

Embleton Parish Housing Needs Survey Final Report

June 2018



Introduction

In January 2018, the Embleton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Committee commissioned Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to undertake a Local Housing Needs Survey for the Parish. This was designed to provide detailed information which would directly input to the development of the Embleton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and also act as a potential catalyst for possible future development of local affordable homes if need was demonstrated.

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 by a local community and where there is a realistic prospect of any need identified resulting in the delivery of additional affordable homes. Critical to this work is that the local community is directly involved in both identifying need and in determining any potential response to the information generated.

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.

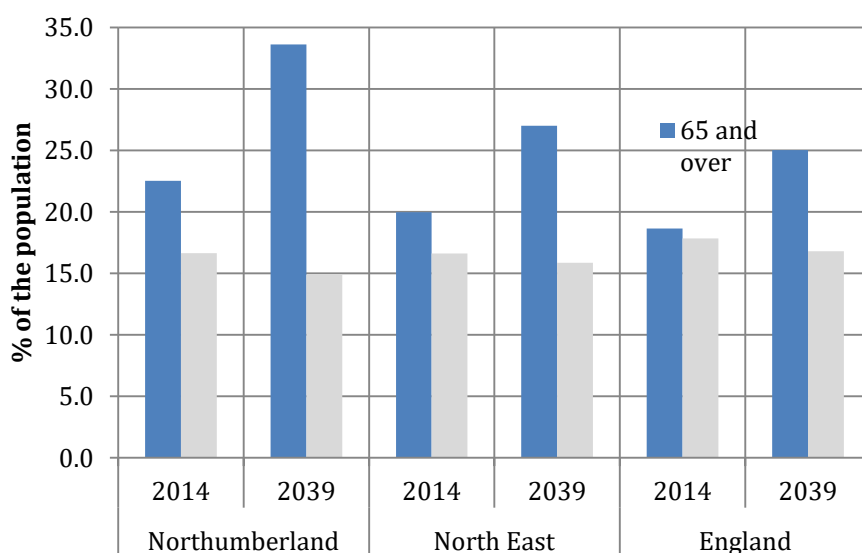
Population profile

At the time of the 2011 Census 672 people lived in Embleton parish in 431 households. Average household size was 2.1 people per household. 12.8% of the population was aged 0-15 years (compared to 17% across Northumberland) whilst 29.9% were aged 65 or over (compared to 20.2% across Northumberland).

68.7% of households were owner occupiers compared to 66% across the county, whilst 16.5% of households were renting from a social landlord (18.7% for Northumberland) and 14.9% rented from a private landlord (13.3% across the county).

26.9% of households contained just one person, 48.3% of which were 65 years or older. Only 8.9% of households had no car or van.

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. It is noteworthy that in Embleton Parish, 29.9% of the population already fell into this age group at the time of the census in 2011. The continued ageing of the population will clearly impact on the range of services and housing needs in the future.



Source: [Northumberland Knowledge Age Profiles](#)

Homefinder data

Northumberland County Council, in partnership with a number of social landlords operating in the county, manages the Northumberland Homefinder allocations service. Anyone aged 16 or over can apply to join Northumberland Homefinder, unless they are ineligible. Affordable homes which become available are advertised via this service. Homefinder operates a banding scheme where applicants are placed in one of five bands according to their level of need as follows:

- Priority Band P for those with an urgent and severe housing need.
- Band 1 for those who are in high housing need.
- Band 2 for those who are in medium housing need.
- Band 2R for those in reasonable preference categories but whose priority is reduced.
- Band 3 for those who are adequately housed.

Data is available from this service with respect to properties advertised within Embleton Parish and, therefore, can provide a view with respect to local housing needs. However, the value of the data is limited for a number of reasons including:

- Data can only relate to those properties advertised and to those people who have applied to join Northumberland Homefinder.
- Individual households can make multiple applications to multiple available properties making conclusions with respect to specific numbers very difficult.
- It is widely known that many people do not apply to join Homefinder due to an expectation that properties which meet their needs are either not available or will be prioritised to households with a higher assessed need.

Nevertheless, Northumberland Homefinder does provide a readily accessible source of data to contribute to this report. Data has been kindly supplied by Northumberland County Council for the period from May 2017 to May 2018. This is summarised below.

