



# **MARCHINGTON**

# **HOUSING NEEDS**

# **SURVEY**

Midlands Rural Housing  
in partnership with  
East Staffordshire Borough Council and  
Trent & Dove Housing  
June 2009



Thank you to the residents of Marchington Parish for their help and support with this survey.



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## Executive Summary

Midlands Rural Housing completed a Housing Needs Survey in Marchington parish during May 2009, to assess the housing need in the parish. As well as requesting specific housing information, the survey asks some general questions relating to the quality of life in the parish.

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people. Affordable housing may be provided through both rental and shared ownership schemes and is for people with a strong connection to the parish.

Marchington is a popular parish in which to live. It has a balanced population, high quality housing stock and local employment opportunities. It also has easy access to nearby road networks and towns.

Housing prices are higher than average and there is little available small, low cost housing, particularly for first time buyers and young families. This may create difficulties in the future for young people on low incomes who want to remain in the parish.

The housing survey results show that, at the current time, respondents do not feel that a lack of affordable housing is a major issue and there is little support for the development of an affordable housing scheme in the parish.

The housing needs survey has identified only three respondents claiming a need for affordable housing. Two are young families and the third is a young person looking to establish an independent first home.

The resulting breakdown is:-

**1 x 2-bed house for Homebuy**

**1 X 3-bed house for rent**

**1 x 3-bed house for Homebuy**

**Our recommendation is that a mixed development of three affordable dwellings should be considered to alleviate the current housing needs in Marchington.**



## 1. Introduction

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people in rural areas. Rural parishes are those with a population of fewer than 3000 people. In 2005 MRH established the Trent Valley Partnership to work closely with authorities in the East Midlands region.

In September 2008 Trent Valley Partnership joined with Trent & Dove Housing and East Staffordshire Borough Council in order to enable the appropriate development of affordable housing in East Staffordshire Borough.

This needs study looks at the shortfall in housing in Marchington Parish. Marchington has a population of 1127 in 456 households (2001 census). 475 survey forms were produced for distribution to residents throughout the parish.

During May 2009, East Staffordshire Borough Council delivered a Housing Needs Survey form to every household in the parish.

### 1. Purpose of the Survey

The aim of the survey was to assess the housing need in the parish of Marchington, in order to provide East Staffordshire Borough Council with the information it requires to meet local housing needs.

### 3. Housing Costs

#### Property Values: Oct - Dec 2008 - East Staffordshire

	Av Detached	Av Semi	Av Terrace	Av Flat	Av Overall Price	No. Of Sales
	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>West Midlands</b>	276,660	150,847	123,130	112,553	<b>166,198</b>	10,309
<b>Staffordshire</b>	250,472	141,887	117,827	108,496	<b>166,718</b>	1,500
<b>East Staffordshire</b>	226,902	139,707	101,794	114,492	<b>150,525</b>	226
Source: Land Registry						

The table above provides a comparison of the property prices across the West Midlands Region, the County of Staffordshire and East Staffordshire Borough. It shows that, overall, prices in East Staffordshire are lower than elsewhere in the region. A family wanting to purchase an average terrace house would need to be earning around £30,000 per annum to secure a mortgage.

Data from the Land Registry shows the following average house prices in Marchington Parish (Postcode ST14 8\*\*), based on sales between June 2007 – February 2009.

Detached - £308,277 (Based on 9 sales)

Semi-Detached – £137,892 (Based on 7 sales)

Terraced – £148,666 (Based on 3 sales)

**Overall - £220,302 (Based on 19 sales)**

**As can be seen from a comparison with the previous table, house prices in Marchington are higher than in East Staffordshire as a whole and would be prohibitively expensive for people on low incomes.**



## 4. Affordable Housing in East Staffordshire

East Staffordshire Borough Council's Housing Strategy states that the Council is no longer a direct provider of affordable housing, but has a strategic and enabling role in its provision. The Council has established working partnerships with key stakeholders such as registered social landlords and currently, Trent & Dove Housing Ltd. manage the housing register on behalf of the Council. East Staffordshire Borough Council will work in partnership with Trent & Dove Housing and other Housing Associations to continue providing affordable housing in the borough.

