



# **Watford Parish Housing Needs Survey Report**

**October 2012**

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## Introduction



Housing Need in rural areas is a particularly complex issue that local authorities across the country are facing. With the rise of rural house prices in recent years and the lack of available properties, local people are being forced to move away from their community in order to find housing they can afford.

Daventry District has a growing population, to add to this the structure and size of households is also changing. When new households are formed or circumstances change, people may find their home unsuitable and it is therefore important that there is an adequate amount of housing to accommodate their needs.

The provision of affordable housing is high on Daventry District Council's agenda, as part of our vision to build a better district it is prioritised under the objective: "Healthy, Safe and Strong Communities and Individuals".

To this end the Council has been undertaking a rolling programme of affordable housing provision, which is based on robust evidence of housing need and local information – provided by Housing Needs Surveys.

This report summarises the findings of the Housing Needs Survey in Watford, undertaken between September and October 2012.

### Strategic and Planning Context

Daventry District Council has a number of policies and strategies to help deliver housing in both planning policy and housing strategy terms. These include:-

- The Saved Policies from the Daventry District Local Plan 1997
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- The Pre-submission West Northants Joint Core Strategy
- The Housing Strategy 2010-2015
- The Sustainable Communities Strategy 2010-2026
- Affordable Housing Marketing and Communication Strategy 2010, which sets out how the Council intends to engage with relevant stakeholders to try and secure delivery of affordable housing.

In addition national policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). This defines the term 'affordable' and provides for exceptions sites which can include an element of market housing where this is necessary to deliver the affordable housing.

## Methodology

The process of how the Watford Housing Needs Survey was produced can be broadly summarised in the below figure:



This process outlined in detail below:

### *Stage 1 – Consultation*

DDC officer's contacted Watford Parish Council to discuss carrying out a housing needs survey.

### *Stage 2 – Planning and Review of Survey Format*

The Parish Council was given the opportunity to add their own bespoke questions to the survey that they felt were pertinent to the local area. In the case of Watford, the parish council chose not to add anything further to the questionnaire.

### *Stage 3 – Survey*

Surveys were delivered to all residents, which included a freepost envelope for the surveys to be returned in.

The survey period was set according to a standard response period of 4 weeks; opening on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and closing on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012

### *Stage 4 – Collection & Analysis*

Daventry District Council's Local Strategy Service collated the results from the completed surveys and a report was then compiled using the survey results and some external data.

### *Stage 5 Review and Publication*

Watford Parish Council was being given the opportunity to comment on the draft report prior to publication. All relevant comments received have been taken into account in the final report.

## About Watford Parish



Watford Parish is located in Daventry District, Northamptonshire. It has 118 households made up of a parish population of 320 according to the 2011 Census.

Watford is situated approximately 6 miles from Daventry Town and 12 miles from Northampton Town

It contains 118 dwellings, of which 9 (8%) are social housing units, owned by Registered Providers working in the area.

## Survey Results

### Response Rate

A total of 112 Housing Needs Surveys were sent out to residents of Watford in September 2012, of which 30 were returned, giving a response rate of 24%.

