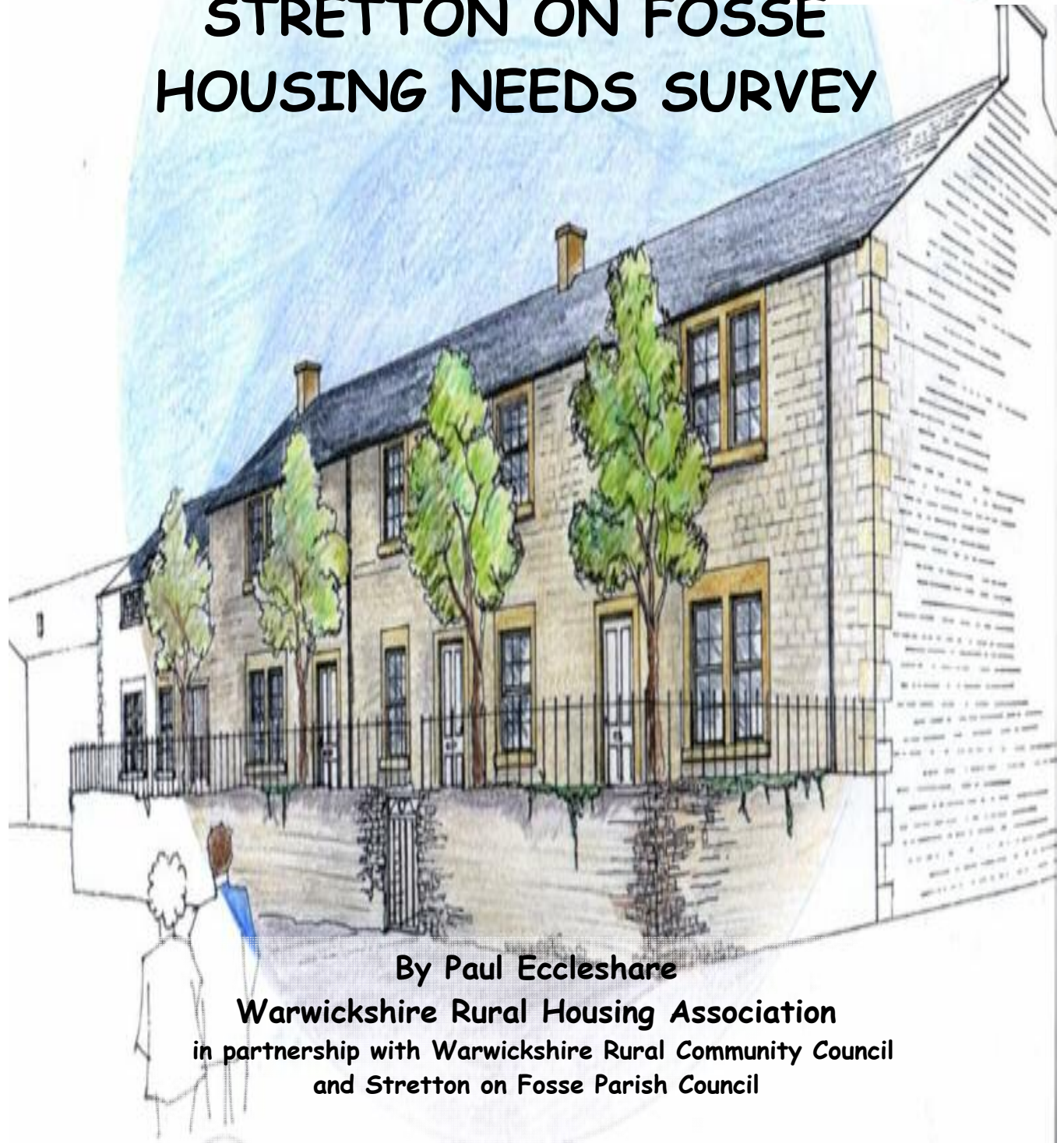




STRETTON ON FOSSE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY



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Warwickshire Rural Housing Association
in partnership with Warwickshire Rural Community Council
and Stretton on Fosse Parish Council

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1 Introduction

In December 2005 the Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) was invited to attend a meeting of Stretton on Fosse Parish Council to discuss the possibility of undertaking a housing needs survey. Stretton on Fosse Parish Council, aware that a lack of suitable and affordable housing is a problem in many villages, were happy to support a survey. This first stage in working towards new affordable homes for local people is to gain an overview of the current housing situation in the parish and provide specific details of the level of need for affordable homes.

