**Notes of a meeting of the Axminster Neighbourhood Plan, Themed Group on Homes and Housing, held at the Cloakham Lawn Sports Centre on 13th March 2015**

# Present

Andrew Moulding, Sarah Davies (Yarlington Housing Group), Helen Dean, Steph Chaplin

**Also in attendance**

John Golding (Service Lead – Housing, Health and Environment - EDDC)

Paul Lowe (Housing Development and Enabling Officer - EDDC)

# Apologies

Shane Morgan

**General Discussion**

Andrew outlined the Neighbourhood Plan process. This was the first time that one of our market towns had “stepped up to the plate”

Seaton and Exmouth have regeneration programmes – Axminster deserves a similar programme.

Villages need a Neighbourhood Plan to help them deliver affordable housing for local people.

The SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) recently carried out, will enable us to drill down into housing need across a wide area eg Exeter.

There needs to be a balance between the West and East parts of the District.

Helen pointed out that we generally agree with the assumptions in the emerging Local Plan.

**Affordable / Social Housing**

We were informed that within the Bovis site there will be 112 rented and 48 shared ownership homes.

Persimmon has currently offered 25% affordable housing, within their proposed planning applications.

Paul Lowe mentioned that a flexible lettings policy prevails at Cranbrook – however this had been enabled by HCA funding. Will we have the same flexibility on the development site promoted by Persimmon?

When questioned on the lettings policy for Axminster, Paul Lowe stated that the priority will be Axminster – but then would cascade outside of the Axminster area, ultimately to the rest of East Devon (but within District Council boundaries).

Sarah Davies said that there were some properties in Axminster eg Flax Meadow, which are proving difficult to let. Yarlington are making every effort to promote these opportunities, as are EDDC. This appears to be a social housing issue, rather than an Open Market issue.

Helen said that the Neighbourhood Plan will provide an opportunity to market Axminster.

Websters and the George Hotel are part of the problem!

Housing Needs shows that there is a need for Affordable Homes in Axminster from 140 households (80 of those actually live currently in Axminster)

A main reason for the problems with letting is that Housing Association rental levels are significantly higher than Council rental levels, + there is currently more choice i.e. HA’s, Council, Private

John Golding confirmed that at the moment there is a real opportunity to meet housing needs in Axminster

Paul revealed that 80 out of the 140 housing needs were for a 1 Bed property! This has probably always been the case, but there is certainly less demand for 3 or 4 bed homes!

**Extra Care Housing**

Firstly, we should identify the need. Alison Golby is the person to speak to at DCC.

E C Housing sits between Sheltered Housing and Residential

**Dementia Care Housing**

This is also being considered in some towns.

It was felt that the George Hotel could possibly be converted to a Care property!! Maybe this could be considered by the likes of McCarthy & Stone / Pegasus or others.