

East Bedlington Housing Needs Survey Final Report

July 2019

Produced for East Bedlington Parish Council

EAST BEDLINGTON
Parish Council



Introduction

In March 2019, East Bedlington Parish Council commissioned Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to undertake a Local Housing Needs Survey for the East Bedlington parish. This was designed to provide information useful to the Parish Council as part of work designed to assess the wider needs of the community.

Since April 2017, CAN has been contracted by Northumberland County Council to establish a Community-led Housing Hub to act as a support platform for local communities wishing to explore the potential for community-led housing in its various forms and to deliver local affordable homes where they are needed. This hub is called 'Communities CAN.'

This work is initially funded through the Northumberland County Council allocation of the government's Community Housing Fund and seeks to support all stages of development, including the initial identification of housing need.

As part of this work, CAN is funded to undertake Local Housing Needs Surveys where requested to do so and where there is a realistic prospect of any need identified resulting in the delivery of additional affordable homes.

In undertaking Housing Needs Surveys, CAN follows the principles set out in national guidelines drawn up by the Rural Housing Enablers Network as follows:

1. The goal of all Housing Needs Surveys is to provide an objective evidenced overview of the scale and nature of the full range of housing need in a locality, usually a village or parish.
2. Housing Needs Surveys are independent and balanced and seen to be so.
3. The process for collecting the data is open, fair and transparent.
4. Any secondary data used as a principal source of information or to augment data collected from households is up to date and relevant to the geography of the survey.
5. Data is anonymised and confidentiality and data protection statements are clear and correct.
6. The community, which is wider than just the Parish Council, is informed of the reasons for the survey, invited to participate and able to access the results.
7. The reports are written in plain English with explanations of how the findings and conclusions are drawn, including any caveats and noting sources of data.
8. Housing Needs Survey reports are publicly available once the commissioning body has agreed and signed off the survey.
9. Housing Needs Surveys are a snapshot in time, their 'shelf-life' is stated and a process for updating the data is available.
10. The Housing Needs Survey is only the start of the process. Once it is completed ongoing liaison should be maintained with the community, housing association or other developer, local authority and landowner to take the project forward.

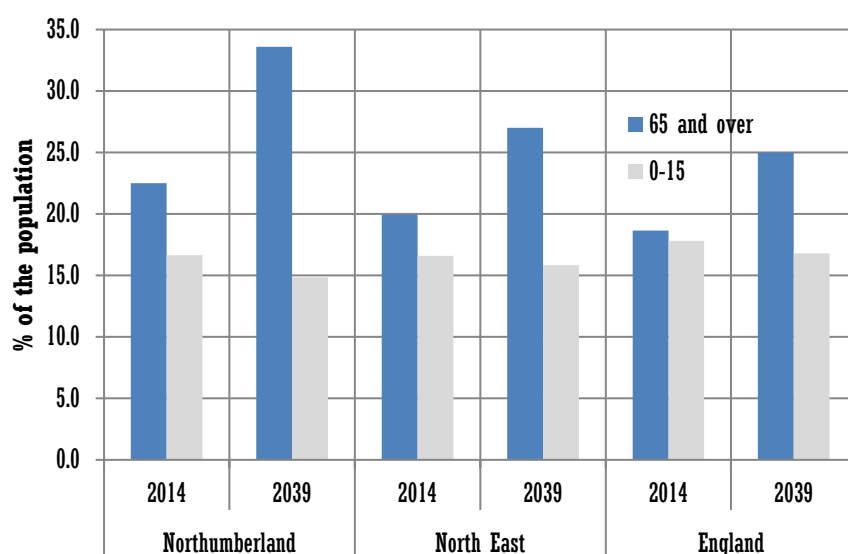
Population profile

At the time of the 2011 Census 8519 people lived in East Bedlington parish in 3847 households. Average household size was 2.2 people per household. 19% of the population was aged 0-15 years (compared to 17% across Northumberland) whilst 17% were aged 65 or over (compared to 20% across Northumberland).

56% of households were owner occupiers compared to 66% across the county, whilst 29% of households were renting from a social landlord (19% for Northumberland) and 14.6% rented from a private landlord (13.3% across the county).

34% of households contained just one person, 41% of which were 65 years or older. 31% of households had no car or van compared to 22% across Northumberland.

