analysis has produced as a starting point, and then highlight the factors⁴¹ that the Neighbourhood Group might wish to take into consideration as they determine the

⁴⁰ NOMIS, QS702EW - Distance travelled to work

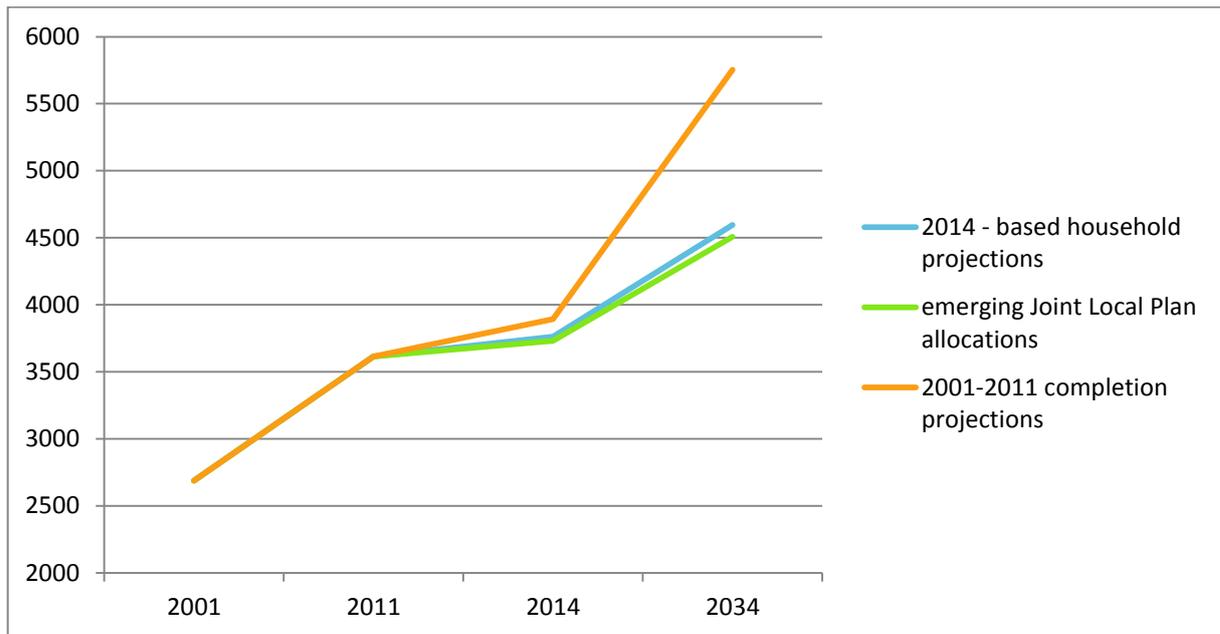
⁴¹ These factors are also referred to as 'indicators' in the PPG.

final housing policy text, bearing in mind the requirement to be in general conformity with the strategic housing policies of Joint Local Plan.

Quantity of Housing Needed

137. To recap, three separate projections of dwelling numbers for Okehampton Plan Area between 2014 and 2034 have been identified (see also **Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Okehampton Plan Area housing projections



138. These are based on:

- A figure derived from the emerging Joint Local Plan (which gives a total of 775 new dwellings, or approximately 39 per year);
- The Government's 2014-based household projections, extrapolated to Okehampton, translated from households to dwellings (which gives 981 new dwellings, or approximately 49 dwellings per year);
- A projection forward of dwelling completion rates 2001-2011, (which gives 1,860 new dwellings, or 93 per year).

139. A summary of the findings of the data gathered in Chapter 3 is presented in **Table 22**. The source for each factor with particular relevance to the neighbourhood is shown, together with AECOM assessment of whether that factor is more likely to increase (↑), decrease (↓) or have no impact on (↔) the neighbourhood plan area's future housing need. Following PPG guidance, the factors relate both to housing price and housing quantity.

140. Professional judgement was applied on the scales of increase and decrease associated with each factor on a scale from one to three, where one arrow indicates 'some impact', two arrows 'stronger impact' and three arrows indicates an even stronger impact. Factors are in alphabetical but no other order.

