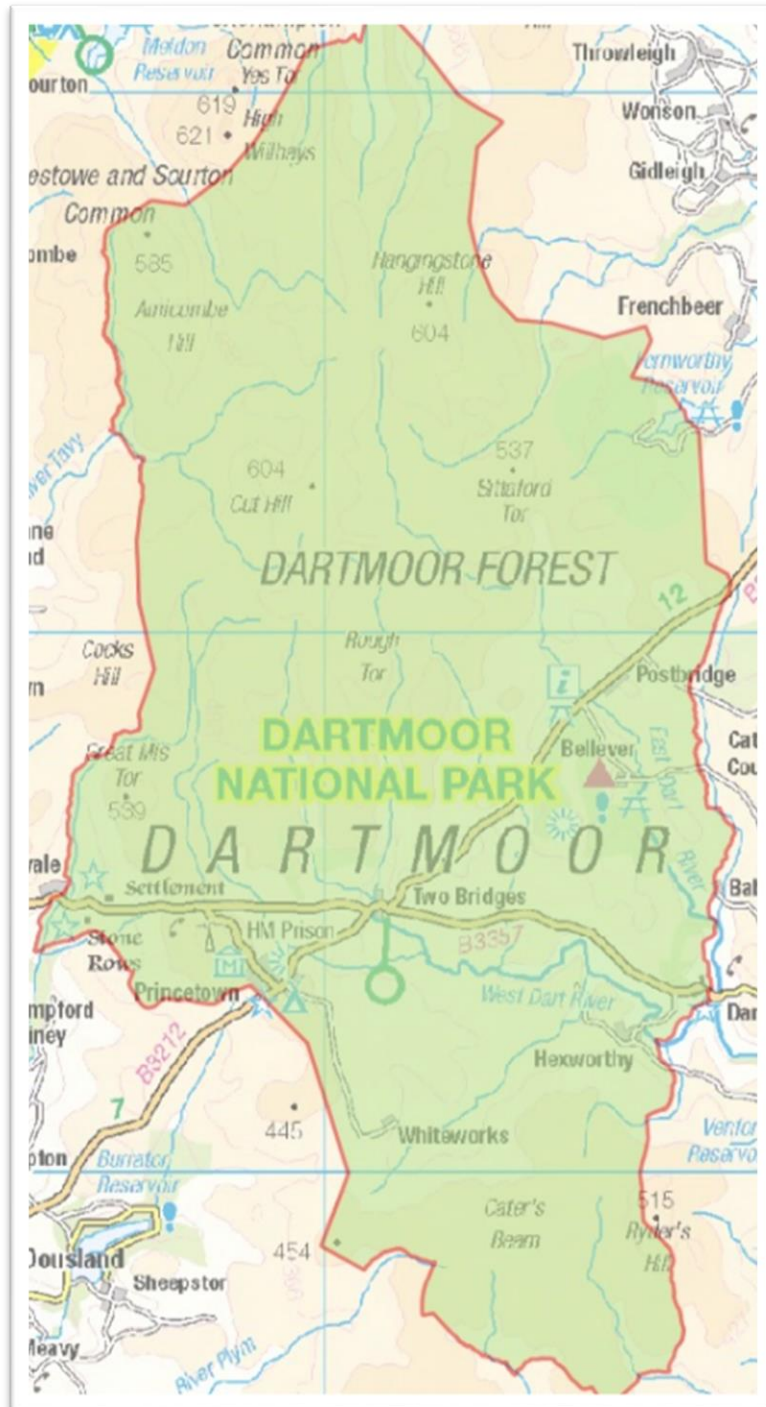


Dartmoor Forest Housing Needs Assessment

April 2023



West Devon
Borough Council

1 – Findings and recommendations

Principal conclusions

The survey identified the need for 16 affordable homes within the next 5 years.

