

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

OCTOBER 2008

COMMUNITY ACTION HAMPSHIRE

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

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Copy of Survey Questionnaire

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: HALE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Key Features and Main Outcomes

- There is a limited number of smaller, cheaper homes either to buy or rent: there is a low turnover of open market and other stock partly due to their being a higher than average ageing population under-occupying larger houses.
- House prices are high in relation to the incomes of those in need: the cheapest or entry-level house sold in the parish in 2008 was £267,000.
- The survey has identified and recommended the need for a small housing scheme of 6 housing association homes for local people who need a home now or in the next few years, the need being for 1, 2 and 3 bed units.
- New Forest District Council's Housing Register also identifies a need for 13 affordable houses. The need being for 1, 2, and 3 bed units.
- The proposed scheme should be a mix of 6 rented homes.
- Respondents cited 16 family members having recently moved away from the parish because they could not find a suitable home.
- Young adults wanting to set up an independent home from the family home form the single largest category of need but several other factors are identified in the report.
- All of those in need have a household income of less than £26,000 per year.
- There is an overall preference for housing association accommodation through rent or shared ownership. Of those who would prefer to buy on the open market, most are unlikely to be able to afford a property in the area on the basis of financial information provided.
- All the households in need have a strong local connection.
- The majority, 86%, of all respondents would support the idea of building a small affordable housing scheme for local people in the parish.
- The location and design of any proposal were seen as critical issues.
- All households in the parish were surveyed to assess local housing need: a very good response rate of 38% was achieved

HALE PARISH COUNCIL

Housing Needs Survey

NOVEMBER 2008

SURVEY REPORT

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2007, NFDC commissioned the Rural Housing Enablers at Community Action Hampshire (CAH) to carry out a Housing Needs Survey to determine whether or not there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.
- 1.2 The motivation and reason for the survey is best expressed perhaps by the following extract from a covering letter which was sent by a Parish Council along with the survey questionnaire:

Owing to the high cost of housing in this area, the Parish Council is considering whether there might be a need for additional affordable housing in the parish so that residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally will not be forced to move away. Affordable housing is homes that can be rented or part bought (shared ownership) from a Housing Association. The reason for providing new affordable housing is to help local people of all ages who would like to contribute in the long term to maintaining the community spirit and village services that still exist.

- 1.3 The survey and this report has been conducted and produced by CAH without the District Council officers or Parish Council members having had sight of any data or had any input into the content of the report. Thus the report and the findings are an independent and impartial commentary based on the evidence collected.
- 1.4 The survey has been carried out at no financial cost to the Parish Council. The survey was funded by NFDC as part of its remit to explore the need for affordable housing across the District Council area. Other rural parish-based surveys are either taking place or planned.

- 1.5 This survey is the most comprehensive study of housing need undertaken in the parish. Whilst some households will already be on the District Council Housing Register, many may not be included on existing records of need. This survey also raises awareness of housing issues facing local people and gave respondents space to express their views on local housing issues.
- 1.6 The findings in this report are based on the survey only. They should be read in conjunction with other District-wide housing needs surveys, the housing market assessment, affordable housing and planning policies (www.nfdc.gov.uk) to place the conclusions in a district-wide, sub-regional and regional context.
- 1.7 For a wider overview of the national rural housing problem, reference should be made to the findings and recommendations of the Government's Affordable Rural Housing Commission Final Report, May 2006 (www.defra.gov.uk)

2. Survey Purpose and Methodology

- 2.1 The purpose of the survey was to acquire detailed information about the current housing situation and the numbers and types of households in housing need and to find out what kind of alternative housing they were seeking. Also, it gave people an opportunity to express their views on what was needed or not.
 - 2.2 Although based on a core questionnaire, the survey form (a copy is appended to the report) was agreed by NFDC in its final form before distribution. The survey form was divided into two parts: Part One collected general information about the respondent's household and Part Two for completion by those in housing need. Also the questionnaire included an explanatory section on what is meant by affordable housing as it can be provided by housing associations together with a case study of a previous beneficiary now living in a small rural exception site.
 - 2.3 An important element in the design of the form was to reveal what is called hidden or concealed households, people who cannot afford to be in the housing market and are living within another household.
 - 2.4 The forms were delivered by hand to all households in the parish. They were returned in prepaid envelopes to CAH.
 - 2.5 The data processing was carried out by the Rural Housing Enabler (New Forest).
 - 2.6 As the questionnaires went to 100% of households, this is a total or census survey rather than a sample survey. This methodology is that recommended* as being appropriate for rural areas in that from the usual borough-wide sample surveys, rural wards are grouped together and as such it is not possible to disaggregate information for individual villages or parishes. There is a presumption (*Source: A Guide to Housing Needs Assessment, IOH 1993*) that there will be a greater response from those in need using this methodology. The results are presented as found (no figures have been 'grossed up').
- * Assessing Housing Need in the South East – A Good Practice Guide (SEERA 2004)
- 2.7 It should be noted that a few respondents did not answer all the questions asked. Percentages quoted are based on responses received for that particular question.