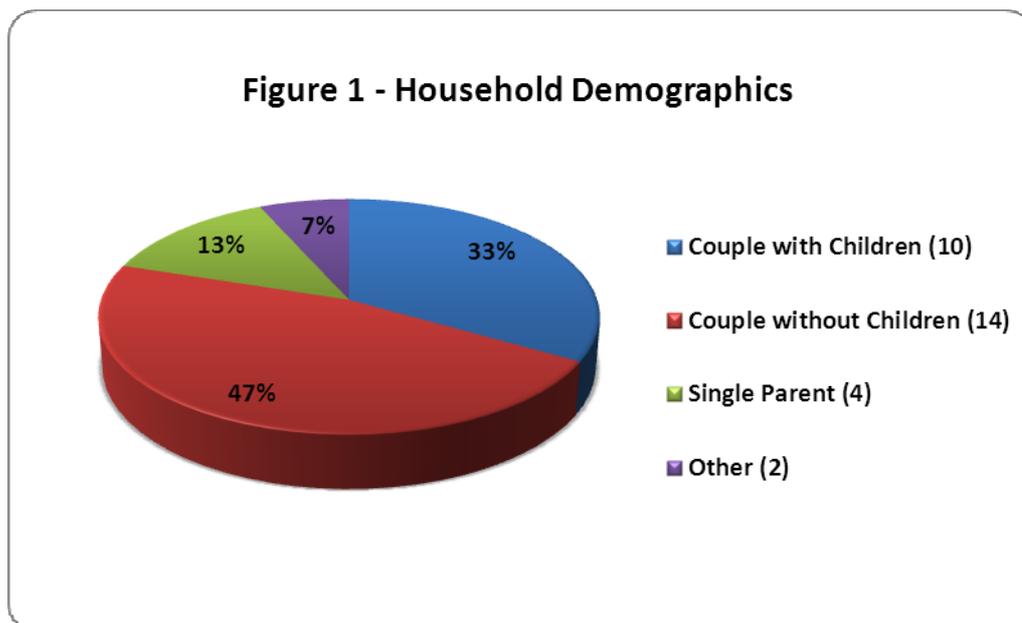
The survey questionnaire itself is split into 3 parts:  
Section A (“*About You and Your Neighbourhood*”),  
Section B (“*Housing Need*”) and  
Section C (“*Equality Monitoring*”).

All respondents were asked to complete sections A and C, whereas only those who felt themselves to be in housing need were asked to complete section B.

### Household Type

To determine household types, the survey asked residents to describe who lived in their household with them.

From Figure 1 below, it can be seen the most common household type, amongst those who responded to the survey, was *Couples without Children* (17).

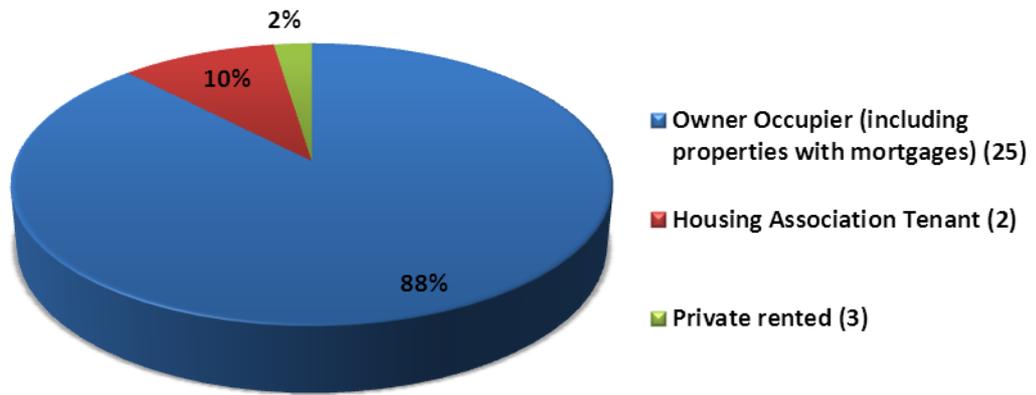


*Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses*

### Tenure & Property Types

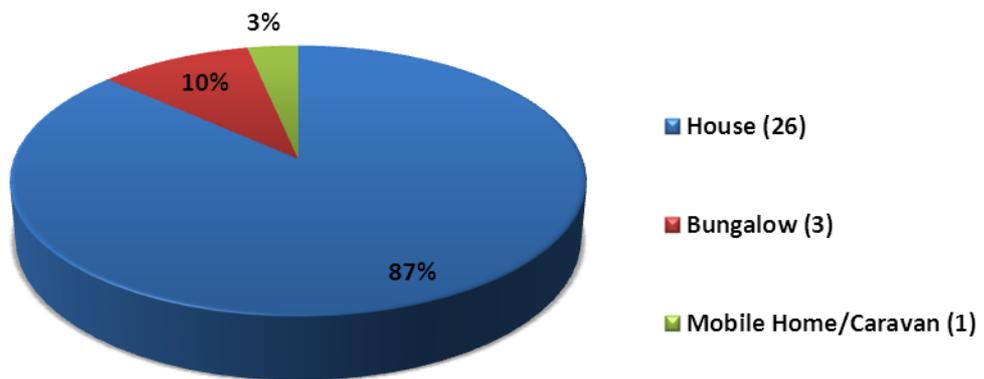
Respondents were asked what size and type of property they lived in. From figures 2, 3 and 4 below it can be seen that the majority of applicants lived in owner-occupied 3 bedroom houses.