The ageing population structure of Northumberland is well documented and this trend is predicted to continue into the future. The graph below shows projections from Northumberland Knowledge with respect to the growing proportion of the population that will be 65 years and older by 2039. In East Bedlington parish, 17% of the population fell into this age group at the time of the census in 2011, lower than the county average.



Source: [Northumberland Knowledge Age Profiles](#)

The Housing Needs Survey

Our Housing Needs Survey involved the distribution of a questionnaire to all households within the parish of East Bedlington. The questionnaire was based on a tried and tested questionnaire utilised elsewhere which was developed and amended through discussion and agreement with East Bedlington Parish Council.

The questionnaire was distributed by post to all 4000 households in the parish. A freepost envelope was provided to each household for return of completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire included five initial questions to be answered by all households and a further eight questions which only needed to be answered by those households who had expressed some form of housing need. For respondents planning to divide their current households into two or more households, an additional sheet was included enabling relevant questions to be completed for each of the proposed new households.

**East Bedlington
HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY**

East Bedlington Parish Council is in the process of looking at the future needs of the community. We are interested in your views on the principle of providing affordable homes for local people in your parish. We would therefore be grateful if you could take a little time to help us by filling in this questionnaire.

PART ONE – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL HOUSEHOLDS

Q1. Please tell us about your household's connection with the East Bedlington Parish

Do you live in the East Bedlington Parish? Yes No

- If yes, how long has a member of your household lived here? Yrs Mths

Does any member of your household have close family (parents, children or siblings) living in East Bedlington Parish? Yes No

Does any member of your household work in the East Bedlington Parish? Yes No

- If yes, how long have they worked here? Yrs Mths

Would you be happy to live in suitable accommodation in East Bedlington? Yes No

If no, where is your preferred location to live (please give your reasons in the box below)? Location

Q2. Please provide details of everyone living in your home including yourself.

Relationship to you	Employment status*	Age						
		<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Self								

*Please select one of the following options: employed/looking after home or family/sick or disabled/unemployed/retiree/career/other

Q3. About the home you currently live in. Do you:

Rent from local authority Rent from Housing Association (e.g. Bemidra)

Live in accommodation provided by your employer Rent from Private Landlords

Part own / part rent (shared ownership) Own with or without mortgage

Other (please specify)

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A total of 145 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 4%. This is a low response rate, particularly when compared to other similar questionnaires carried out recently elsewhere in Northumberland. In order to draw any significant conclusions, therefore, it will be essential to analyse additional information sources relevant to housing needs in East Bedlington.

This was a survey of existing residents and, therefore, is an expression of the needs and desires of these residents.

Research Findings

Connection to the East Bedlington area

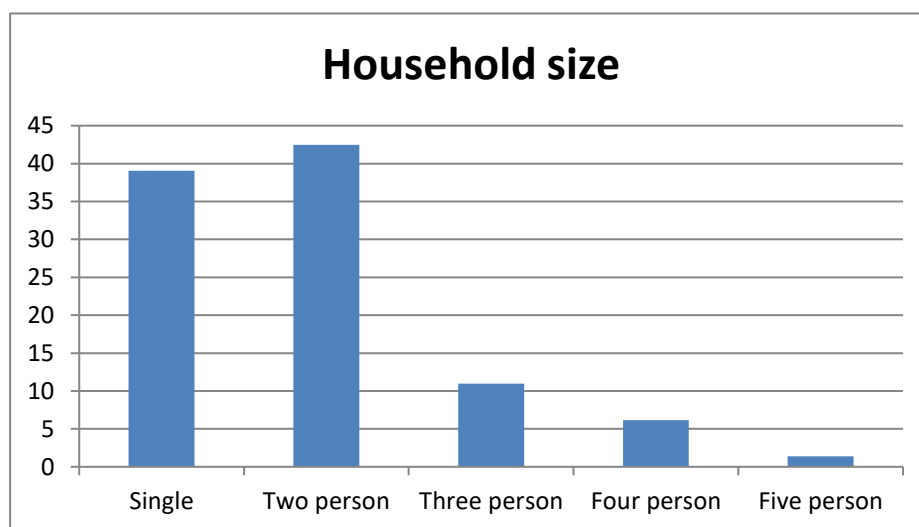
All respondents to the questionnaire lived in the East Bedlington area. This is not surprising given the distribution of the questionnaire to households in the East Bedlington area only but does mean that the responses represent local views. 80.9% of respondents had lived in the East Bedlington area for more than 10 years

Almost half of respondents (48.9%) had close family (parents, children or siblings) living in East Bedlington Parish. Just 14.6% of all respondents had at least one member of their household who worked in the East Bedlington area. Most of these family members (79%) had worked in East Bedlington 5 or more years.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (88.7%) stated that they would be happy to live in suitable accommodation in East Bedlington parish.

