



HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

Maresfield Parish

Wealden DISTRICT

**Survey undertaken in
November 2013**

Action in rural Sussex

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context to the Housing Needs Survey

Action in rural Sussex as the Rural Housing Enabler for Sussex was asked by Maresfield Parish Council to undertake a Housing Needs Survey of the Parish in the Autumn of 2013.

The aim of the survey was to determine the existing and future housing needs of residents, particularly those on low or modest incomes. This report provides a snapshot of the scale and nature of the affordable housing required by local people in Maresfield.

1.2 Rural Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is housing made available either for rent or on a shared ownership basis (i.e. part purchase/part rent). It is built and provided only where there is a clear evidence of need, to those otherwise unable to afford appropriate housing at market prices.

The main mechanism for providing affordable housing in rural areas is via Exception Sites policy. This allows rural sites to be identified and used solely for the provision of affordable housing in locations which would not normally be used for housing due to policies restricting such development.

Rural 'Exception Sites' as they are commonly called can only be used for affordable housing, and must remain so in perpetuity. Planning conditions and legal agreements are used to restrict the occupation of these properties to people falling within categories of need and who can prove a local connection through family, residence or work.

The role of the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) is to provide independent support, advice and information to Parish Councils and community groups concerned about the lack of affordable housing in their rural communities. Action in rural Sussex provides a Rural Housing Enabling service in both East and West Sussex.

Action in rural Sussex (AirS) is a registered charity (No.1035401) whose purpose is to improve the quality of life of local communities, particularly for disadvantaged people, and to facilitate the development of thriving, diverse and sustainable communities throughout rural Sussex.

1.3 Methodology

The primary mechanism for gauging the level of need for affordable housing in rural areas is by undertaking a Parish Housing Needs Survey. This involves surveying all households within the Parish in order to obtain information which can be used to assess the scale and nature of the need locally.

The Housing Needs Survey consists of two main parts:

1. The first part is for all households to complete. It contains questions used to identify those who believe they have a housing need and asks them to provide information to support this. It also asks respondents whether they support the concept of constructing a small affordable housing development in the community and if so, where.
2. Part 2 of the survey form contains questions used to capture information on the specific household circumstances and housing requirements of respondents. This section is to be completed by those households who currently are, or expect to be, in need of affordable or more appropriate housing.

The survey was delivered by post to 1,440 households in the parish using the Council Tax Register provided by the Local Authority. The survey pack delivered consisted of a covering letter from the Parish Council outlining the purpose of the survey, the survey form itself and a postage paid self-addressed envelope which households could use to return the survey form. The closing date for the survey was 29th November 2013.

1.4 Response rate

Overall 1,440 questionnaires were sent out; one to each household in the parish. A total of 416 survey forms were returned. This gives the Housing Needs Survey a response rate of 28.9%.

4 households identified that their property was not their main home and were subsequently excluded from the number available for analysis. The total for analysis was therefore 412 households.

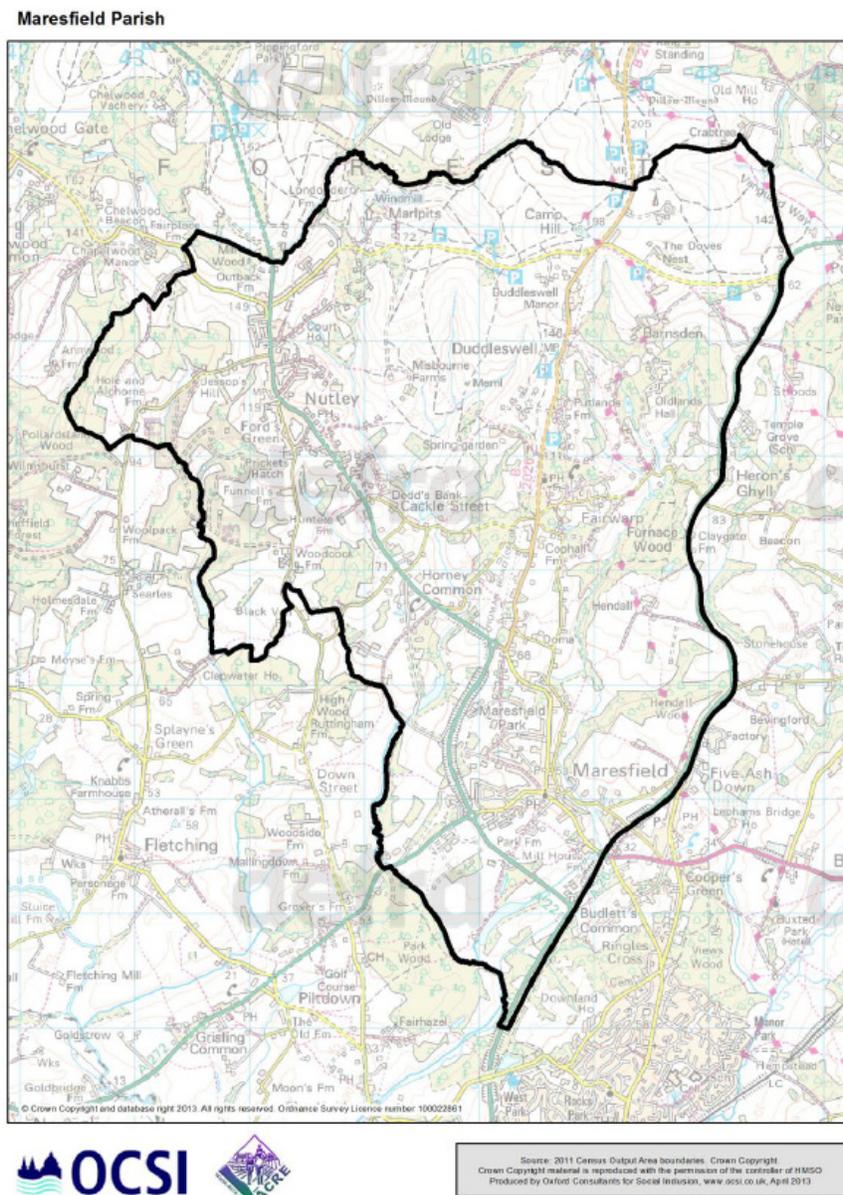
2 The Parish of Maresfield

The Parish of Maresfield is located in the north western portion of Wealden District in East Sussex on the southern edge of the Ashdown Forest and contains the settlements of Fairwarp, Maresfield and Nutley.