141. Note that factors have the potential to contradict one another, due to data being gathered at different times and across differing geographies. The Okehampton Plan Group is invited to use its judgement in resolving any conflicts, but it is advised that the more local and more recent data should generally have priority over data gathered at a larger spatial scale or older data.
142. Our general approach reflects PPG advice to adjust the housing quantity suggested by household projections to reflect appropriate market signals, as well as other market indicators of the balance between the demand for and supply of dwellings, such as house prices and past build-out rate.
143. The PPG also advises that market signals are affected by a number of factors, and plan makers should not attempt to estimate the precise impact of an increase in housing supply. Rather they should increase planned supply by an amount that, on reasonable assumptions and consistent with principles of sustainable development, could be expected to improve affordability, and monitor the response of the market over the plan period.
144. As such, **Table 22** should be used as a basis for qualitative judgement rather than quantitative calculation. It is designed to form the starting point for steering group decisions on housing policy rather than to provide definitive answers. Again, this reflects the PPG approach - it states that when considering future need for different types of housing, planners have the option to consider whether they plan to attract an age profile that differs from the present situation. They should look at the household types, tenure and size in the current stock and in recent supply, and assess whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs.
145. The PPG also states that appropriate comparisons of indicators (i.e. factors) should be made and that trends uncovered may necessitate adjustment to planned housing numbers compared to ones based solely on household projections. Where upward adjustment is considered necessary, it should be at a reasonable level and not negatively affect strategic conformity with the emerging Local Plan.
146. To help inform the steering group discussions that will be necessary to determine a neighbourhood plan housing target, professional judgement of need level, based on the market factors presented in **Table 22**, and taking into account our own knowledge and experience of housing need at neighbourhood plan level has been provided.

Table 22: Summary of factors specific to Okehampton Plan Area with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing quantity

| Factor | Source(s) (detailed in Chapter 3) | Possible impact on future housing need | Rationale for judgement |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Age structure of population | SHMNA, Census, | ↑↑ | The Census shows that proportion of people aged 65-84 in Okehampton Plan Area is significantly higher than the national average, and there is also a higher proportion of those aged 85 or over. Census data also shows that there have been trends towards this increasing – particularly in the 85 and over age group. Additionally, the SHMNA noted that West Devon is projected to see a considerable increase in the older person population by 2031, which will place greater pressures on existing services and stock. It also noted that Estate Agents perceived that Okehampton Town was in particularly in high demand primarily by retirees and families. AECOM considers that this factor has two rather than three up arrows as older members of the population downsizing from family homes will free up dwellings for younger families and first time buyers. |
| Economic performance | SHMNA, Census, | ↔ | The SHMNA notes that West Devon has seen the second lowest level of growth in employment out of the local authorities within the HMA but that the projected job growth until 2030 is higher than that seen between 2001 and 2011. Additionally, census data shows that the proportion of economically active residents in Okehampton Plan Area is higher than in both West Devon and that of England. A sideways arrow has been given here as although economic performance is potentially strong, this forecast has already been embedded into |

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| | | | the Local Plan projection. |
| Overcrowding/concealed families | Census, SHMNA | ↓ ↓ | Census data highlights that there has been a large increase in the number of households with more than 1.5 persons per room but, conversely, there has also been an increase in households with 0.5 to 1, and less than 0.5 persons per room. These increases have occurred at a higher rate than for West Devon and would suggest that the trends in number of persons per room in Okehampton Plan Area are relatively stable. By contrast, England as a whole is seeing increasing levels of overcrowding. Additionally, the proportion of concealed families is less than both the West Devon and England averages. This data does not suggest that there is significant overcrowding in Okehampton Plan Area. As such, this factor has been given two down arrows to reflect a lack of pressure for additional housing from overcrowding or concealed households in Okehampton Plan Area. |
| Level of new supply in local housing market | Census | ↓ | Between 2001 and 2011 there was a total of 93 new dwellings completed each year in Okehampton Plan Area leading to approximately 40% increase over the ten year period. . In comparison, there was a 22% increase for West Devon as a whole. This suggests that the supply of new dwellings has been almost double the amount seen in West Devon. As such, this is likely to result in decreased demand on future housing need. This factor has been given one down arrow as this high level of delivery may be met due to the desirable nature of Okehampton Plan Area. |

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| <p>Local housing waiting list/need for affordable housing</p> | <p>Local Housing waiting list, SHMNA, Census</p> | <p>↑</p> | <p>The Census shows shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing) is in line with the district average, which in turn is lower than the England average. However, the proportion of socially rented housing is slightly higher than the district level but much lower than the national average. The local housing waiting list for Okehampton Plan Area shows that applications make up 4.6% of the total number of households; this is again slightly higher than the West Devon average. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that in the past developers have not met the affordable housing requirements detailed in Local Plans, which may push demand higher. This factor has been given one up arrow as it can be seen that affordability indicators (including anecdotal evidence) point to a marginally higher need than the district level, but one which is lower than that which is seen across England on average.</p> |
| <p>House prices relative to wider area</p> | <p>Census, The Land Registry</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>House price data from The Land Registry shows that, that from 1st January 2016 to 31 December 2016, the average sold house price over the past year in Okehampton Plan Area was £245,921. This is slightly lower than the overall West Devon average of £255,898 over the same period, despite anecdotal evidence from local estate agents suggesting that Okehampton Plan Area is in high demand. This suggests that although the demand for homes is healthy relative to the West Devon average, it is not particularly high.</p> |

147. **Table 22** contains in total three up arrows, two horizontal arrows and three down arrows. This indicates that local market factors such as an ageing population are acting to increase

housing demand but that these factors are tempered by the high proportion of under-crowding and recent high supply of housing which results in a balanced housing demand.