Figure 2 - Household Tenure



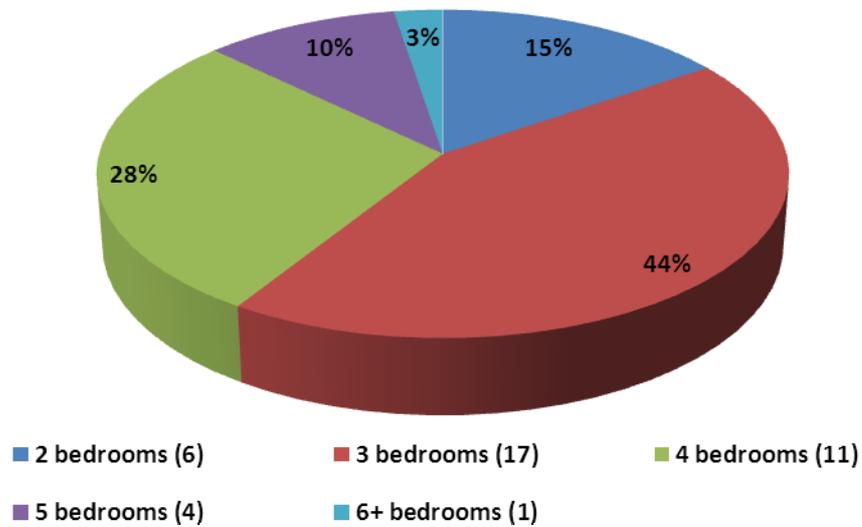
Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses

Figure 3 - House Types



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses

Figure 4 - Number of Bedrooms

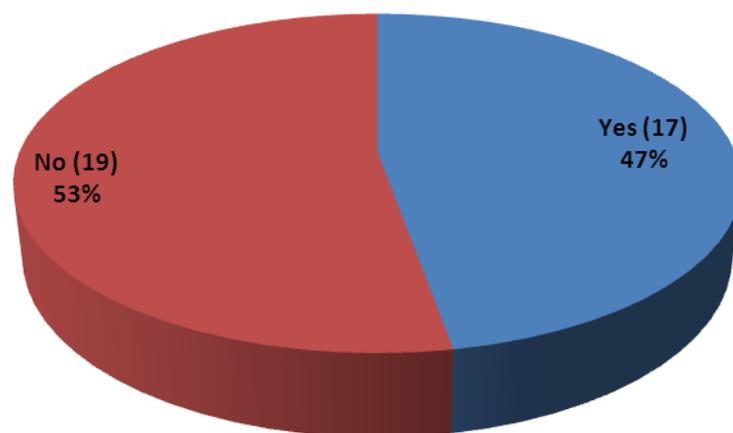


Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses

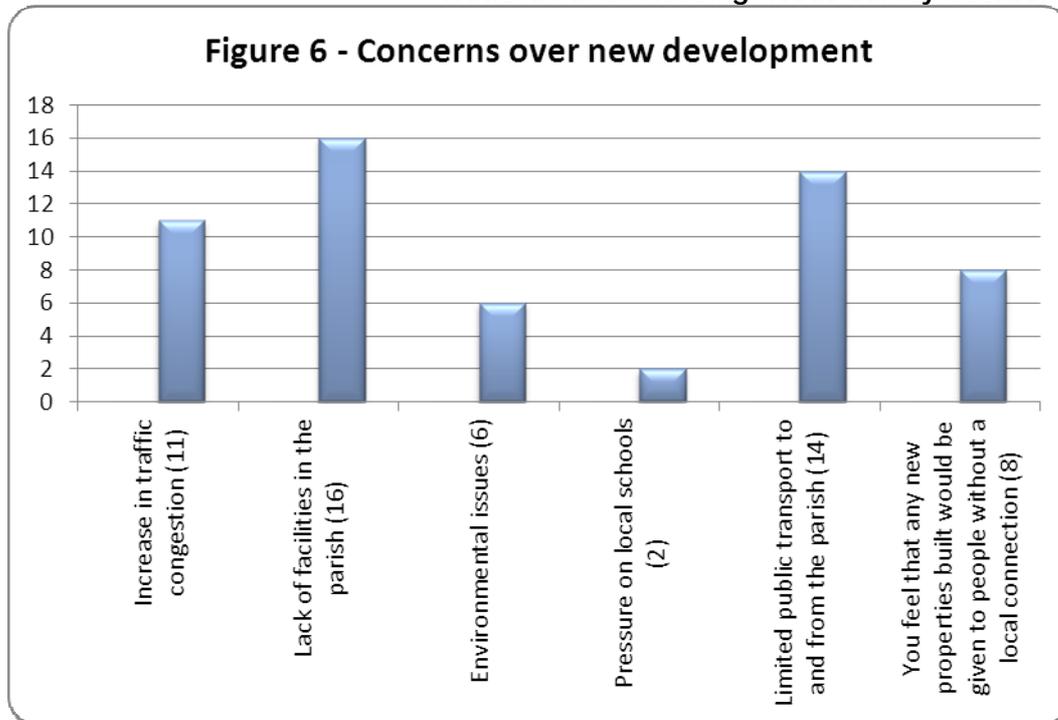
### Opinions of Future Development

Of the 39 survey questionnaires received, 36 (92%) answered the question regarding future housing development in Watford. 17 (47%) households agreed in principle that they would be in favour of a small housing development for local people with a proven need and 19 (53%) disagreed with this. This is illustrated in Figure 5 with Figure 6 showing a further breakdown of reasons given for not supporting a small-scale development within the village.

Figure 5 - Opinions on Small Scale Development for Local People



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses



Note: Numbers in brackets represent the actual number of responses

As can be seen, *Increase in traffic congestion* was the most prominent followed by *'pressure on local schools'*.

Other comments made in respect of this question included the following:-

*Increase in crime*

*Our village minibus depends on the school contract. If number of children using the minibus increases we could lose the contract in favour of a coach*

*People not wishing to live in close proximity to wind turbines – possibility of health problems – epileptic fits etc.*

*It is possible to sustain a small population in a location with no amenities; any increase makes the task more difficult or impossible.*

**Respondent Comments on Housing Need and Provision**

Residents were also given the opportunity to make any other comments they had in relation to housing need and provision within the village. Comments made included the following:-

*More housing would require more facilities in the village such as public transport, local shop and social structures*

*There is not enough social housing in the village, I privately rent which is more than my housing benefit, my home is small, has no garden and is damp*

*A variety of housing is needed to keep the village going*

*The village needs to grow to get more young families to take part in village life*

*There were four council houses built specifically for agricultural workers in 1945, with the demise of dairy farms, employing six people, there were no longer any agricultural workers and the availability of council houses was lost. The resulting amalgamation of the four houses into two had two results. Milk for Watford and Yelvertoft was imported from the continent and some of the land in the Parish was taken out of production and received a subsidy known as 'set aside'. Secondly, an arable mono culture system of farming is practiced with little or no livestock. I am not saying the lack of affordable housing was the sole cause of the demise of the four dairy farms, but I do think there is a correlation.*

*More small 2/3 bed houses and bungalows (not 4/5/6 bed houses) also one or two small shops.*

*Most village areas need rented accommodation for young families in order to keep a demographically healthy community. Too often new build only caters for the wealthy middle class.*

*There is no public transport, no school in the village, no shop/pub/post office, more houses would require infrastructure "first". Rapidly expanding DIRFT is on our doorstep with its traffic problems.*

*The housing that is needed here today is sufficient family homes to support a shop and post office – to serve primarily the less well off without motor transport and the elderly who do not like driving.*