The largest village (Maresfield) is approximately 2 miles north of Uckfield alongside the main A22 road which runs northwards to East Grinstead, it is also adjacent to the A26 which continues northwards to Crowborough and the A272 which runs westwards to Haywards Heath.

The parish contains a small number of facilities and services such as the shops, pubs, primary school and church.

According to the Census, the population of the parish was 3,635 persons in 2011.

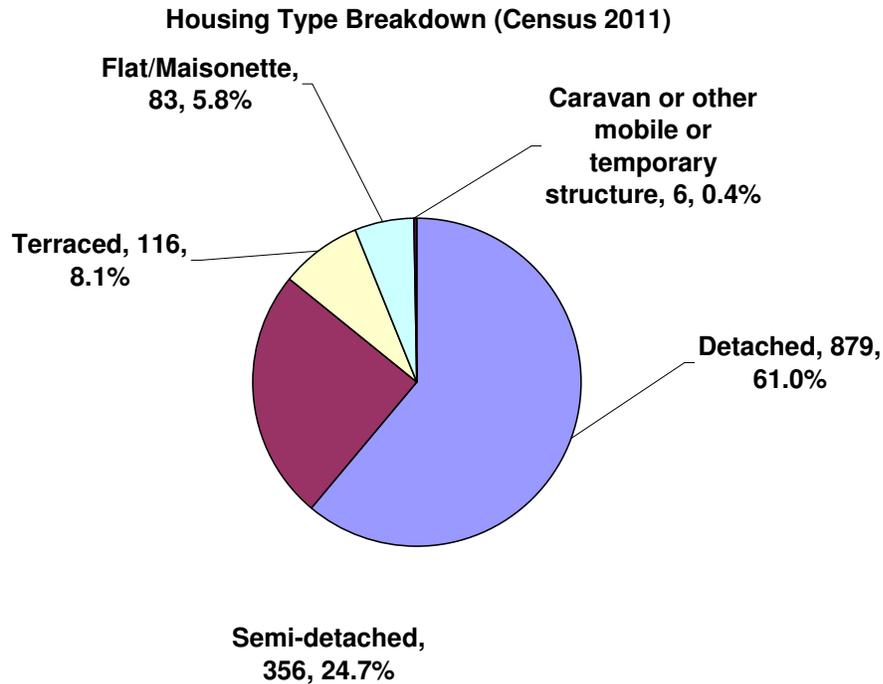


2.1 Housing type in Maresfield

Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the existing structure of the housing stock in Maresfield Parish (as at the Census - 2011).

The data shows that in 2011 the greatest proportion of properties in the parish were detached properties. These made up 61.0% of the housing at that time, with a smaller proportion of semi-detached properties (24.7%), 8.1% being terraced, 5.8% being flats/maisonettes and 0.4% being caravans or other mobile or temporary structures.

Figure 1 - Housing Type Breakdown



As Table 1 shows, Maresfield has a significantly higher proportion of detached housing (61.0%) compared to the rest of Wealden District (44.6%), with a lower proportion of semi-detached housing (24.7% compared to 30.4%), terraced housing (8.1% compared to 12.7%) and a significantly lower proportion of flats/maisonettes (5.8% compared to 11.1%) and caravans and mobile/temporary structures (0.4% compared to 1.1%).

Table 1 - Housing Type comparison between the District and the Parish

Housing Type	District	Parish
Detached	27,984 (44.6%)	879 (61.0%)
Semi-detached	19,042 (30.4%)	356 (24.7%)
Terraced	7,960 (12.7%)	116 (8.1%)
Flat / Maisonette	6,949 (11.1%)	83 (5.8%)
Caravan or other mobile/temporary structure	696 (1.1%)	6 (0.4%)

(Source: Census 2011)

2.2 Housing Tenure in the Parish

From the 2011 Census data and as seen in Table 2, the predominant tenure in Maresfield parish is owner-occupied housing (79.9%), with rates comparable to but slightly higher than for the rest of Wealden District (78.7%). The proportion of shared ownership properties is similar to that for the rest of the District (0.9% compared to 0.8%).

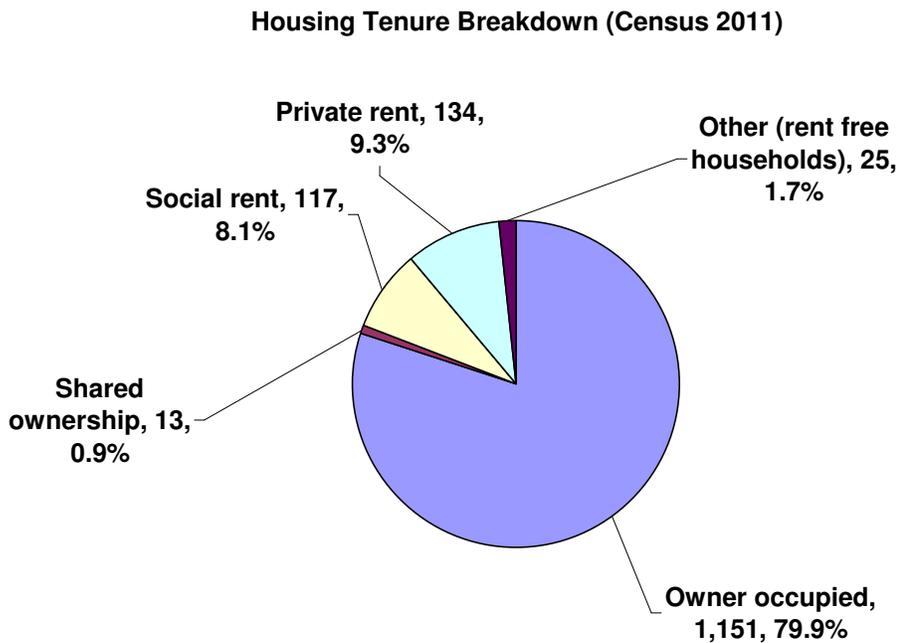
The parish has higher levels of Social Rented housing (Housing Association) and Local Authority rental housing than the rest of Wealden District (8.1% compared to 7.7%). It has lower levels of private sector rentable properties than for the remainder of Wealden District (9.3% compared to 11.1%), and identical rates of those in the 'Other' category (1.7%).

Table 2 - Housing Tenure in the District and the Parish

Tenure	District	Parish
Owner occupied (owned outright or with mortgage)	26,483 (78.7%)	1,151 (79.9%)
Shared ownership (Part owned-part rented)	503 (0.8%)	13 (0.9%)
Social Rented (Housing Association / Council rent)	4,808 (7.7%)	117 (8.1%)
Private rent	6,973 (11.1%)	134 (9.3%)
Other (Living rent free)	1,037 (1.7%)	25 (1.7%)

(Source: Census 2011)

Figure 2 – Housing Tenure Breakdown



3 Local Income Levels and Affordability

3.1.1 Property Prices in the District

The table below shows the Land Registry's average selling price for different types of open-market housing in the District between April to June 2013 (the latest data release).