- 2.8 It is possible, indeed likely, that a degree of housing need occurs within the households who did not respond to the questionnaires and therefore the need identified in this report could be an under-representation of the real situation. The actual figures from the survey can be classed as demonstrable need.
- 2.9 Some information has also been cross-referenced to the 2001 Census, the HM Land Registry parish-based data from web-based sites and the Office of National Statistics.
- 2.10 It is hoped that this report is clear and readable. But some terms have differing definitions, not least *What is affordable housing?*

We have used

Housing provided with subsidy so the asking price or rent can be substantially lower than prevailing local market prices or rents, ensuring it stays affordable for those who cannot afford market housing.

The terms house and housing used in this report refers to all types of residential property including flats, bungalows, sheltered accommodation etc unless otherwise stated.

3. Response to Survey

- 3.1 Of the 227 questionnaires distributed, 87 were processed, a 38% response. The response rate is very good for such a survey and is large enough to have good statistical validity. Further forms were returned after the cut- off date and could not be included in the analysis but those, which demonstrated housing need, have been retained so that should the parish decide to advance an affordable housing scheme in the future, such households could be contacted.

Population figures show that about 553 people live in the Parish. The 227 forms distributed equate to the Council Tax Register records for the number of households validating this as a 100% survey. In addition, these figures give an average household size for the parish of 2.44 people. The 87 survey forms returned represent a survey population of 190 people giving an average household size of 2.18 people, which equates well with the total parish average, again validating this as a representative survey. The 2001 Census showed an average household size of 2.43.

- 3.2 The following sections of the report analyse the key features and present the key findings from the data analysis. Appendix 1 is a copy of the survey form.
- 3.3 The survey was carried out in September and October 2008 for three weeks before the questionnaire return date.

SECTION TWO: THE SURVEY FINDINGS

4. Current Housing Situation – Key Features

- 4.1 Part 1 of the questionnaire was completed by all households whether or not there was any housing need so as to build up picture of the current housing situation in the parish.

The Population

- 4.2 The 87 households replying to the survey contain a total population of 190 of which 8% are children aged less than 15, only 6% are aged 16-24, 8% aged 25-44 and 41% aged 44-65 with the remaining 37% over 65. Making a broad comparison with some national figures – 20% under 15 and 16% over 65 for 2003 (source: Office of National Statistics www.statistics.gov.uk)*, the conclusion is that the parish has significantly less young people and significantly more older people than the Hampshire and national average.

And the overall profile bears out that depicted for rural villages in The State of the Countryside Report 2007 (Commission for Rural Communities), out-migration of younger people due to lack of affordable housing and unaffordability of market housing and in-migration of affluent families and an ageing resident population.

The Housing Stock and Tenure

- 4.3 Some 99% of the housing stock is houses (56%) or bungalows (43%) of which 71% is 3 or 4 bedroom accommodation. With the demographic trend towards smaller households, this lack of 1 and 2 bed units will make it difficult for younger people in particular, whether single, couples, small families as first-time buyers or being on lower incomes to enter the housing market either by affordability or lack of supply. Despite the number of larger houses, a significant number are occupied by one or two people: these tend to be 'empty-nesters' – people whose children have grown-up and left leaving under-occupying parents. Several of these filled in the form as being in housing need: they may be on the housing register for special or health needs or wish to downsize locally to a more manageable property. These homeowners may not be in need by a local authority definition but there is clearly a demand for such housing locally. The fact that there are proportionately less smaller units in the area merely exacerbates this problem

* UK average for 2003. Hampshire is similar to the UK average as a whole showing the same proportion of 0-15 yr olds and 65+ yr olds.

