

Introduction

The Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) attended a meeting of Lighthorne Heath Parish Council on 21 July 2004. During the course of this meeting there was a resolution to undertake a housing needs survey in the parish, with the practical assistance of the RHE.

A second meeting took place on 25 August 2004 with the Parish Council and the RHE. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the format and content of the survey questionnaire and the logistics of distributing the same.

Separate to the above, a meeting took place at the offices of Stratford District Council on 27 July 2004. The meeting was called to consider not only future housing requirements in Lighthorne Heath, but also the future of the village shop and doctor's surgery – two amenities the future of which are linked to the provision of new housing in the parish. The following people were present at this meeting:

- Rob Weeks, Head of Environmental Health and Housing, SDC
- Dawn Lang, Director South Warwickshire Housing Association
- Steve Bromley, Area Planning Officer, SDC
- John Gordon, Development and Enabling Officer, SDC
- Mike Ashley, Head of Construction and Property, SDC
- Councillor Louise Giblin, SDC
- Councillor Clive Higgs, SDC
- Councillor David Booth, WCC
- Charles Barlow, Rural Housing Enabler, WRCC

As a result of this meeting the importance of a thorough, up to date assessment of housing need in Lighthorne Heath was highlighted. A number of criteria for the survey were defined including the need for the survey to cover both social housing and open market needs and the opinion of villagers towards two key sites in the parish being used for development

A survey questionnaire was finalised at the end of August. South Warwickshire Housing Association was consulted on the content of the questionnaire. The Housing Development Team at Stratford District Council was also consulted. A copy of the final questionnaire can be seen as Appendix 1.

330 questionnaires were printed and delivered to the village for distribution. A 'Freepost' envelope was inserted into every questionnaire. Closing date for questionnaires was 1 October 2004. An article also appeared in the Lighthorne Heath Parish Newsletter advertising the survey.

By 1 October 2004 a total of 70 questionnaires had been returned. This represents a response rate of 21.2%.

Planning context

While there is a policy of considerable restraint on new housing development in rural areas, this policy can be relaxed in order to meet local needs.

Policy COM1 of Stratford on Avon District Council's Revised Deposit Draft (January 2003) Local Plan Review 1996-2011 deals with the principle of 'Local Choice'. In essence, this gives rural communities in the District the opportunity to shape their future and help determine how their housing needs can be met.

Policy COM1 applies to the Main Rural Centres and Local Centre Villages in the District. Lighthorne Heath is currently designated a Local Centre Village, having a basic range of facilities including a general store, a primary school, regular public transport and a doctor's surgery. There is, however, doubt regarding the parish's ability to retain its LCV status if the general store and doctor's surgery close.

Policy COM1 makes specific reference to the importance of rural communities' undertaking Parish Plans. The Policy anticipates that meeting the housing needs of local residents will feature as a high priority in most Parish Plans.

Examples of housing need that Policy COM1 anticipates could be identified as part of the Parish Plan process include:

- Affordable (social) housing for local people
- Specialist types of housing, e.g. supported accommodation or homes for 'key workers'.
- Open market housing where this meets a need from within communities.

Policy COM1 also provides rural communities with an opportunity to put forward proposals for meeting housing needs identified through the Parish Plan process, e.g. identification of potential development sites.

Background

Lighthorne Heath is some way into the Parish Plan process. This housing needs survey will form an important part of this Plan.

A report written on the basis of a parish appraisal in 2002/3 suggested a need for both additional social/affordable housing and open market housing. This report also indicated that most people in the parish were broadly in favour of new housing development to meet local needs.

Further justification for the latest housing needs survey

- To update and add to information gained from the 2002/3 parish appraisal.
- To compare affordable needs against current market data. In respect of affordable housing, affordability is usually defined by comparing a household's income against the price of open market accommodation. As property prices have increased by as much as 50% over the last three years, the ability to make an up-to-date comparison is imperative.
- To compare affordable housing needs against other housing needs, including open market.