From these figures the income required to purchase each type of property has been provided. This is calculated on the basis of a securing a 90% mortgage with a 3.5 x gross income lending ratio. From this it can be seen that the lowest income required to purchase an average price flat in the District would be £41,259.

Table 3 - Average House Prices in the District (by type)

Housing Type	Average Price	Income Required
All Housing	£289,701	£74,494
Detached	£410,478	£105,551
Semi-Detached	£227,915	£58,606
Terraced	£201,172	£51,729
Flat	£160,453	£41,259

Source: Land Registry (2012)

These figures provide an overview of the current status of house prices across the District (based on sale prices). It should be noted that house prices may fluctuate at various times of year and between different geographical areas.

House prices in rural areas are also likely to be higher than the District-wide averages outlined above, largely due to the limited supply of property available for sale and the higher average size of such housing stock.

3.1.2 Property prices in the Parish

A property search on www.rightmove.co.uk was also carried out to provide an indication of current prices of properties available in Maresfield. Table 4 shows the lowest prices for open market properties on sale in Maresfield and Table 5 shows the lowest prices for properties available to rent in the same area. The rental values for income required are based on monthly rents not exceeding 25% of an individual or households gross income.

From this search undertaken in December 2013, the household income required to afford to purchase an entry level home was £61,714 for a two bed terraced house. (No smaller properties were for sale at the time of the search)

Table 4 - Lowest current property prices

Property Type	Location	Lowest Price	Income Required
2 bed terraced house	Maresfield	£240,000	£61,714
3 bed semi-detached house	Maresfield	£295,000	£75,857
2 bed semi-detached house	Maresfield	£325,000	£83,571
4 bed semi-detached house	Maresfield	£325,000	£83,571
3 bed detached house	Maresfield	£410,000	£105,428

From this search undertaken in December 2013 and based on current property prices, the household income required to afford to rent an entry level home was £38,160 for a 2 bed apartment (No smaller properties were for rent at the time of the search).

Table 5 - Lowest current property rental prices

Property Type	Location	Lowest Price	Income required (@25% gross income)
2 bed apartment	Maresfield	£795 pcm	£38,160
2 bed semi-detached house	Maresfield	£925 pcm	£44,400
3 bed semi-detached house	Maresfield	£925 pcm	£44,400
4 bed detached house	Maresfield	£1,395 pcm	£66,960

4 Survey - Part 1: Views on Affordable Housing

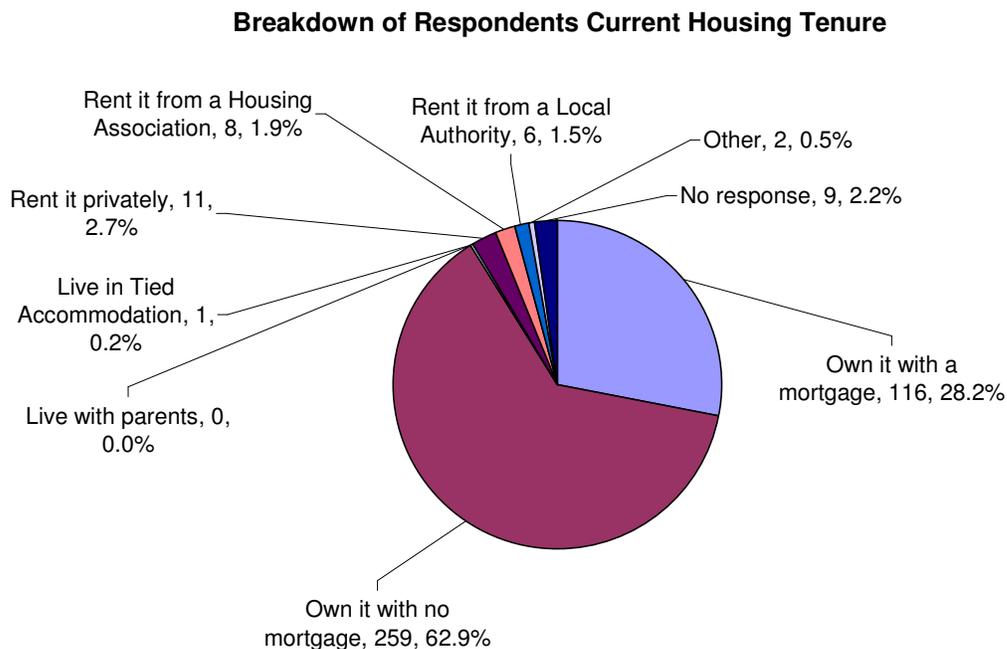
4.1 Current Housing Tenure

The vast majority of those completing the survey (99.0%) identified their current home as their main home, with 1.0% identifying it as a second home.

Of those in their main home, the greatest proportion (62.9%) owned it with no mortgage, with 28.2% owning it with the use of a mortgage.

Of the remaining respondents: 2.7% rented privately, 1.9% rent from a Housing Association, 1.5% rent from a local authority, 0.2% live in tied accommodation, 0.5% provided 'other' responses and 0.0% live with parents. 2.2% of respondents did not complete the question.