- 4.4 91% of property is owner-occupied, with a significant percentage (69% of the total) owned outright without a mortgage, typical of an older population, reinforcing the issues as highlighted above. Housing association accommodation (4%) and the private rented sector (2%) reflect limited opportunities for those on lower incomes unable to access the open market to rent within the parish.

Property Turnover

- 4.5 The question on length of residency shows that 77% of respondents have lived in the parish for over 10 years with a further 10% of households being resident for 5-10 years. This represents a stable community, a low level of development and a low turnover of property. If to this low availability is added the poor potential supply of smaller units as indicated above, the possibilities for local people on lower incomes who wish to remain in the parish, or indeed those who may wish to return, appear very limited. The analysis of local affordability in a following section will amplify this problem.

Housing Need and Out-Migration

- 4.6 The survey data shows that there are 13 respondents with someone needing separate accommodation with 6 respondents needing this to be met in the next two years.
- 4.7 Directly connected to the above, respondent households report 16 family members having had to move from the parish due to difficulties in finding a suitable home locally. This represents out-migration and is indicative of a lack of affordable housing to rent buy. Given the very low percentage of the survey population aged 16-24, only 6%, and this being the age group most likely to be looking for their first and affordable home, there is an indication here that this is a trend which the Parish Council may wish to address: the housing needs analysis in detail below will further justify this.

5. Level of Support for a Small Development of Affordable Housing

- 5.1 One of the purposes of the report was to establish the level of local support for a possible new scheme. Question 6 on the questionnaire asked: *Would you support a small development of affordable housing in Martin if there was a proven need from households in Martin with a genuine local connection?*

A total of 87 respondents answered the question.

86% said 'Yes': 14% said 'No'

- 5.2 Numerically, this represents a clear majority who would support the Parish Council if a small development were needed. But many respondents backed up their decision by adding comments and I have included these as verbatim transcripts in Appendix II.

I have made no judgement nor attempted to attach any weight to these findings either way, preferring to leave such local opinion to be considered by the Parish Council.

6. Housing Need

6.1 Section 1 asked households if they or anyone living within the household needed separate accommodation now or in the next five years. Some 13 respondents completed the question with 13 respondents completing part 2 as needing a new home in the next three years and wishing to live in the parish. What follows analyses the needs and situations of those households.

Local Connection

6.2 Of those respondents completing Part 2, 4 were completed by themselves as being in need and 7 were completed on behalf of family members needing separate accommodation.

Of these respondents, 3 live in the parish. Of the remaining, 4 previously lived in the parish.

It is worth emphasising here that strong local connection criteria would be rigidly enforced should a scheme be proposed and advanced.

6.3 In addition, as indicated in 4.7 above, survey responses identified 16 people that have moved away in the past five years because of difficulties finding a suitable home. It is not known whether these people are still in housing need or they may have settled into alternative accommodation elsewhere. But the number of households on the Housing Register preferring the parish and with a local connection to the parish, 13 households, would indicate that some of them might still be in housing need.

Current Tenure

6.4 In terms of the current tenure of those households in need, 5 are living within homes owned or rented by their parents and 2 live in private rented accommodation.

Preferred Tenure

6.5 Of preferred tenure of first choice, 8 would prefer to rent from a housing association, and 3 require shared ownership. Only 3 preferred private rented accommodation as first choice.

It would seem that an overall preference for Housing Association homes reflects an air of reality in terms of financial capacity. The following section on affordability will echo this and also demonstrate that most who aspire to open market purchase can at best only afford shared ownership.

Households on the Housing Register

6.6 Only 2 of the 13 Part 2 respondents in need is already on the Housing Register. Should the other households wish to qualify for any possible future scheme, they would need to go on the Housing Register.

The current NFDC Register shows households requesting the parish and with a local connection to the parish standing at 13 (7 requiring a 1-bed house, bungalow or flat; 5 a 2-bed house; 1 a 3-bed house).

Household Composition

6.7 In terms of household composition, there are 7 single persons, and 6 families with children.

Reasons Accommodation Needed

6.8 The main reasons for needing to move fall into two categories. The need to start a first home and not being able to afford a mortgage and to be nearer family.

Size of Accommodation Required

6.9 In terms of the size of accommodation required, 3 of the households require 1 bed and 7 of the households requires 2 bed and 3 of the households require 3 bed.

