

Theme: Housing

Social housing

Private rentals

'Healthy Homes Ilfracombe'



What did we **discover** about **social housing** in Ilfracombe?

THE PROBLEM

- A **severe shortage of suitable social housing** means that social housing is out of reach for many who need it most
- People are **trapped in unaffordable, unsafe, or overcrowded living conditions**
- **Long waiting lists** and a **mismatch** between available properties and people's actual needs
- The **lack of secure, affordable housing contributes to poor health, instability, and ongoing poverty**
- There is a pressing need to significantly increase the supply of quality, accessible, and appropriate social housing, so that everyone has a safe and stable place to call home

How did we **define** the problem as a design challenge?

How might we increase the availability, and quantity, of suitable social housing, ensuring that people experiencing poverty have access to safe, stable, and affordable homes that meet their diverse needs and provide long-term security?



"There's no way that NDDC would have involved lived experience in the housing project in Ilfracombe without the Commission"
Ken, CEO, NDDC '91



PHYSICAL HEALTH – Safe & comfortable

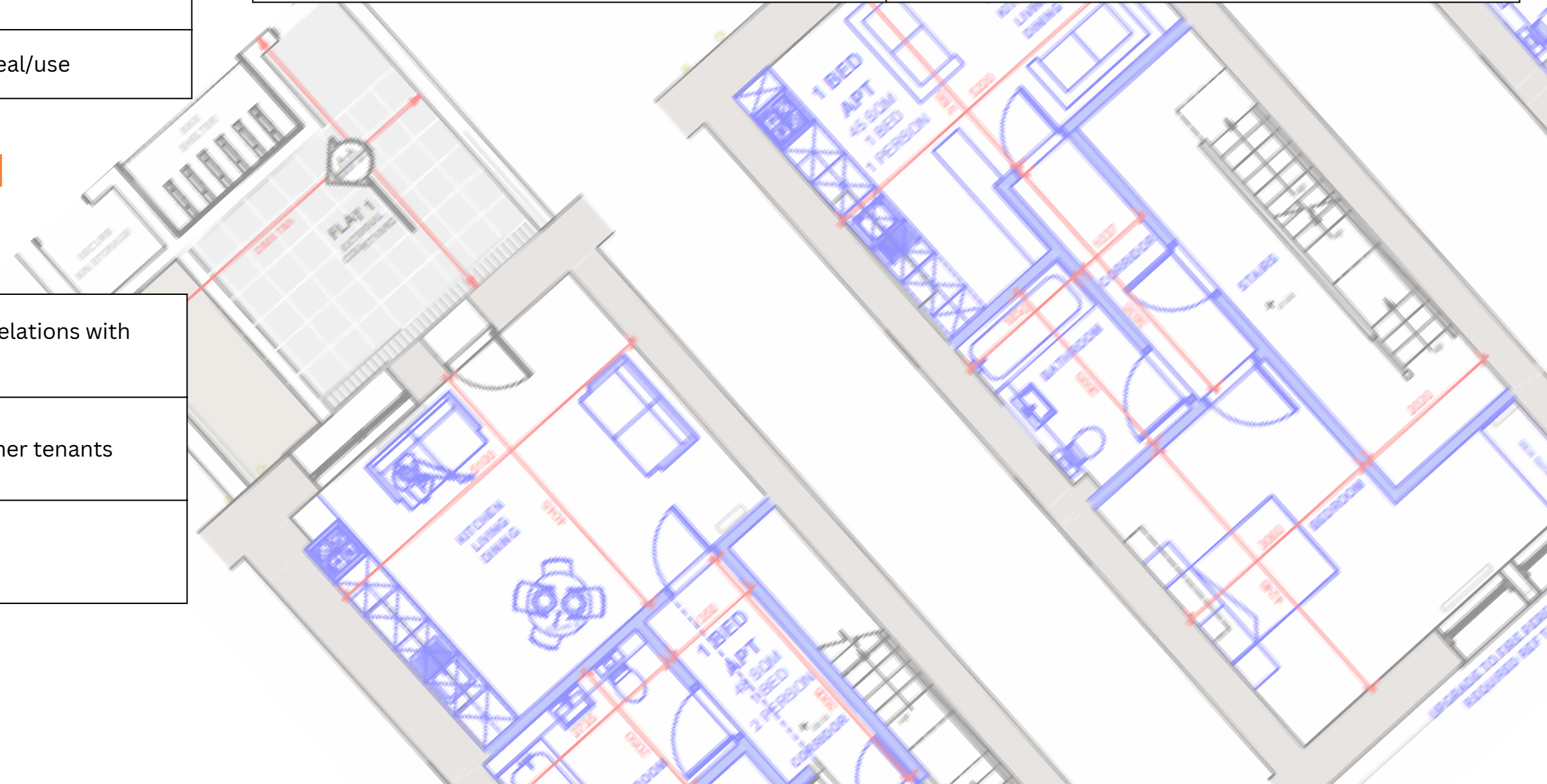
What we want	Previous issues (lived experience)
Larger units rather than cramped HMO bedsits	Not enough room to live comfortably (a home is more than just existing)
Modern boilers for water / heating system	Inefficient, unaffordable heating (old storage, electric fan)
Secure and safe - electronic, gas, plumbing systems (safety checked)	Unsafe: Sockets hanging off the wall, lack basic safety checks and maintenance
Good ventilation and air quality	Mould, damp Heating costs are high and don't want to waste heat
Affordable and energy efficient fittings (e.g. Heated towel rails)	Cannot afford to use appliances
Insulated for thermal comfort	High heating costs
Security gate & light to secure passageways	Used as a toilet, fly-tipping, drug deal/use

