

ST ERME PARISH

HOUSING NEED SURVEY

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1. Introduction

1.1. Summary

1.1.1. Cornwall Council generally determines local housing need at parish level through statistics generated by the Cornwall HomeChoice register. This is a comprehensive database, operated by the Council, of all those households that are seeking an affordable rented home in Cornwall.

1.1.2. In some circumstances (particularly in rural areas), it can be useful for the Affordable Housing Team to supplement its existing HomeChoice data with additional information from a localised Housing Need Survey. Housing Need Surveys provide a wealth of additional information from households within a specific area, on important issues such as the level of support for a proposed development. They can also provide further detail on the types of homes required by local people (both market and affordable), and are particularly useful in highlighting additional 'hidden' housing need that hasn't been identified through the HomeChoice database.

1.1.3. Housing Need Surveys are therefore a useful 'snapshot' of the local need situation at a given point in time, and can complement the existing housing need information held by the Council. They are generally undertaken by the Affordable Housing Team, for the benefit of the Local Planning Authority. However, they can also be a useful tool for parish councils and Neighbourhood Plan groups in assessing their housing needs and priorities.

1.1.4. However, a Housing Need Survey's accuracy and relevance will reduce substantially over time as, unlike the HomeChoice and Help to Buy South West Registers, they are not updated when households' circumstances change. Consequently, the Affordable Housing Team considers them useful in specific circumstances where additional information is required on the type and scale of housing required in an area. However, this is in circumstances where they complement the existing housing need data, or provide additional qualitative information; they should not replace information from HomeChoice and parish councils should always request up to date housing need information from the Affordable Housing Team, rather than rely on an historic Housing Need Survey.

1.2. Survey purpose

1.2.1. The Parish is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which will provide the evidence to set out local planning policies. In preparing this plan it is very important to understand what housing is required to meet the local needs of the communities over the plan period.

2. Current Housing Need Information

2.1. Registered need on Cornwall HomeChoice

2.1.1. Cornwall HomeChoice indicates that 51 households with a local connection to the parish are principally seeking affordable rented housing. Of this, 18 state a preference for living in the Parish, though it should be noted that householder preference can change with time and circumstance including the availability of affordable homes in an area.

2.1.2. A breakdown of the local housing need profile is provided in Figure 1 below, which has been separated by bedroom requirements and priority need banding:

Figure 1 – Summary of HomeChoice register

Local Connection Parish	Band	Council Minimum Bedroom Need								Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
St Erme	Band A	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
St Erme	Band B	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
St Erme	Band C	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	8
St Erme	Band D	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
St Erme	Band E	10	9	8	2	0	0	0	0	29
St Erme	Total of Band	14	20	9	5	3	0	0	0	51

2.2. Households registered with Help to Buy South West

2.2.1. The Help to Buy South West register has no local households that are seeking to buy an affordable home in the parish.

2.2.2. However, this only accounts for those households that indicated that they either live or work in the parish on their application form. Help to Buy South West do not routinely keep data on ex-residency or family connections as households seeking to buy an affordable home generally understand that they may need to move to other areas in order to secure a property (as fewer affordable sale homes are provided). As a result, the above figure is likely to underestimate the total local need for affordable sale homes if a comparable local connection definition were to be used in both circumstances.

3. Survey Methodology

3.1. Location and geographic extent of survey

3.1.1. The Parish is located north-west of Truro, although rural in nature, the parish is generally considered sustainable. Along with a number of smaller hamlets the parish is made up of principle settlements, Trispen and St Erme. Facilities within the Parish include a primary school, pub, convenience store and post office. There are also a number of businesses and employment opportunities, and the parish is within close proximity to secondary schools and supermarkets in the larger neighbouring settlement of Truro.

3.2. Survey methodology

3.2.1. The survey was undertaken by the Affordable Housing Team at Cornwall Council, in partnership with the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Group. It ran for 6 weeks from 1 July through to 12 August 2016. Households received a letter notifying them of the questionnaire inviting them to complete the online "Netigate" questionnaire or request a paper copy of the survey for completion. A small number paper copies were returned which were then inputted using the online tool, Netigate.