It should be noted that this survey is a snapshot in time and there are a number of other pressures that will need to be considered. West Devon Borough Council declared a Housing Crisis in February 2022 and the pledges that members supported are available on request. In addition, there is a national cost of living crisis which all impact on the changes in housing need. Therefore this figure should not be treated as a maximum number to be provided within this timescale. Regular monitoring of the housing register and local information will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Recommendations

1. To provide 16 additional affordable homes within the next 5 years to meet the needs of those with a local connection to the parish.
2. The need is for 16 affordable or social rented homes across a mix of sizes.
3. The **current stock of affordable and social rented properties within the parish (approx. 67)** provides accommodation with a local connection requirement to the parish. With vacancies occurring at the current rate, 13 properties over the past 3 years, it is likely that existing stock will meet some of the housing need.

Key findings

Affordability

- The survey found that of those indicating a need to move within the next 5 years, 84.2% would require rented properties. The council's policy in our adopted Supplementary Planning Document is that these should be Social Rented tenure.

Local Connection

- The survey found that 98.6% of respondents met the West Devon Borough Council local connection requirement.

Other findings

- The survey helped to identify some of the households that are in housing need. All of the **540 households in the Dartmoor Forest parish were contacted** regarding the survey and **71 surveys were returned. This is a response of 13.1%.**
- 92.6% of respondents answering the question said they would want to stay living within the parish.

Aims of the survey

- To investigate the affordable housing need, tenure and house size for local people within the Dartmoor Forest parish, and those with a local connection to the parish.
- To establish the employment profile of the parish and the challenges for employers.

“Housing Need” is defined in Planning Policy Statement 3 as “The quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance”.

In order to establish whether a household needs affordable housing, it is necessary to consider three elements:

- 1- That they have housing need
- 2- That they are unable to meet their need with their own resources in the open market
- 3- That they have a local connection to the parish.

Survey history, methodology, distribution and response

A housing needs survey was undertaken as part of West Devon Borough Councils practice to collect data on housing need across the whole of the borough, in response to declaring a housing crisis in 2021/22. Letters were delivered through the postal service to detail how to access the survey online. There was a community drop in event for people to fill in a paper copy and to ask the council questions, which was promoted throughout the community. The deadline for completing the survey was the 6th of February 2023, which gave respondents 4 weeks to complete it.

The survey asked a number of questions about the household and the composition, the current types and tenures of homes, affordability and future requirements. All residents were invited to complete this survey.

There were a total of 540 households within the parish who were contacted to complete the survey, with 71 completed, which is a response rate of 13.1%.

General survey findings:

Employment profile

Respondents were asked if they travel to work, including whether they were travelling in or out of the parish. 27.9% of those answering the question said that they don't travel to work as they are employed within the parish, a further 8.8% said that they do travel to work but do so within the parish. 42.6% of those answering the question said that they travel to a workplace outside of the parish, which is the largest percentage when considering travel to work. Some of the areas respondents noted they travel to included Plymouth, Tavistock and Exeter.

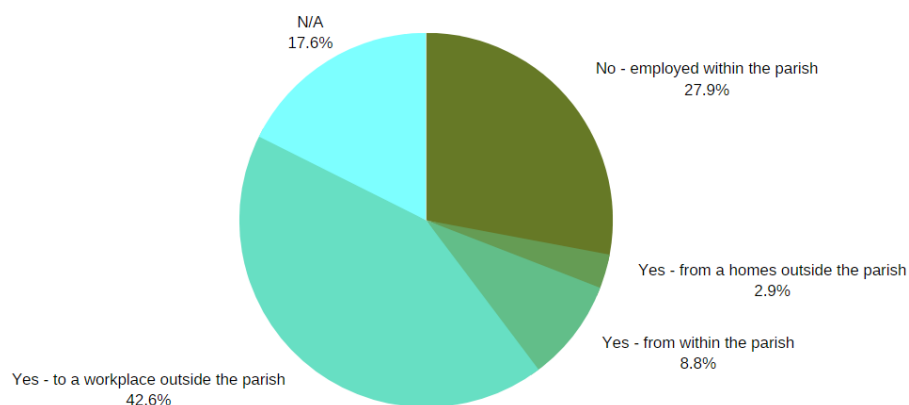


Figure 1: Travel to work

Working from home:

Of the respondents that answered the question 43.5% said that they work from home, and the remaining 56.5% said that they do not work from home. Example roles of those that work from home included caring for family members, agriculture and forestry, art and craft, hospitality, governmental and HR roles, software engineering and architecture.

