

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Housing Service**

**Tenancy Strategy**

**October 2012**

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# 1 Background

The Council is required to publish a Tenancy Strategy before 15 January 2013, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011<sup>1</sup>. This Act also introduced tenure reform. As a provider of homes, the Council can now use flexible tenancies which are fixed term tenancies. Housing associations working in the District are able to grant fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies.

Section 150 of the Act places a statutory duty on local authorities to include a description of the high level objectives (“matters”) that registered providers should “have regard to” in their tenancy policies. These policies will relate to:

- The kind of tenancies they grant
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where they grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of the terms
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy

However, in some cases, registered providers working within the District will have already signed contracts with the Homes and Communities Agency in relation to the development of the new affordable rent product for the delivery of affordable housing until 2015<sup>2</sup>, which means that they have already made some decisions about the type of tenure to be offered to new households. However, these registered providers will be expected to review their own tenancy policies after the publication of this strategy to bring them into line.

The Act also gives local authorities powers to ensure that social housing in their areas is meeting needs and priorities as identified by the Council. In Mid Devon, there is concern about affordability and also about a lack of available homes for those local people in the greatest need.

Mid Devon District Council is part of the Devon sub-region and a member of the Devon Strategic Housing Group.

## 2 MDDC Priorities

The Localism Act requires local authorities to take into account the priorities in their housing and homelessness strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/affordable-homes>

## 2.1 Corporate Priorities

The focus of the Corporate Plan for 2012-15<sup>3</sup> is on:

- Thriving economy
- Better homes
- Empowering our communities
- Caring for our environment

In particular, the Council has stated that ensuring that the housing needs of our residents are met through the provision of affordable homes and good quality housing in the public and private sectors is a priority.

## 2.2 Housing Priorities

There is a commitment to updating our Housing Strategy<sup>4</sup> in the Corporate Plan with a target date of December 2012. However, existing priorities are:

- To reduce the number of empty homes by working in partnership with other stock holding local authority landlords in Devon and to target the smaller and better located properties in the three main towns
- To help landlords in the private sector to provide a better service
- To deliver initiatives around affordable warmth
- To encourage downsizing in Council housing stock
- To support the Rural Enabler Programme
- To maximise the provision of all types of intermediate housing
- To work in partnership to deliver an extra care facility in Tiverton

## 2.3 Homelessness Priorities

Our homelessness strategy<sup>5</sup> is also due to be reviewed shortly. Within the existing strategy there is a duty to look at the prevention of homelessness, provide support to vulnerable people, tackle the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness, help people move away from rough sleeping and provide more settled homes. Many of the actions in the 2008 Homelessness Strategy have been achieved particularly in the private rented sector. In

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4446>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15761&p=0>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=15640&p=0>

particular, the relationship with local landlords in the private sector has improved. The revised strategy is likely to:

- Consider the trends of homelessness across the District
- Assess partnership working in order to develop a more united approach across the District, to all persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Look at the services available to support those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and ensure that there are complimentary housing options for those wishing to live independently

#### **2.4 The Tenancy Strategy: Aims**

The aims of this tenancy strategy take account of the themes contained in the Council's Corporate Plan, housing and homelessness strategies and are:

- To meet the Council's statutory obligations set out in the Localism Act
- To prevent homelessness
- To ensure that there are complimentary housing options available for those who wish to live independently. It is important to recognise that different options may be relevant at different life stages, when housing applicants may have different levels of income.
- To give local people as much opportunity as possible to access social and affordable housing where they live
- To make the best use of the Council's housing stock and wider social housing in the District. This will include reducing under-occupation and ensuring that adapted homes are let to those who need them the most
- Ensuring that vulnerable households are able to access appropriate accommodation and, where needed, ensure that accommodation is available for life
- Maximising choice for housing applicants, where possible, and promoting mobility within social housing and between social housing and other tenures

### **3 Supply and Demand for Social Housing in Mid Devon**

We work with all the other local authorities in Devon through the Devon Home Choice (DHC)<sup>6</sup> scheme to allocate properties. This is a choice based lettings scheme which enables people in housing need to bid for properties which are available for letting.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.devonhomechoice.com/Data/ASPPages/1/2.aspx>

### 3.1 The Local Allocations Policy<sup>7</sup>

The Council operates its own local allocations policy which is operated alongside DHC. This is to facilitate the best use of stock and enables Registered Providers working within the District to give preference to certain applicants. The Council will apply a local lettings preference in some cases as part of the commitment to build sustainable communities.