*This document gives the impression that the provision of additional housing would be used to meet the needs within the parish: this is not the way it works. No account is taken of associations within this community when allocating houses. Individuals and families with relatives who are already resident are much easier to absorb into the community. Placing folk from outside makes Watford an even less sustainable location than at present. There is insufficient room to allow the level of expansion that would bring amenities*

## Local Housing Market & Affordability

Table 1 shows a list of properties sold in Watford from September 2010 to August 2013. There were 21 properties sold altogether with the cheapest of the homes selling for £87,000 for a semi-detached house and the most expensive selling for £310,000 for a detached house.

**Table 1: House Sales in Watford September 2010 to August 2013**

Year of Sale	House Type	Price (£)
2013	Semi-detached	100,000
2013	Detached	193,500
2013	Detached	280,000
2013	Semi-detached	186,500
2012	Detached	215,000
2012	Detached	310,000
2012	Detached	298,000
2012	Semi-detached	288,000
2012	Semi-detached	199,000
2012	Semi-detached	157,000
2012	Detached	290,000
2012	Semi-detached	186,500
2012	Detached	226,000
2012	Semi-detached	87,000
2011	Detached	250,000
2011	Semi-detached	170,000
2011	Link-detached	250,000
2011	Semi-detached	200,000
2010	Detached	246,000
2010	Semi-detached	178,000
2010	Detached	167,000

Source – Zoopla.co.uk as at 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013

On the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the Zoopla website was advertising one property for sale which is summarised in table 2. At the time of writing this report there were no properties for rent within Watford.

**Table 2: Properties for sale in Watford October 2013**

Year	House Type	Price (£)
2013	5-bed detached	795,000

Source: Zoopla as at 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Based on the following calculation (using current lending criteria)

$$\frac{\text{(House price- 10\% deposit)}}{3.5 \text{ Mortgage Multiplier}}$$

And using the property for sale in Table 2, a household would need to earn at least £204,428 per year and have a 10% deposit of £79,500 to be able to afford the property currently for sale in Watford Parish.

**Watford Parish Housing Needs Survey October 2012**

To assess how accessible the above house prices are, those who felt they were in need of housing in the parish were asked to supply some financial information as detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3 Income Bands of Respondents in Housing Need**

<b>Below £14,999</b>	<b>£15-£19,999</b>	<b>£20-£24,999</b>	<b>£25k-£29,999</b>	<b>£30k-£39,999</b>
1	0	0	0	0

1 household responded to the income question. As can be seen from Table 3, the household could not afford to buy the cheapest property currently on the market in Watford.

## Section B Analysis of Housing Need

This section analyses the answers given within Section B of the survey. Households who considered themselves to be in housing need were asked to complete this section in order for the level of need to be determined

### Section B Household Types

Of the 30 questionnaires received, 2 households (7%) filled out the Housing Needs Section of the response form, indicating that they were in housing need and wished to be considered for housing that may be developed as a result of the survey.

### Reasons for Housing Need

All households completing Section B of the survey form were asked to give reasons why they felt they were in housing need. Respondents were allowed to state more than one reason. Reasons given for housing need were 'Property too small', 'independence' and 'support from relatives'.

### Housing Need Analysis

Table 4 below summarises the households expressing a housing need.

**Table 4: Outline of Respondents in Housing Need**

Current Tenure & Size			Local connection	Preferred Tenure	Actual Tenure & Size		Need
Housing Association Tenant	2	Bungalow	Living in Parish	Renting from Housing Association	2	Bungalow	No
Living with Family	3	Mobile Home	Living in Parish	Renting from Housing Association	1	Flat	Yes

### Local Connection

"Local Connection" is a term that refers to the level of connection a person has to an area. It is assessed on the following four criteria listed in order of priority: -

- Currently living in area,
- Previously lived in area,
- Close family in the area i.e Parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren (and the step equivalent of any of these relationships) husband, wife, civil partners
- Working in area

## **Housing Register Analysis of Housing Need in Watford**



Due to the high demand for social housing, Daventry District Council keeps a register of all applicants wishing to be housed. The applicants are prioritised into Bands according to their housing need and are able to 'bid' on suitable properties. Further details can be found in Allocations Scheme Policy available on the Daventry District Council Website.