148. With regard to selecting a specific housing target from the three projections shown in **Figure 6**, AECOM would advise against relying on the 2001-2011 dwelling completion rates. Although these can be useful in certain circumstances, in the case of Okehampton Plan Area, the evidence suggests that the delivery rate between 2001 and 2011 was unusually high, and therefore, a housing number based on this projection may result in an oversupply of housing in the future. Consequently this projection should be discounted.
149. Having discounted a projection based on dwelling completion rates, there is then a choice either based on the 2014 based household projection figure of 981 dwellings, or the Local Plan target of 775 dwellings. AECOM recommends that the most appropriate course of action will be for the Neighbourhood Group to discuss a range of figures with WDBC based on the two projections. The discussion in the following paragraphs outlines issues which should be taken into account.
150. Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet Basic Condition E of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. This requires that the Neighbourhood Plan's housing policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the relevant Local Plan, bearing in mind that some strategic local policies may be outside of the local plan. With regard to housing numbers, Neighbourhood Plans are considered to meet Basic Condition E as long as they seek to meet the Local Plan target, which is considered a minimum figure. This means that the Neighbourhood Group will be required to allocate 775 new dwellings (the number stipulated by the emerging JLP) as a minimum figure.
151. Taking the above into account, it should be noted that the 2014 based household projection (981 dwellings) is a significantly higher figure, indicating that there may be some unmet need in the future (higher than that provided by the JLP target). AECOM highlights that this is a demand-side projection only, and in line with government guidance, this estimate needs to be aggregated with the results of the supply-side evidence base, and local constraints on the supply-side such as: landscape, heritage, transport, and infrastructure considerations. As such, the deliverable number may be lower than 981 dwellings.
152. Taking into account the potential for a housing need in excess of the JLP target (evidenced through the 2014 household projections), the Neighbourhood Plan Group may allocate some or all of this excess need. It should be noted that any housing number allocated above the JLP target is at the discretion of the Neighbourhood Group.
153. AECOM advises that the Neighbourhood Group discuss a range of potential figures with WDBC between the minimum of 775 dwellings, and a potential maximum of 981 dwellings. The most sensible course of action would be to take a midpoint figure of 878 dwellings as a starting point and assess the deliverability of any uplift to the JLP target against the local supply side constraints such as landscape, heritage, transport, and infrastructure considerations.

Characteristics of housing needed

154. Having confirmed the quantity of housing required in Okehampton Plan Area, the remainder of our assessment focused on the characteristics and/or type of the housing needed. Summaries of the conclusions from all sources are in **Table 23** below. Factors in the table

are in alphabetical but no other order. Note that there is potential for overlap between some factors (e.g. dwelling type and housing for older people) but an inclusive approach has been taken to ensure all relevant factors are covered.

Table 23: Summary of local factors specific to Okehampton Plan Area with a potential impact on neighbourhood plan housing characteristics

| Factor | Source(s) (see Chapter 3) | Possible impact on housing needed | Conclusion |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Affordable housing | Census, Local Housing Waiting List, emerging JLP, SHMNA, | <p>WDBC provided data which shows the affordable housing need in Okehampton Plan Area is slightly higher than the West Devon average. Anecdotal evidence also highlights that developers have re-negotiated the affordable housing target in the past, suggesting that the total percentage of affordable homes delivered may be lower than the 30% set out in the JLP.</p> <p>The proportion of shared ownership (an indication of a lack of affordable housing), is the same as the West Devon average, and slightly lower the England average. Anecdotal evidence from the Neighbourhood Group did however highlight that in the past, Shared Equity properties have not been seen to be affordable for the local community.</p> <p>It would appear that the level of need (4.6%) would be likely to be met by the outlined affordable housing provision in the adopted Core Strategy.</p> | <p>Based on available evidence there does not appear to be an acute need for affordable housing, however anecdotal evidence does highlight a need for both housing affordable for the local community, and also a wish for safeguards to ensure developer contributions to affordable housing set out in the JLP are met. It is therefore recommended that the Neighbourhood Group work closely with WDBC to ensure that the emerging Joint Local Plan will sufficiently address any requirements for affordable housing in Okehampton Plan Area. Additionally, the group should - in conjunction with WDBC – aim to augment the Local Plan Policy with locally specific detail through the Neighbourhood Plan while ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in conformity with the Local Plan.</p> |
| Dwelling type | SHMNA, Census | <p>West Devon as a whole shows a housing stock profile with considerable proportions of detached property, in excess of the national average level. Census data shows that Okehampton Plan Area has a lower proportion of detached housing than West Devon, but still more than the national average. In contrast, there is a higher proportion of terraced housing than regional and national averages, but fewer flats.</p> | <p>It is recommended that the new dwellings to be provided should be a mix of houses, flats and bungalows, designed to meet the needs of a range of population sectors, but with a particular focus on smaller dwellings, bearing in mind the need for a particular focus on homes for older people.</p> <p>Although it is accepted that the local context suggests a proportion of the new dwellings coming forward would be semi-detached and detached, the</p> |