The policy also sets out how the Council will allocate adapted properties in order to make best use of stock in the District. Also, in accordance with the provisions of the DHC scheme, the Council can advertise properties showing that preference will be given to tenants wishing to downsize.

### 3.2 Local lettings policies

The Council understands that in some cases, a Registered Provider may wish to introduce a local lettings plan in order to promote sustainability and create a balanced community. In particular, this may be required on larger new build developments. The Council expects to be consulted by Registered Providers before the development of any local lettings plans in the District. The Registered Provider must explain why a local lettings plan is necessary and must involve the Council in working out the details. All local lettings plans must be publicised on the DHC website and all adverts relating to any properties available on the scheme must state that a local lettings plan is being used in relation to the allocations.

### 3.3 Social homes in Mid Devon

As well as being the Strategic Housing Authority in Mid Devon, the Council is also a Registered Provider.

There are social rented homes within the District and the break-down is:

#### Council housing stock as at 31 March 2012:

##### All Accommodation

|          | Bedsit | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 6 Bed | Total |
|----------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit   | 14     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 14    |
| Flat     | 0      | 329   | 243   | 6     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 578   |
| Houses   | 0      | 1     | 483   | 948   | 35    | 2     | 1     | 1470  |
| Bungalow | 0      | 458   | 540   | 17    | 1     | 0     | 0     | 1016  |
|          | 14     | 788   | 1266  | 971   | 36    | 2     | 1     | 3078  |

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16803&p=0>

### General Needs Accommodation

|          | Bedsit | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 6 Bed | Total |
|----------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit   | 3      | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 3     |
| Flat     | 0      | 218   | 220   | 6     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 444   |
| Houses   | 0      | 1     | 483   | 948   | 35    | 2     | 1     | 1470  |
| Bungalow | 0      | 134   | 334   | 15    | 1     | 0     | 0     | 484   |
|          | 3      | 353   | 1037  | 969   | 36    | 2     | 1     | 2401  |

### Supported Housing Accommodation

|          | 0 Bed | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 6 Bed | Total |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit   | 11    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 11    |
| Flat     | 0     | 111   | 23    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 134   |
| Houses   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Bungalow | 0     | 324   | 206   | 2     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 532   |
|          | 11    | 435   | 229   | 2     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 677   |

### Other social housing stock as at 31 March 2010:

#### All Accommodation

|               | 0 bed | 1 bed | 1/2 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Hostel | Total |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Bedsit        | 55    | 0     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0     | -      | 55    |
| Flat          | 0     | 113   | 30      | 57    | 10    | 0     | -      | 210   |
| Houses        | 0     | 249   | 0       | 273   | 263   | 20    | -      | 805   |
| Bungalows     | 0     | 21    | 0       | 59    | 0     | 0     | -      | 80    |
| Hostel places | 0     | 0     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0     | 32     | 32    |
|               | 55    | 383   | 30      | 389   | 273   | 20    | 32     | 1182  |

#### General Needs Accommodation

|           | 0 bed | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Flat      | 0     | 113   | 57    | 7     | 0     | 177   |
| Houses    | 0     | 10    | 233   | 263   | 20    | 526   |
| Bungalows | 0     | 0     | 9     | 0     | 0     | 9     |
|           | 0     | 123   | 299   | 270   | 20    | 712   |

