

## **Housing and Community Need in the Parish of Hambledon - a summary of the 2015 housing needs survey**

### **Introduction**

Following the acquisition of Orchard Farm by the English Rural Housing Association (ERHA), the Parish Council felt it would be appropriate to up-date the 2010 housing needs survey. This further survey was carried out by Surrey Community Action (SCA) in January 2015 and the resultant report has been formally adopted by the Parish Council.

314 questionnaires were mailed to all households and local employers in the Parish. 261 questionnaires – 83 per cent – were returned. Across the country a 10 – 35 per cent response rate is generally recorded, so this is outstanding.

Part 1 surveyed all residents about their views on housing development within the Parish. Part 2 was designed to help measure the level of need, both for affordable housing by those with a local connection and for open market housing; and in both cases with particular reference to the needs of older people and emerging households.

Whilst questionnaires were delivered to all households, the results do not represent the views of all residents. No information is available in respect of non-respondents and it is not possible to gross up results to represent all households. Nor does the survey purport to represent the Parish's entire housing need. Not everyone answered every question. Findings are based on responses.

### **Background information**

#### **Property in Hambledon: the open market sector**

In February 2015 there were three properties for sale in the Parish<sup>1</sup>. Eight properties had been sold in 2014, ranging from a two-bed flat (£249,950) to a four-bed detached house (£1,110,000).

A single person wishing to purchase the former would require a gross annual income of £64,272; a couple would require a joint gross annual income of £74,985<sup>2</sup>. These figures assume that a minimum deposit of 10 per cent (£24,995) would be required by mortgage lenders (unless the household was able to access Help to Buy which would require a five per cent deposit).

Opportunities to purchase a two-bed property in Hambledon at this price are very limited. The average price of the two-bed cottages that came onto the market in Hambledon in 2014 was £580,000 which would require a joint income of £193,333. Older people looking to downsize and young couples or single people wishing to get on to the housing ladder are thus faced with a lack of small, open market housing.

National Housing Federation data shows that the average (mean) house price in 2012 for Waverley was £423,877. This was the highest in Surrey and 4.9 times higher than in England as a whole; and it equated to 16.2 times the average salary (£26,151) for those living in the Borough.

#### **The rented sector**

As of February 2015 one property, a one-bed flat, was available to rent in Hambledon for £875 per month. A three-bed property had recently been let for £1,500 per month.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Based on a mortgage x3.5 or a single income and x3 for a joint income

National Housing Federation data show that in 2012 the average (mean) private sector rent for a one-bed property in Waverley was £269.08 per week, compared with a figure of £162.69 for England as a whole. Housing Association weekly rents for one-bed properties in Waverley were £102.47/£83.21.

Households having difficulty in paying their rent can apply for Local Housing Allowance based on housing needs and size of accommodation. Maximum weekly current rates range from £168.98 (one-bed property) and £214.38 (two bed property) to £346.15 (four-bed)

### Council tax

In 2011 Hambledon had a lower number of properties in tax bands A – E than both Surrey and the country as a whole. 0.9 per cent of Hambledon's housing stock fell within Band A, compared with a Surrey average of 1.8 per cent and a national average of 24.8 per cent. At bands F and G the trend was reversed: the Hambledon averages were 22 per cent compared with 13 per cent (Surrey) and four per cent (nationally).

### Current affordable housing in the Parish<sup>3</sup>

Duncombs Cottages: five properties (two for rent; three shared ownership), built by ERHA in 2000-02.

Waverley Borough Council has a total of 22 properties in the Parish.

None of the above has become available since 2010 which means that those on the Waverley housing register who would qualify for affordable housing in Hambledon are likely to have to wait a considerable number of years before a suitable property becomes available.

### **Hambledon: household characteristics**

#### The survey. Part 1

The responses (ranging from 261 to 253) to the first five questions in Part 1 indicated that

- for 98 per cent their home in Hambledon is their main home
- 70 per cent live in houses, 24 per cent in bungalows and seven per cent in flats or caravans [this is in line with most rural areas]
- 88 per cent are owner occupiers [this is well above the national average], seven per cent rent [this is well below the national average], one per cent share ownership (part rent/part buy) and three per cent are in accommodation that goes with the job or other (unspecified)
- 28 per cent of respondents have lived in the Parish for more than 20 years. 15 per cent for 16 – 20 years, 15 per cent for 11 – 15 years, 28 per cent for five – 20 years and 15 per cent for less than five years
- four per cent stated that family members had moved away from Hambledon in the last five years due to difficulties in finding a home locally.

There were two further questions in Part 1. The first asked whether a small number of new homes in the Parish would provide any of the following benefits and 93 respondents commented as follows

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| - meeting housing needs of local people        | 86 per cent |
| - maintaining a mixed balance of households    | 67 per cent |
| - supporting the village shop, pub, etc        | 59 per cent |
| - helping local employers recruit/retain staff | 54 per cent |
| - maintaining the viability of local services  | 54 per cent |

The last question sought ideas for a site or sites within the Parish where a small development could be built. 34 of the 48 respondents suggested Orchard Farm and seven

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Waverley Borough Council

the land opposite the Merry Harriers. Other sites were mentioned once or twice and can be assessed by SCA/Waverley if thought appropriate; but none is known to be on the open market.

### The survey. Part 2

21 households stated that they needed to move within the Parish within the next two - five years. All will be reminded that, if they are not already on the Waverley Borough Council housing register, this is a pre-requisite for accessing social or affordable housing.

Part 2 sought information on types of accommodation and why it was needed; the types of households in need; and the numbers of bedrooms needed. The survey did not collect precise salary figures: instead it asked respondents to indicate, within various ranges, their gross annual income and how much they thought they could pay by way of monthly rent or mortgage costs.

Taking into account all the information given by respondents to Part 2, there would appear to be a need for the following accommodation in the Parish:

|                                     | one-bed | two-bed | two/three-bed | three-bed | three bed + | Total market     |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|
| Open market                         |         | 1       | 1             | 2         |             | 4                |
|                                     |         |         |               |           |             | Total non-market |
| Affordable rent                     | 2       | 2       |               |           | 1           | 5                |
| Shared ownership                    |         | 4       |               | 2         |             | 6                |
| Affordable rent or shared ownership |         | 2       | 2             |           |             | 4                |

While the survey indicates the above level of housing need, by the time units become available needs may have been met elsewhere or may have altered. Nor has it yet been assessed whether those who say they are in need actually qualify for affordable or shared ownership housing. This will be ascertained by ERHA and Waverley. As such, the total number of homes, if any were to be built, should reflect the need identified by the survey; the level of need for affordable or shared ownership housing in Hambledon recorded on the Waverley Borough Council housing register; and the number of homes that it would be appropriate to build in the Parish given site constraints and the local setting.