

# **Report on the Need for Affordable Housing in the Parish**

## **Harvington Parish Council Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The Parish council is mindful of the Government's need for affordable houses to be built in order to meet a local need. There have been 14 such properties built within developments in the last three years. This has resulted in 134 affordable houses within the Parish. At the time of these developments the Parish Council had little idea of the need for people with a local connection to the Parish. This became the focus of attention when the new Council was elected in 2007, and in 2009 the Community First Group offered to carry out survey of the Parish.

The Council accepted a questionnaire prepared by them, which was set out in three parts:

- Part A Sort information on the current housing profile.
- Part B Requested the identification of current or future need for housing.
- Part C Provided the opportunity for requesting registration for housing.

These questionnaires were delivered by hand to 675 addresses in the parish, together with a reply paid envelope. There were 271 (40%) returned, each completed to a varying standard as the detailed findings show.

### **Housing Need**

The focus of need was identified through the completion of Part B of the questionnaire, which was completed by 17 respondents; again the forms were completed to a varying standard. Two of those responding did not qualify for affordable housing under the local connection criteria. The analysis identified that there were five people living with their parents or relatives and that 13 needed to change their accommodation within the next five years. However, only two persons requested affordable accommodation. Further, one person required older person's accommodation.

It is revealed that five respondents are home owners, four are tenants and one is in a shared ownership scheme. However, nine respondents wish to be in rented accommodation, four would like to be party to shared ownership and three want to own their own homes. Of those respondents who prefer to rent, three consider they are able to afford a mortgage in excess of £65,000; this will need to be subject to a check on the income available, which has not been identified in the findings.

There were ten respondents who indicated that they had lived within the Parish for the past five years. Seven responded that they hadn't lived here in all of the past five years. It is noted that one of these is working in the Parish whilst two indicated that they didn't live in the Parish now, but had lived in the Parish at some time. However, it is reported that there were no questionnaires returned from persons outside the Parish.

Seven respondents have a close family living in the Parish and eight respondents identified that they have a local involvement either with children at school or belong to a local group.

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The results of the review, whilst informative, do not give an accurate and objective view of the housing need within the Parish because the questions posed did not adequately separate the requirement of households and of individuals. It does not reveal the balance (skew) of the returns as information is not available to analyse the statistics geographically, neither is there an indication of the income of those in need.

The Parish Council would like to thank Community First for their efforts in preparing the questionnaire, its delivery and the initial analysis of the results.

### **Conclusion**

There is a need for affordable housing over the next five years. However, this can be considered low in view of there being just 15 (2%) respondents out of 675, also that there are some 134 affordable houses within the Parish at present and there have been 37 properties where tenancies have changed in the last 3 years.

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## **Detailed Findings**

### **Introduction**

The Parish Council has discussed housing need over a considerable period and, when the new council was elected in 2007, it decided that it should carry out a survey. This was not only to answer the housing need but also to gather information to support a Parish Plan and to better respond to the strategy requirements of the District and County Councils. Community First informed the Council that they were able to carry out this survey. They indicated that they had a questionnaire template, which had been used in other Parishes and this could be used to assess whether there would be sufficient local housing need to justify the provision of new affordable dwellings.

This offer was accepted and the survey was carried out in June 2009. The questionnaire was set out in three parts:

- Part A Sort information on the current housing profile.
- Part B Requested the identification of current or future need for housing.
- Part C Provided the opportunity for requesting registration for housing.

Questionnaires were delivered to 675 households. There were 271 questionnaires returned, although the results collated indicate that 265 have been analysed. There were no returns from outside the parish. Part B was completed by 17 respondents. However, Community First identified that there were only 15 qualifying respondents.

A separate review by the Parish Council has identified that there are 134 affordable houses within its boundary.

The results of the questionnaire and the definitions used in this report are set out in the appendices:

1. Analysis of Results of Housing Needs Questionnaire.
2. Social and Affordable Housing.
3. Wychavon District Council - Policies; Local Connection and Need.
4. General Statistics.

### **Summary of Findings - Questionnaire, Part A**

- a. There are 566 people living in the households which responded.
- b. There are 373 (66%) people over 45 and 252 (45%) are over 60 years of age.
- c. There are 223 (84%) households, which are owner occupied.
- d. There are 109 (41%) of households where the tenancy exceeds 20 years
- e. There are 199 houses and 60 bungalows in the selection and 204 of them have 3 bedrooms or more.

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- f. There were 36 people leaving the parish in the last 5 years; 6 have left because they were not able to find affordable or suitable accommodation.
- g. Support for affordable accommodation for those with a local connection was recorded by 158 (60%) households responding.

### **Summary of Findings - Questionnaire, Part B**

- a. The need to move covered the whole array of reasons set out on the questionnaire. However, two respondents requested affordable accommodation and one respondent wished to have older person's accommodation.
- b. Five of the respondents are currently living with parents / relatives.
- c. Eight respondents are looking for rented accommodation, whilst the remaining seven would like a form of ownership. However, five respondents are already homeowners.
- d. Five respondents may qualify for a mortgage in excess of £55,000.
- e. Ten respondents have lived in the parish for the past five years.
- f. One respondent works in the parish.
- g. Seven respondents have a close family living in the Parish.
- h. Some respondents have reported a local involvement in the parish but it is unclear how many of them have.
- i. One person stated they had been unable to take up employment because of a lack of affordable housing.
- j. There are three respondents who are in permanent employment.
- k. The preferred choice of areas to live may be classed as near the school or anywhere in the village.

The results of the survey were presented to the Parish Council in September 2009, in order for them to complete an executive summary. These results were difficult to follow as the format used was different from that set out in the questionnaire. Further it was difficult to reconcile the figures recorded. Discussions between the Parish Council and Community First resulted in the survey responses being recorded as in the questionnaire (Appendix 1). A summary of the findings are set out above.