### Elderly Person's Accommodation

|           | 0 bed | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 47    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 47    |
| Flat      | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Houses    | 0     | 239   | 40    | 0     | 0     | 279   |
| Bungalows | 0     | 21    | 46    | 0     | 0     | 67    |
|           | 47    | 260   | 86    | 0     | 0     | 393   |

### Special Needs/ Supported Accommodation

|               | 0 bed | 1/2 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | Hostel | Total |
|---------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Bedsit        | 8     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0      | 8     |
| Flat          | 0     | 30      | 0     | 3     | 0      | 33    |
| Houses        | 0     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 0      | 0     |
| Bungalows     | 0     | 0       | 4     | 0     | 0      | 4     |
| Hostel places | 0     | 0       | 0     | 0     | 32     | 32    |
|               | 8     | 30      | 4     | 3     | 32     | 77    |

The data shows that there is a shortage of larger family-sized homes.

### The supply of available homes during 2011/12:

(The tables below show lettings by property type for both Council and Housing Association stock)

#### *The Council's own stock*

General Needs  
Accommodation

|           | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Flat      | 18    | 18    | 0     | 0     | 36    |
| Houses    | 0     | 21    | 30    | 2     | 53    |
| Bungalows | 8     | 21    | 0     | 0     | 29    |
|           | 26    | 60    | 30    | 2     | 118   |

Supported accommodation

|           | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Flat      | 13    | 1     | 0     | 0     | 14    |
| Houses    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Bungalows | 31    | 7     | 0     | 0     | 38    |
|           | 44    | 8     | 0     | 0     | 52    |

**Other social housing stock**

General Needs Accommodation

|           | 0 bed | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Flat      | 0     | 13    | 12    | 0     | 0     | 25    |
| Houses    | 0     | 0     | 20    | 18    | 1     | 39    |
| Bungalows | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
|           | 0     | 13    | 32    | 18    | 1     | 64    |

Supported Accommodation

|           | 0 bed | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed | Total |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bedsit    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Flat      | 0     | 13    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 13    |
| Houses    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Bungalows | 0     | 7     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 7     |
|           | 0     | 20    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 20    |

In summary, the turnover during 2011/12 was as follows:

|                     |                            |                    |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| MDDC Stock turnover | General Needs turnover     | 4.9%<br>(118/2401) |
|                     | Supported Housing turnover | 7.7%<br>(52/677)   |
|                     | Total all stock turnover   | 5.5%<br>(170/3078) |
| RP Stock turnover   | General Needs turnover     | 9.0%<br>(64/712)   |
|                     | Supported Housing turnover | 4.3%<br>(20/470)   |
|                     | Total all stock turnover   | 7.1%<br>(84/1182)  |

During 2011/12, 58 Council tenants resolved their own housing needs by arranging mutual exchanges. 29 tenants moved within the District to other homes owned by the Council and 29 moved from homes not owned by the Council.

### 3.4 Housing needs within Mid Devon

There are significant pressures in terms of supply versus demand in relation to suitable social rented accommodation in Mid Devon. There is a shortage of larger homes, in particular, and housing applicants requiring this type of accommodation may therefore have to wait many months or even years before being re-housed. This can be demonstrated by the following statistics:

#### Housing Register Data Applications in Mid Devon by band as at 10 October 2012

|       | Bedroom Need |     |     |    |   |   |       |
|-------|--------------|-----|-----|----|---|---|-------|
| Band  | 1            | 2   | 3   | 4  | 5 | 6 | Total |
| A     |              | 1   |     |    |   |   | 1     |
| B     | 52           | 62  | 10  | 4  | 1 | 1 | 130   |
| C     | 63           | 120 | 48  | 17 | 2 |   | 250   |
| D     | 288          | 88  | 17  | 7  | 1 |   | 401   |
| E     | 386          | 374 | 137 | 17 | 2 |   | 916   |
| Total | 789          | 645 | 212 | 45 | 6 | 1 | 1698  |

As at 1 October, there were 36,899 Active and Under Review Active applicants in Devon as a whole.

