

Parish of Lynton & Lynmouth Housing Needs Report



Produced by: Devon Communities Together

On behalf of: Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council and
North Devon District Council

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1 Executive Summary

Principal Conclusions

The survey identified a need for 13 affordable homes within the next 5 years.

Key findings

Affordability

- The survey found 7 households in housing need who could not afford to buy in the open market.
- 1 of those could afford to rent in the open market.
- 7 additional replies were received by households on Devon Home Choice who had not completed the survey but were eligible for affordable housing in the town.

Tenure

- 11 of the households in need qualified for affordable housing for rent.
- 2 may be able to afford a shared ownership property.

Size of Property Required

- 10 x 1 or 2 bedroom properties for singles/couples
- 3 x 2 bedroom properties for families

Other Findings

- The survey achieved its aim of identifying actual households in need. 915 surveys were delivered and 208 survey forms were returned. The response rate was 23%.
- 80% of those who answered the question said they would be in favour of a small development of affordable housing for local people. 41 households did not answer this question.
- A total of 6 households showed an interest in self-build. 5 of these expressed an interest in individual self-build housing and 5 expressed an interest in group self-build housing.
- 25 households in total expressed a desire to move within the parish sometime within the next 5 years.

2. Aims of the Survey

- To investigate the housing need, tenure and size of homes required for local people in the town, those wishing to return, and those who work in the town.
- To establish the general level of support for new homes in the town with an emphasis on homes for local people with housing needs.
- To establish the views of the whole community on future housing in the town.
- To assist the Parish Council and District Council with future planning.

3. Survey history, methodology and response

3.1 History

Lynton & Lynmouth Town Council decided to carry out a survey to assess the level of local housing need. The Rural Housing Enabler met with the Town Council and it was agreed to proceed with the survey. Survey forms were finalised and 915 forms were posted out to every household in the parish. Parishioners were able to return the survey in a reply paid envelope. The deadline for the return of the survey was 14th November 2016.

3.2 Methodology

The survey was carried out using a standard methodology approved by local planners. Background notes on the methodology can be obtained from the Rural Housing Enabler.

The survey form was in 3 parts. The first section asked a limited number of questions about the type of household and their support for affordable housing. All residents were invited to respond to this part of the survey. The second section was aimed at parishioners aged over 55 to gauge the specific needs of older residents. The third part of the survey was designed to be completed by households who believe they have a need for affordable housing and wish to remain living in the town. A reminder was also sent to those on the Devon Home Choice register who did not complete a survey form.

3.3 Response

- 208 surveys were returned, which is a response rate of 23% of all dwellings surveyed.
- Out of the 208 returned surveys, 21 were returned with Part 3 completed.

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

4. Introduction and Information about Lynton & Lynmouth

4.1 Overview of Lynton & Lynmouth

Lynton & Lynmouth Parish is located on the North Devon coast midway between Ilfracombe and Minehead and consists of the larger town of Lynton and the small harbour town of Lynmouth which lies just to the east. The parish is situated in Exmoor National Park and is a popular tourist destination, being home to the Lynton & Lynmouth cliff railway (which links the two settlements) and the Valley of the Rocks. Several walking and cycling trails also go through the parish including the Tarka Trail and South West Coastal Path. The parish is fairly remote with

the nearest large town being Barnstaple which is approximately 20 miles away. It has a daily bus service (not Sundays) which links it to Barnstaple.

Amenities and organisations in the parish include a Parish Church, United Reform Church, Primary school and nursery, Post Office, health centre, town hall, convenience store, garage, and cinema. The parish also has football, bowls, tennis and cricket clubs and a youth centre. Lynmouth is home to the Lynmouth Pavilion which houses an Exmoor National Park centre and a café and small exhibition space. Being a tourist destination, the parish has several hotels, pubs, B & Bs and shops catering to the tourist trade.

4.2 Population Figures

In the 2011 census the usually resident population of Lynton & Lynmouth was recorded as 1441 in 871 households. The census also records that there were 245 dwellings which were empty properties, second homes or holiday lets. This is 28% of the total number of households which is a very high percentage and reflects the fact that Lynton is a holiday destination with a large number of second homes and holiday lets.