Results

Part A

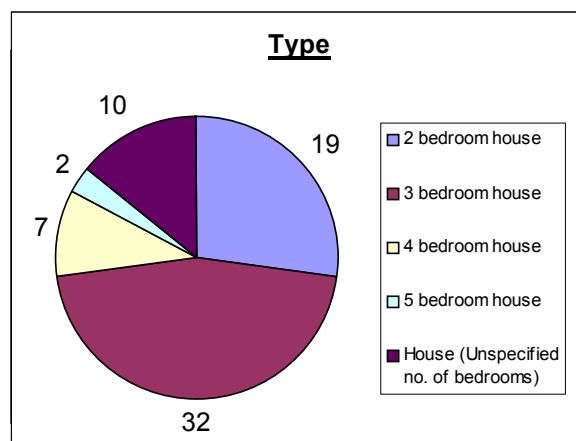
Breakdown of question data – 70 returned questionnaires

Average household size – 2.5 persons

Current housing circumstances

Housing Association renting	14
Housing Association shared ownership	0
Tied accommodation	0
Private renting	2
Owner occupier/No mortgage	11
Owner occupier/Mortgage	42
Living with parents	1
Other	0

Housing type



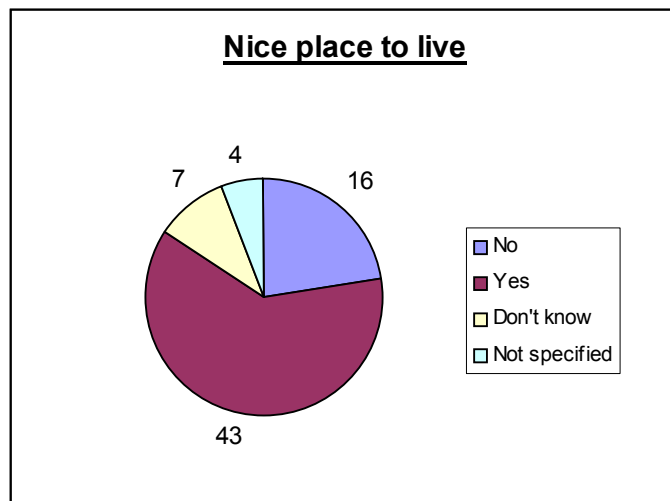
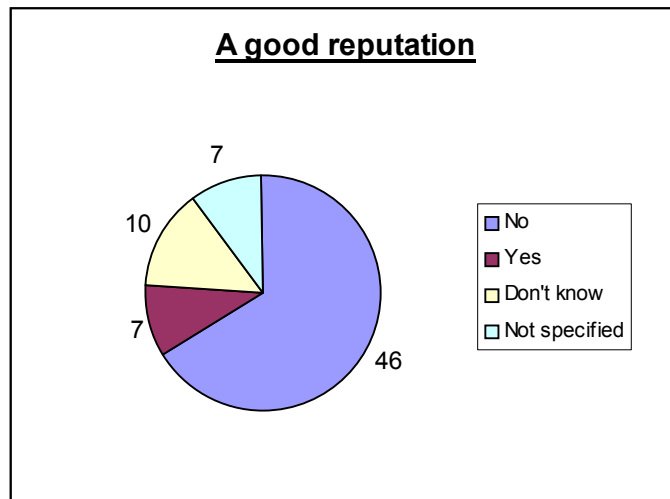
Local connection

Connection	Yes	No
Live in the village	69	1
Work in the village	7	63
Have relatives in the village	5	65
Previously lived in the village	5	65

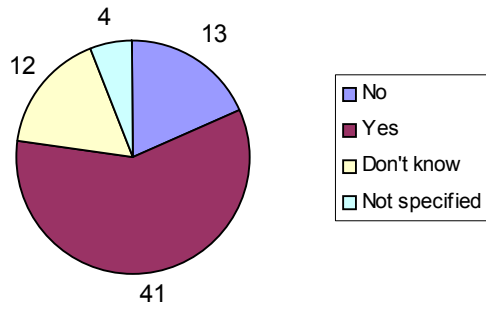
Of the respondents who stated they currently lived in the village, the average length of residency was 12.7 years.

Of the respondents who stated they had previously lived in the village, the average previous residency was 6.25 years.