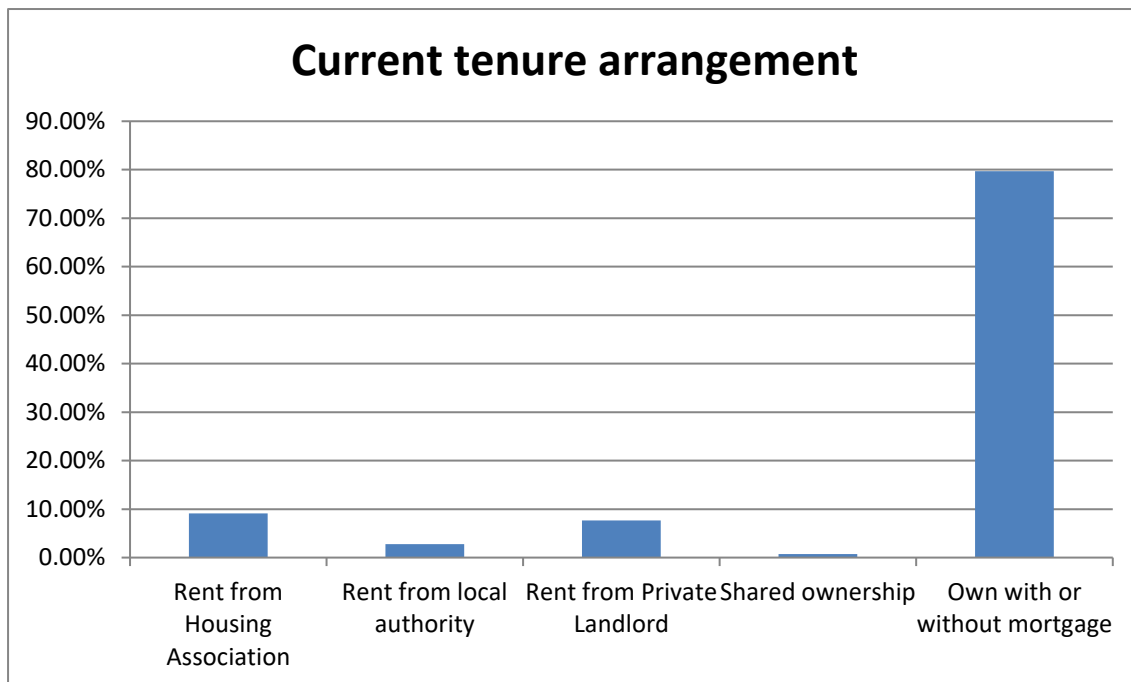
Household characteristics

A large proportion of respondents (42.5%) were in two-person households with a further 39% living alone. 18.5% of respondents lived in households containing 3 or more people.