A housing needs survey form was agreed with the Parish Council and a copy delivered to every household in the parish during January 2006. The return date for the survey was 10th March 2006 and returns were made via a 'Freepost' envelope directly to Warwickshire Rural Housing Association (WRHA).

WRHA were asked by the WRCC to undertake the analysis of the responses from the survey in order to maintain the confidentiality of the respondent's details. WRHA is a specialist rural housing association that works with parish councils and local authorities to investigate the need for and provide affordable homes in villages throughout the county.

2 Purpose of the survey

The aim of the survey was to assess local housing needs, i.e. housing needs within and relating to the parish of Stretton on Fosse.

3 Average house prices

Data from the Land Registry shows the following average house prices for Stretton on Fosse, based on sales between October - December 2005:

Detached - £390,092 based on 16 sales during the period. The UK average = £293,231

Semi- Detached £236,990 based on 5 sales during the period. The UK average = £174,039

Terraced - £275,685 based on 10 sales during the period. The UK average = £149,763

4 Planning Context

Nationally there is a widespread policy of restraint on the development of new housing in rural areas. However, chapter 18 of PPG 3: Housing (amendment January 2005) recognises the importance of affordable housing in rural areas to meet the needs of local people and ‘...*contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities.*’ At a local level this policy is expressed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council’s Local Plan Review 1996 – 2011, Revised Deposit Draft January 2003, policy CTY 5 ‘Housing “exception” schemes’ that states:

‘The development, in exceptional circumstances, of affordable dwellings to meet local housing need in perpetuity may be permitted in settlements where residential development is normally resisted’

Policy CTY5 allows for the development of affordable housing in rural areas where:

- It has been demonstrated that there is a local and long-term need for affordable housing.
- The content of the scheme reflects and can reasonably meet the identified local need.
- The scheme has been initiated by the local community concerned and has the support of the relevant Parish Council, or is identified in an adopted Parish Plan.
- Satisfactory prior arrangements have been made for the management and occupation of the properties to ensure that the homes provided will meet the identified local need both initially and in perpetuity.

In practice the fulfilment of the final point of this policy is subject to a planning condition (known as a Section 106 agreement) being placed on the development that limits the occupation of the homes to people with a local connection. In this context a local connection is usually defined as:

- An individual or household currently living in the parish concerned.
- An individual or household that has lived in the parish concerned, but who has moved away in order to find suitable and/or affordable accommodation.
- A household containing an individual who works in the parish concerned.
- A household containing an individual who was born in the parish concerned.
- A household containing an individual who has close relative in the parish concerned.

Currently no planning policy allows for the development of open market housing in Stretton on Fosse.

5 Respondents' details

Approximately 185 survey forms were distributed and 36 were received in return. This equates to a response rate of over 19% which is considered as reasonable for this type of survey because people will only respond for one of three possible reasons:

- a) to express a need for alternative accommodation,
- b) to offer their support in principle to the idea of a small housing scheme for local needs,
- c) to state their opposition to the development of a small housing scheme for local needs.

All 36 responses¹ were included in the remainder of this analysis. The total number of people represented by the survey forms was 88 across all age groups.

¹ For the purposes of this document the term respondent refers to an individual survey form. This often represents a household containing more than one person.