Priority Banding by bedroom eligibility					
Band	Bedroom Eligibility				Total
	1	2	3	4+	
Band 1	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
Band 2	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
Band 2R	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
Band 3	13	<5	<5	0	19
Band P	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
Total	13	<5	<5	0	25

For data protection purposes, where figures are less than 5 these cannot be displayed specifically. Nevertheless, this table suggests that Homefinder applicants living in Embleton Parish

predominantly require a one bedroom property (52%) with the remainder of applicants requiring either two or three bedroom properties. 76% of applicants were considered to be adequately housed whilst 50% had been on the housing register for less than one year. 58% of applicants were under the age of 55. The table below shows the current tenure type of applicants.

Current tenancy		
Tenancy	Count	%
Private tenant	11	44
Living with family & friends	6	24
Housing Association tenant	<5	-
Other	<5	-
Total	25	100

The table below shows that in the period from May 2017 to May 2018, there were 4 advertised properties which received 71 bids – an average of 18 bids per property. 80% of these bidders were from outside the Embleton area. 18% of those bidding were from the Alnwick area. 54% of those bidding are currently living in a social rented property.

Homefinder advertised properties (Dec 2016 to Dec 2017)							
Property Type	Bedrooms				Total	Bids count	%
	1	2	3	4+			
Bedsit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bungalow	0	1	0	0	1	16	22.5
Flat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	0	1	2	0	3	55	77.5
Maisonette	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheltered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	2	0	4	71	100.0

Both houses and bungalows are clearly demonstrated to be popular properties in terms of number of bids received.

The Housing Needs Survey

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

The questionnaire was distributed by hand to all households by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, utilising a number of local volunteers. A freepost envelope was provided to each household for return of completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire included two initial questions to be answered by all households and a further twelve 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.

EMBLETON PARISH
Neighbourhood Plan Committee

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY FOR EMBLETON

We are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan and 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. What are your views on housing developments in Embleton Parish?

a. Would you be in favour of small pockets of development to bring additional homes to Embleton parish? Yes ☐ No ☐

b. Would you be in favour of a small development of affordable homes with a priority for people with a local connection to Embleton Parish? Yes ☐ No ☐

c. Would you be in favour of developments which focus on the housing needs of the older population? Yes ☐ No ☐

Any comments (These may be included, anonymously, in our report):

Q2. Is your current home suitable for your household's needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no please tick all boxes that will apply to your household within the next five years:

Too small (overcrowded)	Too expensive
Too large	In the wrong place
Needs repairing	Family circumstances are changing
Can't manage the stairs	Needs adapting due to disability / health needs
Want to move but there are no suitable homes available locally	One or more members of the household need their own home
Other (please give details)	

If you answered 'No' to Q2 please continue to Part Two.

If you answered 'Yes' there is no need to answer any further questions. Please return your questionnaire using the prepaid envelope provided. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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A total of 171 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 38% (based on distribution of 450 questionnaires). This is an excellent response rate for questionnaires of this nature.

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 the Embleton area.