The District-wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies a significant level of affordable housing need within East Staffordshire. There is a requirement for 293 new affordable homes per year.

The Borough Council will use their planning powers to enable the development of new affordable housing and one of their priorities for action will be to conduct a rolling programme of Rural Housing Surveys.

## 5. Planning Context

Planning policy at national, regional and local levels imposes strict restraints on new housing development in rural areas. However, it is possible to relax such constraints in exceptional circumstances, e.g.: where new housing would meet a specific, locally identified, need, there is the potential available to provide housing on 'rural exception sites'. These sites would not normally be released for housing development.

Any affordable housing that may be provided on a 'rural exception site' would be subject to planning permission which has the effect of limiting occupation of the properties to local people on low incomes. Local people might be defined as including:

- A person or family currently living in the parish.
- A person or family who has lived in the parish but moved away to find affordable or suitable housing.
- A person or family with work commitments in the parish.
- Retired or disabled persons who have strong local connections.

## 6. Respondents' Details

The following sections of this report detail the responses from the questionnaires distributed and returned during May 2009, in Marchington parish.

Respondents individual details have been kept confidential and any identifiable attributes have not been included in the results. Any comments that have been made may also have been edited so as not to identify individual circumstances.

The following results are a snapshot in time and provide the village and East Staffordshire Borough Council with an insight into the parish in terms of current housing need, the desirability of the village and the current level of facilities serving the local community.

A total of 140 survey forms were received giving a return rate of 30%. This is a good response, taking into consideration that only people who have a housing need or those who are interested in commenting on local matters are likely to respond.

### 6.1. Age Profile

The chart below shows the age profile of the 347 people captured on the 140 survey forms returned. The responses show that the largest single group of the population in Marchington, representing 47%, are adults of working age.

There are a significant number of families living in the parish and the percentage of children under 16 is over 19%. This group may find difficulty in obtaining affordable housing in the parish, in the future.