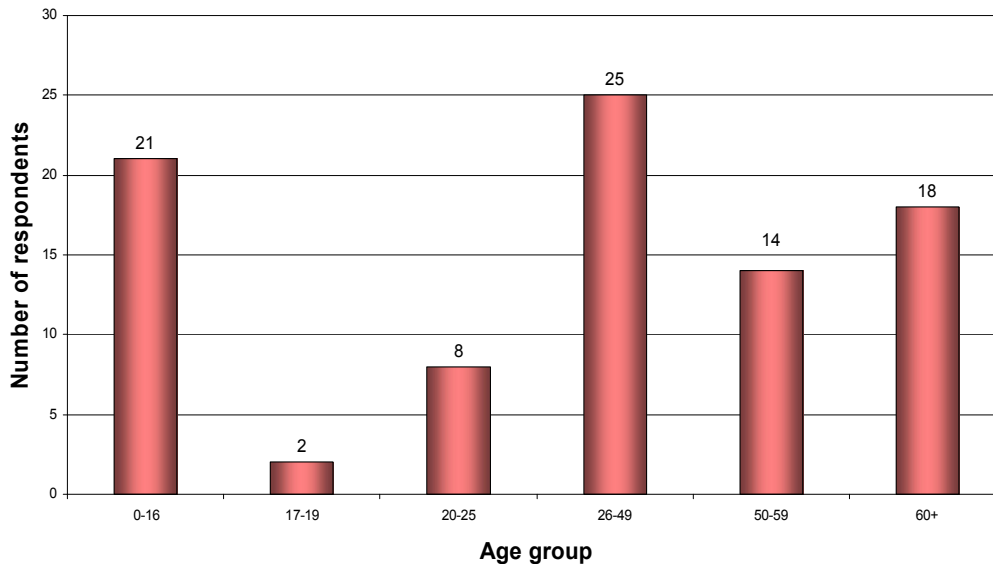
6 Age profile

The following chart shows the age profile of the 88 people captured by the 36 returned survey forms. It can be seen that the largest group of respondents are in the 25 – 49 years age group. The data underlying this graph shows that this group are the parents to all the 0 – 16 year olds represented by the respondents. Therefore a majority of the respondents represent family groups, a majority of which have children who are still attending school.

The over 60 age group represents just over 20% of respondents. All but one household falling into this age bracket are composed entirely of people who are all over 60 years of age. 50% of this group are people living on their own.

Six out of the eight 20 – 25 year olds in the survey were living at home with parents. The two remaining members of this group were living in tied accommodation. This group are of particular concern as their ability to afford local housing may play a major factor in their ability to remain in the parish when they eventually seek independent / more secure accommodation.

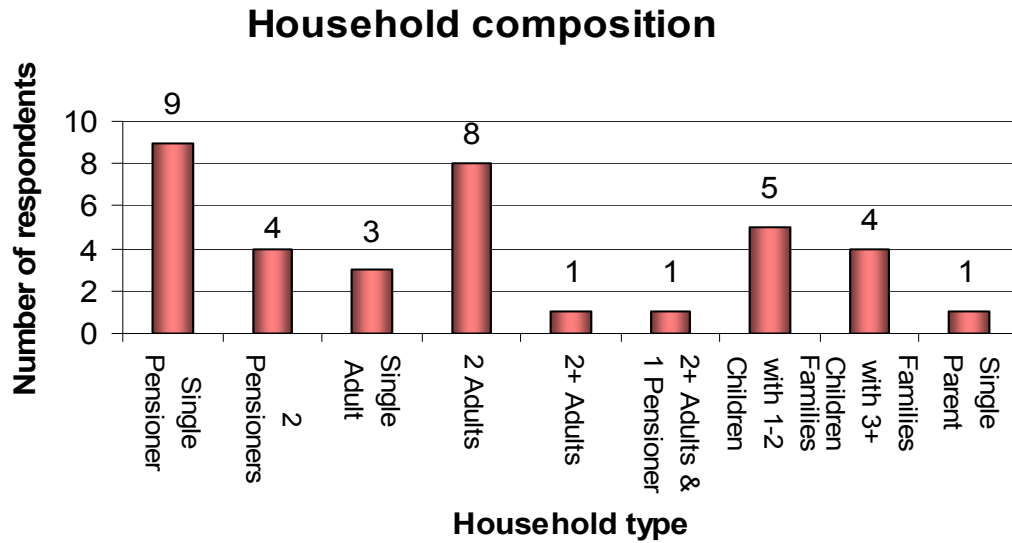
Age profile of respondents



7 Household size and mix

The following chart shows the number of **households** in each size/mix category. The highest level of response was from single pensioner² households, although when combined the families with children group is equal to this. The next largest group is the '2 Adults', making up just over 22% of the respondent households.