Employers:

There were some questions that considered employers within the parish. The survey asked how many employees they employed within specified age brackets.

Employer	16 - 21 years	22 - 35 years	36 - 50 years	51 - 65 years	65 years +
A		0 - 5			
B		0 - 5		0 - 5	
C	0 - 5			0 - 5	
D		0 - 5	10+		
E	0 - 5				0 - 5
F	0 - 5	0 - 5			
G				0 - 5	
H	0 - 5				
I					0 - 5

Figure 2: Local employer’s staffing, by age group

There are a range of ages that are employed by employers within the parish, ranging to 65 years and over, although there are more businesses that employ within the 16 to 21 years age bracket. It is also notable that the employers don’t employ vast number of people, with the largest being Employer D, employing a maximum estimate of 15 employees.

Employment challenges

Of the employers that responded to the question, 50% said that they have difficulty in recruiting employees, the remaining 50% said that they didn’t.

The main issues employers mentioned included: Lack of accommodation, an ageing demographic, people not wanting to work, seasonal living wage jobs, staff not wanting to travel from outside the parish. The open text box provided useful insight into the issues for employers within the parish when trying to recruit and retain staff.

Current tenure

Of those respondents that answered the question:

- 59.4% own their own home,
- 15.9% of respondents were renting from a private landlord,
- 7.2% were renting from the council or housing association
- 8.7% renting from the Duchy,
- Overall, 33.2% of respondents said that they are renting.

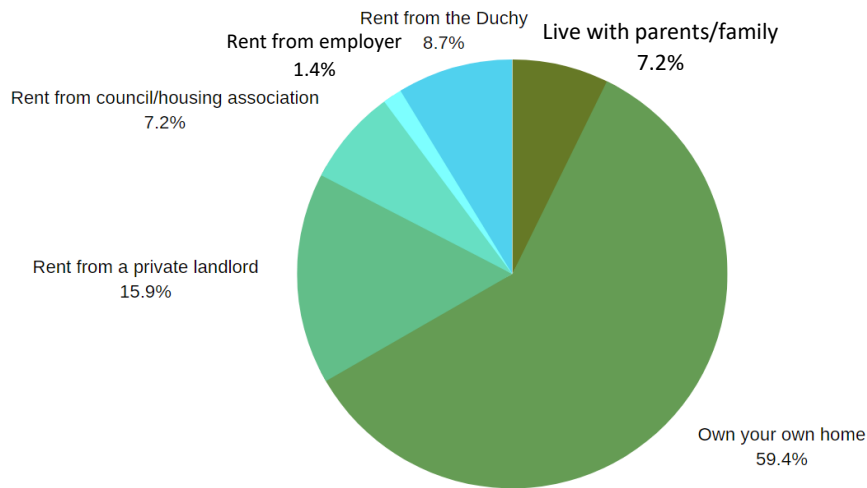


Figure 3: Current tenure of respondents

Second homes and holiday lets:

Within the Dartmoor Forest parish, there are 17 second homes, 2.8% of the total number of dwellings. There are a further 6 holiday lets, which amount to 1% of the total number of dwellings within the parish. Although there are second homes and holiday lets within the parish, the overall percentage of the total number of dwellings is small, so it is unlikely to cause large pressures on housing provision within the community.

Respondents who need to move:

Of the respondents that answered the question, **19 households** indicated a need to move within the next 5 years, amounting to 26.8% of the total number that responded to the survey.

The survey asked what the reasons would be for the respondent to need to move.

- 24.3% said that their home is too small,
- 16.2% said that their home was too expensive,
- 10.8% said that their reason to move would be to find their first home
- 10.8% said they would move because they are currently living with friends or family,
- 21.6% selected themes that were related to insecure living, including private tenancy due to end, homeless and insecure accommodation.