6.10 One household would require special care or support because of health problems.

Urgency

6.11 There is a degree of urgency to meet the need: 6 households are requiring a separate home now or within 1-2 years.

7. Affordability

- 7.1 It is best perhaps to approach this issue by revisiting the preferred tenure of those in need and comparing this to financial information provided.

Rent

- 7.2 8 households would prefer to rent from a housing association: the spectrum of rents for a 2-bed to a 3-bed units would lie between £90 to £110 per week.

Shared Ownership

- 7.3 6 households indicated their capacity to pay up to £100 per week and it maybe that these households could be eligible for shared ownership housing: 0 households have a sufficient deposit. All the households in need have a gross income of less than £2167 per month (£26,000 per year). This figure is the generally accepted threshold above which a household might be considered to be financially eligible for a shared ownership property, usually taking out a mortgage on 40% of the equity as an entry level and paying rent on the balance. Therefore, no households would be able to afford the shared ownership option.

Open Market

- 7.4 For those households wanting to buy on the open market as a preferred first option, the issues in Martin are as follows:

Using HM Land Registry data on house sales in the parish (websites: www.mouseprice.com and www.ourproperty.co.uk), for that part of the parish with postcode SP6 2NN, for 2008 the average house price has been £672,000, based on 5 sales. The entry level (ie cheapest) house was £267,000 for a semi-detached house.

So taking the cheapest house sold, ie what would be the open market entry level price, the lowest for 2008 was £267,000. Assuming a 95% mortgage at 3.5 joint income, a household would need a gross income of about £72,000 and a deposit of £13,350 to afford the latter property. So for households wishing to remain in Hale, the options available are moving to a cheaper area, staying in their existing home or investigating a different tenure such as renting or shared ownership. Local house prices and the supply of houses on the open market clearly presents a gap between aspiration and attainment for those in need who wish to buy on the open market

Economic Status and Travel

- 7.5 Of those households in need, 10 provided information as being in full-time employment: all are employed locally (in the parish or in the Ringwood/Salisbury/Fordingbridge area). 8 travel to work by car, 2 car share, 1 by bus and 1 by bike.

SECTION THREE: THE WAY FORWARD

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Though most households are satisfied with their housing situation, there is a demonstrable unmet housing need from local people for 13 units of affordable housing as quantified below.
- 8.2 The unmet need is a product of a low turnover of relatively large expensive open market housing in the parish which excludes those local people on lower incomes from gaining access to this market should they wish to stay in the parish. All the households in need have average incomes of less than £26,000 which represents a problem in an area of high property values. In addition there is a low turnover and inadequate supply of affordable social rented housing and for shared ownership to meet the need.
- 8.3 There is a good overall majority (86%) level of support for a small scheme from the local community to satisfy this need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.
- 8.4 The responses have shown that housing for local people is a significant issue in the parish. 13 respondents have expressed a need for new or alternative accommodation. The Housing Register also gives the current register figure of 13.
- 8.5 Incomes for all households in need wanting to buy outright are nowhere near sufficient to buy on the open market and for those, shared ownership may be the only solution to stay living in the parish. Based on the information provided, no shared ownership homes are recommended.
- 8.6 The size of any future affordable housing scheme may be assessed against the following factors:
 - (a) The survey has revealed the need for housing for 13 households in housing need with a local connection with Hale.
 - (b) New Forest District Council's Housing Register has revealed a need for 13 households.
 - (c) Based on the financial information, units for rent should be provided. It is unlikely that households could afford shared ownership.

- 8.7 Given all the factors in this report, an affordable housing scheme for local people as detailed below, would be appropriate for families with children, couples and single people, subject to planning and funding implications.

PROPOSAL: 6 AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Sizes: 2 x 1 bed flats or maisonettes to rent
3 x 2 bed houses to rent
1 x 3 bed house to rent

- 8.8 It could be considered that a scheme of the above size would not have too significant an impact on the parish were it well-sited and well-designed.
- 8.9 It should also be remembered that a housing needs survey is only a snapshot of need at any one time and while the scale of need is not likely to change, by the time any possible future scheme is likely to be achieved, the mix and size of units would need to be cross-referenced with the District Council Housing Register to show emerging need with a local connection at that time.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Parish Council consider advancing the process to achieve a small scheme of affordable housing as proposed above by:

1. Accepting the findings of this report.
2. Engaging with the District Council and Hyde Housing Association, to explore the potential for programming such a scheme and its funding by the Housing Corporation.
3. Exploring potential locations and availability of any sites which the Parish Council may think appropriate.