The average household size for the respondents = 2.44 persons per dwelling.



² The term 'Pensioner' refers to anybody over 60 years of age.

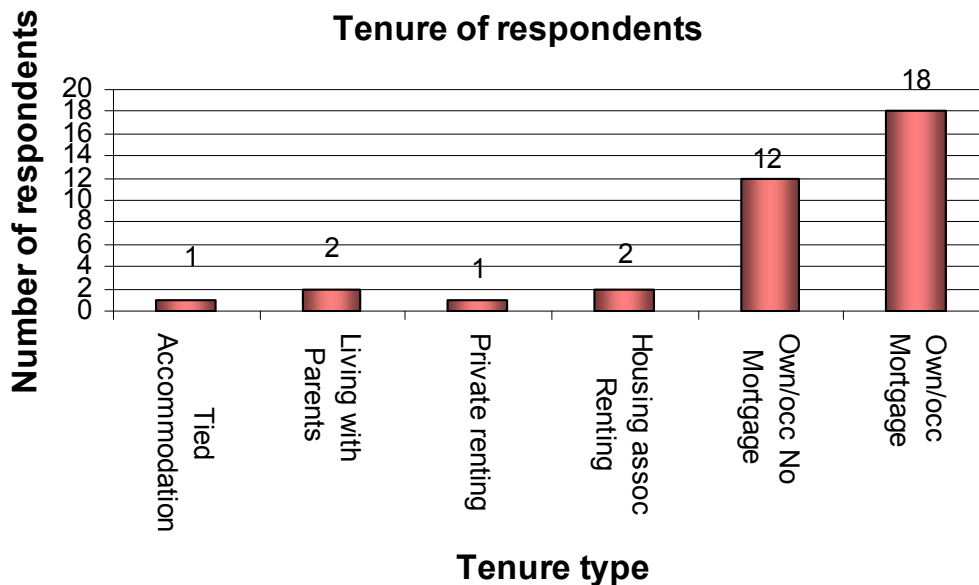
8 Tenure of respondents

The following chart shows the current household tenure across the 88 respondents. In a pattern that is repeated across villages in Warwickshire, owner- occupiers make up nearly 90% of the total number of respondents.

Accommodation in the 'social' sector makes up nearly 6% of the total, while respondents who cited their tenure as 'living with parents' make up 3%. Tied accommodation also makes up nearly 3%. Depending on the employer, this can be a very insecure form of tenure. Those respondents renting privately account for 3% of the total, again their long-term tenure can be viewed as insecure.