4.3 Council Tax Bandings

A breakdown of Council Tax bandings in Table 1¹ shows that there are 441 properties (51% of all dwellings) in the lower two bandings out of a total of 859. These represent the entry level properties that people on lower incomes would be able to afford. This is a high level compared to a lot of towns but as the 2011 Census also shows that there are 223 flats in the parish many of these properties may be holiday flats and may not necessarily be available to local people in the long term.

Table 1

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total
243	198	181	127	72	22	15	1	859

4.4 Property Prices and Rent

In the last 2 years the Land Registry has recorded 72 property sales in the parish. The average price of properties whose value was shown was £226,472. Prices ranged from £86,000 for a one bedroom flat to £675,000 for a large detached house.

There are currently 25 residential property listings on the Rightmove website in Lynton. The cheapest house on the market at the moment is a 2 bedroom cottage for £175,000. There are only 2 houses for sale under £250,000 and one of these is a 6 bedroom property needing renovation. There are 5 residential property listings on the Rightmove website in Lynmouth. All are in excess of £280,000. This confirms the lack of affordable property for sale in the parish.

There are currently no properties advertised on either Rightmove or Zoopla for rent in Lynton or Lynmouth.²

To assess whether a household can afford to buy in the open market it is necessary to look at the cost of an entry level property in the local market. This is done by comparing information on local private rents gained from the housing needs survey with rents of properties currently on the market. From this information, we can establish typical rents to assess affordability.

¹ From 2011 census

² House price and rental figures as of 11/11/16

There were no one bedroom properties for rent on the open market at the time of writing this report therefore data has been taken from surrounding rural areas and information provided by current tenants. The figures used to assess affordability are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Size	Property price	Weekly rent
1 bedroom	£120,000	£110
2 bedroom	£150,000	£150
3 bedroom	£200,000	£160

4.5 Current affordable housing stock

There are currently 69 housing association owned properties in the parish. These consist of:-

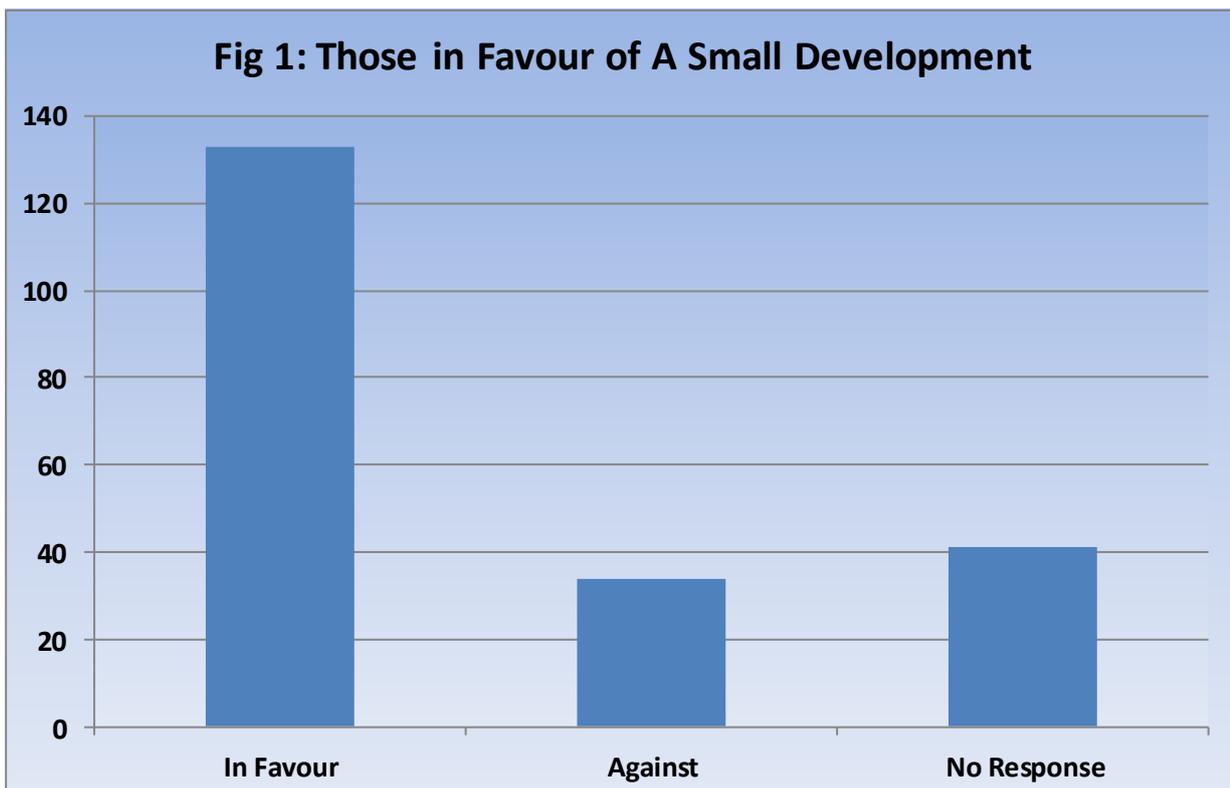
- 17 x 1 bedroom homes
- 35 x 2 bedroom homes
- 17 x 3 bedroom homes