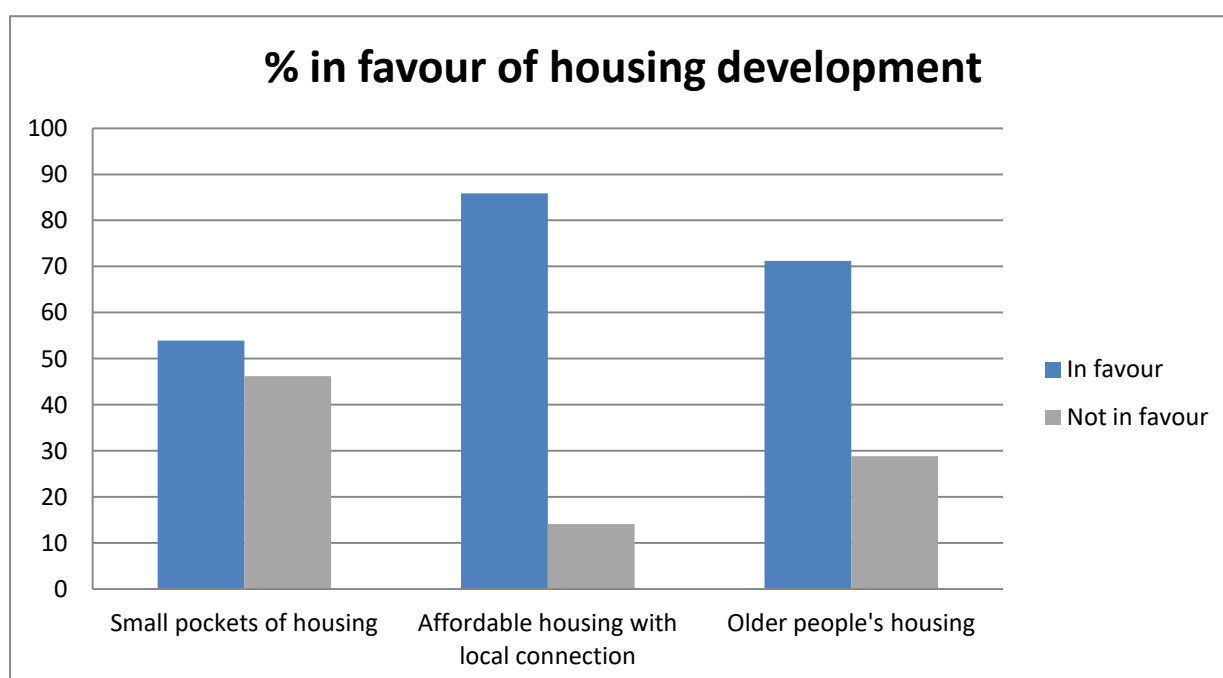
Research Findings

Housing Development in Embleton Parish

Just over half of respondents (53.8%) were in favour of small pockets of development to bring additional homes to Embleton Parish.

This figure rose considerably to 85.9% of respondents who were in favour of a small development of affordable homes with a priority for people with a local connection to Embleton Parish.

71% of all respondents were also in favour of developments which focus on the housing needs of the older population.



Respondents were able to complete a comments box in relation to their views on housing development. The overwhelming issue raised by respondents related to concern about the growing number of second homes / holiday homes in the Parish (40% of the comments made). A further significant proportion were concerned about over-development generally (11%) and a similar number mentioned the need to provide appropriate accommodation opportunities for young families.

Households in need

A total of 11 households who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their current home was not suitable for their household's needs. This is a relatively small number representing 6.4% of respondents. The remaining elements of the questionnaire were only

to be completed by these 11 households. The Research Findings below relate solely to these respondents.

Connection to Embleton

All 11 respondents lived in Embleton Parish. This is not surprising given the distribution of the questionnaire to households in the Embleton area only but does mean that the responses provide a picture of local needs.

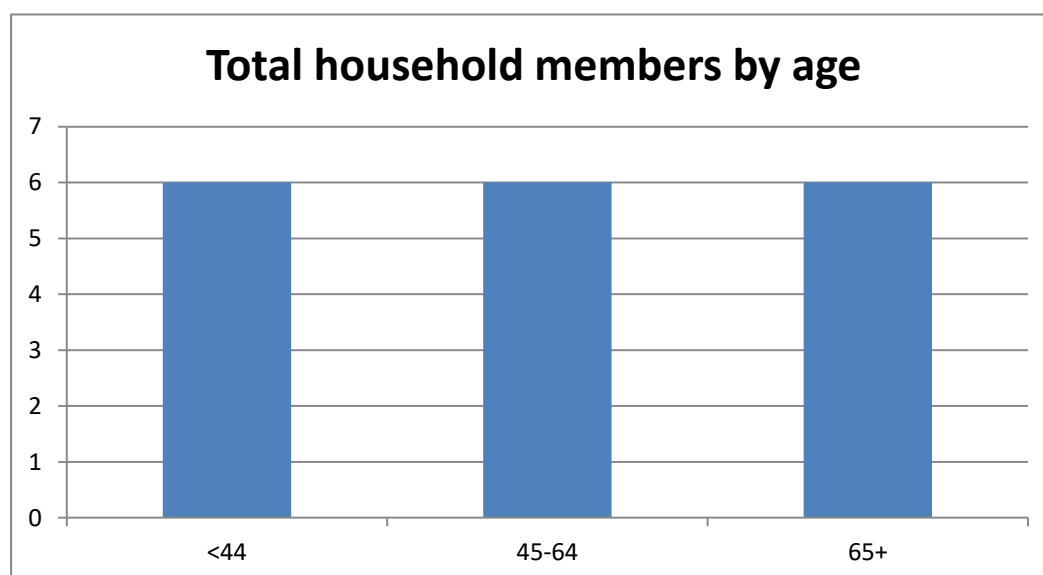
27.3% also have close family (parents, children or siblings) living in Embleton Parish. 36.4% of all respondents had at least one member of their household who worked in Embleton Parish. The overwhelming majority of respondents (88.9%) stated that Embleton Parish was their preferred place to live.