A Local Housing Needs and Demand Study<sup>8</sup> undertaken during 2011 revealed more information about the people who may be seeking housing through DHC. It showed that there are 718 concealed households within Mid Devon which are looking for affordable housing. 498 intend to move to Council rented, 43 to housing association rented and 177 to shared ownership accommodation. A concealed household may consist of people who are children of another household; parents or grandparents; or a partner or spouse. The survey found that around 77% of the concealed household in the District would be unable to rent in the private market, and 85% were unable to buy.

The Study also showed that over-occupation in council rented accommodation was 8.1%. It stood at 6.9% in the Housing Association rented sector.

<sup>8</sup> Mid Devon District Council formally commissioned DCA in March 2011 to carry out a Housing Needs Survey. The core of this project was to identify a robust evidence for future base to support the targets to be set in the Local Development Framework Documents, and local housing and planning policies for delivery at local level.

Under-occupation was another significant issue identified in the study with 18.4% of social rented properties in the District being under-occupied by two or more bedrooms. Over 560 out of the 712 properties identified are in the Council's own stock. The report recommended that tackling under-occupation of family houses to make best use of the existing stock would make a positive contribution to meeting need through better re-let supply.

## **4 Affordability**

The Council has adopted the definition of affordable housing as set out in the draft National Planning Policy Framework: "Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices."

The Council recognises that Registered Providers who are developing new homes will be charging affordable rents on new developments and on a proportion of relets, in some cases. The Council believes that the "baseline" maximum rent charged for affordable housing should be no greater than the relevant Local Housing Allowance. Registered Providers are also expected to carry out an affordability assessment when letting properties at rents which are close to the current Local Housing Allowance, to ensure that the tenancy will be sustainable over time.

## **5 Tenure**

### **5.1 Length of Tenancy**

The Council is committed to the use of fixed term or flexible tenancies as it considers that this would enable the best use of the social housing stock in the District.

In accordance with the Tenancy Standard, Registered Providers are expected to offer "tenancies which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of their housing stock".

Registered Providers working within Mid Devon may use fixed term or flexible tenancies. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Council will be using flexible tenancies when letting homes from its own stock.

The revised Regulatory Framework for Social Housing requires Registered Providers to grant general needs tenants a tenancy for a minimum fixed term of five years, or, exceptionally, a tenancy for a minimum fixed term of no less than two years in addition to any probationary tenancy period.

The Council would prefer that other Registered Providers offer fixed term or flexible tenancies where this will help to make best use of the stock. In particular, the Council would expect that households moving in to larger homes of three bedrooms or more should be offered a flexible tenancy. This would mean that they could be supported to move on

should the size of their household reduce and the accommodation could be made available to re-house another household needing a larger home.

The Council also supports the use of flexible tenancies in relation to adapted homes. If a property has been significantly adapted for use by someone with a disability, the Council would expect a flexible tenancy to be offered to ensure that if in future the person with the need for that type of accommodation is no longer living there, for whatever reason, the remaining members of the household can be moved to alternative accommodation more appropriate to their needs and the property offered to someone who is in need of the adaptations.

The Council uses introductory tenancies<sup>9</sup> in its role as a landlord and supports the use of starter tenancies<sup>10</sup> by other Registered Providers working within the District. The preferred length of such tenancies is one year. It is understood that probationary tenancies may be extended if there are any issues causing concern during the tenancy term which are of a serious nature or which cannot be resolved in partnership with the tenant and any other partner agencies, as appropriate.

The preferred length for a fixed term tenancy is five years but the Council understands that there will be some circumstances in which it might be appropriate to issue a tenancy for a fixed term of two years. There may be cases where someone is unable to live in their own accommodation due to circumstances beyond their control. For example, following a fire or flood; or if they have left their home following a relationship breakdown and the property cannot be sold due to the fact that there are children under the age of eighteen resident there.