17 have been let in the last 2 years, including the 4 new flats at Lee Road. This shows that there is some availability of affordable housing already in the parish which could go towards meeting some of the housing need.

5. General Survey Findings

5.1 In favour of a small local development

Respondents were asked if they would be in favour of a small number of homes for local people being built if the need for affordable housing were proven. 80% of those answering the question said they would be in favour. 20% said they were against any development. It should be noted that 41 households did not respond to this question. Fig.1 below shows the breakdown.



39 individuals made suggestions or comments about possible sites. 16 suggested Lydiate Lodge, the former elderly care home. This was by far the most popular suggestion. The Holman Park area was also a popular suggestion. The full list will be made available to the Town Council on a separate document.

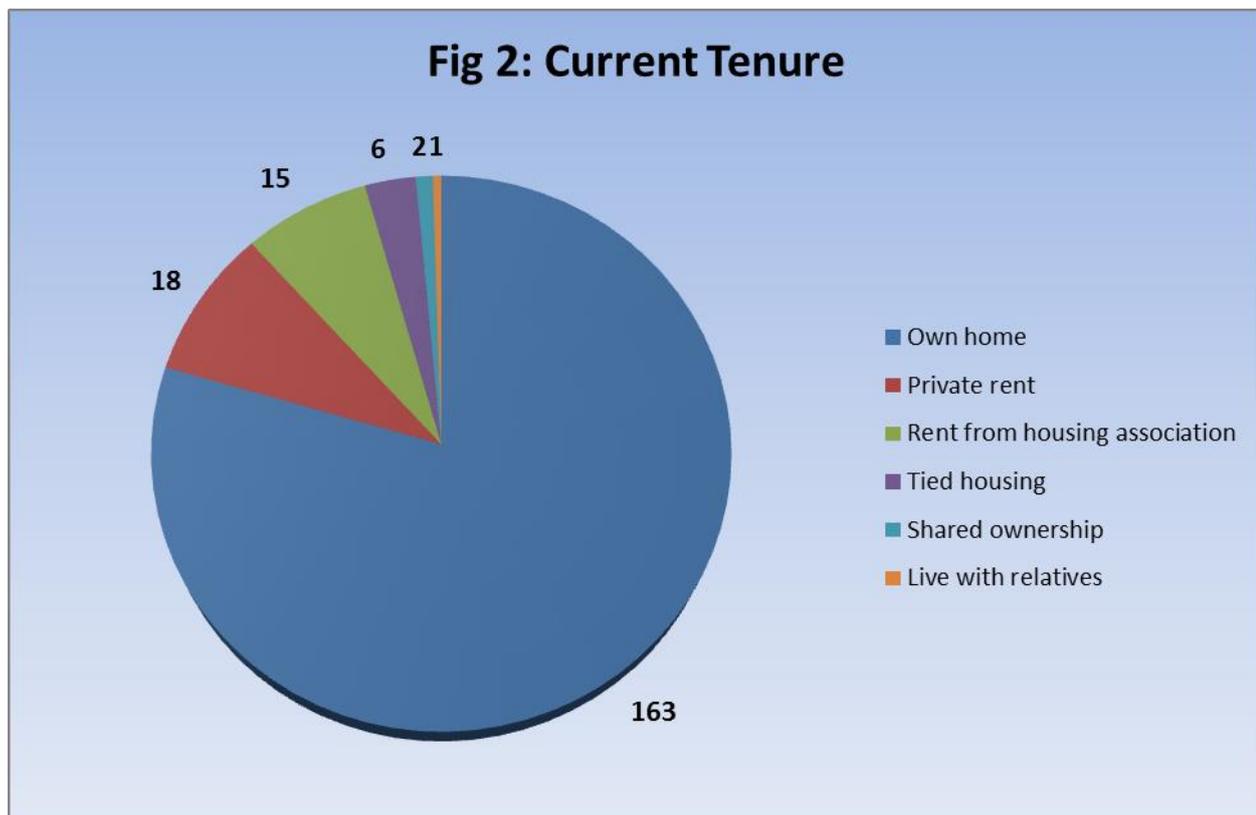
Additional comments were made more generally about the provision of new housing; these comments will also be made available to the Town Council on the above document.

