

Strete Housing Needs Survey May 2015

Prepared by South Hams District Council on Behalf of Strete Parish Council



STRETE HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

In March 2015 a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken for the parish of Strete. This survey was carried out by South Hams District Council on behalf of Strete parish council; its primary purpose is to provide evidence about the likely future affordable housing need in the parish. The results will contribute as part of the evidence to inform a Neighbourhood Plan if the community decides that this would be appropriate. This survey will be a key piece of evidence to inform potential planning applications in the parish of Strete. It is to be used in conjunction with Devon Home Choice and Help to Buy South West as evidence to illustrate demand for housing changes. The questions asked are intended to provide a headline figure only to advise what affordable housing provision may be needed within the town over the next 5 years and is based upon the answers which have been provided. A full breakdown of the results will be provided to the parish council. The names of those completing the survey will be confidential to South Hams District Council and removed from the analysis.

South Hams DC is currently preparing to consult on 'Our Plan' which is the new strategic plan for the District until 2031 this will set out minimum development requirements for communities in the South Hams. This Housing Needs survey looks specifically at affordable housing needs rather than open market housing needs.

This survey is a guideline for the next 5 years but can be revisited within this time if the Parish feels that this is appropriate and in consultation with the Council's Affordable Housing Officer. Housing need, whether this is for privately owned, rented or for those unable to afford housing in the area changes over time, therefore this needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure that that the results reflect the local need at the time.

Background

Strete Parish council requested the housing needs survey to help identify affordable housing need within the community. This can additionally be used to support a neighbourhood plan if the community decide to carry this out.

The survey was delivered to every household within Strete Parish and a pre – paid envelope was provided for respondents to send their completed surveys to South Hams District Council. Due to concerns about access to a computer this was considered to be the best way to ensure optimum responses were received.

Analysis

In total 225 households were offered the opportunity to complete the survey, 104 responses were received to the survey which equates to a 46% return rate. This return rate is very good in comparison with other areas across the District. The survey is aimed at affordable housing need and this will not directly affect a large number of people within the community.

Of those who responded, 9% stated that they had a housing need. The majority of the respondents who stated that they did not have a housing need lived in privately owned accommodation. A small number of the applicants who stated that they had a housing need were over the age of 65 and expressed a wish to downsize due to costs and difficulties managing their current property.

There appeared to be a number of responses from people who commented that they would like their children to have the opportunity to own or rent their own home but property prices within Strete were out of their financial means.

Looking at the age demographic of the returns the following was ascertained:

0 – 14 yrs = did not complete the survey however the age average is 17.8% for the UK and 14.8% for South Hams.

15 – 18 yrs = 1% (UK 6.3%) (SH 5%)

19 – 54 yrs = 13.5% (UK 48%) (SH 40%)

55 – 65 yrs = 10.5% (UK 11.7%) (SH 16.5%)

65 yrs plus = 75% (UK 16.2%) (SH 24%)

This is probably reflective of the population of Strete which skews the average age range to those over the age of 65. This is not dissimilar to other areas within the district and is apparent in other evidence which is collected district wide. It could also be argued that there was a high percentage of those people under the age of 65 did not return the survey however; the age demographic is typical of our smaller communities in the South Hams. The majority of those over the age of 65 owned their own homes and did not envisage a move within the 5 year period.

All of the applicants who completed the survey lived, worked or had family within the Strete parish in addition to this many had relatives and/or were employed for at least 16 hours per week in the area. Therefore all of the respondents clearly met South Hams District Council's Local Connection criteria for affordable housing within the area. Of those who did privately rent, the amount of rent paid was between £600 and £800 per calendar month. This is likely to be in relation to larger properties, and would be higher than the local housing allowance rate which can be paid (housing benefit) for the area. Only 1 respondent replied who was a second home owner.

The table below shows the amount of money which can be paid for different sized properties; this additionally includes the Plymouth rates which covers a large part of the South Hams. The information used for this is the South Devon broad market rental area:

Bedroom rate	Devon South - Weekly	Plymouth - Weekly
Shared Room	£63.50	£71.21
1 Bedroom	£96.91	£94.16
2 Bedrooms	£128.19	£122.36
3 Bedrooms	£153.02	£145.43
4 Bedrooms	£192.24	£182.45

When looking for properties to rent through Right Move in Strete there were no properties available. However looking at the TQ6 postcode there were properties in Dartmouth which ranged from £138 per week for a one bedroom property, on average £160 per week for a two bed and £190 per week for a 3 bed property. This gives some idea about affordability for those on low incomes within the area.

Of the responses received who completed the survey to say that they were in housing need, no one lived in a property which was larger than their needs.