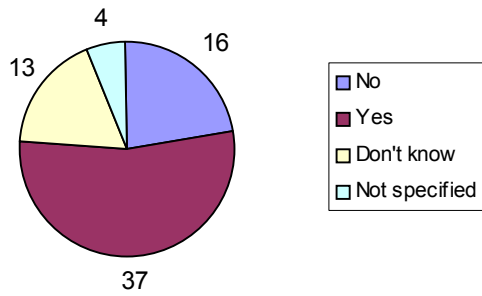
Do you feel that the parish benefits from....



Balanced and varied population

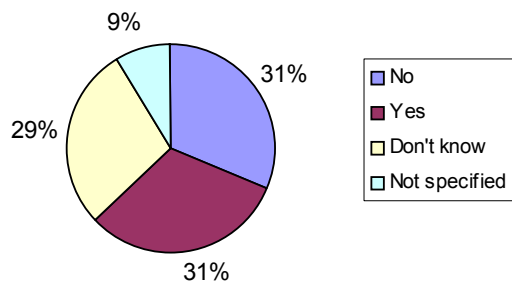


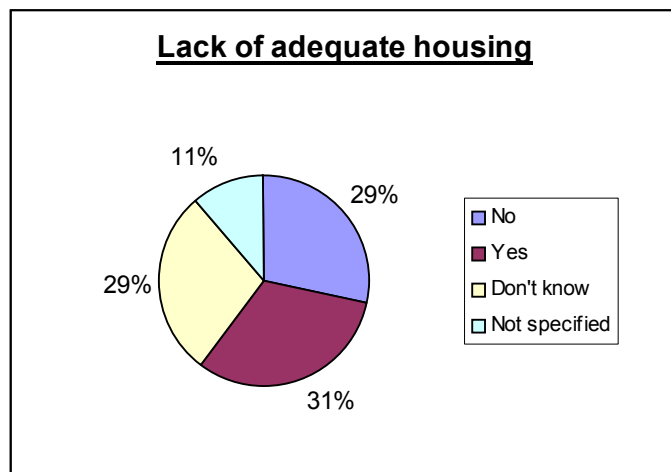
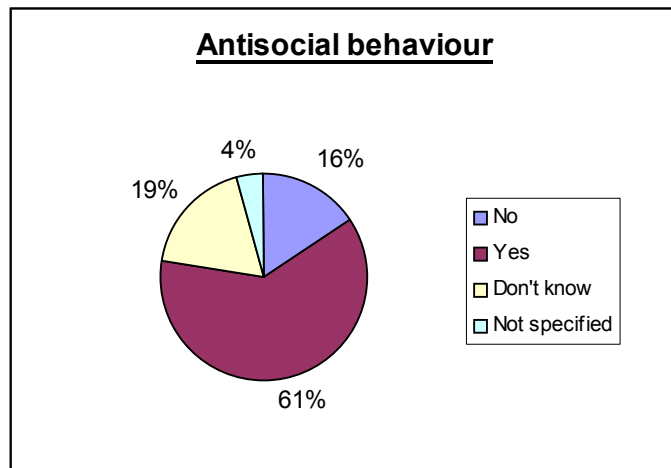
Friendly atmosphere/spirit



Do you feel the parish suffers from the following....

Crime





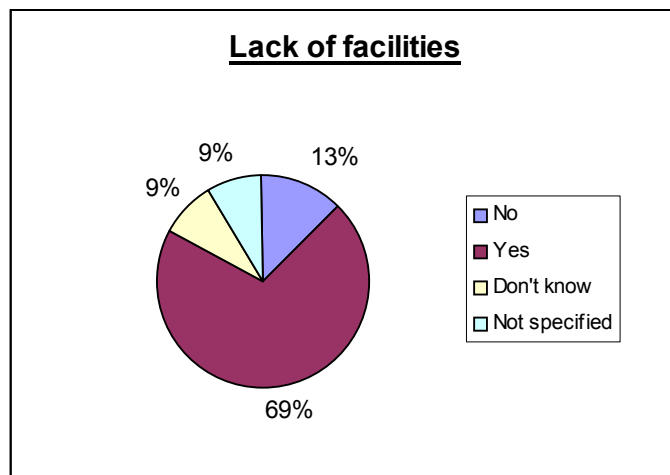
If you answered 'Yes' to lack of adequate housing, in what way?