Assessment of those in need

Housing need

Of those that answered whether they or a household member were in housing need, **19 respondents indicated yes, whilst 44 indicated no.**

Of the nineteen respondents, 94.7% want to stay living within the parish. Of these that indicated the need to move:

- 10.5% said that they would need to move immediately,
- 52.6% said that they would need to move within the next 12 months,

- 31.6% need to move within the next 2 to 5 years.

The survey also asked that if the respondent should move away from the parish, would they use Princetown Primary school for their children's education. Of those that answered this question, 50% said that they would not, a further 30% said 'maybe', whilst 20% said that they would.

Need for adaptations

Of the respondents that answered "does anyone in your household require adapted accommodation", 6.5% said that they did. These included suggestions such as wet room, stair lift, hand rails, wheelchair access and level access. One respondent said they, or someone in their household need sheltered or retirement accommodation.

Local definition

The definition of local connection is set by West Devon Borough Council:

- A member of the household is currently resident in the parish for 6 out of the last 12 months, or 3 out of the last five years, where this has been out of choice or
- Those people who have permanent employment within the parish or
- A member of the household has family connections in the parish (immediate family who have themselves lived within the parish for at least 5 years) or
- Other strong local connection with the parish, for example upbringing.

Each of the respondents were asked whether they live and/or work in either Princetown or wider areas of the Dartmoor Forest Parish. Of the 71 respondents that took part in the survey, 70 responded to this question, a response rate of 98.6%.

Of those respondents that answered this question:

- 68.6% said that they live in Princetown,
- 25.7% said that they live within the Dartmoor Forest Parish, including areas such as Hexworthy, Bellever, Postbridge and Merrivale,
- 1.4% had no local connection through residence or through employment.
- 4.3% had a local connection to Princetown and the parish through employment.

On reviewing the circumstances of the respondents that answered this question, 98.6% were found to meet the local connection requirement, set out in the list above.

Current stock turnover

Between January 2019 and February 2023, there have been 13 properties available for affordable or social rent within the parish. Of these, nine were 2 bedroom properties, two were 3 bedrooms and two were 1 bedroom flats.

It is clear that the existing stock is able to provide some accommodation for those in housing need, but does not cover the full level of need. There were nine respondents to the survey in need of affordable housing provision that require a two bedroom property, despite this being the highest turnover of stock.

Housing options

Respondents provide information on income and savings, which allows an assessment of what the household can afford to pay for their accommodation.

From data provided by Land Registry, the mean average property price within the parish in 2022 was £277,541. This is an increase of 6.1% on the previous year, which showed a mean average of £260,500 in 2021.

The income and affordability of all respondents that answered these questions is shown below.

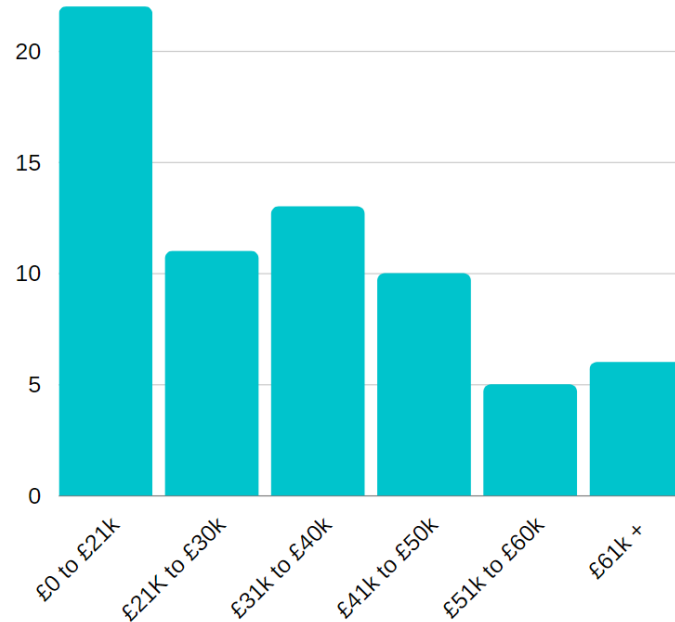


Figure 4: Annual household income

The survey asked how much the respondent pays per month in rent charges. The graph below visualises the responses to this question.