Of the respondents 60% stated that they are in housing need although this figure is not directly related to affordable housing, however they provided their main reason for moving. The reasons varied from wanting a first home, current property too large or their home being too small. This information has been cross referenced to those who have registered on Devon Home Choice. Only one respondent advised that they had registered their need with Devon Home Choice. There are a number of people who have registered their need with Devon Home choice and/or Help to Buy South West who did not either complete or indicate this on the survey. The high number of people who did not indicate a housing need who wish to downsize as they felt their current home was too large could be attributed to the respondents who are retired and no longer have the need for a larger home. In terms of wishing to stay within Strete Parish, 93% wished to remain with very few wishing to leave the area.

The names and addresses of responses were collected if people wished to leave their details. This was not compulsory as some information is personal in terms of income and the reasons that they wished to move. The names and addresses including date and time of the responses has been recorded by survey monkey which helps us to identify any skewing of the results. This information is confidential to South Hams District Council and is subject to data protection.

A number of comments were included in the survey responses. The majority of those responses referred to keeping younger people in the area and ensuring that provision was made for them in terms of size and affordability for the future. This was linked to discount home ownership options or rented properties due to the affordability of properties in the area.

Devon Home Choice Register

There are a number of households who will not have registered their need with Devon Home Choice who have also not completed the survey; further work can be done on this aspect by officers at South Hams District Council. Sometimes people do not register their need for affordable housing until planning permission is secured and awareness raising opportunities are known to local people. It should also be noted that those with a housing need who have moved away from the area may not have completed the survey and registered their need or desire to return to reside in Strete. A table of households currently registered are detailed below. It should be noted that additional households will apply for housing when a development is being built. Reviews of the housing register do take place but households may not automatically inform us when they move. Access to a computer may be an issue or lack of understanding that the survey was available and needed to be completed.

Those in need by bedroom size and band living within Strete Parish:

Table 1: Households in need by bedroom size and band currently living in Strete (source Devon Home Choice)

Bedroom size	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E
1	0	0	0	2	1
2	0	0	0	1	0
3	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0

This does not include those people who live outside of Strete who may wish to return to the parish.

The table above shows a household has been placed in Band E. This household may not meet the definition of a housing need as per Devon Home Choice; however they may be spending a significant amount of money on their housing costs and wish to remain in Strete. This information does not include those applicants who have moved away but wish to return and meet the Local Connection criteria. The applicants listed above are renting privately or are in current affordable housing stock.

The number of applicants is likely to increase if a development has more certainty and this can be monitored through South Hams District Council and Devon Home Choice.

Turnover

The turnover of affordable home since Devon Home Choice began in 2010 totals 11. The size of these units is varied with five, one and two bedroom bungalows which meet the needs of older/disabled applicants, four - 3 bed houses and two - 2 bed houses to meet the general needs of the area. Evidence from the strategic housing market needs assessment has advised that the majority of the emerging need District wide, is for smaller housing stock to meet both general needs and the older population. The help to buy figures will include the proportion of additional people seeking home ownership products.

Timescales for Housing Need Survey

This survey would generally have a shelf life of 3 – 5 years. As mentioned previously the number of applicants seeking affordable housing can change depending on a number of factors. The data may be very different at that point due to changes in housing trends, government policy and other factors including the economy.

Conclusion

The number of new rented homes needed to meet “local needs” is 4.

This takes in to account the current turnover of housing stock which is approximately 2 units per annum. It has also been noted that the development of 9 units in Stoke Fleming may have

accommodated some of those applicants seeking affordable housing who previously had connections to Strete. This development comprised a mixture of family sized accommodation with the restriction that applicants were required to meet the 'allocations policy' for South Hams District Council. The 'allocations Policy' is available to view on the website and hard copies have been provided to the parish council.

It should be noted that 50% of the properties which have been re-let have been bungalows and therefore will not meet the general needs of the community.

The breakdown of any new affordable properties should be informed by the following split:

25% - 1 bed

50% - 2 bed

25% - 3 bed

The above split bears in mind what developers are likely to be able to deliver in terms of rented accommodation. There is usually a need for larger numbers of 1 bedroom stock but this is not always practical in terms of viability of a scheme. In addition to this the management and mix within the community needs to be taken into consideration.

This split of units will adequately meet the affordable housing needs of the local community for the next 3-5 years. However, there may be a wish for the community to address this before the five year period if necessary.

The number of homes needed for intermediate home ownership equates to 1 unit.

This figure has been extracted from the Help to Buy data for those expressing an interest who currently live in Strete. The data from Help to Buy shows a much larger number of people who have expressed a desire to live within Strete but they do not necessarily have the local connection to the area.

However, the housing need identified is a snapshot in time and can vary due to various factors detailed previously. Any applications submitted will be required to demonstrate how they meet the policies set out in the Council's adopted development plan and other adopted documents. Each application will be considered on its own merits and will need to take account of the most up to date information available at the time. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with the Council's Affordable Housing Officer and planning officers at the earliest opportunity.

Further Information

For further information about this report please contact:

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