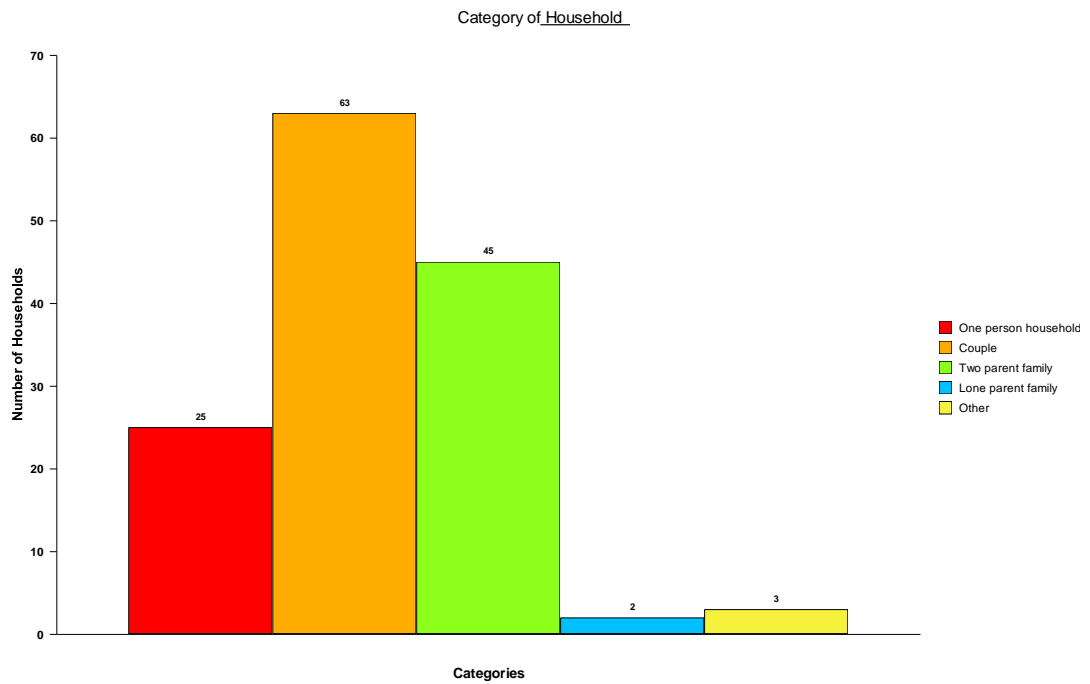




## 6.2. Household Size and Mix

The following chart shows the number of households in each size/mix category.

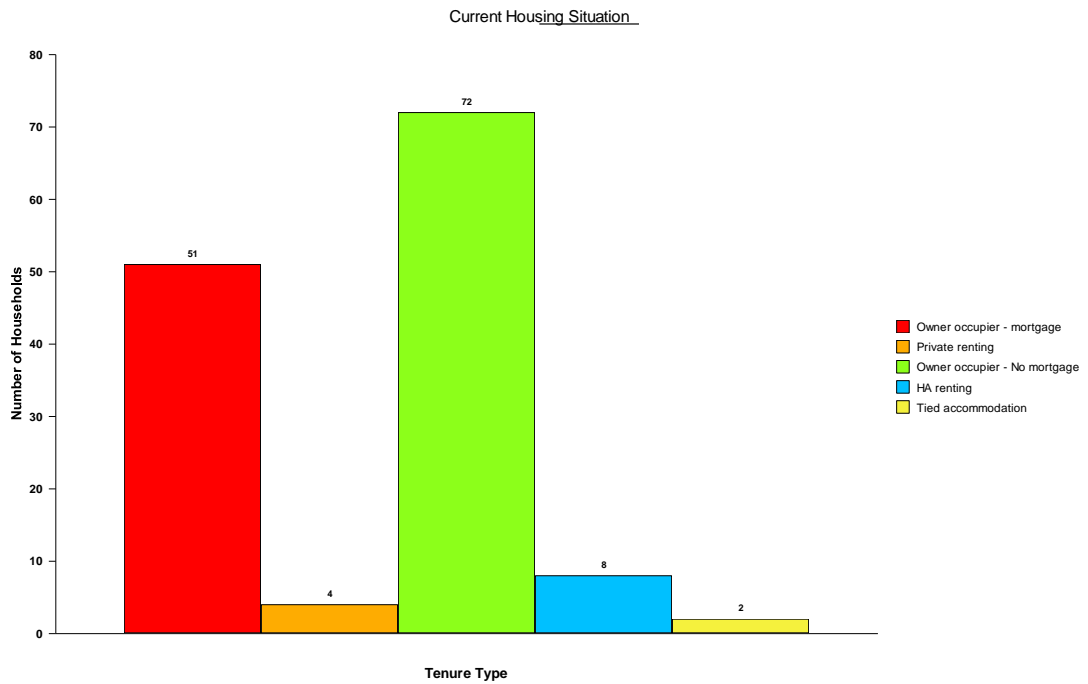
The largest category, at 46%, is households containing couples. 34% of respondent households contain families with children.



### 6.3. Tenure of all Respondents

The following chart shows current household tenure of all respondents. Owner-occupiers make up 90% of households, of whom 59% have no mortgage.