Of those that responded to the question, 30.8% pay under £400 per month for their rent. Another 30.8% pay between £601 and £700 per month for their rent costs. These were the two most popular responses that participants selected.

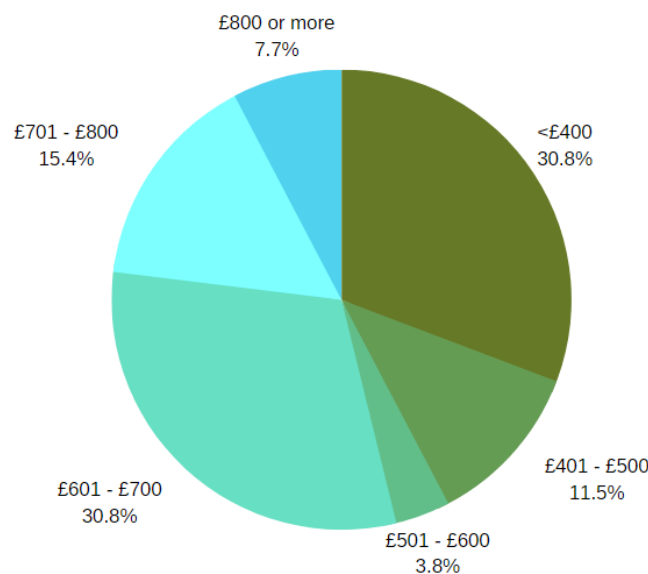


Figure 5: The monthly rental costs of respondents

Suggested housing mix

Of those that indicated a need to move, 84.2% would be likely to require social or affordable rented properties, whereas the remaining would be able to afford intermediate home ownership, or properties on the open market through rental or sale.

For those that answered the question and indicated a need to move, the median amount of rent that they currently pay on a monthly basis was between £601 and £700. Data from Right Move that covers 2020 until the end of 2022 shows that the median average rent for all sized properties in the parish was £887.50. This is considerably higher than the median average currently paid for by those seeking to move within the next 5 years.

Number of Bedrooms	Number Required
1	3
2	9
3	4

Figure 6 – Size mix requirements from the survey

Number of Bedrooms	Number Required (Bands A-D)
1	8
2	9
3	5
4+	1

Figure 7 – Size mix requirements from Devon Home Choice.

Figure 6 recommends that there is a need for 3 one bedroom properties, 9 two bedroom properties, 4 three beds, and 2 four or more bedroom properties. This was drawn from the respondents that indicated a need to move and would require affordable housing provisions.

Figure 7 shows the number of households with local connection to Dartmoor Forest Parish through residence, work or immediate family that are registered with Devon Home Choice. The highest level of demand is for two bedroom properties, then for one bedroom properties. There are an additional 9 applicants that are graded at Band E, which recommends they are not in housing need at this time.

Outcome of community drop in event

There was a community drop in held within Princetown, which enabled people to have assistance in completing a survey or to speak about their concerns regarding housing in the parish.

Emergent themes included the land of 1 or 2 bed properties, in particular, properties for older people and for those with mobility issues that may require bungalows.

There was also concern about the lack of younger people within the parish and the resultant lack of a community feel. This concern around the amount of younger people and families also leads to concern around the school roll, which is seen to be due to the lack of affordable family homes, meaning that families with children move away and no longer use the primary school.

Another consideration was the lack of intermediate affordable housing within the parish, including shared ownership properties. Some feedback suggested this would be beneficial to the community as a route into affordable home ownership and to aid some onto the property ladder.

There were some site suggestions that emerged as a result of these conversations, including the Jubilee Field located behind the church, and the Old Prison Officers Mess, which the community feel could provide people with flats. There is also the Garages at Bellever Close that are in disrepair, but could provide a space for affordable housing or community assets.