Household characteristics

A large proportion of respondents (54.5%) were in single person households.

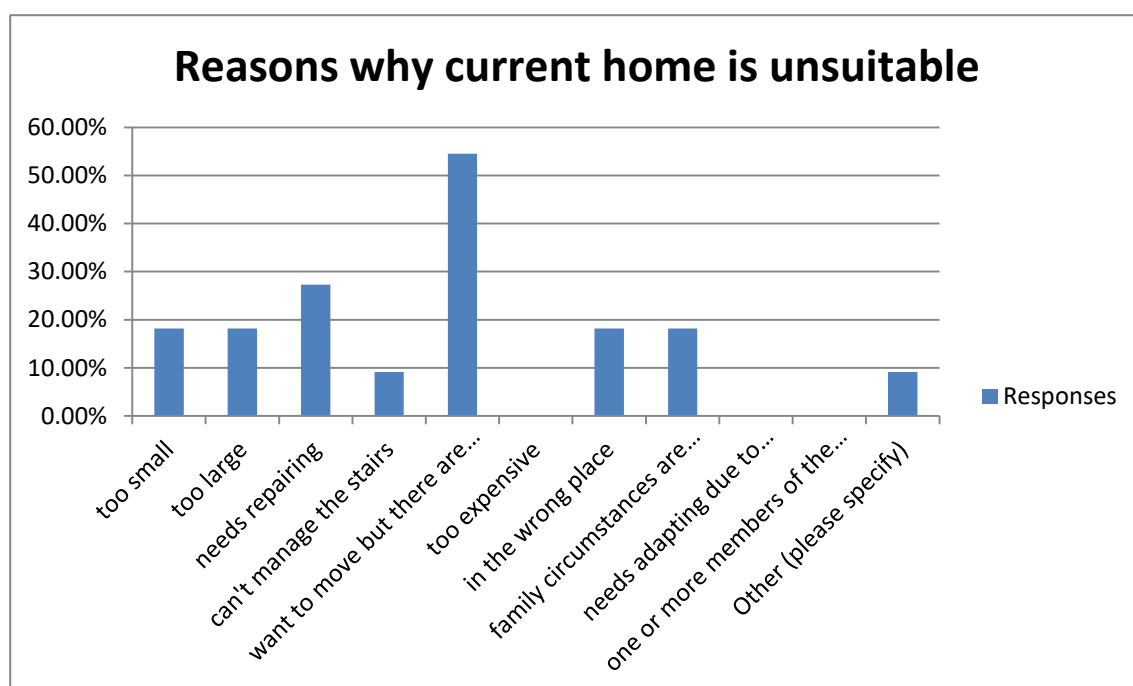
Over 60% of individuals completing the questionnaire were in employment and the remainder were retired. The age profile of those completing the questionnaire was split between 63.6% over 55 years old with the remainder under 55 years old.

The table below shows the total number of people living in the respondent households by age.



Type of need

The reasons why households indicated that their current home is unsuitable for their needs were varied. However, the most common reason was that no suitable homes are available locally. The percentage of respondents indicating each area of need is shown in the table below (NB: respondents could indicate multiple preferences).