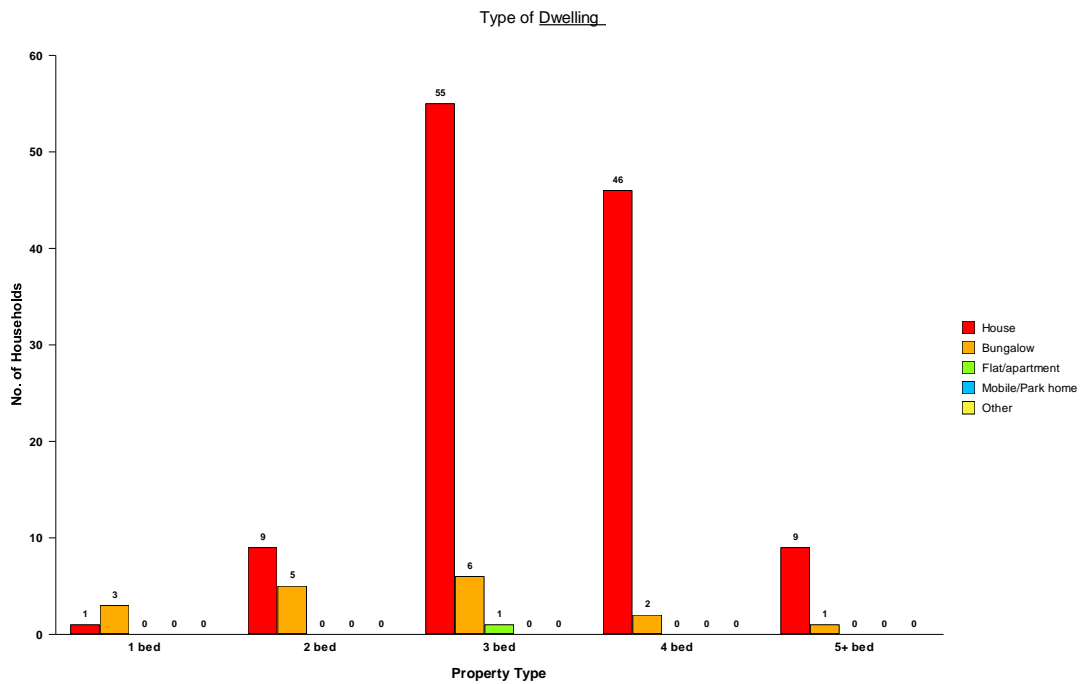
Rented accommodation makes up 9% of total households, with two-thirds of rentals being Housing Association properties.



## 6.4. Property Types

The following chart shows that the largest groups were occupants of 3 bedroom houses at 40%, followed by occupants of 4 bedroom houses at 33%.

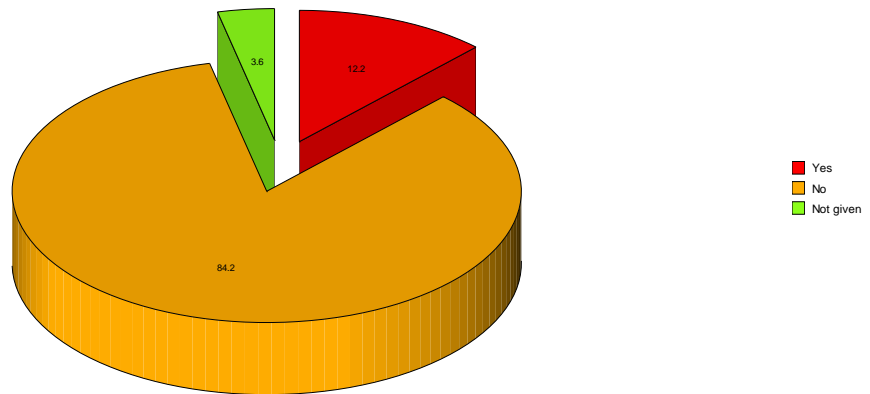
Small 1 and 2 bed properties make up only 13% of total housing stock.



## 6.5. Migration

The chart below indicates that there have been a number of local people forced to move out of the village in order to secure suitable housing. Over 12% of respondents were aware of somebody who needed to move out to find affordable or suitable accommodation.