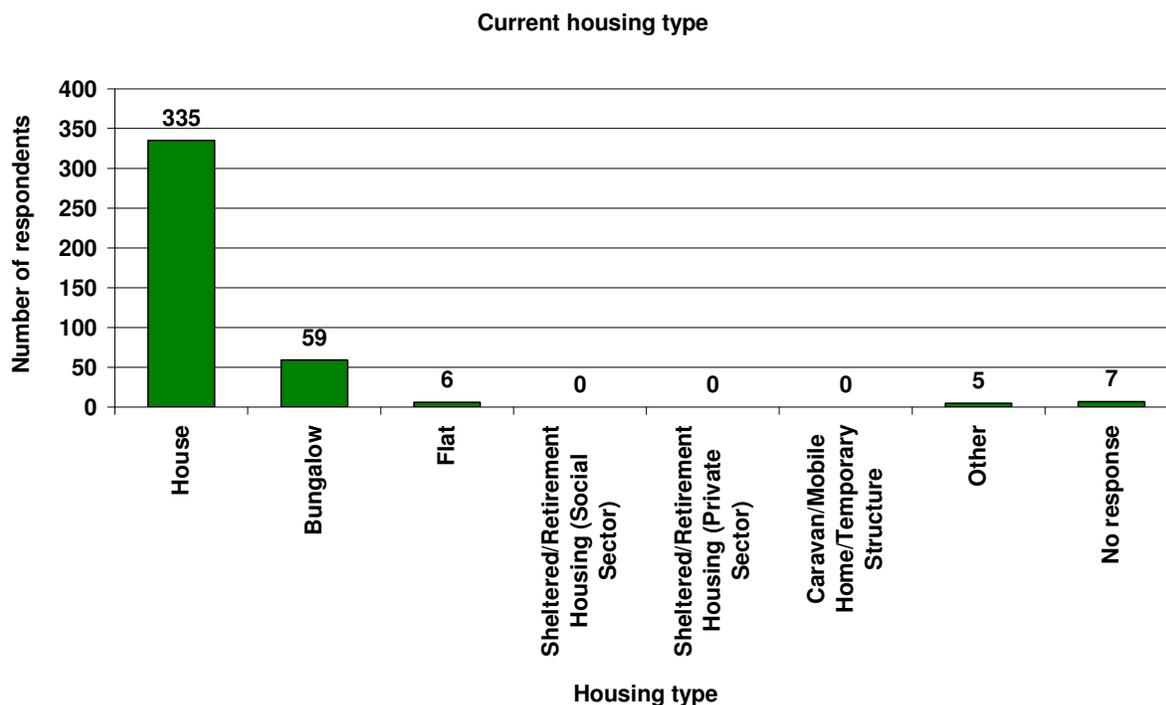
Figure 3 - Current housing tenure of respondents



4.2 Housing Type

An overwhelming majority of respondents (81.3%) identified that they currently live in a house, with 14.3% living in a bungalow and 1.5% living in a flat. 0.0% of respondents lived in sheltered/retirement housing (public sector), whilst 0.0% lived in sheltered/retirement housing (private sector) and 0.0% of respondents lived in a caravan/mobile home/temporary structure. 1.2% of respondents lived in 'other' properties and 7 respondents did not complete the question (1.7%).

Figure 4 - Current housing type of respondents



4.3 Number of bedrooms

Households with 4 or more bedrooms represented the most common size of dwelling amongst those responding to the survey, making up 51.9% of responding households. The next most numerous responses were for: 3 bedrooms (28.6%); 2 bedrooms (14.6%) and 1 bedroom (2.9%). A total of 1.9% of respondents did not complete the question.

Table 6 - Number of bedrooms in respondent's households

Number of bedrooms	Number of responses
1	12 (2.9%)
2	60 (14.6%)
3	118 (28.6%)
4 or more	214 (51.9%)
No response	8 (1.9%)

4.4 Adaptations

22 respondents (5.3%) identified that their current home required adaptations in order to become suitable for the needs of a household member. 377 respondents (91.5%) said that their current home did not require any adaptations, whilst 13 respondents did not complete the question (3.2%).

A total of 27 respondents (6.6%) identified that if their current home required adaptations to become suitable for the needs of a household member that they would need financial assistance to undertake such changes. Whilst 120 (29.1%) indicated they would not require financial assistance and 265 (64.3%) provided no response to the question.

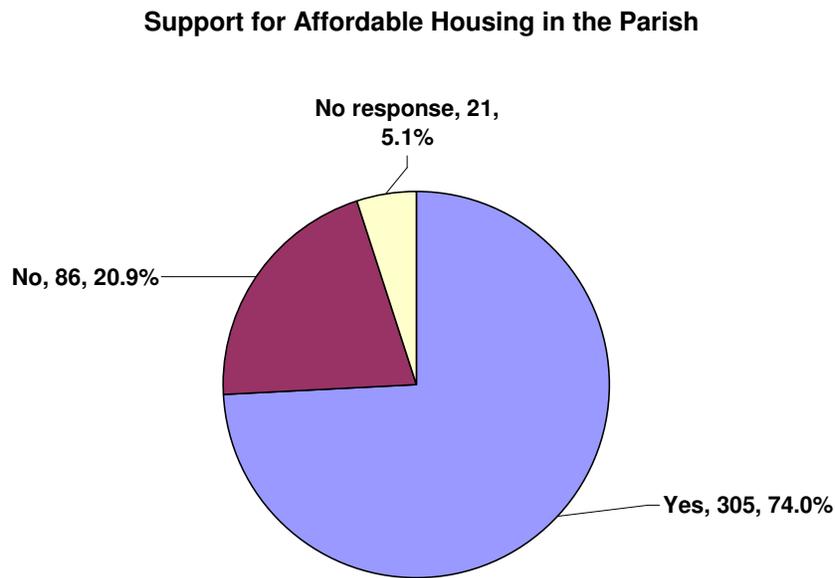
4.5 Local connection

Of the 388 respondents to the question, 387 currently live in the village (99.7%). Of those responding to the question, 28 work in the village (7.2% of those responding), 32 have relatives in the village (8.2% of those responding) and 15 have previously lived in the village (3.9% of those responding). No response was provided on 24 forms.

4.6 Support for Affordable Housing

Of the respondents to the survey, 305 (74.0%) were in favour of a small affordable housing development for local people in Maresfield if there was a proven need. As seen in Figure 5, 86 respondents (20.9%) said that they would not support an affordable housing development and the remaining 21 respondents did not answer the question (5.1%).

Figure 5 - Support for an affordable housing development

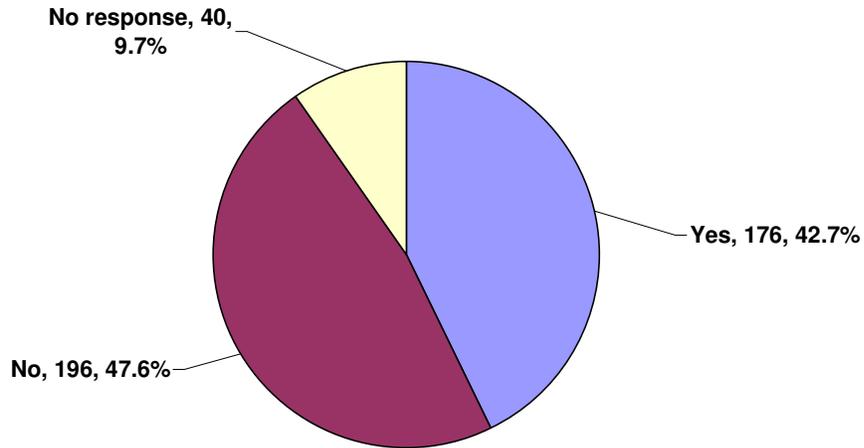


4.7 Support for Open Market Housing

Of the respondents to the survey, 176 (42.7%) were in favour of other kinds of housing being made available for housing development in Maresfield if there was a proven need. As seen in Figure 6, 196 respondents (47.6%) said that they would not support a market housing development and the remaining 40 respondents did not answer the question (9.7%).