Conclusion

Overall, it must be remembered that this Housing Needs Survey represents a picture of a point in time. Circumstances within the community and households evolve and so **any future provision of affordable housing should take account of this.**

The survey has identified need for **16 units of affordable housing within the next 5 years.**

There is a need for all property sizes within this recommendation:

- 3 x 1 bed properties
- 9 x 2 bed properties
- 4 x 3 bed properties.

From the community drop in, it is clear there is a need within the parish for genuinely affordable properties, most notably for families, which will remain so in perpetuity. In addition, it is clear that provision of affordable properties need to be future proof in light of an ageing community with little to no existing affordable accommodation for elderly households or those with mobility difficulties.

Recommendation

The final assessment is for 16 social rented properties. There were 16 respondents to the survey that indicated housing need who would need affordable or social rented accommodation, with further applicants registered with Devon Home Choice.

There should be some consideration for intermediate affordable housing provision, due to the little to no existing provision of this within the parish. This would aid people with a local connection a route into affordable home ownership, which would also remain affordable in perpetuity.

The current stock of affordable or social rented properties in North Tawton provides accommodation that has a local connection agreement to the parish applied to them. With the current rate of stock turnover, it is likely that existing stock of affordable units may meet some of the further housing need within the community.

Appendix: Housing Needs Survey

Princetown and Dartmoor Forest Housing Needs Survey

This survey will help us to assess the housing need within Princetown and the Dartmoor Forest Parish. By providing information, we will be able to assess the current and future needs.

If you have any questions, please email us at Affordable.Housing@swdevon.gov.uk

The privacy policy below sets out how your data will be used and stored:
<https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/9197/Housing-Needs-Survey>

Please note, this questionnaire does not register you on a housing waiting list. If you wish to apply to the housing register or obtain more information on social housing contact: West Devon Borough Council Housing Advice Team on 01822 813600 or go to <https://www.devonhomechoice.com/>

If you're interested in **Shared Ownership** properties, check out Help to Buy South. If you wish to apply or obtain more information, follow the link: <https://www.helpstobuyagent3.org.uk/apply-page/>

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete

1. Do you live in Princetown?

Yes

No

2. Do you work in Princetown?

Yes

No

3. Do you live in Dartmoor Forest?

If yes, please tick where

Bellever

Dunnabridge/Hexworthy/Dartmeet/Babeny

Hexworthy

Merrivale/Rundle/Two Bridges

Postbridge

Postbridge Rural

Powdermills

Outside Dartmoor Forest Parish

4. Do you work in Dartmoor Forest?

If yes, please tick where

- Believer
- Dunnabridge/Hexworthy/Dartmeet/Babeny
- Hexworthy
- Merrivale/Rundle/Two Bridges
- Postbridge
- Postbridge Rural
- Powdermills
- Outside Dartmoor Forest Parish

5. What is your connection to the area?

- Lived here for at least 6 months
- Work in this area
- Children attend school
- Immediate family living here i.e. parents, siblings, children
- All of the above
- Other

6. If you wish to move to the areas of Princetown or Dartmoor Forest, please tell us where you would like to live.

Select all that apply

- Bellever
- Dunnabridge/Hexworthy/Dartmeet/Babeny
- Hexworthy
- Merrivale/Rundle/Two Bridges
- Postbridge
- Postbridge Rural
- Powdermills
- Princetown
- Other

7. If you wish to find work in the area of Princetown or Dartmoor Forest, please tell us where you would like to work.

Select all that apply

- Bellever
- Dunnabridge/Hexworthy/Dartmeet/Babeny
- Hexworthy
- Merrivale/Rundle/Two Bridges
- Postbridge
- Postbridge Rural
- Powdermills
- Princetown
- Other

8. If you're employed in the parish, what type of work do you do?

- Dartmoor Prison
- Agriculture / forestry
- Local shop/Cafe/Restaurant/Hotel
- Tourism
- Self-employed
- Local school
- Other

9. Do you travel to work?

- Yes - to a workplace outside the parish
- Yes - from a home outside the parish
- Yes - from within the parish
- No - employed within the parish
- N/A