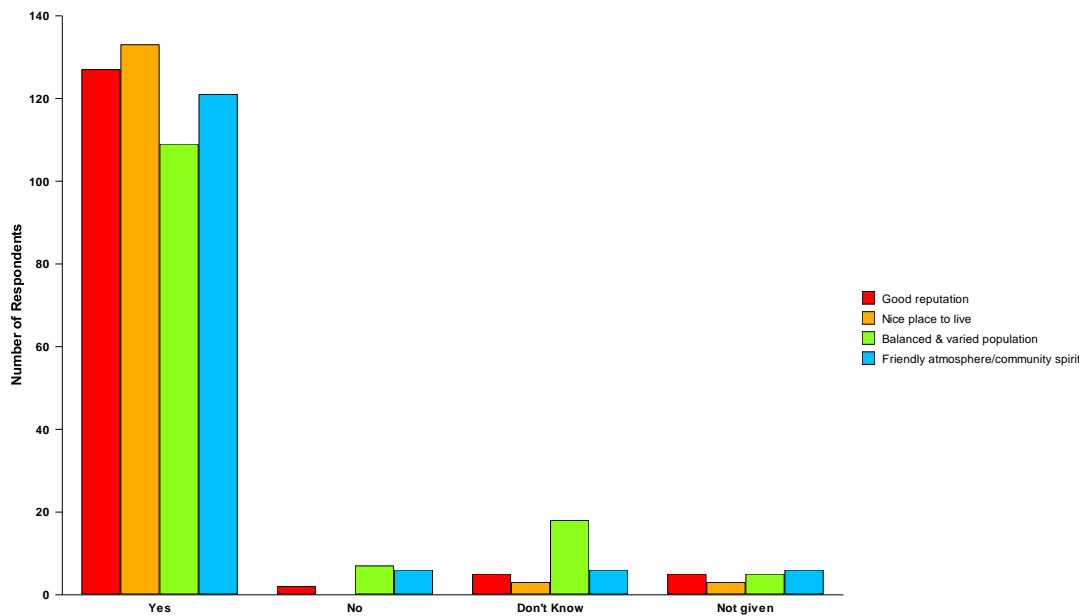
Migration - Leavers in Last 5 Years



## 7. Sustainability Issues

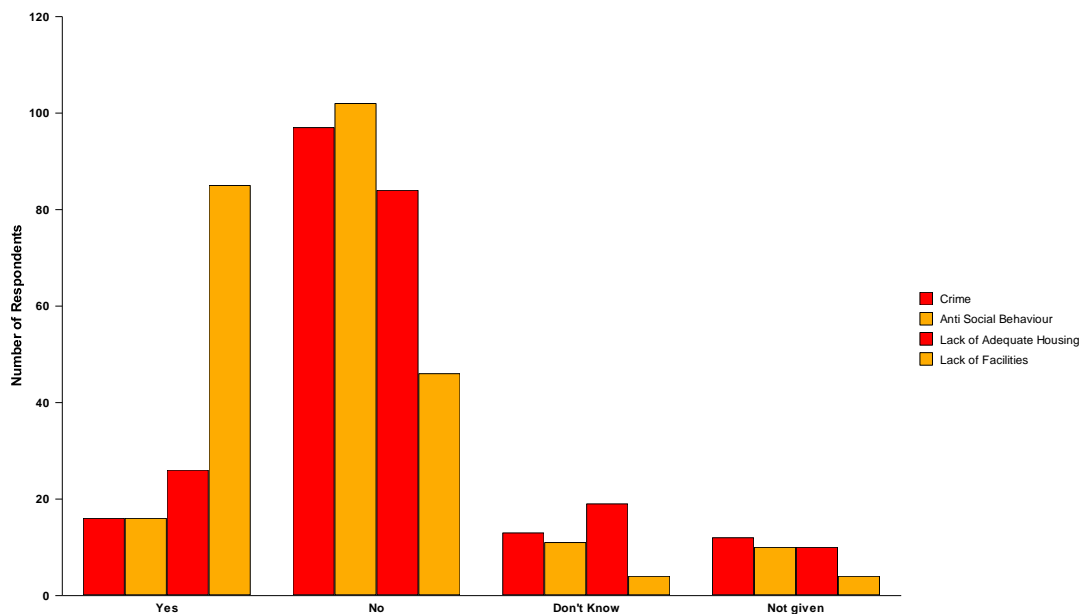
Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of living in Marchington. The purpose of these questions is to build-up a picture of life in the parish and to identify any issues that could form a threat to the long-term sustainability of the village. The following two charts detail respondents' answers, from which we can gain an indication whether any affordable housing provided in the village will be sustainable in the future, i.e. will people want to live there in the future?