Figure 6 - Support for open market housing

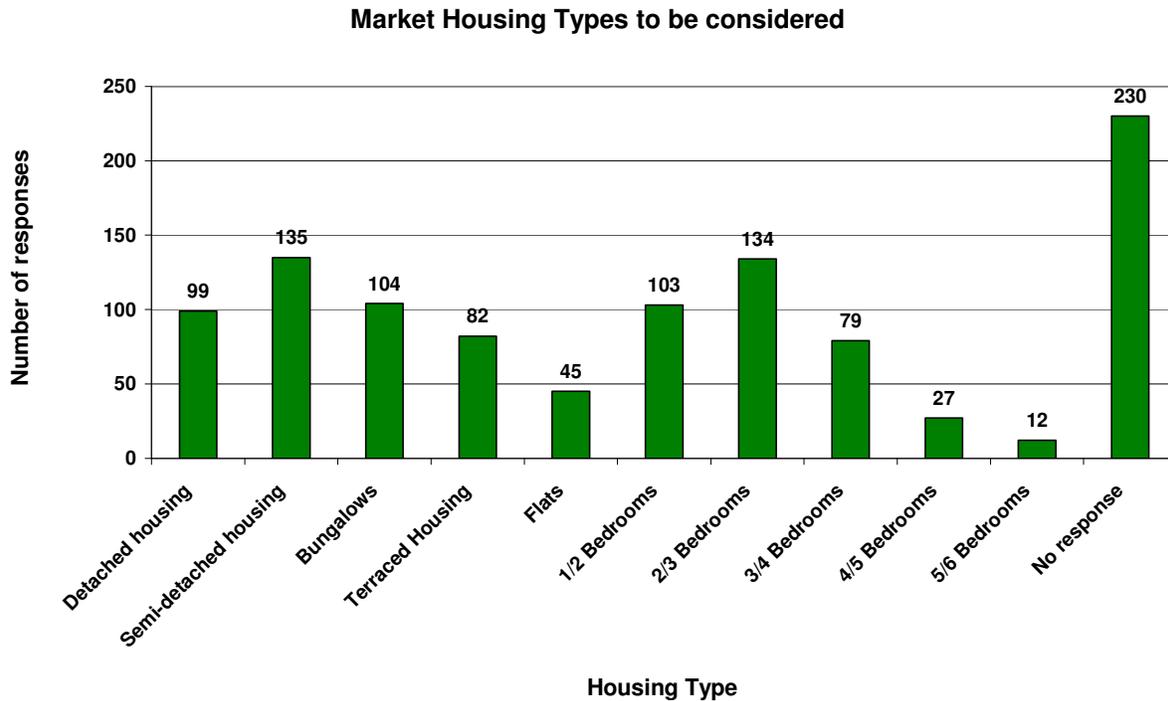
Support for an Open Market Housing Development in the Parish



4.8 Types of Open Market Housing that should be considered

Irrespective of whether respondents supported the construction of additional open-market housing in Maresfield, they were asked what types of open market housing should be considered were some to be constructed. The most commonly identified style of housing which respondents felt should be considered was semi-detached housing which was identified by 135 respondents (61.4% of respondents to the question). The commonly identified size of property to be considered were those with 2/3 bedrooms, these were identified by 134 respondents (60.9% of respondents to the question). 192 out of the 412 respondents to the survey did not complete the question.

Figure 7 - Types of open market housing to be considered



4.9 Does any family member need to move now or in the next 5 years?

From Table 7, it can be seen that a combined total of 45 respondents said that a household member will need to move in pursuit of affordable housing. Of these, 28 said it was needed within 5 years (6.8% of all responses) and 17 said they needed to move in 5 or more years (5.3% of all responses).

Table 7 – Households moving for affordable housing

Does the household need to move	Number of households
Yes, within 5 years	28 (6.8%)
Yes, in 5 or more years	17 (5.3%)
No	274 (66.5%)
No Response	93 (22.6%)
TOTAL	412

As shown in Table 8, it can be seen that a combined total of 31 respondents said that a household member will need to move in pursuit of open market housing. Of these, 19 said it was needed within 5 years (4.6% of all responses) and 22 said they needed to move in 5 or more years (5.3% of all responses).

Table 8 - Households moving for open market housing

Does the household need to move	Number of households
Yes, within 5 years	19 (4.6%)
Yes, in 5 or more years	22 (5.3%)
No	242 (58.7%)
No Response	129 (31.3%)
TOTAL	367

4.10 Summary

The trends outlined in the sections above illustrate that:

- 99.0% of respondents currently have their main home in the parish.
- 28.2% of respondents currently own their own home without a mortgage.
- 81.3% of respondents currently live in a house.
- The most common size of residence currently occupied by respondents has 3 bedrooms (36.2%).
- 3.5% of respondents identified that their current home required adaptations in order for them to remain living in it.
- Of respondents completing the survey: 99.7% currently live in the village.
- 74.0% of respondents would support an affordable housing development for local people if there were a proven need.
- 42.7% of respondents would support the development of other housing within the parish. The most commonly supported forms of such housing would be semi-detached housing with 2/3 bedrooms.
- 12.1% of respondents knew of a household that would need to leave the parish in pursuit of affordable housing.
- 9.9% of respondents knew of a household that would need to leave the parish in pursuit of open-market housing.

5 Survey Part 2 Results – Affordable Housing Need

Part 2 of the survey was only completed by those respondents who indicated that their current home was unsuitable for their household's needs.

These were then assessed against the criteria of personal circumstance, income level and evidence of a local connection in order to determine whether each household was a potential candidate for affordable housing in the parish.

In all, a total of 23 households were identified as being in need of affordable housing.

A total of 17 respondents were excluded on the basis that they had sufficient income to obtain housing via the open market, that their current home was adequate in meeting their housing requirements or that they did not possess a sufficiently strong local connection to the parish. A further 6 respondents were also identified as not eligible for affordable housing, but they clearly indicated a need to downsize to a more appropriate property that met their needs.

