**AXMINSTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – Homes and Housing Group**

**Group members**

The group comprised Andrew Moulding (Group lead), Steph Chaplin (Symonds and Sampson), Shane Morgan (Morgan York), Sarah Davies (Yarlington Housing Group) and Helen Dean (Yarlington Housing Group)

**Meetings**

The group held four meetings, including one meeting with John Golding (Service Lead – Housing, Health and Environment – EDDC) and Paul Lowe (Housing Development and Enabling Officer – EDDC)

**Introduction**

It is accepted that we need more homes to house the next generation. First-time buyers are now expected to find a deposit ten times the size of their 1980’s counterparts in real terms. We are not prepared to live in a country where home ownership is an exclusive members’ club, only accessible to people who rely on family wealth.

We have seen local residents struggling with rent, needing housing benefit to keep a roof over their heads; being unable to live near their family; unable to buy their own home or downsize to suitable, more affordable homes.

These struggles will only be mitigated if we build more homes of all types for people at different price points in the market.

**Axminster Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire**

The N P Questionnaire identified the following issues:

* The need for a mix of affordable and privately-owned housing
* An interest in self-build, or a demand for a “piece of land” to build on
* The highest need is for semi-detached housing
* Concerns that additional housing will bring traffic congestion, surface water risk, lack of GP facilities and general infrastructure
* The need for living accommodation, linked to retail eg flats over shops
* General requirement for faster broadband connection

**Key Points**

The Key Points which emerged from our discussions were as follows:

* There is a demand for more **bungalows** for older people, which would free up more family homes. There is a preference for “small units” – **one and two bed** properties. (One bed houses are more sought after than one bed flats)
* There is currently less demand for three and four bed homes, but there is a requirement for homes, with provision for **dependent relatives**
* There is a need for “**Extra Care Housing**” – maybe 60 units. This will become a significant requirement. (Extra Care Housing sits between Sheltered Housing and Residential Care). We should consider making future provision for “**Dementia Care Housing**”
* There is resurgence in demand for “**Self Build**” opportunities
* Residents would like to see more **imaginative designs**, to suit a **Traditional Rural Market Town.** We should embed standards into the Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating an appropriate amount of **Green Space.**

**THERE ARE REAL OPPORTNITIES FOR MEETING HOUSING NEEDS IN AXMINSTER**