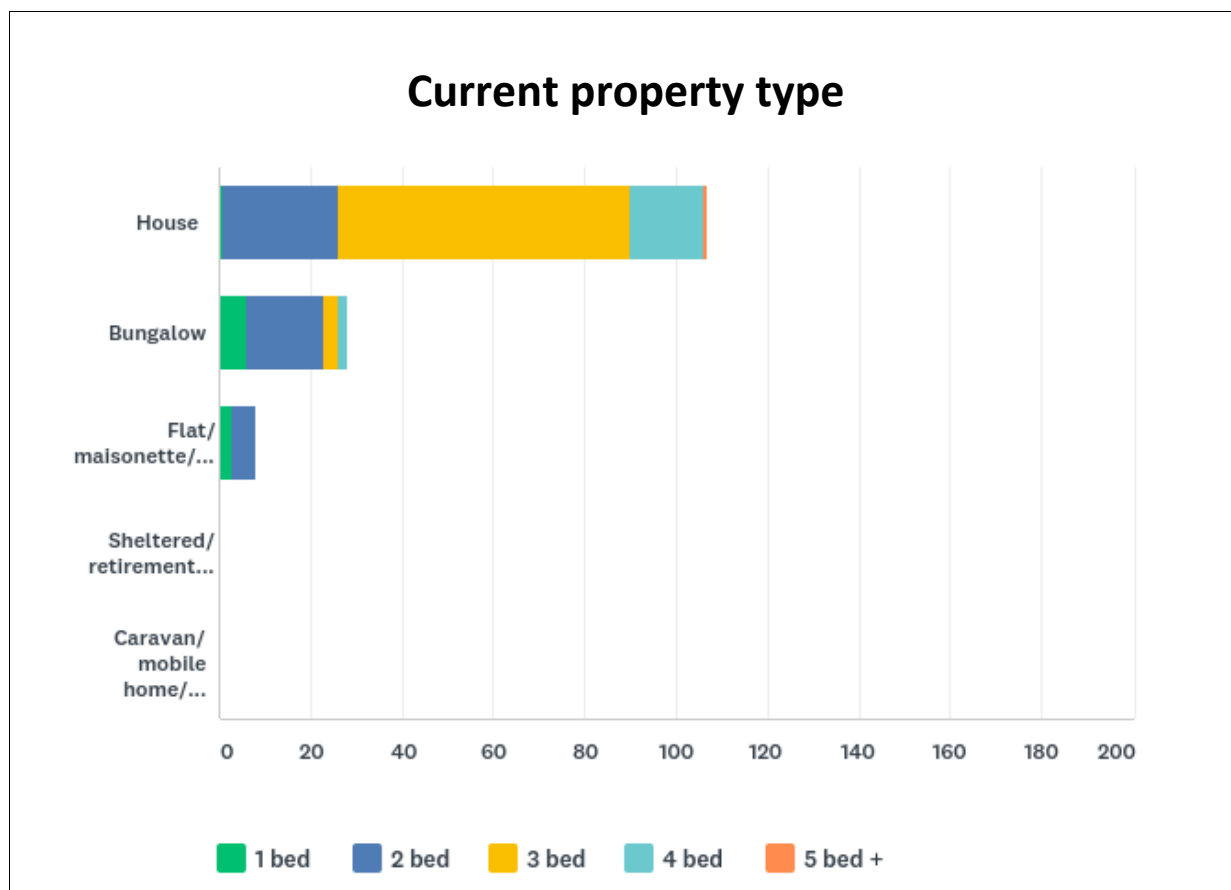


The proportion of individuals completing the questionnaire who were retired was 55%. This is considerably higher than the general population where, according to the 2011 census, 16.1% of all residents were retired. The proportion of respondents in employment was 40%.

79.7% of respondents owned their own homes (with or without a mortgage). 11.9% rented from a social landlord (housing association or local authority) and 7.7% from a private landlord. Compared to census statistics, this suggests that respondents were potentially skewed towards owner occupiers.



44.8% of all responding households lived in a 3-bedroom house and 17.5% in a 2-bedroom house. 11.9% of households lived in a 2-bedroom bungalow and 11.2% in a 4-bedroom house. 7% of households lived in a property with just one bedroom.