Does the Parish Benefit From?



From the chart above it can be seen that the vast majority of residents consider that Marchington has a good reputation, is a nice place to live, with a balanced and varied population and friendly community spirit.

Does the Parish Suffer from?

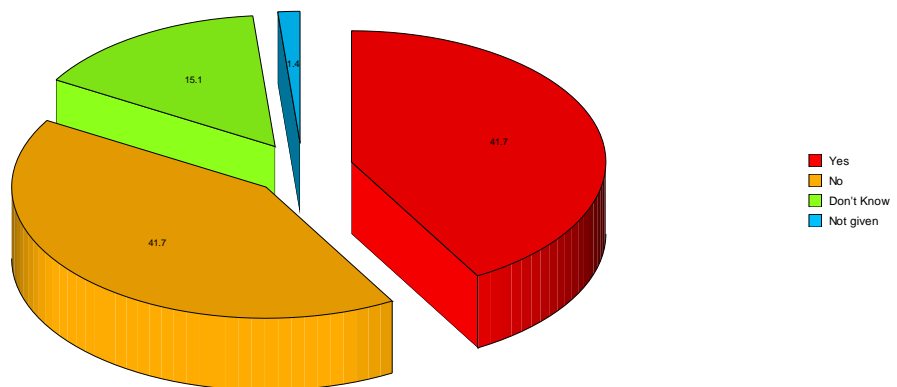


The second chart above shows that only a small number of respondents consider there is crime and anti-social behaviour within the village and less than 20% think there is as a lack of adequate housing. The chart shows that approximately 50% of respondents believe the village is lacking in essential facilities.

## 8. Support for a Small Housing Development

The chart below shows the level of support for a small development of affordable homes for local people, being built in the parish. The chart shows there is a fairly low level of support within the community at under 42%, with an equal number of respondents being against such a scheme.