Respondents were asked to express what type of development they would like to see in the parish. 45 respondents gave no response. 25 respondents gave responses as listed below:

1	Antisocial behaviour from some children
2	Drugs, vandalism, arguments with parents over children
3	Lack of bungalows for older and disabled people
4	Lack of housing for large families
5	Lack of social housing for young families
6	Larger houses for families with several children/bungalows for elderly or disabled
7	Larger housing
8	Lots of families in inadequate housing, too many children in small houses
9	Need 3 bedroom houses and bungalows for older people
10	Need ground floor housing for disabled people

11	Need more activities for over 12 year olds
12	No bungalows at all
13	No chance of part ownership
14	No houses for young families starting out
15	No housing for the elderly
16	Not enough
17	Not enough 3 bedroom houses
18	Not enough social housing or property for sale for the lower income
19	Old people in houses too large, large families in houses too small, no accommodation for single people
20	Old people's bungalows, new shop, new doctors surgery
21	Overcrowding, intimidation from some families
22	Regular policing needed urgently
23	Starter homes for newlyweds, bungalows for the infirm or disabled
24	Undesirable people moving into the village
25	Unruly children

Do you feel the parish suffers from the following....



If you answered 'Yes' to lack of facilities, in what way?

Respondents were asked to express what facilities they thought were lacking or should be provided. 19 respondents gave no response. 51 respondents gave responses as listed below:

1	A modern well stocked shop
2	A regular, sensibly priced bus service that allows people to get to and from work
3	A shop centred in a convenient location for everyone
4	Better bus service
5	Better bus service, better shop
6	Better bus service, improved shop, pub, decent doctor's surgery
7	Better bus service, more often and more places

8	Better facilities for children, buses and pub social club
9	Better shop, improved public spaces/clean streets
10	Better shop, social club
11	Better shops, launderette, pub, off licence
12	Bus service, new doctor's surgery, dance classes, yoga, hairdressers
13	Bus service, pub, larger shop, fish and chip shop, takeaway
14	Chip shop, social club
15	Community centre, better transport, good surgery
16	Community services
17	Decent shop and surgery
18	Decent shop, bus shelter, proper doctor's surgery
19	Decent shop, pub
20	Doctor's, social club for all ages
21	Don't care, don't like the village, can't wait to move
22	Good local shop
23	Good shop, pub, youth club
24	Improved shop and doctor's surgery including better opening hours
25	Improved shop, medical centre, pub
26	Improved shop/newsagent
27	Improved, accessible doctor's surgery
28	Leisure centre, bowls, bus service
29	More for young people to do
30	More frequent bus service. Pub/decent shop/better doctor's surgery with 9-5 hours
31	More frequent bus service. Sunday bus service. Small supermarket - shop not adequate.
32	More shops and more for children
33	New post office and shop, doctor's surgery, pharmacy, multipurpose village hall including facilities for church worship and activities
34	New shop
35	New shop with longer opening hours, chip shop, chemist
36	Nowhere for adults to socialise, insufficient bus/taxi service, nowhere to eat out
37	Pub
38	Pub
39	Pub
40	Pub, better shops, doctor's
41	Pub, better shops, doctor's surgery, buses, better pavements, better play area
42	Pub, nice shop
43	Pub, social club
44	Pub, social club, chip shop
45	Pub, takeaway, video rental, sports hall, drop in centre for kids
46	Pub. Bus service
47	Renovated shop, post office, doctor's surgery
48	Retain shop, also retain surgery and post office
49	Shop and internet café
50	Social club, youth club, shop

51	Youth club
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Would you be in favour of a housing development for local people based on local needs?

Yes	44 (62.9%)
No	14 (20%)
Don't know	8 (11.4%)
Not specified	4 (5.7%)

If you answered 'Yes' to more housing, where would you like to see this being built?