Gordon Richardson
Rural Housing Enabler (New Forest)
Community Action Hampshire
November 2008

Tel: 023 80891969
Email: gordin@supanet.com

APPENDIX 1

HALE HOUSING NEED SURVEY

APPENDIX 11

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 7

PARISH - HALE

QUESTION NO. 7: I WOULD SUPPORT A HOUSING SCHEME.

- Would support housing as my children have had to move away.
- We only live in Hale/Woodgreen thanks to this type of housing.
- Young people with ordinary jobs have been priced out of the market.
- Too many of the young people in the village have been forced out of the market.
- Too many of the young people in the village have been forced to move away because of the lack of housing and inflated prices of accommodation.
- Reluctantly yes, but obviously, like most residents, I am very concerned as to where a suitable site would be located and the extra traffic such a development would lead to.
- To remain a vibrant living community, all villages need to cater for young, old, rich, poor etc., and therefore there is a need for affordable housing. Do nothing and the housing stock becomes less accessible to those on lower incomes.
- Yes, on the assumption there would be full consultation with local residents on where and how large the development would be.
- Yes, providing they are good family houses!
- I recognise the need for young people to continue to live here – currently priced out of the market.
- We need affordable housing in Hale for younger members of the community but the letter enclosing this form and the form itself show a lack of imagination, as we do not need “a small development” which would segregate them from the rest of the community. We need to allow the development of single plots around the village, subject to agreements under Section S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, preventing the sale of them to anyone over the age of 30 years. This would keep the value of the dwellings down at a level which young people could afford.

- Emphasise small and genuinely for local people. Say 10-15 homes, preferably on a brownfield site if its possible. Essential that the homes are publicly owned with no right to buy.
- We know of one couple in our road who desperately need housing.
- I agree subject to the Parish Council and village are involved in consultation at all stages. Land used to be infill or site within present confines.
- Would support providing houses could not be sold on in the future.
- Great Britain as a whole is desperately in need of affordable housing.
- Provided it is otherwise subject to normal planning consideration.
- We feel it is so important for young people to be able to remain in the area if they so wish, otherwise the heart will go out of the Parish. With such a lovely school and beautiful countryside, Hale is an ideal place for children to grow up in. We were fortunate to move here on retirement.
- Some objections/concerns to this type of housing could be addressed by not placing all affordable housing together, for instance, using redundant farm buildings etc. Thus integrating within community, private landlords could also be used, this would help project the appearance of any development.
- We have grand children born in Hale who would love to move back to Hale to live.
- Essential in my view that younger people can afford to stay in the Parish.
- I do not think my sons will be able to afford to live in the village, given house prices, should they choose to. I think there must be many other young adults in this position.
- Local people should have the chance to stay in one of the best parts of the country. Also, this would keep families close if they wished.

PARISH - HALE

QUESTION NO. 7 I WOULD NOT SUPPORT A HOUSING SCHEME

- But like all of us, not next to me! But not possible, no room.
- This provides an inconsistency with Planning Strategy. Houses are currently limited to 33%.extensions and new dwellings not allowed. It would be appropriate if council houses had not been sold off.
- Not sure there is a need for affordable housing in Hale. I would not want to see any more green spaces being given over to buildings.
- We would support affordable housing if we thought it was workable for local people but cannot see how this could be enforced so it was for local people/connections only? Also, the site for such housing would be questionable. We have not ticked Y or N because we would support a scheme if it could be properly enforced but not if it wasn't.
- Surrounding areas, i.e. Fordingbridge, have more suitable areas for affordable housing.
- This is a difficult question to answer just Y or N. I would support "genuine" local connection more than "households in need". However, there also needs to be some link to the availability of employment and the chance of the need being sustained in the long term.
- I could not be against anything more than the idea of building affordable housing. What about Woodfalls, Downton, Fordingbridge, plenty of homes to buy and rent at the moment.
- The only occasions on which we have had "neighbour problems" have been those resulting from occupants of "social" housing.
- There is little employment in the local area so would increase traffic for the extensive commute to Southampton or Bournemouth. Impact on local roads etc.