3.3. Survey structure

3.3.1. The survey format was in accordance with the Council's model questionnaire. Topics within the survey included:

- Whether the respondent was in need of affordable housing; Whether they were currently living in the Parish;
- The composition of a respondent's household;
- The type and tenure of their current home, as well as the length of time they had been living in the property;
- Whether their home included any special adaptations;
- Whether any members of the household have had to leave the parish;
- The type of connection the household had with the parish;
- How urgently the household needed to move, and why;
- Where the household would like to live, and the type of property required;
- Whether the respondent is already registered with either HomeChoice or Help to Buy South West;
- General equalities monitoring questions.

3.4. Report Format

3.4.1. The remainder of this report will analyse the results of responses to the Housing Need Survey. For ease of reference, responses from those that were not in housing need (the 'generic' questions) along with respondents general thoughts on affordable housing development will be reported separately to those that indicated that they are in 'housing need'.

3.4.2. In accordance with Cornwall Council standard procedures, the survey asked a number of additional questions relating to equalities monitoring. These are only for Council-use, and have no bearing upon the outcome of this survey. As a result, analysis of these will not be reported specifically here.

4. Survey Data

4.1. Summary of survey response rate

4.1.1. At the closing point of the survey following the electronic inputting of returned paper copies of the questionnaire, the Affordable Housing Team recorded **162** responses to the Housing Need Survey. This is equal to an overall response rate of **27%** of the **611** households which received notification of the survey.

4.1.2. The information provided a wealth of useful data on the housing need in the parish. The Affordable Housing Team considers this to be a statistically significant survey and it is recommended that the conclusions drawn from the analysis be used to inform both the parish council and the Local Planning Authority regards housing need in the parish.

4.2. Analysis of sample

4.2.1. Of the **162** responses, **150** were recorded as 'complete'.

4.2.2. As outlined above, the survey was split to capture information on those households that considered themselves to be in 'housing need', as well as seeking general information on those respondents not in need.

4.3. Households in 'housing need'

4.3.1. This report will focus on those households that responded on the basis on being in housing need, a total of 44 respondents considered themselves to be in housing need. This was covered by questions 13 to 29.

4.3.2. Current housing circumstance – respondents were asked whether they owned or rented their current home, of note:

a) **26%** Living with friends or family

b) **43%** Private rented

4.3.3. Local connection – These questions asked respondents to identify the type of local connections that they had to the parish. Options include: current residence; employment; ex-residency; or, close family connection. However, it should be noted that respondents may have multiple local connections to a parish.

4.3.4. The survey outlined that:

- a) **84%** of respondents are already resident or working in the parish, and have been living in the parish for more than 3 years;
- b) **56%** of respondents have previously lived in the parish for more than 5 years;
- c) **67%** had families that had lived in the parish for more than 5 years. The most common family connections were through a respondent's son (**32%**), daughter (**18%**) or father (**18%**).

4.3.5. Reasons why a move is required – respondents were able to select all reasons that applied to them. The most common answers were:

- **39%** of households need a more affordable home (i.e. they can't afford their current property in the long-term);
- **44%** of households indicated that they would like to purchase a home;
- **19%** households were looking to move out from living with family or friends to improve their independence;
- **32%** households stated their current home is too small

4.3.6. How quickly households need to move home – **61%** of respondents need to move home within three years, with **34%** of respondents needing to move within five years.

4.3.7. Where households would like to live:–

- **7.5%** respondents stated **Trispen**
- **7.5%** respondents stated **St Erme**
- **75%** respondents stated **anywhere in the parish**
- **10%** respondents stated **outside of the parish**

4.3.8. Tenure Type Preferences – the following trends were noted (multiple responses allowed):

- a) **23** households indicated that shared ownership would most suit their needs;
- b) **21** households indicated that they would prefer affordable rented housing;
- c) **20** households were looking for discounted sale housing
- d) **6** households would consider purchasing on the open market
- e) **8** households were looking to rent privately

4.3.9. Property size – **15%** of respondents require a 1-bedroom home; **37%** require a 2-bedroom home; **43%** require a 3-bedroom home; **5%** require a 4+ bedroom home.