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| | | | neighbourhood plan should seek to avoid an over-provision of new larger (3 + bedroom) detached dwellings. |
| Dwelling size | Census, SHMNA | Between 2001 and 2011 Okehampton Plan Area saw the highest level of proportional growth in large houses (7+ bedrooms) and also those with two bedrooms. However there was a decrease in the number of 1 room houses. This, combined with an ageing population and wider national trends of decreasing household sizes, is likely to result in a shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to current housing stock distribution in the future. The SHMNA, did note that Okehampton Plan Area is also in high demand from families due to its good schools, so there will also be demand for larger family homes moving forwards. | <p>Support, encourage and/or require the development of a large proportion of smaller (1-2 bedroom) dwellings to meet the needs of older people looking to downsize, and also younger families.</p> <p>Smaller dwellings most likely to be in demand would be houses rather than flats, and could be terraced or semi-detached depending on its local context.</p> <p>There also continue to be a demand for larger detached homes from families, however this need will in part be met through older residents downsizing from under-occupied homes.</p> |
| Housing for older people | Census, SHMNA | Agents perceived that Okehampton Town is in particularly high demand, with a large proportion of the market driven by retirees. Census data shows that the proportion of people aged 65-84 in Okehampton Plan Area (18%) is significantly higher than the average for England (14%), and also that the proportion of people aged 85 and over in Okehampton Plan Area (3%) is larger than the England (2%) average. Data from the SHMNA confirms that the number of older persons (aged 65+) living alone in the Local Authorities is forecast to increase significantly by 2020. West Devon in particular has the highest percentage increase out of any local authority within the HMA. | <p>The choice of housing for older people needs to increase in the future in line with expected demographic changes. There will be increased demand for smaller housing and bungalows from retirees who wish to downsize; and there will also need to be opportunities for specialist and extra care housing.</p> <p>To augment the Plan aspirations, The Neighbourhood Plan group may tackle this by working with specialist providers to provide dwellings suitable for older people, essentially smaller units and/or bungalows with 1-2 bedrooms</p> <p>A policy supporting downsizing for households currently under-occupying larger properties, though aspirational, could at least be a useful statement of</p> |

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| | | | <p>intent.</p> <p>Monitor downsizing as it takes place- the more that happens, the lower the need for new family-sized/larger dwellings.</p> |
| <p>Tenure of Housing</p> | <p>Census, SHMNA</p> | <p>The level of owner occupation in Okehampton Plan Area is higher than the England average Ownership in Okehampton Plan Area has also increased at a higher rate than for the modest level of growth in West Devon, and the contraction at the national level (2001-2011). However, shared ownership, which is an indication of a lack of affordable housing, increased in Okehampton Plan Area at a rate broadly in line with the national average but at a rate of almost a third of that seen in West Devon. This suggests affordability issues in Okehampton Plan Area are slightly smaller than the national average and not as acute as seen in West Devon.</p> <p>The proportion of socially rented housing (rented from the Council or a Registered Social Landlord) is higher than the West Devon average but lower than the national average. Between 2001 and 2011 the increase in social rentals in Okehampton Plan Area has been much larger than the national average, and comparable to that seen in West Devon,</p> <p>There are also a higher proportion of privately rented units in Okehampton Plan Area compared to the West Devon and England averages, but the increase in private rents have been comparable to West Devon but lower than the national average.</p> | <p>There is a high proportion of home ownership in Okehampton Plan Area, and there does not appear to be as acute affordability issues relative to England. However, relative to the data for West Devon there appears to be a higher need for both social and market rented housing. Large increases in shared ownership between 2001 and 2011 also suggest issues with affordability.</p> <p>As previously discussed, the ageing population may also result in an increased demand on social and private rents as older residents may wish to down size.</p> <p>It may also be pertinent for the Okehampton Plan Group (as an action outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan polices) to consider other forms of housing tenure, delivered through community led projects. See appendix A for further information on this.</p> <p>Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan should work closely with West Devon Borough Council to ensure that local need for both social and market rented housing is met.</p> |