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

Respondents were asked if they knew of anybody who had had to leave the town in the last 5 years due to lack of suitable housing. 23 households replied that they did know of someone.

5.4 Current tenure

Of the 206 respondents who provided details, 163 (79%) own their own home, 19 (9.2%) rent from a private landlord, 15 (7.3%) rent from a housing association and 6 (3%) live in tied housing. The remaining 3 households (1.5%) are made up of 2 shared ownership properties and 1 living with relatives. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of tenure.



5.5 Main or second home

19 of the respondents were second home owners.

5.6 Parish of Residence

Respondents were asked which parish they lived in.

- 201 lived in Lynton & Lynmouth
- 1 lived in Somerset (second home owner)

- 1 lived in Parracombe
- 1 lived in Upton (second home owner)
- 4 did not respond to this question

5.7 Number of bedrooms in current home

Respondents were asked how many bedrooms their current home has. The replies are shown in Table 3 below. 4 households did not answer this question.

Table 3

Number of bedrooms	1	2	3	4+
Respondents	21	69	63	51

5.8 Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

Respondents were asked whether they would consider becoming a member of a CLT. 12 households expressed an interest

6. Housing needs and aspirations of older residents

Part 2 of the questionnaire was directed at residents over the age of 55. The number of people over the age of 55 is set to rise significantly across the UK over the next 20 years. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics published population projections for the next 20 years. These figures show that by 2034 the percentage of people over the age of 55 will have increased by 23% across Devon and by 25% in North Devon during that period.

221 people answered Part 2 of the survey from 147 households with at least one member over the age of 55. This is 71% of the total respondents.

6.1 Age of Respondents to Part 2 survey

Respondents were asked to give their age in 10 year bands. As can be seen in Table 4 below, the majority of those who replied (80%) were aged between 55 and 75.

Table 4

Age Group	55-65	66-75	76-85	Over 85
Number	89	87	28	17

6.2 Future Housing Plans

Households were asked about their future housing plans.

- 21 households plan to move within the next five years. Of these, 8 would like to remain in Lynton & Lynmouth and all would require affordable housing.
- 18 further households expect to move after five years.
- 105 have no plans to move at the moment.
- 3 households did not answer the question.

6.3 Type of Accommodation preferred by older persons

Older households were asked what type of accommodation they may need in the future. The majority preferred a home better suited to their needs but not designed for older people. Preferences are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Type of Accommodation Preferred by Older Persons	Number
Home better suited to needs but not specifically designed for older people	38
Home specially designed for older people	15
Residential / nursing home	5

6.4 Location of next home

Respondents were asked where they would like to move to when they next move home. The breakdown is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6