The Council also acknowledges that some groups may be vulnerable and therefore expects Registered Providers to offer the most secure form of tenure:

- to people moving into homes specifically designed for the elderly
- to people with learning disabilities

## **5.2 Renewal of Tenancies**

The Council has a strategic responsibility in relation to homelessness and is expected to manage and prevent it. As part of our strategy, our Homeless Team already works with our own Neighbourhood Teams and Housing Associations in connection with arrears and anti-social behaviour issues to provide advice for tenants.

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[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Councilandhousingassociationhomes/Councilhousing/DG\\_188483](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Councilandhousingassociationhomes/Councilhousing/DG_188483)

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[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Councilandhousingassociationhomes/Housingassociationhomes/Housingassociationtenants/DG\\_188400](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Councilandhousingassociationhomes/Housingassociationhomes/Housingassociationtenants/DG_188400)

Registered Providers will be expected to undertake a review of each fixed term or flexible tenancy which should commence shortly after the start of the last year of the fixed term. In order to make best use of stock and to check whether the household has an on-going need for that particular property type, the investigation should focus on household composition and income.

Tenants should be given at least six months notice of the end of their tenancy period. The notice should state clearly that either the Registered Provider proposes to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term or does not propose to do so. The notification should set out the actions expected of the tenant and provide a named contact.

The use of flexible or fixed term tenancies is advocated as a means of making best use of the stock in the District. For this reason, the Council expects the criteria for not renewing a tenancy to be limited to the following:

- Size - Tenancies should not be renewed for properties that are significantly larger than the household requires unless this has been agreed in advance with the Council. Exceptions might include examples such as where it is necessary to accommodate a full or part-time live-in carer, to enable access to dependent children where care is shared or to limit occupation because of local housing management issues.
- Income - Tenancies should not be renewed if the income of the household is above the income limit as set out in the DHC policy.
- Extensive adaptations - Tenancies should not be renewed if the properties include the provision of extensive adaptations that are no longer required.
- Tenant's behaviour including anti-social behaviour and breaches of the tenancy agreement.
- Failure of the tenant to co-operate in the review process.

It is likely that there will be some cases where the household has reduced in size since the tenancy started although they will remain in housing need. Registered Providers will be expected to provide housing advice and assistance to enable them to find more appropriate accommodation; this is likely to be through the Devon Home Choice (DHC) scheme. The household should be offered another flexible tenancy if they are rehoused under these circumstances unless they are moving into accommodation designated for the elderly or for those with learning disabilities.

If a Registered Provider decides against renewing a fixed term, or flexible tenancy, they must provide appropriate housing advice and also assist the tenants to find suitable alternative accommodation. They must provide information about all relevant housing options and help to explore each and every one with the tenant. The tenant must not be automatically referred back to the Council as a housing applicant.

All Registered Providers must ensure that the Council's Housing Needs teams are made aware of any forthcoming tenancy terminations at least two months before the tenancy is due to end.

## 5.3 Mobility

### 5.3.1 Mutual Exchanges

The Council is keen to promote mobility within social housing, and expects landlords to actively promote schemes to facilitate mutual exchanges. Mutual exchanges provide a good opportunity for tenants to resolve their own housing needs. The Localism Act enables secure and assured tenants who became tenants before April 2012 to exchange with any other social tenant and be sure of keeping their existing level of security.

### 5.3.2 Transfers

The revised tenancy standard states that tenants with an existing social tenancy on 1 April 2012 must be given a “tenancy with no less security where they choose to move to another social rented home”. This means that their security of tenure is protected should they transfer to another social rented home.

This protection does not apply to existing tenants who choose to bid for a property let on affordable rent terms. However, landlords have discretion to offer another similar tenancy where they choose to do so.

## 6 Disposals

The Council appreciates that there may be occasions when it makes sense to dispose of property that has previously been available for social renting, either due to the high costs of maintenance or because it is not of a type or in a location which meets housing need. Alternatively, it may be where the proceeds of disposal are needed to support the development of more housing.