The remainder of this section provides an overview of the responses received from households identified as being in housing need of affordable housing within the parish. Please be aware that this information represents responses to the Housing Needs Survey and does not include information relating to the Local Authority Housing Register. The number of households identified as being in need by the survey that are also on the Housing Register is identified in the section below.

5.1 Residence and Local Connection

Of the 23 respondents in need of affordable housing:

- 19 currently live in Maresfield (82.6% of all in need respondents)
- 2 currently work in Maresfield (8.7% of all in need respondents)
- 15 have relatives in Maresfield (65.2% of all in need respondents)
- 5 have previously lived in Maresfield (21.7% of all in need respondents)
- All respondents completed the question.

5.2 Length of residence

Table 9 below provides a break down of the length of residence for those respondents that identified that they currently lived in Maresfield, worked in the village, have relatives in the village or lived in Maresfield on a previous occasion (where they answered the question).

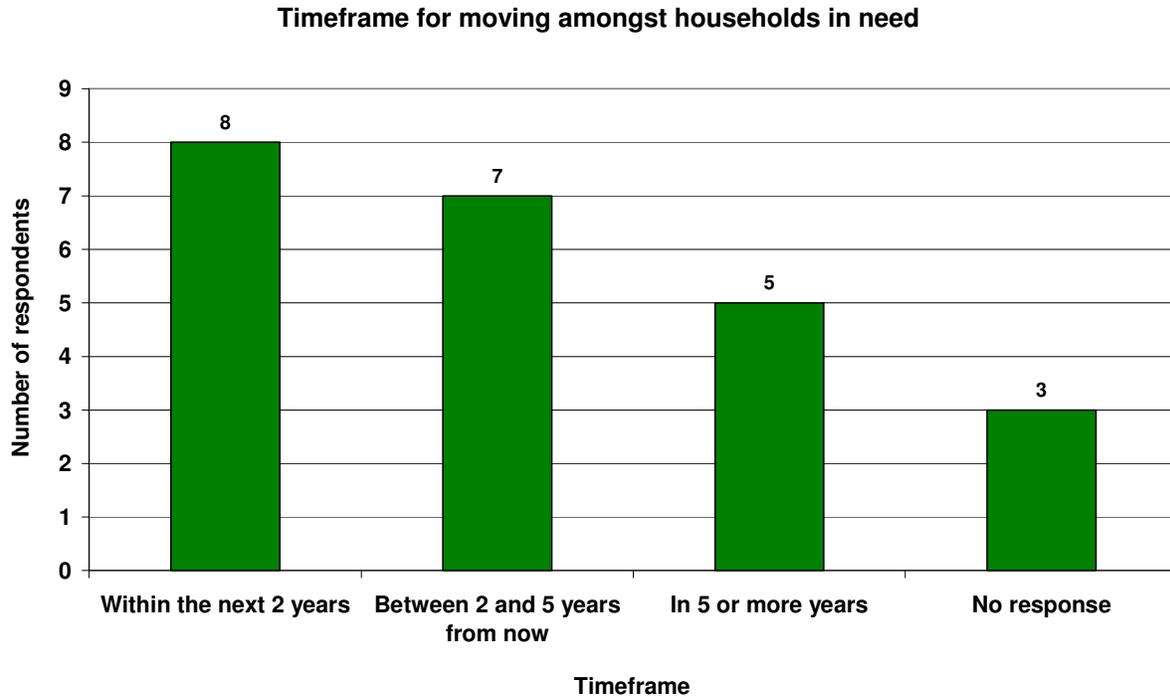
Table 9 - Length of residence

	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	30+ years	Whole life
Currently live in Maresfield	4 (28.6%)	4 (28.6%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Work in the village	0 (0.0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Have relatives in the village	2 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (30.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (20.0%)	1 (10.0%)
Previously lived in Maresfield	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)

5.3 When accommodation is required

A total of 8 (40.0%) of the respondents in housing need stated that they would need to move within 2 years, 7 respondents (35.0%) highlighted a need to move between 2 and 5 years from now, whilst 5 (25.0%) respondents made clear that they would need to move in 5 or more years from now. 3 respondents did not provide an answer to the question.

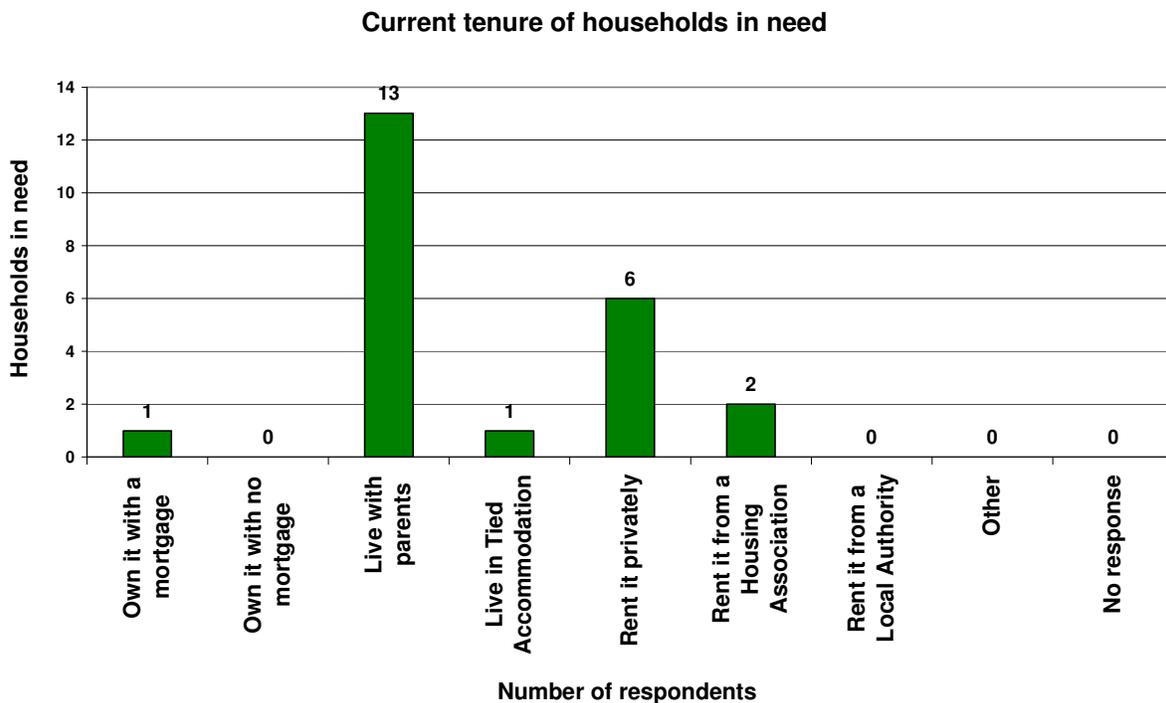
Figure 8 - Likely timeframe in which respondents would need to move



5.4 Current tenure of households in need

Of the 23 households identified as being in need: 13 were living with parents (56.5%), 6 were renting privately (26.1%), 2 were renting from a Housing Association (8.7%), 1 lived in tied accommodation (4.3%) and 1 owns it with a mortgage (4.3%) with all respondents completing the question.