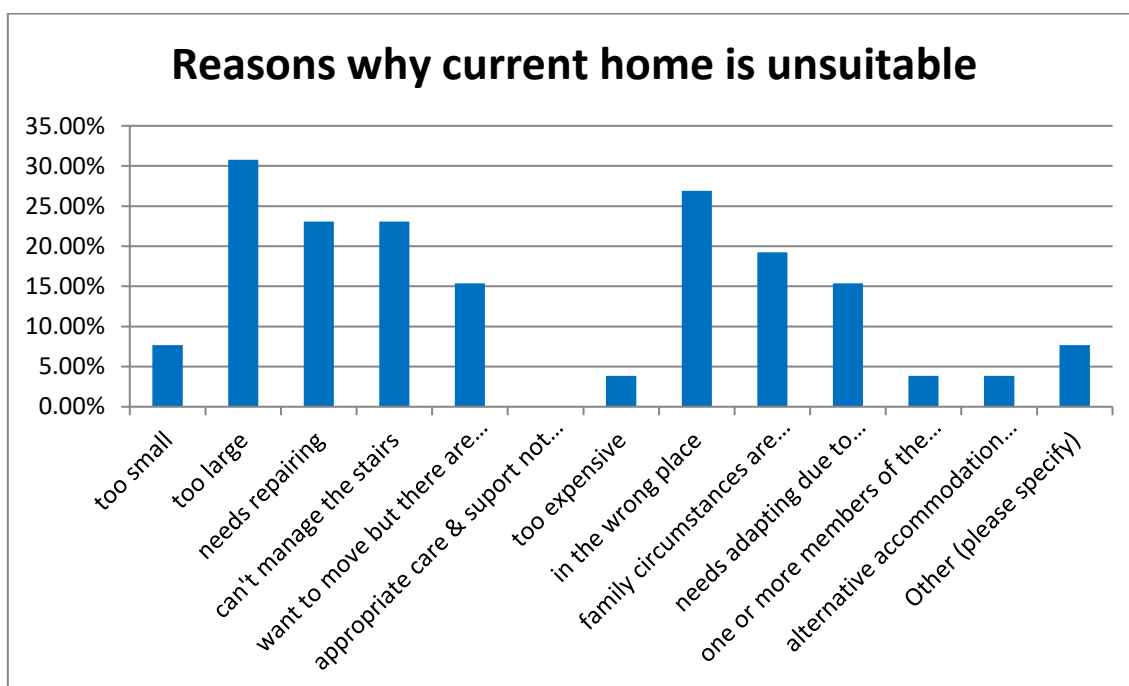


Households in need

The majority of households who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their current home was suitable for their household's needs over the next five years. However, 19.2% of respondents indicated that this was not the case representing 28 households in total. The remaining elements of the questionnaire were only to be completed by these 28 households. The Research Findings below relate solely to these respondents.

Type of need

The reasons why households indicated that their current home is unsuitable for their needs were varied. The main reasons for housing need were that the existing property is too large or in the wrong place. Similar numbers of respondents also stated that the existing property needs repairing or that stairs were difficult to manage. The percentage of respondents indicating each area of need is shown in the table below (NB: respondents could indicate multiple reasons).



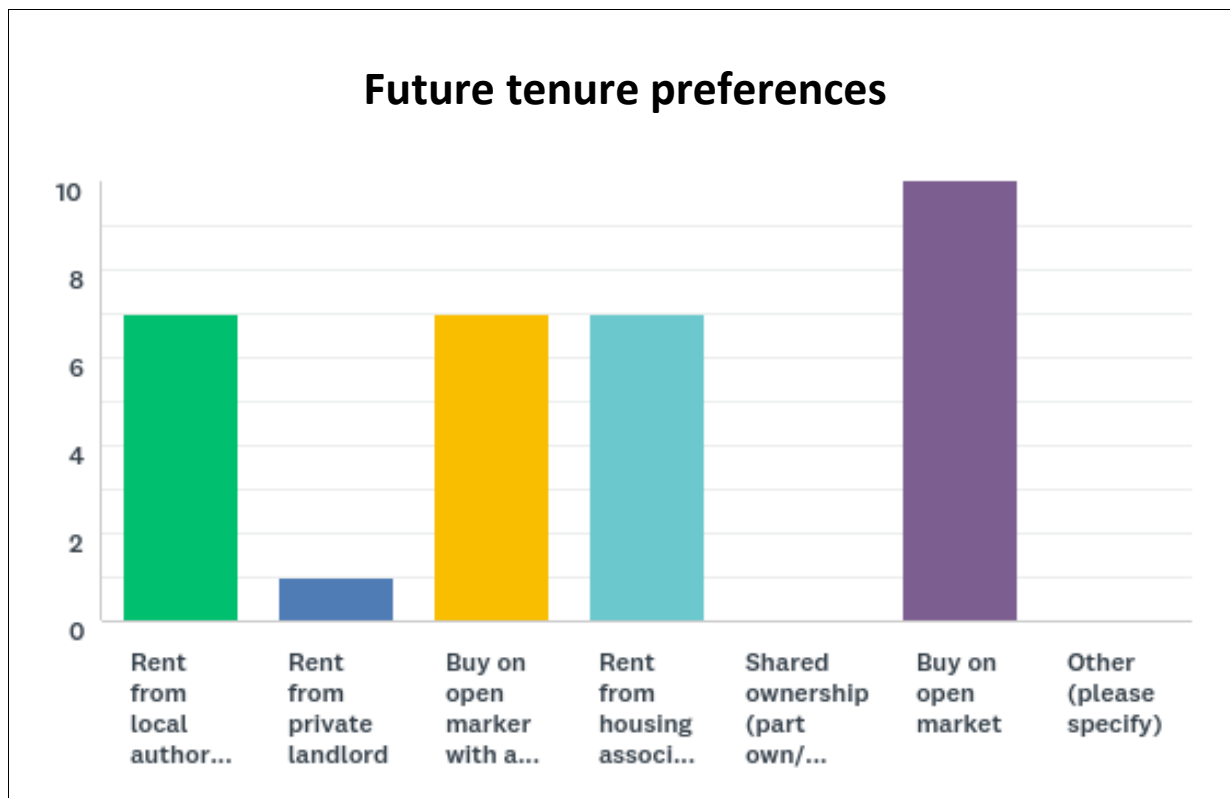
The survey included an opportunity for respondents to explain their reasons for needing to move in more detail. Responses to this question fell into three main categories:

- The need to move into smaller properties and/or bungalows
- A desire to be closer to more amenities
- Poor repair of existing properties

Future tenure preferences

Buying on the open market was the preferred option for 43.5% of those households expressing a housing need. 30.4% indicated a desire for affordable rented homes from the local authority with the same proportion expressing a similar desire for affordable rented homes from a housing association and for buying on the open market with a discount.

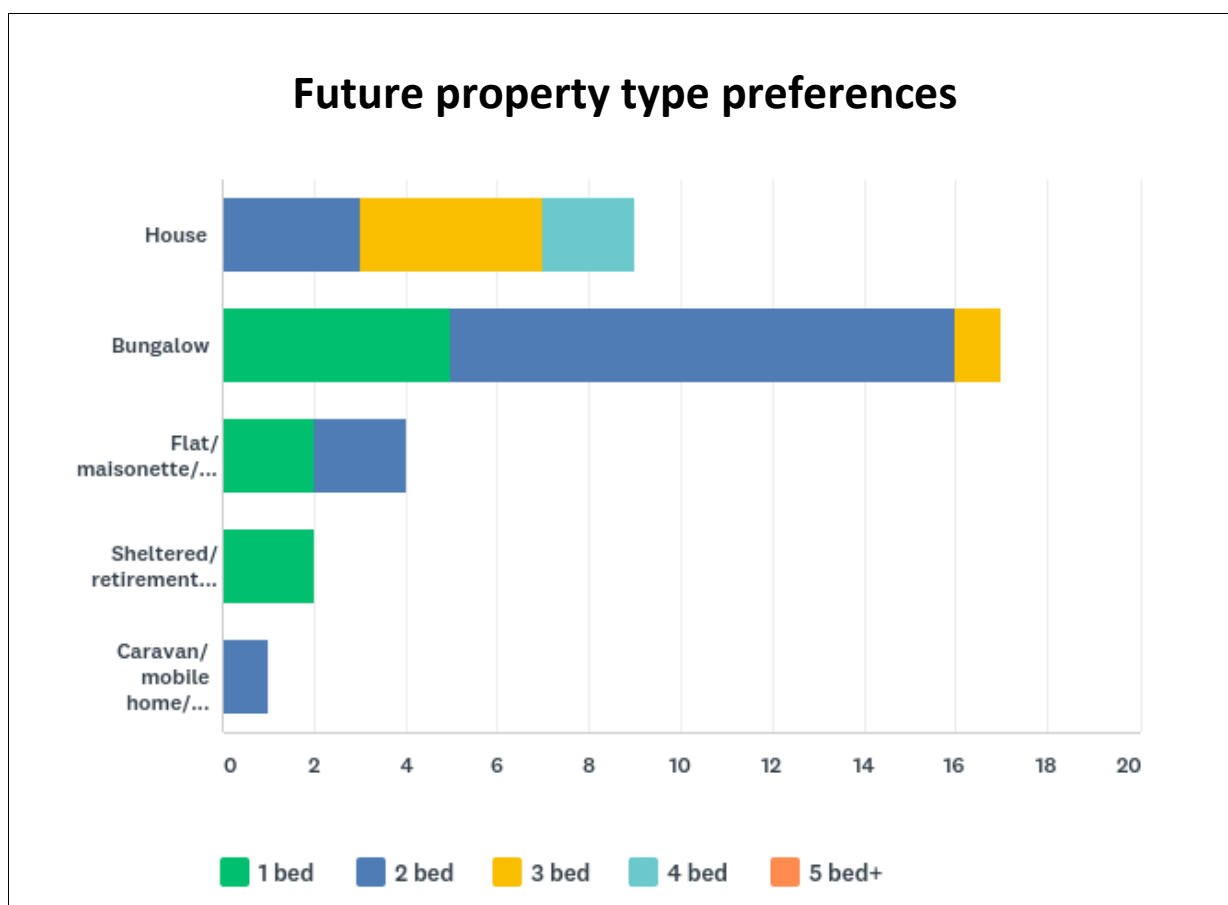
NB: respondents could indicate multiple preferences.