The Council would expect Registered Providers to consider whether other registered providers might wish to purchase this stock, before considering selling it to a landlord outside of the sector. The Council would also expect Registered Providers to consult with the Local Authority on the detail of any major disposal so that it can assess the impact of the disposal on its ability to meet future housing need in the district.

The Council will not support the disposal of the following types of housing without a very strong case being made:

- Larger homes, which are defined as:
  - Three bedroom houses with potential for use as four bedroom homes. For example, they may have a dining room and living room or they may have three double bedrooms
  - Larger homes capable of accommodating six people or more
- Properties that may be suitable for “downsizing” initiatives
- Homes in smaller, rural settlements: that, is as defined in Statutory Instrument 1997 No 621<sup>11</sup>
- Properties which have had extensive adaptations<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Statutory Instrument 1997 No 621 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/621/contents/made>

- Supported or specialist housing

## 7 Conversions to Affordable Rent Tenancies

The Council understands that the number of conversions has been pre-determined by the Homes and Communities Agency through their National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) contracts with Registered Providers. However, Registered Providers do have some flexibility when considering which specific properties to convert.

The Council expects that Registered Providers should have regard to the following when considering the proportion of properties which will be let at an “Affordable Rent”:

- The pattern of re-lets by location, property size and type
- The need to ensure that under-occupiers wishing to downsize are not put off by having to pay a higher rent or being given reduced tenancy rights.
- The need to ensure a reasonable supply of family-sized accommodation at social rents
- The need to ensure that properties in rural areas can be let to those working in the area on low wages
- The shortage of wheelchair accessible accommodation

Registered Providers are reminded that they can offer properties let at social rent on flexible tenancies where this supports the aims of this tenancy strategy: for example, by offering a larger property on a “fixed term tenancy” in order to minimise future under-occupation.

## 8 Tenancy Management

### 8.1 Housing Management

Registered Providers working in Mid Devon are expected to have a good knowledge of both the tenants and homes in their management. Landlords with social housing stock in the District are required to operate their business in accordance with the provisions of the regulatory framework issued by the Homes and Communities Agency. The Council believes that it is important for landlords with social housing stock to undertake regular estate inspections and to involve other stakeholders, such as local Councillors and the Police, as necessary.

### 8.2 Tenancy Fraud

The Council expects all Registered Providers working within the District to have robust strategies in place to combat tenancy fraud, in accordance with the provisions of the revised Tenancy Standard in the regulatory framework. As part of this, the Council expects Registered Providers to verify the identity of the new household at sign up and to maintain regular contact as the tenancy progresses.

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<sup>12</sup> Extensive adaptations usually mean every adaptation except adaptation of an existing bathroom, installation of a stair lift or non-permanent ramps. A combination of these could, however, be considered to be extensive.

## 9 Impact Assessment

An impact assessment is being developed alongside this tenancy strategy and will be published with the final version.

## 10 Review

This strategy can be reviewed on an ad hoc basis to take account of any changes in legislation. The next planned review will be due in December 2016 although there is a recognition that by that stage it is unlikely that any flexible or fixed term tenancies will have been brought to an end by then. It should then be reviewed every two years after that.

## 11 Contacts

If you wish to view the tenancy policies of all the Registered Providers working in the District, the contact details are shown below:

