



**Rye Parish
Housing Needs Survey
Summary**

Survey undertaken in March 2023

Introduction

In 2023 Action in rural Sussex was commissioned by Rye Town 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, and who could not afford to meet them on the open market within the parish.

Methodology

An assessment of the level housing need was undertaken using an online Housing Need Survey promoted to every home in the parish. 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 574 responses were received from the 2500 households in Rye Parish– 426 by post and 148 online. This represents an overall response rate of 23% - a 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 Rye area during the previous 12 months.

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

Incomes

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics) found the 2022 average (mean) gross income in Rother District was £30,809 and the 2021 mid value (median) gross income was £22,401 per year.

Affordability

Property costs indicate an entry level gross annual household income requirement of some £27,000 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 £42,429 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 £16,500.

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

Key Survey Findings

General

- The 2023 census highlighted that there was a slightly higher proportion of smaller (potentially cheaper) homes in Rye, compared to the Rother District as a whole
- There was very strong support (92%) for local affordable housing provision if there is a proven need.
- A majority (64%) would like to see community led housing provision.

Affordable housing need identified

The key findings identified from this Housing Needs Survey are:

- 123 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 to the question had a local connection to Rye Parish
- The most common reasons for the housing need were: to set up an independent home – 43 (35%), needing a larger home - 19(15%), current rent/mortgage is unaffordable - 16(13%), current home expensive to run/maintain - 12 (10%), and wanting a more secure form of tenure was the reason - 10 (8%).
- Ten households are currently housing association / local authority tenants, mainly seeking larger accommodation. These respondents may be able to address their housing need by a transfer or mutual exchange.
- The largest classifications of households in need of affordable housing were: adult / family with children (aged under 18) – 55 (44%), single adults (aged 18+) - 44 (36%), single older people (aged over 65) – 8 (6%), adult / family (with children aged over 18) – 7 (6%), adult couple (aged 18 - 64 - no children) - 7 (6%), and one older couple (aged over 65).
- Renting from a housing association or local authority was preferred option by 48 (39%) of respondents. This was followed by renting from a local community organisation - 37 (30%), shared ownership – 15 (12%), and buying on the open market – 10 (8%).
- The largest proportion of respondents - 59 (48%) required a one-bedroom property. This was followed by two bedroom - 37 (30%), three bedroom 20 (16%), four bedroom – 6 (5%), and one five-bedroom need.
- Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, 19 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.
- Housing need is pressing for most respondents, 78% need to move either now or within two years, and 20% need to move between two and five years from now.
- A number of respondents have specialist requirements: 20 identified a ground floor requirement, 3 sheltered housing and 6 housing with support services.

- Only 50 (41%) were on a local authority or housing association housing register for a rented home, and 10 (8%) were on a 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, 33 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.

A significant proportion of the 33 households identified a first preference for some form of private ownership – either buying on the open market (14), shared ownership (7) or private renting (2).

Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, 16 of the households may be able to buy a shared ownership property – depending on the shared ownership scheme, and a more 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:

- The make-up of the 33 households was: adult couple (aged 18 to 64 - no children) – 12 (37%), adult/family with children (aged under 18) – 9 (27%), single adult (aged 18+) – 4 (12%), single older person (aged over 65) – 4 (12%), and older couple (aged over 65) – 4 (12%).
- All households responding to the question possessed a local connection to the Rye Parish through living in the area, working locally, family connection, or past residence.
- Current housing comprised: 19 (58%) households rented privately, 8 (24%) living with parents/friends/family, one household owned a property with a mortgage, 4 (12%) own a property with no mortgage, one lives in a shared ownership home.
- Nineteen (60%) indicated a preference for two bedrooms, 9 (28%) three bedrooms, 3 (9%) one bedroom, and 1 (3%) four bedrooms.
- Twenty-seven respondents indicated a need to move either now or within two years, one 2 to 5 years from now, five between 5 to 10 years from now.
- Five households needed ground floor, three required households sheltered housing, and two households had a need for residential care.
- Five households in need of market housing were on a local authority or housing association register for shared ownership. Four households were on a local authority or housing association register for rented housing.

For further information on the survey please contact: Action in Rural Sussex
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