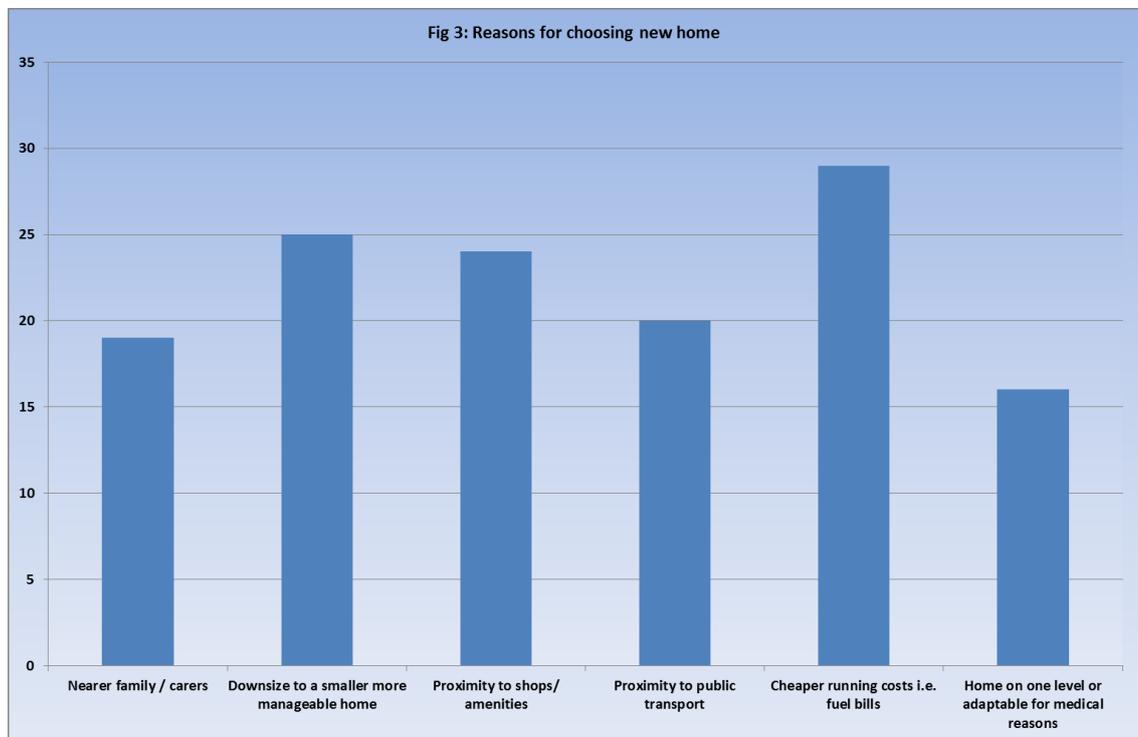
Remain in Lynton/Lynmouth	Elsewhere in North Devon	Elsewhere in Devon	Outside of Devon
61	14	10	12

6.5 Adaptability of current home

Respondents were asked whether they felt that their current home was adaptable to meet changing needs. 79 felt that their home was adaptable. 54 answered no and 14 did not respond.

6.6 What reasons would be most important when choosing a new home

Older households were asked to give the three most important considerations when choosing their next home. The results are shown in Figure 3 below. The most popular reasons were cheaper running costs and the need to downsize to a smaller, more manageable property.



6.7 Conclusion - Older Persons Needs

The older persons’ survey shows that the majority of households (71%) have no plans to move home. However, the parish does have a number of older households who wish to downsize to

smaller accommodation that is easier to maintain, has lower running costs and is close to amenities and support. All of these households would require affordable housing.

7. Assessment of those wishing to move to a new home in Lynton & Lynmouth within the next 5 years

Part 3 of the survey was aimed at those who expect to need to move home within the next 5 years and remain in Lynton & Lynmouth. It asked questions regarding size and make-up of the new household, local connection and financial circumstances. This information helps to identify the number of households that are eligible for both open market and affordable housing in the parish and the size, tenure and type of homes required.

25 households indicated a need to move to another home within the parish in the next 5 years, however only 21 completed Part 3 of the survey. The needs of these 21 households only have been included in this section of the survey.

7.1 Minimum bedroom requirement

Respondents were asked the minimum number of bedrooms they would require in their new home. Table 7 below shows the breakdown. One household did not reply. It should be noted that there are criteria relating to affordable housing that set the number of bedrooms that a household are eligible for based on the number of adults and children in that household.

Table 7

1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
6	11	2	1

7.2 Timescales for moving

Households completing this part of the form were asked to identify when they would need to move.

- 7 households indicated a current need to move.
- 4 households indicated a need to move in 1-3 years.
- 9 households indicated a need to move in 3 - 5 years.
- 1 household did not reply to this question

7.3 Housing tenure

Respondents were asked what type of accommodation they would consider moving to. The results are shown in table 8 below. Respondents could choose more than one option.

