



Plumpton Parish Housing Needs Survey Summary

Survey undertaken in March 2024

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Introduction

In 2024 Action in rural Sussex was commissioned by Plumpton Council, to assess the scale and nature of the need for locally affordable housing in the Parish.

The study identified households whose housing needs were not being appropriately met currently on the open market within the parish.

Methodology

An assessment of the level housing need was undertaken using a postal Housing Need Survey to every household in the parish, together with an online option for completion. The survey gathered information on the household make-up of those with an affordable housing need (e.g. single adult, family with children, older couple, 65+ etc.), current housing type, tenure and circumstance, gross household income and savings, and details of respondent's local connection to the area.

Eligibility for affordable housing was based on two main aspects. Firstly, the housing in which the individual/household resided was not adequate for their needs e.g. too few bedrooms. Secondly, that they cannot afford an appropriate property which would meet their needs to rent or buy on the open market within the local area. This was determined by comparing respondents' financial information against the baseline rental and purchase costs for a property, which would meet their current requirements.

A total of 205 responses were received from the 626 households in Plumpton Parish – 151 by post and 54 online. This represents an overall response rate of 33% - a very good response rate for a survey of this nature.

Property prices

In order to develop a baseline of the affordability of property within the parish, sale price information was gathered of properties sold in the Plumpton area during the previous 24 months.

Rental costs were calculated by identifying the cheapest property of each bedroom size being marketed for rent in the Plumpton area at the time of compiling the report.

Incomes

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics) found the 2023 average (mean) gross income in Lewes District was £43,659 and the mid value (median) gross income was £35,757 per year.

Affordability

Property costs indicate an entry level gross annual household income requirement of some £32,000 to rent a one-bedroom property – assuming direct housing costs did not exceed 30% of annual gross household income.

To buy a one-bedroom property, costs indicated an income of £48,215 was required – assuming a 10% deposit and 3.5 x income to value multiplier. The purchaser would need to have savings for a deposit of £18,750.

This highlights an affordability issue for over half local wage earners.

Key Survey Findings

General

- The 2023 census highlighted that there was a significantly higher proportion of larger (potentially more expensive) homes in Plumpton Parish, compared to the Lewes District as a whole.
- There was very strong support (85%) for local affordable housing provision if there is a proven need.
- A majority (53%) would like to see community led housing provision.

Affordable housing need identified.

The key findings identified from this Housing Needs Survey are:

- 23 households were identified as needing affordable housing due to the inadequacy of their current housing in meeting their needs and their inability to afford to rent or purchase a suitable property on the open market in the parish.
- All households responding had a local connection to Plumpton Parish.
- The largest classification of households in need of affordable housing was single adults (aged 18+) - 15 (65%). This was followed by adult / family with children (aged under 18) – 3 (13%). The balance being single older people (aged over 65) – 2 (9%), adult/family with children (aged over 18) - 2 (9%), and adult couple (aged 18 - 64 - no children) - 1 (4%).
- The most common reason identified in the survey for households seeking to move was to set up an independent home – 16 (70%). Two (9%) of households need to be closer to a carer or dependent. Other reasons given included: Need a larger home, changing circumstances (e.g. divorce), current rent/mortgage is unaffordable, need a more manageable home, and need a smaller home.
- One of the households, a local authority tenant seeking larger affordable housing, may be able to address their housing need by a transfer or mutual exchange.
- Renting from a housing association or local authority was the most preferred option by 9 (39%) of respondents. This was followed by renting from a local community organisation - 5 (22%) and buying on the open market – 7 (30%). Two households (9%) would prefer shared ownership.
- Affordability was an issue for many households - current rent/mortgage is unaffordable for 16(13%), and current home expensive to run/maintain for 12 (10%). Needing a larger home was the main reason for 19(15%). Wanting a more secure form of tenure was the reason for 10 (8%) of households.
- The largest proportion of respondents - 18 (78%) required a one-bedroom property. This was followed by two bedroom - 4 (18%), and three bedroom 1 (4%).
- Housing need is pressing for most respondents - 16 households (70%) need to move either now or within two years. Seven households (30%) need to move between two and five years from now.
- A number had specialist requirements. Three respondents identified ground floor as a requirement, 2 sheltered housing and 2 housing with support services.

- Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, 4 of the households in need of affordable housing appear to be able to afford shared ownership – depending on the shared ownership scheme, and a more detailed assessment of their income / expenditure and mortgage eligibility.
- One of the 23 households in need of affordable housing identified that they are on a local authority or housing association housing register for a rented home. No households in need of affordable housing identified that they are on a local authority or housing association housing register for shared ownership.

Market preferences identified

As part of the process of reviewing the responses from households who completed Part 2 of the Housing Needs Survey, 15 households were identified who could not be categorised as in need of affordable housing due to their income and savings, or because they were currently housed in a way that met their requirements.

Whilst currently ineligible for affordable housing based on the current criteria, it is important that we consider these households that possess either a housing aspiration or housing need, to enable us to better understand the housing market locally.

Most of the 15 households first preference was for some form of private ownership – either buying on the open market (9), shared ownership (1) or private renting (1).

Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, 7 of the households may be able to buy a shared ownership property – depending on the shared ownership scheme, and a detailed assessment of their income / expenditure and mortgage eligibility.

The key characteristics of the households identified as falling into the market housing need category were:

- All 15 households possessed a local connection to the Plumpton Parish through living in the area, working locally, family connection, or past residence.
- The make-up of the 15 households was: older couple (aged over 65) – 5 (33.3%), adult/family with children (aged under 18) – 3 (20%), single adult (aged 18+) – 3 (20%), single older person (aged over 65) – 2 (13.3%), and adult couple (aged 18 - 64 - no children) – 2 (13.3%).
- Current housing comprised of 7 (47%) households own a property with no mortgage, 5 (33%) living with parents/friends/family, 2 (13%) renting privately, 1 (7%) lives in a shared ownership property.
- The main reason for moving were a need for an independent home – 5 (33%), need a smaller home – 4 (26%), current home expensive to run / maintain - 2 (13%).
- Eight (53%) indicated a preference for two bedrooms, 4 (27%) for three bedrooms, and 3 (20%) for one bedroom.
- Seven (47%) indicated a need to move either now or within two years.
- Three households needed sheltered housing.
- One household in need of market housing was on a local authority or housing association register for shared ownership.