| Housing Association  | Address  | Website address  | Telephone number             |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|
| Abbeyfield Society   | Abbeyfield, Abbeyfield House, 53 Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3UW                | <a href="http://www.abbeyfield.com">www.abbeyfield.com</a>                   | 01727 857536<br>01884 256518 |
| Affinity Sutton  | 2 Pritchard Street, Bristol. BS2 8RH   | <a href="http://www.affinitysutton.com">www.affinitysutton.com</a>           | 0300 100<br>0303             |
| Aster Group  | 4-5 Russell Court, Palace Street, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 2AS                                 | <a href="http://www.astercommunities.co.uk">www.astercommunities.co.uk</a>   | 01752 827730                 |
| Cornerstone Housing  | 18 Southernhay East, Exeter. EX1 1QD   | <a href="http://www.cornerstonehousing.net">www.cornerstonehousing.net</a>   | 01392 273462                 |
| Devon and Cornwall Housing Group (Tor Homes manages Devon Stock) | Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 2JZ  | <a href="http://www.dchgroup.com">www.dchgroup.com</a>                       | 0300 123<br>8080             |
| Falcon Rural Housing   | Falcon Rural Housing, Falcon House, 3a South Street, Wellington. Somerset. TA21 8NR        | <a href="http://www.falconruralhousing.com">www.falconruralhousing.com</a>   | 01823 667343                 |
| Guinness Hermitage   | Ground Floor, Hillfields House, Matford Court, Sigford Road, Exeter. EX2 8NL               | <a href="http://www.guinnesspartnership.com">www.guinnesspartnership.com</a> | 01392 822<br>900             |
| Hastoe Housing   | West Office, West Office, Fluer de Lis, Middlemarsh Street, Poundbury, Dorchester. DT1 3GX | <a href="http://www.hastoe.com">www.hastoe.com</a>                           | 0300 123<br>2250             |
| Housing 21   | 9 Avro Court, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. PE29 6WG                   | <a href="http://www.housing21.co.uk">www.housing21.co.uk</a>                 | 0345 606<br>6363             |
| Magna West Somerset  | St Peter's House, Bridge Street, Williton, Somerset. TA4 4NR                               | <a href="http://www.magnaws.org.uk">www.magnaws.org.uk</a>                   | 0800 138<br>6107             |

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| Housing Association,          |   |  |   |
| Raglan Housing                | Raglan Housing Association, Suite C Lancaster House, Grange Business Park, Whetstone, Leicester LE8 6EP | <a href="http://www.raglan.org">www.raglan.org</a>                                 | 0800 011 6420   |
| Sanctuary Housing             | Leat House Tavistock Road Roborough Plymouth Devon PL6 7BD.   | <a href="http://www.sanctuary-group.co.uk">www.sanctuary-group.co.uk</a>           | 0800 083 9283 or 0300 123 3515                                |
| Spectrum Signpost             | Signpost House, Sunrise Business Park, Blandford Forum, Dorset. DT11 8SA                                | <a href="http://www.sha.co.uk">www.sha.co.uk</a>                                   | Business calls: 0300 111 3600<br>Customer calls: 0300 7777837 |
| South Western Housing Society | Eastbridge House, Pill Road, Rooksbridge, Axbridge. Somerset. BS26 2TN                                  | <a href="http://www.swhs.org.uk">www.swhs.org.uk</a>                               | 0844 915 0025 or 01934 750780                                 |
| Sovereign                     | Unit 2, Orchard Court, Heron Road, Sowton Industrial Estate, Exeter EX2 7LL                             | <a href="http://www.southwest.sovereign.org.uk">www.southwest.sovereign.org.uk</a> | 0845 712 5577 / 01392 888000                                  |
| Tiverton Almshouse Trust      | The Market House, 18 Bampton Street, Tiverton. EX16 6AA   | <a href="http://www.tivertonalmshouse.org.uk">www.tivertonalmshouse.org.uk</a>     | 01884 251444  |
| Westcountry Housing           | Hatfield House, Hatfield Road, Torquay TQ1 3HF  | <a href="http://www.westcountryha.org.uk">www.westcountryha.org.uk</a>             | 01803 200300  |
| Yarlington Housing Group      | Lupin Way, Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 8WN   | <a href="http://www.yhg.co.uk">www.yhg.co.uk</a>                                   | 01935 404 500   |

A copy of this document can be obtained in different formats including large print, Braille etc; it can also be obtained in other languages on request.

If you have any comments or queries regarding this document or if you or anyone known to you needs any advice surrounding their housing needs please contact the Housing Service at Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6PP

Tel: 01884 255255

Fax: 01884 234907

Email: [cfry@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:cfry@middevon.gov.uk)

Opening hours Monday – Thursday 9.00 – 5.00, Friday 9.00 – 4.30