To ensure that everyone with a local connection to Watford and a housing need is considered, the Housing Register has been analysed. This process identified no additional households.

## Conclusions

The analysis done by this survey identified 1 potential household in need of affordable housing in Watford. This is broken down as follows;

### Rented Units

1x 1 bed flat

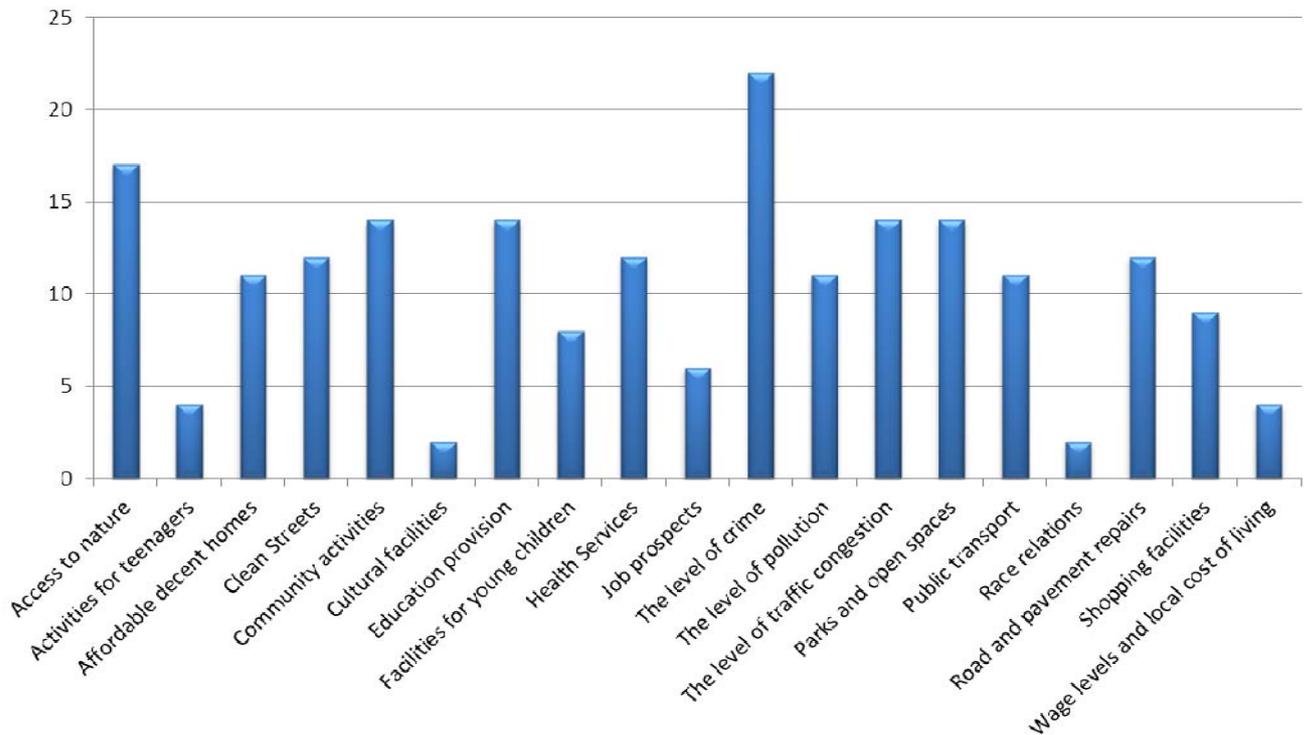
## Appendix A

This section contains a breakdown of information obtained in the Housing Needs Survey relating to people's opinions about life in the parish as well as their overall opinion of their local area.

### Watford Resident Views on the Parish

Respondents were asked what they thought made a good place to live and what they felt needed improving in their parish. Figures 10 & 11 show the responses received.

#### Watford residents views on what makes somewhere a good place to live



### Watford Residents views on what needs improving