4.3.10. Specific house types required – 95% of respondents do not require any form of adapted property.

4.3.11. Affordable homeownership prices – respondents are asked to state how much they could afford for housing in the parish of the 33 respondents who said they wish to purchase:

- 12 could afford to buy **under £101,000**
- 6 could afford to buy between **£101,000 – £125,000**
- 8 could afford to buy between **£126,000 - £155,000**
- 7 could afford to buy between **£156,000 - £200,000**
- 0 could afford to buy **£200,000+**

4.3.12. Deposits – Of those 33 households that would be interested in purchasing a home, 61% of households had access to less than £11,000 for a deposit, with only 9% of households able to raise a deposit (20% of purchase price) typically required to purchase a Discounted Sale Home.

4.3.13. Affordability of rental costs – 30 households indicated that they would consider renting a home. The amount these households could afford on monthly rent is outlined in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2 - rental affordability

Answer Choices	Number
Do not wish to rent	10
Less than £400 pcm	5
£401 - £500 pcm	5
£501 - £600 pcm	8
£601 - £700 pcm	11
£701 - £800 pcm	1
£801+ pcm	0
Total	40

4.3.14. Are households registered for affordable housing – only 8 respondents were already registered with either HomeChoice or Help to Buy South West or both, with 32 respondents not registered with either agency. Consequently the Housing Need Survey has identified 32 **'hidden households'** that are not counted within the current registered housing need information for the parish.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Summary of survey response

5.1.1. Taking into consideration the breadth of the survey, in addition to the range of responses received, the Affordable Housing Team considers that it presents a statistically significant set of data with an overall response rate of 27%.

5.2. Key statistical findings

5.2.1. The survey has demonstrated that a number respondents are in need of affordable housing with **36** respondents alone being in need and having a local connection through living or working in the parish for more than 3 years. As outlined in Figure 1 the HomeChoice Register demonstrates a need for affordable rented housing; however it is common for only a proportion of these households to respond to surveys of this type. Principally, this is because households often misinterpret the requirement to respond and consider that as they are already registered with HomeChoice, they do not need to complete an additional survey questionnaire. In addition not all HomeChoice applicants will have received notification of the survey, if they are not currently residing in the Parish.

5.2.4. Equally as significant are the **32** households that they were in housing need, but indicated that they were not registered with either HomeChoice, or Help to Buy South West. These are the 'hidden households' that surveys of this type are designed to identify. Overall, the majority of households are looking for a 3 bedroom property, but there is also a strong need for 2 bedroom homes, which further indicates that it is mainly family size accommodation that is required in the Parish.

5.2.5. In line with the general housing need across Cornwall, the majority of households are looking for an affordable rented home especially when taking account of respondents actual ability to purchase against their preference for ownership. As a result, the provision of additional affordable rented housing in the Parish is important to the wider sustainability of the community, to prevent local people from having to move away.

5.2.6. However, the survey has also highlighted that a significant number of households are looking to buy an affordable home and have an income and deposit that could support such a purchase. The existing Help to Buy South West figures, in combination with the information generated by this survey has demonstrated that there is a justification for the provision of a good number of affordable homes for sale, as long as they are provided in the form of small-medium family-sized homes for shared ownership, requiring smaller deposit contributions than compared to discount market sale. Furthermore, the inclusion of affordable homes for sale will provide an important balance in any new development proposal and the evidence suggests that local households

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would support this tenure of property being provided in the Parish. It should be noted however, that some households' desire to purchase an affordable home may, in some circumstances, be aspirational as a considerable number of respondents indicated that they could only afford to buy a maximum of £80,000, or had access to less than £5,000 for a deposit. Consequently, whilst the inclusion of shared ownership properties will be important, the majority of any new homes should be provided as affordable rented, in order to meet the local need.

5.2.7. Finally in terms of timescale, there is urgency in respondents need to move home, with **61%** stating that they would need to move within 3 years and **95%** within 5 years.