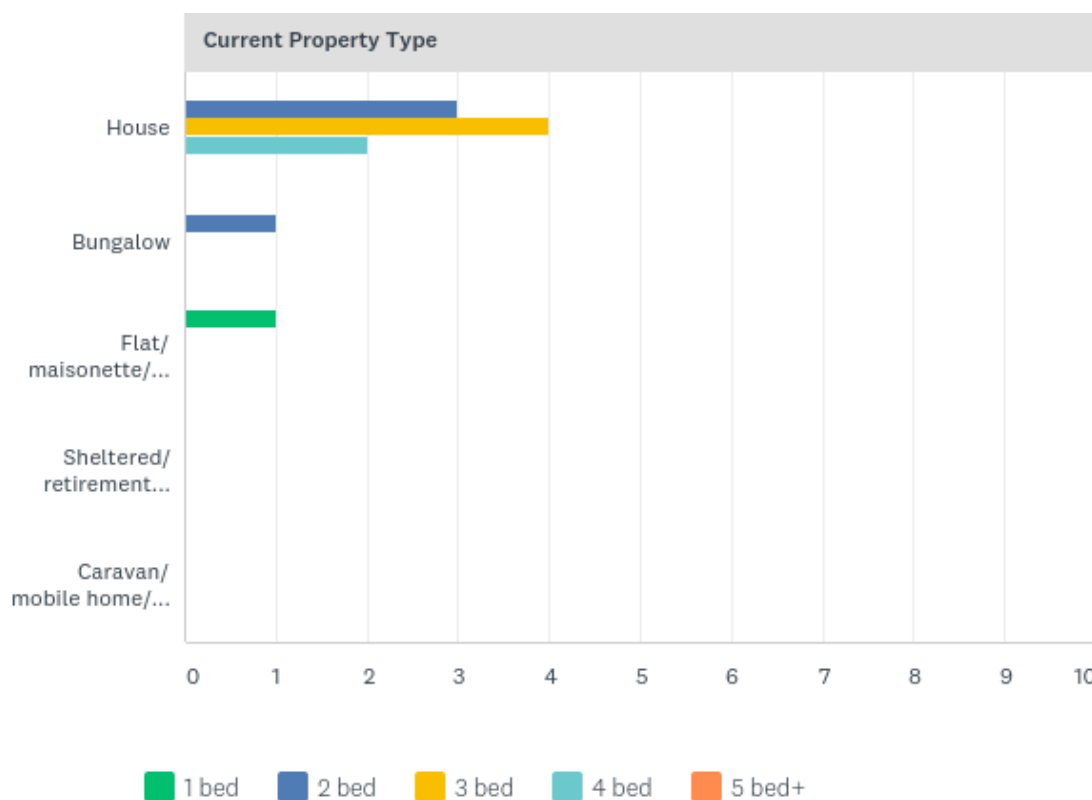


The survey included an opportunity for respondents to explain their reasons for needing to move in more detail. Responses to this question were also varied but key issues mentioned were properties being too large as occupants grow older, the need for additional accommodation to house children and the poor repair of some private rented property.

Existing tenure and property type

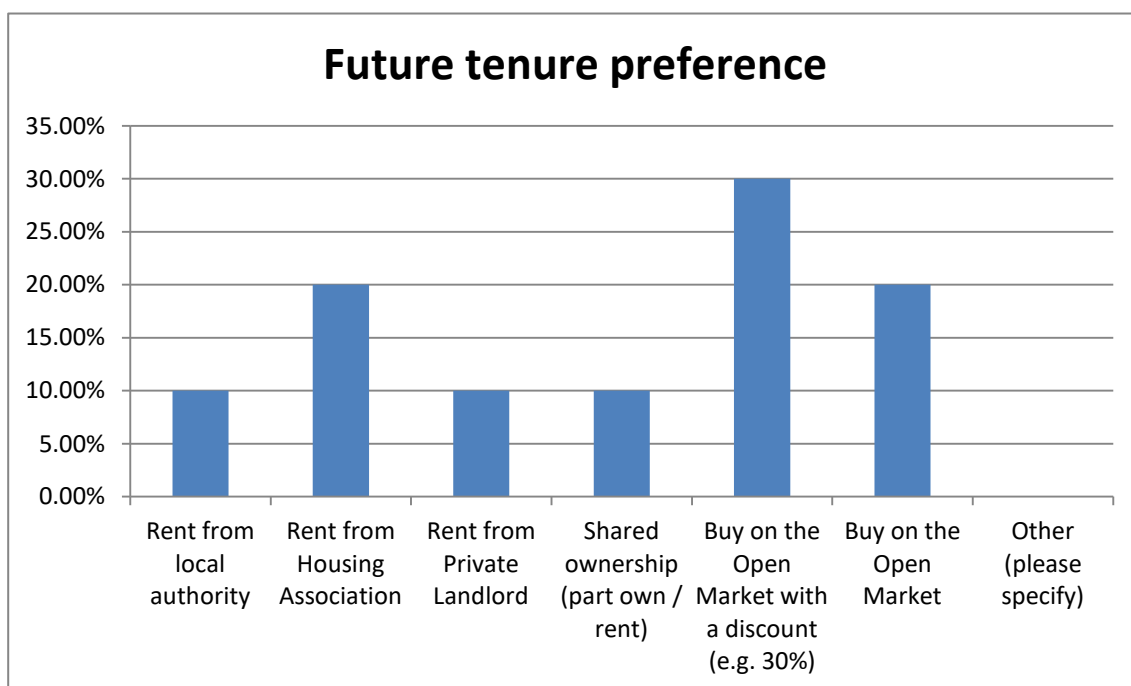
Over half of all respondents (55%), who expressed a housing need, were owner occupiers. 27% rented from a private landlord whilst 18% rented from the local authority.