Figure 9 - Current tenure of households in need



5.5 Housing Register

A total of 4 respondents (19.0%) with a local connection who indicated a housing need are currently on the Local Authority or Housing Association housing register, with 17 respondents (81.0%) not currently being on the housing register. 2 respondents did not complete the question.

5.6 Reasons for moving

As shown in Table 10, when asked why the household needed to move, 14 respondents said it was to set up an independent home, 3 respondents needed a larger home, 2 needed a cheaper home, 1 needed to be closer to their employer, 1 needed a secure home and 1 needed to change tenure. 1 respondent provided an 'other' response. All respondents completed the question.

Table 10 - Reasons for needing to move house

Reason for moving	Number of respondents
Need to set up an independent home	14 (60.9%)
Need larger home	3 (13.0%)
Need to be closer to carer or dependent, to give or receive support	1 (4.3%)
Need cheaper home	2 (8.7%)
Need to avoid harassment	0 (0.0%)
Need to be closer to employer	1 (4.3%)
Need a secure home	1 (4.3%)
Need to change tenure	0 (0.0%)
Need adapted home	0 (0.0%)
Need a more manageable home	0 (0.0%)
Need to be closer to/have access to public transport	0 (0.0%)
Need a smaller home – present home is difficult to manage	0 (0.0%)
Other	1 (4.3%)
No response	0 (0.0%)
TOTAL	23

5.7 Accommodation requirements

Of the in-need households, 0 respondents (0.0%) identified a need in future for ground floor accommodation. 0 respondents (0.0%) identified a need for other housing with support services provided, 0 respondents (0.0%) identified a need for sheltered housing with support services provided and 0 respondents (0.0%) residential housing with care provided. 23 respondents did not complete the question (100.0%).

5.8 Preferred tenure

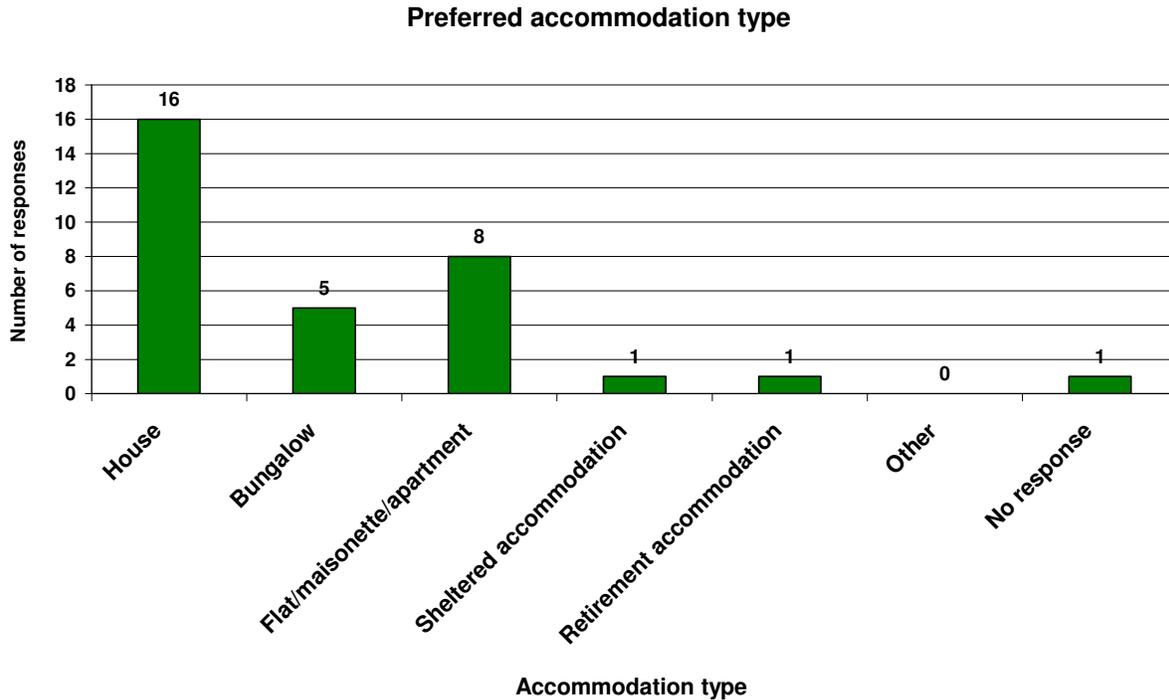
12 of the 23 households in need of affordable housing indicated a preference to rent from a Housing Association (52.2%), 6 wanted to purchase a property on the open market (26.1%) and 5 were seeking a shared-ownership property (21.7%). All respondents completed the question.

5.9 Housing Type

A total of 16 out of 23 respondents indicated a preference for a house (72.7% of all responses to the question), 8 for a flat/maisonette/apartment (36.4% of all responses to the question), 5 for a bungalow (22.7% of all responses to the question), with 1 respondent indicating a preference for sheltered accommodation (4.5%) and 1 indicating a preference for sheltered accommodation (4.5%). 1 respondent did not complete the question.

