

Housing needs survey for the parish of Bridge

RESULTS

The housing needs survey was delivered to every household in Bridge Parish during July 2005. The purpose of the survey is to find out if there is a need for a local needs housing scheme in the parish.

A summary of the main findings of the survey is given below:

- Response rate of 36% (a good response for this type of survey)
- Respondents to the survey were predominately owner occupiers (90%)
- The 2001 census shows a slightly higher level of rented accommodation at 19% of dwellings (private and social rented)
- From the survey 74% of homes have 3 or more bedrooms
- 63% of respondents have lived in Bridge for more than 11 years
- 148 people have left the parish in recent years, of these 33 people indicated that they would return if affordable housing is available
- Respondents perceived that housing for young people (26%), family homes (12%) and housing for older people (12%) are most needed in the parish
- 11% of respondents would prefer to see no further houses built
- 75% of respondents said they would not object to a development to meet local housing needs
- Written comments were received;
Concerns were expressed about
 - Pressure on existing services and facilities
 - Expansion of the village and growth towards Canterbury
 - Loss of rural feel and possible change to village character
- 16% of respondents (40 households) to the survey indicated a housing need
- The 40 households that completed section 2 of the survey, indicating they had a housing need, were assessed to see if they would be eligible for local needs housing - that is they have a connection to the parish, they wish to remain living in the parish and are unable to afford suitable accommodation, in the parish, to either rent or buy on the open market.

- 24 households are unable to rent privately or purchase a home on the open market suitable for their needs
 - 16 x single people
 - 2 x couples
 - 6 x families
- Of the single and couple households
 - 78% are between 16 -24 years of age
 - 5% are between 25 – 44 years of age
 - 11% are between 45 – 59 years of age
 - 5% are over 60 years of age
 - The 6 families include 7 children
- 22 out of the 24 households currently live in the village
- 14 (58%) of the 24 households are seeking their first independent home

A formula of need being 2 to 3 times greater than number of properties that maybe be built is used to calculate how many homes would meet existing and future housing need in the parish.

For Bridge Parish a small scheme of perhaps 8 affordable homes would meet existing and future needs of local people.

The survey also showed that 8 households, of older people, living in the parish are seeking some form of assisted accommodation, either warden assisted or residential care, within the parish.

Local needs housing schemes are built to provide affordable rented or shared ownership homes for local people. The homes are managed by a housing association and an agreement sets out the criteria that any applicant would have to fulfil in order to be allocated a home. Importantly they must be able to demonstrate a connection to the parish, either through residency, close family or employment.

As land within the village envelope is scarce and carries a high value, planning policy allows, where a proven need is established, for local needs housing schemes to be built outside of the normal limits to built development. These are known as exception sites. There are very strict criteria that must be met to ensure that the homes are sensitively designed, well located in relationship to the village, local services, the surrounding countryside and highways.