On the land of the SWHA garages	27 (38.6%)
On the land of the current village shop	6 (8.6%)
Either/both of the above	19 (27.1%)
Neither of the above	18 (25.7%)

Additional comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments. 29 of the 70 respondents did so:

1	Absolutely no further housing required. We have more than enough! This is not a town. It is not even a village. It's just a hamlet.
2	As long as the village is guaranteed a good doctor's/shop/post office to reflect the needs of the increased population. No point building more houses if the village can't support it with decent provisions
3	Build more private houses - not necessarily for local needs if this means more social housing. Also consider new workers at Aston Martin etc.
4	Bungalows for the elderly
5	But only if new shop and surgery are part of the plans. We need the green spaces as well especially for the children. Most people don't want large development without facilities
6	Have put house up for sale (due to change in personal health) because not enough facilities in Lighthorne Heath. Moving to town where facilities and services are far superior
7	Houses should ideally be built by the school. Facilities should be at the centre of the village
8	I cannot understand why approval seems to be sought on every available piece of land/space in the village
9	If houses built on shop land we will still need a shop or there will be no point living on estate with no transport

10	Let Mr Dev purchase shop at a good price
11	More facilities for young people. Housing Association to clamp down on tenants who are not keeping their properties and gardens in a tidy condition
12	More private housing to help raise the balance of the community, strictly within village limits
13	Pointless putting up additional housing without adequate local facilities for the young - shops/pub/jobs
14	Private development of houses sold on open market (3 beds+) would possibly improve the area
15	Revive the plan with surgery and shop with a few houses at the garages site
16	Room for 2 houses on Gifford Road. Paddock should be developed to suit the needs of the community not the developer
17	Shop and post office desperately in need of renovation
18	Shop should be central to the village
19	Some larger private homes by shop and upgrade this part of the village. Garage area is always a mess, and a breeding ground for the youth
20	The people should be made available to people with jobs so that they and their families can go away from their village for their entertainment and not cause more problems
21	The reason I answered no is because once we have a few houses the floodgates will open for more and more development. If we do get houses the old garage site is an eyesore and so this is the best site
22	The shop is in need of major repair. The roof leaks when it rains and in winter it's colder in the shop than outside.
23	These garages need to be demolished ASAP. They lower the tone of the village
24	Varied housing needs for couples as well as one parent families and families
25	Village hall would make a good shop. Houses could be built on site of shop. Also a doctors surgery.
26	Village needs more shops and a post office. SWHA site would be ideal for shops
27	Village still suffers from a bad reputation
28	Would also clean that area up providing homes for village families
29	Would like to buy something affordable on part ownership basis but there is no option here

Part B

Respondents were asked whether they were in need of alternative suitable accommodation in Lighthorne Heath, but currently unable to find this in the village. 11 respondents answered 'Yes'. However, 1 of these 11 was discounted on the basis that the respondent did not wish to live in Lighthorne Heath.

Much of the information provided for Part B of the questionnaires is subject to a confidentiality agreement. However, the breakdown of overall housing need over time is as follows:

Immediate need

3 x 3 bedroom houses to rent from a housing association
1 x 2 bedroom house shared ownership from a housing association

Within the next 12 months

1 x 3 bedroom house to rent from a housing association

1 –2 years time

No needs identified

Over 2 years time

3 x 2 bedroom bungalow/ground floor flat to rent from a housing association
3 x 2 bedroom bungalow to buy on the open market

Notes

- A full breakdown of these needs can be seen as Appendix 2
- Where households indicated a preference for shared ownership, their ability to enter into such an arrangement was assessed. The likely mortgage a household could raise was compared against a 50% share of a shared ownership property. This '50% share' was determined by researching property prices in the Lighthorne Heath area, calculating an average price for the type/size of property and then multiplying this by 50%. Having assessed whether households could afford to enter into a shared ownership arrangement, if they could not do so they were re-classified as being in need of rented accommodation from a housing association.

Next steps

The next step will be for the results of this survey to be adopted by Lighthorne Heath Parish Council.

The intention is that the District Council will adopt parts of Lighthorne Heath's Parish Plan as supplementary planning guidance when the Plan is completed. This survey should be one of those parts adopted. In the meantime, the results of this survey can be used as a material planning consideration in justifying a housing scheme for local people.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are given to:

- Louise Giblin, Lighthorne Heath Parish Council
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- Liz Jones, Lighthorne Heath Parish Council
- Viv Purdy, Lighthorne Heath Parish Council
- Suezanne Baker, Clerk to Lighthorne Heath Parish Council

And all those who helped to distribute the survey questionnaires.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Leaflet

Appendix 2 Full type/tenure breakdown

Appendix 3 2001 Census data for Lighthorne (awaiting separate data for Lighthorne Heath)

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