% In Favour of a Small Scheme



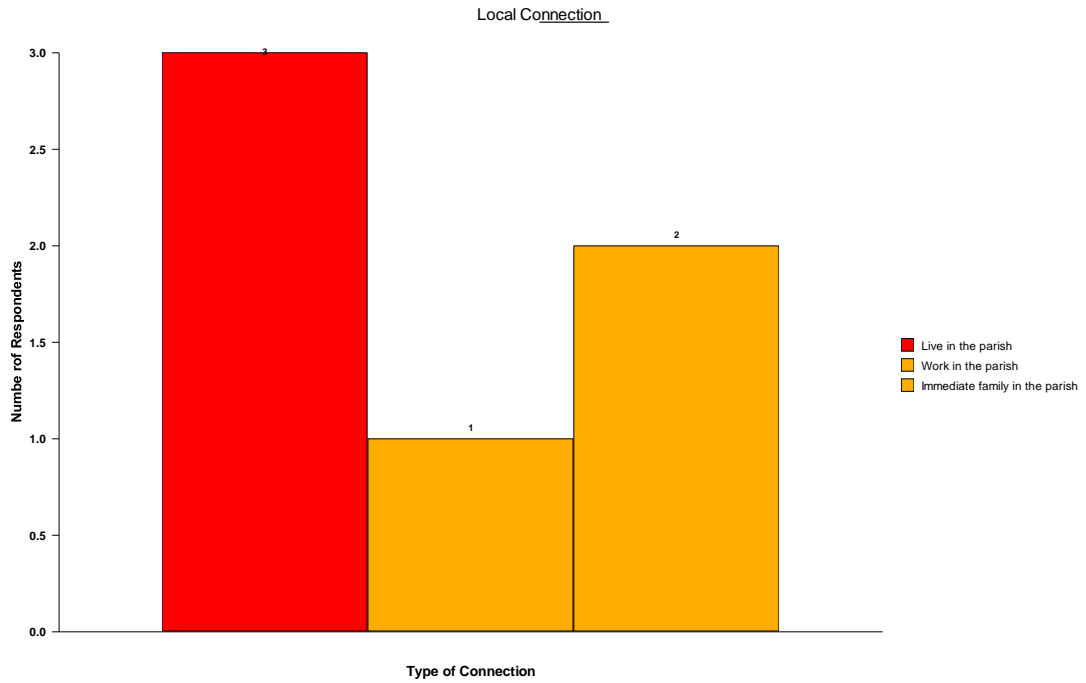
## 9. Housing Needs Analysis

Out of the 140 returns, 137 were from people who would be considered as adequately housed and would not be looking to move to alternative accommodation within the next 5 years. These respondents completed a survey form primarily to offer their support or objection towards a 'local needs' housing development, as well as to give their comments regarding the sustainability of Marchington and comment on its facilities. These were therefore discounted from the rest of the analysis.

Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing is concerned, there are 3 returns detailing a housing need.

## 9.1. Local Connection

The graph below shows the type of local connection held by respondents with a specific housing need. There were 3 responses in total, all of whom are currently living in the village. One respondent works in the parish and two have family in the parish. All fulfil the criteria for having a strong local connection with the parish.



## 9.2. Housing Tenure

The chart below shows the housing circumstances of respondents with a specific housing need.

One respondent owns a property which would release a small amount of equity upon sale. Whilst not qualifying for social rented property, this respondent would qualify for the shared ownership, Homebuy scheme.





### 9.3. Respondents in Need Details

The tables below list the respondents who have expressed a housing need, what type of housing they would prefer, and our assessment of their need.

#### **Single**

RESPONDENT	ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED	REALITY TENURE
Living with parents and family in 4 bed house, requires independent, first home closer to carer/dependent, within 2 years. Residency 29 years and family in the parish.	2 bed house. Homebuy.	2 bed house. Homebuy.

#### **Families**

RESPONDENT	ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED	REALITY TENURE
Family of 4 living in 2 bed rented property, need larger accom. within 2 years. Residency 7 years.	3 – 4 bed house. Rented or Homebuy.	3 bed house. Rented.
Family of 4, living in mortgaged 2 bed property, require larger accomm. immediately. Resident 21 years, work and family in the parish.	3 bed house. Homebuy.	3 bed house. Homebuy.

Therefore the housing needs derived directly from the survey are:

**1 x 2-bed house for Homebuy**

**1 X 3-bed house for rent**

**1 x 3-bed house for Homebuy**



## 10. Numbers Registered on Waiting List

The East Staffordshire Housing Register (waiting list) has approximately 2500 people wanting social rented accommodation in the borough. Although most of these will not have a local connection to Marchington, the numbers give an indication of general demand for affordable housing.

Under the Choice Based Lettings system adopted in East Staffordshire, a 1 bed bungalow in Newborough recently attracted 4 bids and a 3 bed house in Draycott-in-the-Clay attracted 17 bids, showing that there is demand for properties in rural villages.

## 11. Conclusions & Recommendations

Midlands Rural Housing, in partnership with East Staffordshire Borough Council, has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of the parish. This study has not only investigated the actual housing needs, but has also ascertained residents' views with regard to living in the village, and has identified the level of local support for a development to meet local needs.

Marchington parish consists of a central hub around the old village containing the primary school, a village shop and public house, combined with 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development, an industrial estate and several isolated and outlying properties. To the east of Marchington village is Dovegate prison. Residents are able to take advantage of nearby road networks leading to local towns and conurbations for work and shopping facilities.