Table 8

Shared ownership/ equity	Affordable/Social rent	Affordable self-build	Open market self-build	Discounted market	Starter home	Open market
4	12	4	2	4	2	8

7.4 Self-build opportunities

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in self-building, either as an individual or part of a group. 6 households declared an interest in building their own home. Respondents could tick more than one box.

- 5 households were interested in an individual self-build
- 5 households were interested in a group self-build

As self-building is a very popular option at the moment and is encouraged by local and central government, this may be something for the Town Council to consider further.

7.5 Reasons for moving

Respondents were asked why they wished to move home. They could tick more than one box. Table 9 shows why households need to move

Table 9

Reason for wishing to move	No of respondents
Need to move to a home with more bedrooms	4
Need to downsize to a home with fewer bedrooms	5
Need to move for health/mobility reasons	4
Will be leaving and do not expect to be able to rent or buy privately	1
Struggling to afford current home	5
Private tenancy ending	4
Home is in poor condition	3
Other (includes need more space, don't like current home, social lease ending, want self-build, moving for work, no private rental available)	6

7.6 Budget for new home

Respondents who wished to purchase a home were asked about their budget. Table 10 below shows the breakdown of replies.

Table 10

£150,000 - £200,000	£200,000 - £250,000	£300,000 - £350,000	£350,000 +
4	3	2	1

8. Assessment of those in affordable housing need

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

8.1 Identifying those in housing need

All 21 of the households who expressed a need to move within the next 5 years and remain in Lynton & Lynmouth have been assessed and 9 have been excluded for the following reasons:-

- 8 could afford to buy on the open market and wanted open market housing
- 1 stated they were moving away from the area

This leaves 12 who may qualify for affordable housing.

8.2 Local Connection

To qualify for affordable housing, respondents must have a local connection to the parish. The definition of local connection for Lynton & Lynmouth is set out below:

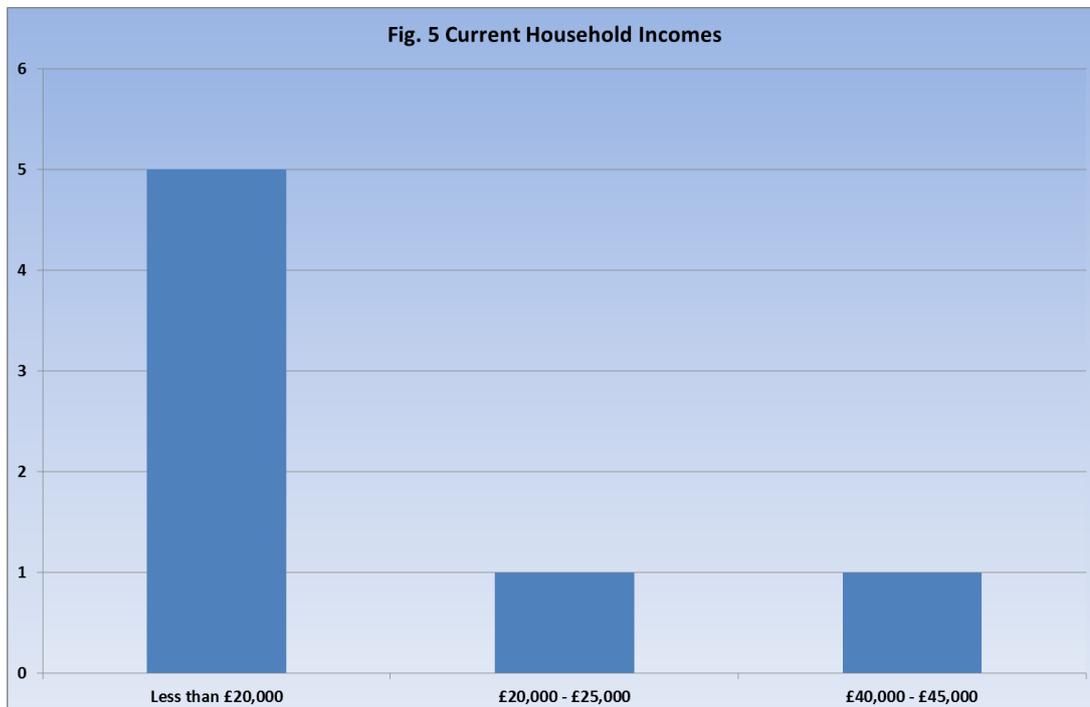
Affordable houses in the Parish shall only be occupied by persons (and their dependants) whose housing needs are not met by the market and:

- a) who have a minimum period of 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish; or
- b) who are not now resident in the parish or an adjoining parish but have a local connection with the parish including a period of permanent and continuous residence of 10 years or more within the last 20; or
- c) who have an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish, the essential need arising from proven age or medical reasons; or
- d) who need to live close to their place of work in the parish or an adjoining parish.

