



News Release

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New Housing Opportunities Available

South Hams District Council is asking people who are looking for affordable or more suitable accommodation to complete a short questionnaire helping them to understand the housing need within the local area.

Many people report that they cannot afford to buy, or rent, a home in the place where they have a personal connection. This could be the place where they grew up, or perhaps where their extended family live, or even where they work, due to the high cost of housing. In the South Hams, it is not uncommon for average house prices in some communities to be up to 15 times average incomes and it is recognised that the lack of suitable homes for local families has had a major impact on the energy and sustainability of local communities. This is where the Community Housing Strategy can help.

The Community Housing Strategy, awarded South Hams District Council £1.88m to help meet the housing needs of local residents looking to buy, or rent, homes costing in the region of £150,000 - £200,000.

The Council would like to invite residents who cannot find affordable or appropriate housing within their local village or town, to complete a short questionnaire telling them about the housing need in their area. This survey will help the Council to understand which communities are interested in buying or renting community housing, which could then be targeted for future project development.

South Hams District Council will use these survey results to target key need areas and actively support community housing groups, both financially and with development resources, to progress the development of high quality homes. This process will involve a further, and more comprehensive full housing needs survey, discussions with local Parish Councils and community groups to discuss suitable site selection, before projects can be designed and implemented. These homes will then

be available to residents with local connections, where the cost of market housing is currently beyond their reach.

South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Customer First, Cllr Hilary Bastone, said: "I am absolutely delighted that this government funding will help us to address the housing needs of our local residents. We have known for a long time that lower incomes in Devon stop many families from living in their local communities, forcing them to move away from friends and family, in order to afford suitable housing.

"This first step survey will inform us of where the problem areas are and we can then concentrate on working with local community groups to identify where we can support local housing projects to get off the ground.

"I encourage residents who are not on the housing ladder to take five minutes to complete the survey letting us know exactly where the issues are locally so we can use the money to target the areas of greatest need."

Supporting the development of this strategy is the **Devon Rural Housing Partnership**, who said: "The Devon Rural Housing Partnership is pleased to be working with South Hams District Council on this high level housing survey. It is important that we identify where appropriate housing is needed in order to prioritise resources on the right communities."

The survey is now open until Saturday 31 March at 5 p.m. To share your views on local housing needs, please complete this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5Q5SBWQ> A paper version of this survey, is available by contacting the Devon Rural Housing Team on 01392 248919.