(Respondents were allowed to identify more than one response)

Figure 10 - Preferred accommodation type



5.10 Affordability

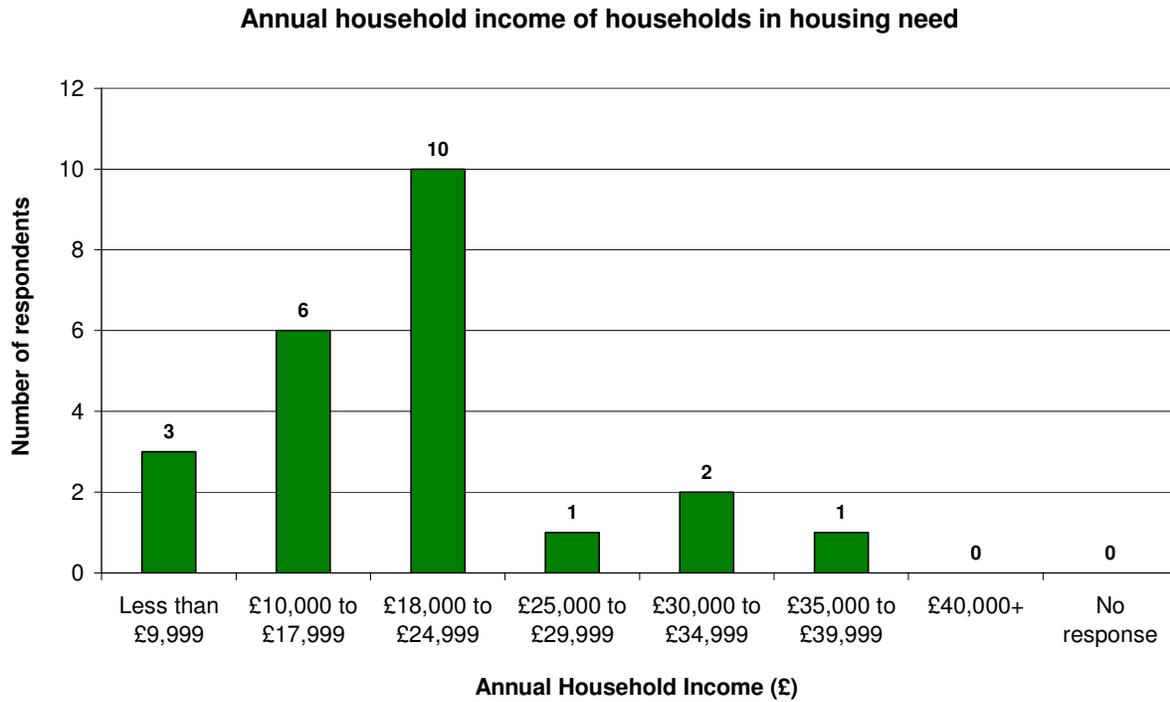
To enable an accurate calculation of the number of people that are in housing need and cannot afford to either purchase or rent on the open market, respondents were asked for their gross annual income and the amount of savings they have.

Figure 11 outlines the annual incomes for those in housing need and that have a local connection. Those respondents who have the highest income were still below the figure determined to be able to afford a property in Maresfield. The most common annual income was in the £18,000 - £24,999 category.

From Figure 11 it can be seen that

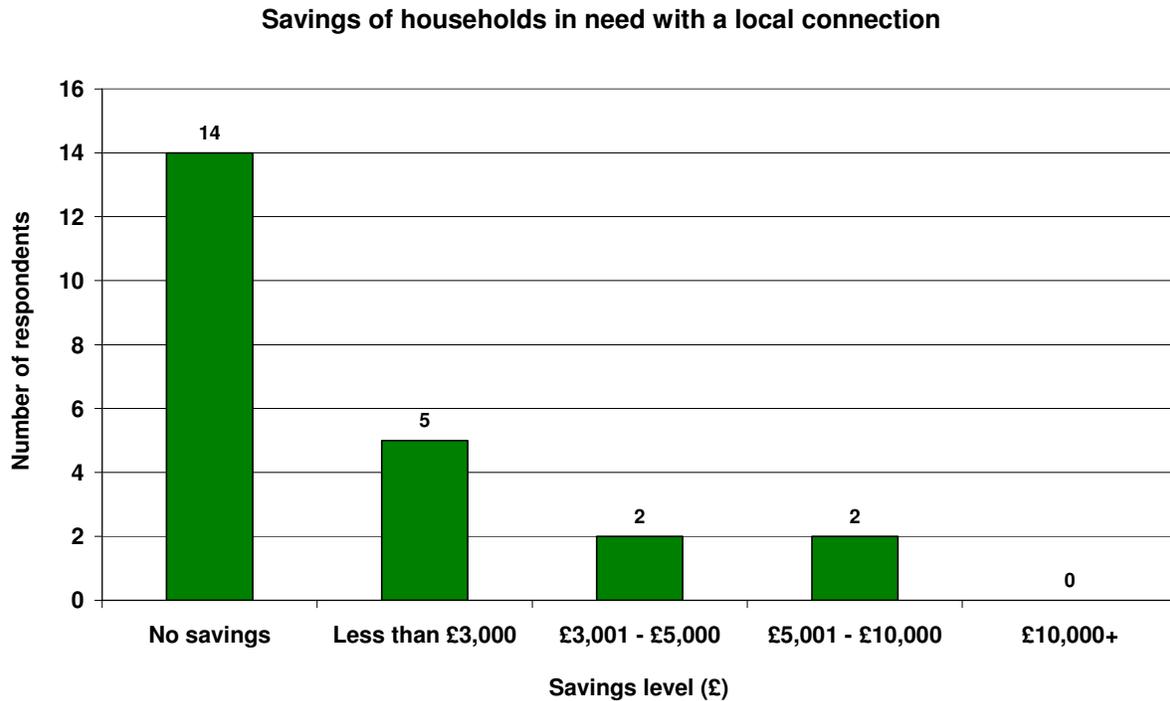
- 19 (82.6%) households have an income below £24,999 per annum – (which is the lowest level income that would be considered for shared ownership housing)
- 4 (17.4%) households have an income of over £24,999.
- All respondents provided a response.

Figure 11 - Annual Incomes of Households in Housing Need with a local connection



From Figure 12, it can be seen that 14 of the 23 households in housing need have no savings (60.9%), 5 households have savings below £3,000 (21.7%), 2 households have savings between £3,001 and £5,000 (8.7%), whilst 2 households have savings between £5,001 and £10,000 (8.7%). No household had savings in excess of £10,000 (0.0%).

Figure 12 - Savings of Households in Housing Need with a local connection



6 Summary of Affordable Housing Need

There are 23 households in housing need who have a local connection and who cannot afford to either purchase or rent on the open market. The breakdown of the types of households in need is provided below:

Table 11 - Breakdown of households in need

Household type	Number of respondents
A single adult	9 (39.1%)
A single elderly person (over 65)	1 (4.3%)
An adult couple (18-64)	6 (26.1%)
An older couple (Over 65)	0 (0.0%)
A family with children	7 (30.4%)
Unclassified	0 (0.0%)
TOTAL	23

Family with children - Number of children	Number of respondents
1	3 (37.5%)
2	3 (37.5%)
3	1 (12.5%)
4	1 (12.5%)
5	0 (0.0%)
Not specified	0 (0.0%)
TOTAL	8

6.1 Household composition

The household makeup of the 23 households in housing need with a local connection and who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 - Composition of households in need