5 of the respondents do not have this connection so have been excluded from the final figures, leaving 7 households.

8.3 Housing Options

Respondents provided information on income and savings which allows an assessment of what the household can afford to pay for their accommodation. Incomes are shown in Figure 4 below.



Given the financial circumstances of the households in need, one could afford to rent on the open market so has been excluded from the final need figures.

None of the remaining 6 households can afford to purchase a discount market or shared ownership home. None could afford the affordable rent product which is set at 80% of open market rent so all 6 households would need a property with a social rent tariff.

8.4 Reasons for moving

Respondents were asked why they wished to move home. They could tick more than one box. Table 11 shows why households need to move

Table 11

Reason for wishing to move	No of respondents
Need to move for health/mobility reasons	4
Will be leaving home and do not expect to be able to rent or buy privately	1
Private tenancy ending	4
Struggling to afford current home	2
Home is in poor condition	1
Other -no private rental available	1

8.5 Type of housing required

The survey also asked households who had an affordable housing need which type of housing they were interested in. Respondents could give more than one option. This gives an indication of residents' aspirations rather than confirming which type of housing they are eligible for. The responses are listed in Table 12 below. The vast majority are would prefer to rent.

Table 12

Type of housing	Interested
Shared ownership/equity	1
Affordable housing for rent	6
Affordable self-build	1
Discounted market sale	1
Starter home	1

8.6 Other evidence of housing need

As well as this survey other evidence of housing need should be considered. The housing waiting list or register for Devon is called Devon Home Choice (DHC). Applicants are given a banding from A to E depending on their level of need. There are 49 households resident in the parish registered on DHC. Details are set out below.

Table 13

Devon Home Choice band	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
Band A (Emergency need)	0	0	0	0	0
Band B (High)	2	0	0	0	2
Band C (Medium)	3	3	1	0	7
Band D (Low)	8	4	0	0	12
Band E (No Housing Need)	21	6	1	0	28
Total	34	13	2	0	49

Only 11 of the households on the register completed the survey. Due to this apparent disparity, all those who are registered with DHC and living within the parish who did not complete the survey were contacted separately by letter and a further 7 positive replies were received. These have been added to the final numbers, giving a total need of 13.

8.7 Housing Mix

The suggested mix of housing is shown in Table 14 below. This takes account of the family makeup as declared on the survey form and the type of housing required.

Table 14

Type of Property	Affordable Housing for Rent	Shared Ownership	Totals
1 or 2 bedroom property for single people	6	2	8
1 or 2 bedroom property for couples	2	0	2
2 bedroom property for families	3	0	3
Totals	11	2	13

It should be noted that income details are not available for 3 of the households registered on Devon Home Choice so we are unsure if they can only afford social rent or have enough income to afford an Intermediate or Affordable Rental property. However, we can say that at least 9 of the properties who require rented accommodation can only afford the social rent tariff.

1 household requires a property adapted for a wheelchair and 3 require level access.

9. Conclusion - Future Housing Need for Lynton & Lynmouth

Overall, it must be remembered that this Housing Needs Survey represents a snapshot in time. Personal circumstances are constantly evolving. Any provision of affordable housing would need to take account of this. However, given the level of response to the survey, and in spite of the potential for circumstances to change, the Town Council can feel confident in the results of this survey. The survey has identified a need in the near future for 13 units of affordable housing.

Any further action taken towards meeting this housing need will require the support of the Town Council and wider community consultation. Should the Town Council wish to address the identified housing need, the Rural Housing Enablers are available to help identify potential sites, conduct site appraisals and facilitate the process of identifying potential development partners as well as any other ongoing assistance that may be required.

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

It is recommended that the Town Council:

- Note this report
- Consider the options for addressing the need for 13 affordable homes.