10. **If you answered 'Yes - to a workplace outside the parish', where do you travel to?**

11. **Do you work from home?**

Yes

No

12. **If you answered Yes, please tell us what type of work you do**

13. **Would you be interested in renting a live/work property where you can live alongside your workplace?**

Yes

No

14. **If yes, please specify the nature of the work you would be carrying out and where you would like to see this provided**

15. If you work from home, is your work space included or separate from your living accommodation?

- Integrated
- Separate

16. If you are an employer within Princetown or Dartmoor Forest, please indicate the number of people you employ per age group.

	0 - 5	6 - 10	10+
16 - 21 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22 - 35 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36 - 50 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51 - 65 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65 years +	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. If you are an employer within Princetown or Dartmoor Forest Parish, do you have difficulty in recruiting employees?

- Yes
- No

18. If yes, please explain briefly the reasons why. E.g. lack of accommodation, lack of skills etc

19. Does your current home limit your ability to secure and/or maintain employment?

For example, is it too far from your workplace or could you work from home if the property was better suited? If so, please provide more details.

20. Do you, or are you...?

- Own your own home
- Rent from a private landlord
- Rent from council/housing association
- Live with parents/family
- Rent from employer
- Homeless
- In accommodation tied to your job
- Rented from the Duchy
- Other

21. If you rent, how much do you pay a month?

- Under £400
- £401 - £500
- £501 - £600
- £601 - £700
- £701 - £800
- £800+

22. How many bedrooms does your home have?

- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4 bedrooms
- More than 4 bedrooms
- Studio/bedsit

23. What income band do you and or your partner fall within?

Income is based on combined gross annual earnings. Please include all benefits received.

- £0 - £20k
- £21k - £30k
- £31k - £40k
- £41k - £50k
- £51k - £60k
- £61k +

24. What sized property do you require?

- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4+ bedrooms

25. **What would be your reasons for moving?**

- First home
- Home too small
- Home too large
- Home too expensive
- Private tenancy due to end
- Insecure accommodation
- Housing tied to your job
- Family break up
- Living with friends/family
- Homeless
- Cannot manage stairs
- Moved away and wish to return
- Insufficient space to work from home
- Require family support
- Other

26. **If you are underoccupying your home and it is a socially rented property, please consider the link to the Tenants Incentive Scheme below.**

<https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/9085/Tenant-Incentive-Scheme>

27. **Do you or a member of your household have a housing need?**

- Yes
- No

28. **If yes, when would they likely need to move**

- Immediately
- Within 12 months
- Within 2 to 5 years
- 5 years or more

29. **Would you or the household member want to stay in Princetown/Dartmoor Forest or move away?**

- Stay
- Move away

30. **If you did move away, would you still use Princetown Community Primary School?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

31. **Including yourself, how many people of each age group are there in your household?**

	1	2	3	4+
0-18 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19 - 54 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55 - 65 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
66+ years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. **Does anyone in your household require adapted accommodation?**

E.g. stairlift, grab rails etc.

- Yes
- No

33. **If yes, please detail the adaptations needed**

34. **Do you or anyone in your household need sheltered or retirement accommodation?**

- Yes
- No
- Other

35. **Are you on the Devon Home Choice, Help to Buy register or Self Build Register?**

- Yes
- No

36. **If yes, please provide your application number/details**

37. **If you answered no, and are in need of affordable housing, consider the link below**

<https://forms.devonhomechoice.com/QuestionnaireStart.aspx?gid=2988&preview=1>

38. **Do you believe you have enough savings (including equity of your existing home if you have one) to buy on the open market?**

- Yes
- No

39. **Please state your income, equity (if any) and savings. This is not compulsory information but will help us to assess affordability of the area.**

40. **Please provide your name and address. This is not compulsory information but will help us to identify any need/requirements.**

41. Please provide any additional comments you have. Thankyou for your participation.

If you know of someone that has had to leave Princetown/Dartmoor Forest parish and wishes to move back, please ask them to fill out this form.