Recommendations for next steps

155. This neighbourhood plan housing needs advice has aimed to provide Okehampton Plan Group with evidence on housing trends from a range of sources. It is recommended that the Plan Group should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with WDBC with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, taking the following into account during the process:

- the contents of this report, including but not limited to Tables 22 and 23;
- Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, of particular notes is Basic Condition E, which is the need for the neighbourhood plan to be in general conformity with the development plan (here, with the adopted plan out of date, this is taken to mean the latest draft of the emerging Joint Local Plan);
- the types (detached, semi-detached, terraced etc.) and sizes (1 bedroom, 2 bedroom etc.) of recent and existing dwelling completions and commitments (i.e. post 2014) as what has already been provided will have an impact on the types and sizes of the remaining homes to be provided over the rest of the plan period;
- the views of West Devon Borough Council;
- the views of local residents;
- the views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers; and
- The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by the Council, including but not limited to the SHLAA.

156. As noted previously, recent changes to the planning system, as well as forthcoming changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the implementation of the Housing and Planning Act, will continue to affect housing policies at a local authority and, by extension, a neighbourhood level.

157. This advice note has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data current at the time of writing (alongside other relevant and available information).

Bearing this in mind, it is recommend that the steering group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by WDBC or any other relevant body and review the neighbourhood plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.

158. Most obviously, this includes monitoring the status of the emerging Joint Local Plan.

159. At the same time, monitoring ongoing demographic or other trends in the factors summarised in Tables 22 and 23 would be particularly valuable.

Appendix A

Encouraging a wider range of tenures for the future

Forms of 'tenure' (ownership) and types of housing provision in England have developed significantly over the last 60 years. For many decades after the war there only 3 forms of tenure namely, privately rented, home ownership and 'social' housing which equated, until the early 1980's as Council Housing. The latter became known as social housing' as more and more housing associations started to deliver homes for affordable rent. After right to buy was introduced in 1980, new ways of part-owning a housing association home were devised variously called shared ownership or equity schemes.

Since the 1980's a small number of permanent housing co-ops were also built, collectively owned by their members, but still rented by the co-op tenants. In the noughties co-housing groups also started to form buying land to build or convert existing properties. These were groups of people who put in their own capital to collectively build, but to individually own their homes and run their schemes collectively. Housing Associations, Co-ops and Co-Housing are all non-profit maximising companies (i.e. any surplus is put back into their communities/housing). Small housing co-ops, co-housing groups as well as self-builders have often found it difficult to find suitable and affordable land for their projects.

With the advent of the 2011 Localism Act, a Community Right to Build was introduced as a route to planning for any community-led housing or building project (e.g. a community centre or all weather pitch). Community led is defined as housing designed and managed by local people and built to meet the needs of the community – not for private profit. There is now a well-developed network of support as well as easily accessible grants available for neighbourhood planning groups to investigate the feasibility of a potential project and to prepare such a project for either a traditional planning application or a community right to build 'order' - which goes through a similar examination and referendum as a neighbourhood plan to grant a planning permission.

With the 2016 Housing and Planning Act, the Government has also begun to promote an ambitious 'starter homes' programme and this also encourages neighbourhood planning groups to identify suitable sites for these. These are aimed at first time buyers, aged under 40 and are expected to be sold by developers or house-builders at no less than 20% below the open market value of the property.

Starter homes can be proposed on brownfield sites, exception sites, or greenfield sites. They will not contribute to section 106 calculations, but may benefit younger people locally, or wanting to live in the neighbourhood area, who cannot currently afford to buy locally.

Neighbourhood planning can therefore influence and encourage a wide range of tenures and types of 'affordable' and market housing locally by developing policies and site allocations that work for the community, land-owners and house builders together. Understanding your housing need locally, which tenures might help to build or maintain a sustainable and diverse community into the future and the potential of different sites in the neighbourhood area is crucial. AECOM and Locality can help groups, through direct

Technical Support and Grants, to influence the wide potential range of housing tenures and provision for your place. The support, particularly around Community Right to Build grants also encourages you to look into whether there might be, for example, groups of people locally who with the right kind of help, could develop a community led scheme on one or more of the sites you have identified.

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