The vast majority of respondents (81.8%) currently live in a house mostly with either 2 or 3 bedrooms.



Future tenure preferences

40% of those households expressing a housing need indicated a preference for either discounted purchase or shared ownership. 30% indicated a desire for affordable rented homes from either a Housing Association or the local authority and 20% preferred to buy on the open market. NB: respondents could indicate multiple preferences.



Future property type preferences, household income and affordability

Unfortunately, most respondents omitted these questions making the results inconclusive.

Northumberland Homefinder Register

Only 1 of the households who expressed a housing need was registered with Northumberland Homefinder. This confirms the view that data from the register only relates to a small subset of the actual need which exists.

A selection of individual responses

"There are too many holiday homes in the village / second homes. Local people can no longer afford a property in the village."

"Despite working full time as a professional person this area is still financial restrictive."

"No more building!"

"Not enough properties for younger people to buy and people on low income."

"Increasing difficulties associated with old age."

"How do you validate Local Connection" Criteria?"

"Need 3 bed for children to have separate rooms."

"Building social housing focusing on local people's needs is far more necessary than building more and more privately owned dwellings, a large number of which have become second/holiday lets. The only people who benefit from these developments are the property developers and the land owners."

"House too large, garden too large."

"Further indiscriminate development to be avoided."

"The village is not able to sustain any increase in population."

"Mobility within social housing still a good thing."

"Most rural areas have young and older people on low salaries. They need to be able to buy homes if they are to remain in the workforce."

"I just wish private landlords could be forced to make their property damp free with efficient central heating systems."

"Restriction of speculative expensive residential developments and concentration of affordable homes and developments for older population."

"No more holiday/second homes!!"

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 Embleton Parish. Key messages from the survey include the following:

- Most people in the parish are in favour of possible small pockets of development to bring additional homes to Embleton Parish for people with a local connection to the Parish (86% of respondents).
- Second homes and holiday lets represent a significant issue for many local people.
- 11 households expressed some form of housing need. This is a small number, despite the good response rate to the questionnaire, and could reflect a number of factors. For example, the existing social housing stock may already be sufficient to cater for the substantive local need generated, or people who find it difficult to compete in the housing market may have already moved away from the community. Nevertheless, a level of currently unmet need has been identified by the survey.
- The most common reason expressed for housing need was that no suitable homes are available locally.
- The survey reflected a spread of age groups, those retired and those in work. Most households expressing a need contained one person (55%).
- Discounted purchase or shared ownership were the preferred option for 40% of those households expressing a housing need, whilst 30% indicated a desire for affordable rented homes from either a Housing Association or the local authority and 20% preferred to buy on the open market.
- Data from the Northumberland Homefinder Register demonstrates robust demand for existing social housing stock: from May 2017 to May 2018, there were 4 advertised properties which received 71 bids – an average of 18 bids per property. 80% of these bidders were from outside the Embleton area.

Credits

Sincere thanks go to the residents of Embleton Parish for their participation in this survey, to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee for their clear direction and to the local volunteers who distributed the questionnaires to every household in the Parish. Many thanks one and all.