Marchington is a pleasant and popular parish in which to live. Many respondents to the survey were particularly keen to preserve the character and nature of the old village and there was strong feeling against any more development taking place in that area.

Marchington has a well balanced population with a high percentage of families and children under 16. The majority of the population are of working age and there is employment available locally on the industrial estate and in HMP Dovegate.

The housing stock consists mainly of medium to large family housing, with a fairly low percentage of small properties available. Some of these are bungalow accommodation for the elderly. There are few starter homes or low cost family homes available. House prices are higher than average for East Staffordshire and would be unaffordable for those earning low incomes and wanting to stay in the parish. The level of available rented property is low. 12% of respondents knew of people having to leave the parish to find suitable affordable housing.

In contrast to the above findings, less than 20% of respondents felt that a lack of affordable housing was an issue for the parish and only 42% were in favour of developing an affordable housing scheme. 42% of respondents were also directly against the development of such a scheme. Several felt that Marchington has an adequate supply of affordable housing.

In fact, the housing needs survey identified just three respondents wishing to register an interest in affordable housing. Reflecting the survey's findings, two respondents are young families and one is a young single first time buyer. All respondents showed an interest in the shared



ownership Homebuy option. There were no elderly respondents claiming a need.

**Our recommendation is that a mixed development of three affordable dwellings should be considered to alleviate the current housing needs in Marchington.**

## 12. Contact Details

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## Appendix A: Comments Regarding Facilities

The following is a list of comments and suggestions on general improvements to the quality of life in the parish, from several respondents to the Housing Needs Survey:

- The bus timetable is not always convenient for school, etc. Also could be better at weekends and evenings.
- Reinststate the Post Office; we now have no facility for pensioners without transport.
- The pub seems to be mainly unused or shut.
- It is necessary to have own transport – local public transport and facilities are poor.
- Lack of public transport.
- Marchington has several good, voluntarily organised, clubs and groups.
- Residents prefer to commute for work and amenities. The local facilities have not been supported.
- Public transport is infrequent and does not go to the lower end of the village.
- The loss of the Post Office has hit pensioners badly.
- Properties and developments away from the village centre feel isolated and disconnected. There is a lack of footpaths, a lack of information e.g. parish magazine and a lack of general consideration, e.g. farm waste deposited on lanes and drains blocked.
- We are getting more crime, car thefts, speeding, occasional anti-social behaviour by teenagers.
- Marchington has very few facilities and very poor public transport. Anybody living here would need a car.



## Appendix B: Comments regarding the development of a small-scale affordable housing development for local people.

The following comments were received from respondents and give a general indication of their concerns for and against an affordable housing scheme. A random selection of comments has been reproduced.

- We agree with the idea of affordable housing, but not as part of a large open market development.
- The infrastructure of the village, i.e. roads, school, shops, etc. will not support much more housing.
- This is a very good idea, rural areas need young people to stay and keep a balance of age groups.
- Marchington has a variety of properties up for sale. There is not a shortage of affordable properties. There are small units in Marchington and on the edge of the village.
- Marchington is a small, friendly village and doesn't need affordable housing or an influx of people which would have a negative impact.
- Marchington has been spoiled by infill and overdevelopment. The village would be ruined by this form of development.
- Small affordable houses for ownership would be a good thing.
- We need houses for first time buyers. We need starter homes in the original village; Forest-Side is too isolated.
- Housing Associations already own properties on this development, most tenants are good, but some spoil it for others and don't consider the rest of the community.
- There are always low cost houses for sale and rent at Forest-Side.
- There is land available on the old army camp (Forest-Side) that could be utilised for affordable housing. Brown field sites such as Marchington camp should be used before building in the village.
- I would not mind seeing a small development, the old army camp is crying out for it.
- I would object strongly to more development in the village. The village is congested enough.