SOCIAL NEEDS - Promoting positive, respectful relationships

Outdoor / Communal space	lack of opportunity to build social relations with neighbours
Ground rules for mutual respect & shared responsibility	Not feeling safe or respected by other tenants
Tenancy agreement, maintenance checks and communication	

MENTAL WELLNESS – promotes wellbeing

Soundproofing	Stressful environment (Noise) Lack privacy when overheard through walls
Paper application options	Online access can increase stress / anxiety
Pets allowed (especially therapeutic) (owners to be responsible for cleanliness/noise)	Discriminated against due to pet
Sense that landlord cares (attitude/maintenance)	Not maintained, negative/ aggressive attitude
Folder of information: services available / local assets (shared resource and not online)	Stress of not knowing where (housing) support is
Environment conducive to Neurodiversity	Over stimulating



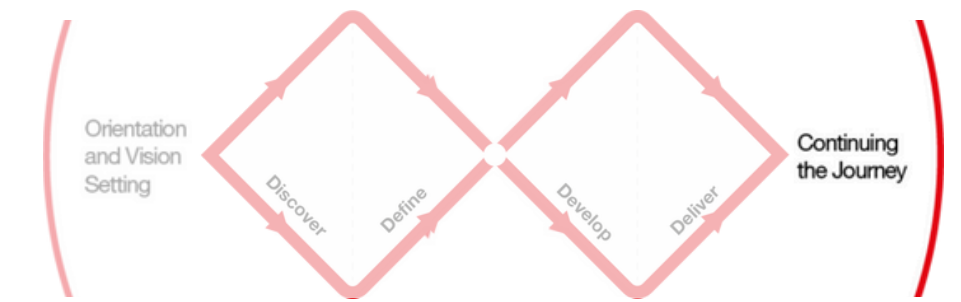
Healthy Homes Ilfracombe

How did we develop this idea?

Creating the first new social housing in Ilfracombe for many years, North Devon District Council purchased the old Post office and buildings on Oxford Grove for retro-fit. The aim was to improve the living environment to achieve better social, physical and mental health outcomes for tenants.

The PTC housing group:

- Enabled the District Council, Community Commissioners, North Devon Homes and 361 Energy to work together, incorporating the learning from the experiences of Community Commissioners.
- We visited the acquired properties with a senior building surveyor
- The Head of Environmental Health & Housing shared architect drawings
- Senior building surveyor reports on progress
- **We co-created a retro-fit specification**



What next?

Short term:

- District Council raising additional funds to meet specified requirements
- Housing group **determining opportunities to influence related policies** (pets, tenancy, section 8 impact)

Medium term:

- Construction - Housing will be in place by the end of 2026
- **Measure outcome** to demonstrate benefits and any unintended outcomes

Long term:

- District Council and North Devon Homes intend to continue to involve people with lived experiences in planning in future social housing initiatives

Landlords Charter

What did we **discover** about the private rented sector in Ilfracombe

THE PROBLEM

- The **private rented sector can be an insecure, unaffordable, and disempowering** place to live.
- Many face **poor housing conditions, short-term tenancies, discrimination, and a lack of accountability from landlords**—all while struggling to meet **high rents**.
- Navigating this system often means **limited rights, fear of eviction, and few safe alternatives**.
- Current systems offer **little protection or support** for renters on low incomes.
- There is a need to create fairer, more transparent, and more supportive housing experiences that treat tenants with dignity, ensure basic standards, and give people greater stability and voice in where and how they live.



**DESIGN
CHALLENGE**

How did we define the problem as a design challenge?

How might we transform the private rented sector into a more secure, affordable, and supportive environment for people experiencing poverty, ensuring tenants have fair treatment, stable housing, and a voice in their living conditions?



How did we develop this idea?

- Outline aims and opportunities for a Charter, including existing and emerging legislation opportunities
- Created draft 'I will statements' for tenants and Landlords
- Discussed support for Landlords
- Invited Letting agencies to begin to build in a new perspective
- 361 Energy submitted a funding bid to support Landlord/letting agency engagement

Aims of charter

Create an attractive charter (to increase motivation to sign and adhere to Charter) that helps to build a trusted relationship between Tenant and Landlord

For Landlords

- Communicate Landlords responsibility
- Promote and communicate relevant legislation / standards (to make this the norm)
- Support (not just penalise) Landlords, helping them improve (policy, maintenance, customer service)
- Improve access and understanding to relevant Information and support
- Highlight good practice

For Tenants

- Communicate tenants' responsibility
- Improve living conditions (Housing quality)
- Protect tenants from bullying, discrimination and unfair eviction
- Ensure access to housing support

What next?

Short term:

- Continue housing group in 2026, involving more Landlords and Letting agencies
- Set out timeline for delivery of Charter
- Define NDDC policies that can be changed to promote voluntary adoption of charter
- Include emerging consumer/regulatory standards

Medium term:

- Determine who could award and enforce Charter
- Determine a package of support available to tenants and landlords
- Reference current/emerging legislation
- Landlord Engagement plan to communicate benefits of signing Charter
- wider public consultation
- Present to Council housing committees for adoption

Long term:

- Finalise Charter
- Create easy read versions
- Signup Landlords and letting agencies