Future property type preferences

The largest demand is for two-bedroom bungalows (11 preferences in total) followed by one-bedroom bungalows (5 preferences). Demand is also expressed for two and three-bedroom houses (7 preferences in total).

NB: some respondents gave more than one preference



Specific health, accessibility and other needs

Five respondents expressed specific health or accessibility issues which would require a specific type of accommodation. Responses related to physical disability and specific health conditions.

Northumberland Homefinder register

Six of the households who expressed a housing need were registered with Northumberland Homefinder. None of these respondents indicated that they had bid for a property in the last 12 months. This confirms the view that data available from the register only relates to a small subset of need.

Household income and affordability

63.6% of respondents, who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, indicated an annual household income of less than £25,000. Just 9.1% of respondents indicated an annual household income above £40,000.

In terms of the amount households could afford to pay for their housing, 57.1% could not afford more than £400 per month.

In terms of a deposit, 25% of respondents who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, could not afford a deposit of £1000. In total, 60% could not afford a deposit of £5000 or more.

A selection of individual responses

"The property needs repairing, and the heating does not work"

"Most of the properties are either too expensive or in a less desirable location and would need repairing."

"I am in a three-bedroom house on my own."

"Lack of amenities in the area making it difficult to live"

"Would like two-bedroom bungalow as both of us having difficulty with stairs."

"As you get older you need to be near shops, doctor etc."

"Would like to live in an area that does not involve drug users, loud late evening drinking which ends up in violence and arguing outside"

"As we are getting older, we need a new home without stairs, garden, etc."

"Flat is too big"

"The roads need to be sorted – it's a disgrace."

"I would like a property with a gas supply and on a bus route."

"I want to own a home but it's just never seemed realistic as there is not a lot of choice, most of the affordable homes are in less desirable areas."

"Need a better bus service."

"Needs repairing"

Key messages from the survey

This was a survey of existing residents and, therefore, is an expression of the needs and desires of these residents reflecting the current age profile of East Bedlington parish. Key messages from the survey include the following:

- A low response rate was achieved for the survey compared to similar recent surveys carried out elsewhere in Northumberland. In order to draw any significant conclusions, therefore, it will be essential to analyse additional information sources relevant to housing needs in East Bedlington.
- More respondents were retired and owned their own homes than would have been expected from census population statistics meaning that those of working age and those currently renting their property appeared under-represented.
- Despite the low return rate, 28 households expressed some form of housing need.
- The most common reasons expressed for housing need were that the current home was too large, in the wrong place, in need of repair or had stairs which were difficult to manage.
- The same proportion of respondents (30%) indicated a preference for affordable rented homes from the local authority, from a Housing Association and discounted purchase.
- Buying on the open market was the preferred option for many households expressing a housing need (44%).
- The largest demand is for bungalow accommodation with 11 preferences for two bedrooms and 5 preferences for one bedroom. Demand was also expressed for two and three-bedroom houses (7 preferences in total).
- Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%), who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, indicated an annual household income of less than £25,000 and 57% could not afford more than £400 per month to pay for their housing. 25% could not afford a deposit of £1000.

Credits

Sincere thanks go to the residents of East Bedlington Parish for their participation in this survey.