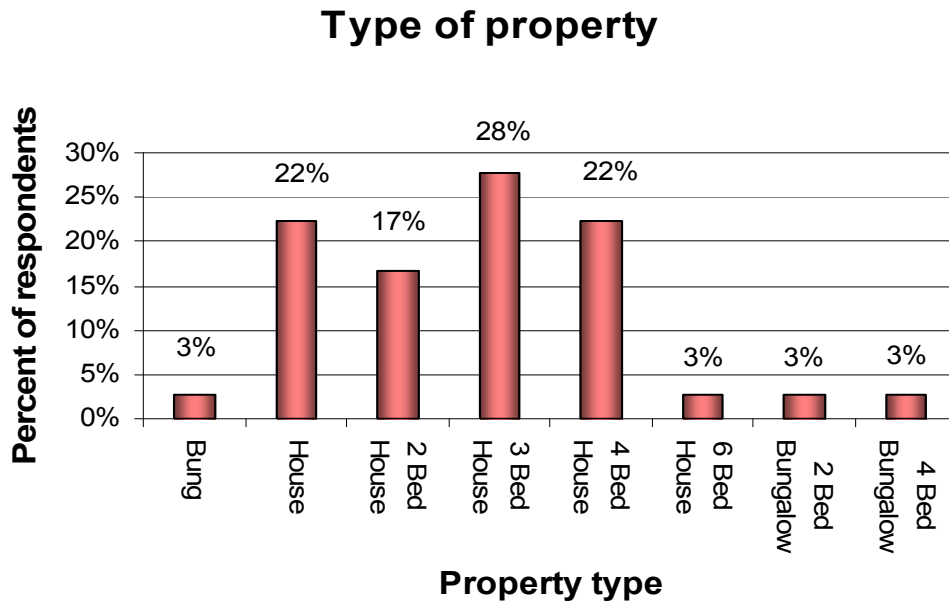
It would appear from this graph that a majority of respondents are adequately housed. It does show that four respondents may be in need of more secure / cost effective forms of tenure or first time independent accommodation.

Additionally, the parish council is advised to bear in mind the nine single pensioner households discussed above. A greater need for alternative accommodation (downsizing / single level) may emerge over the next decade.



9 Property types

The following chart shows the types of dwellings that respondents currently live in. The two largest categories are 3 bedroom houses and 4 bedroom houses, which is not untypical for a rural parish. The categories of 'House' and 'Bung' exist due to incomplete information regarding the number of bedrooms from these respondents. Unfortunately this accounts for 25% of responses on this occasion.



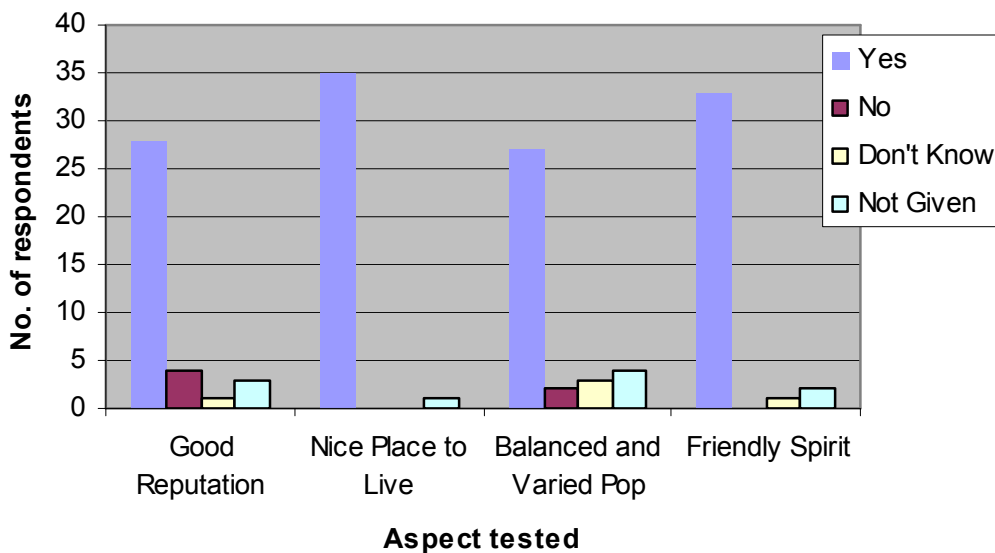
10 Sustainability issues

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived benefits and disadvantages to living in the parish of Stretton on Fosse. This was done to build-up a picture of life in the parish, and to identify any issues/problems that could threaten the long-term sustainability of the village.

Information relating to the sustainability of a settlement is important to assess whether any affordable homes that are subsequently provided will in themselves be 'sustainable'. Ensuring that people will take up tenancies and live in a settlement are crucial considerations when providing new homes.

The first chart shows respondents' views about the benefits to living in Stretton on Fosse. The majority of respondents think the parish has a good reputation, is a nice place to live, and has a balanced and varied population and a friendly spirit.

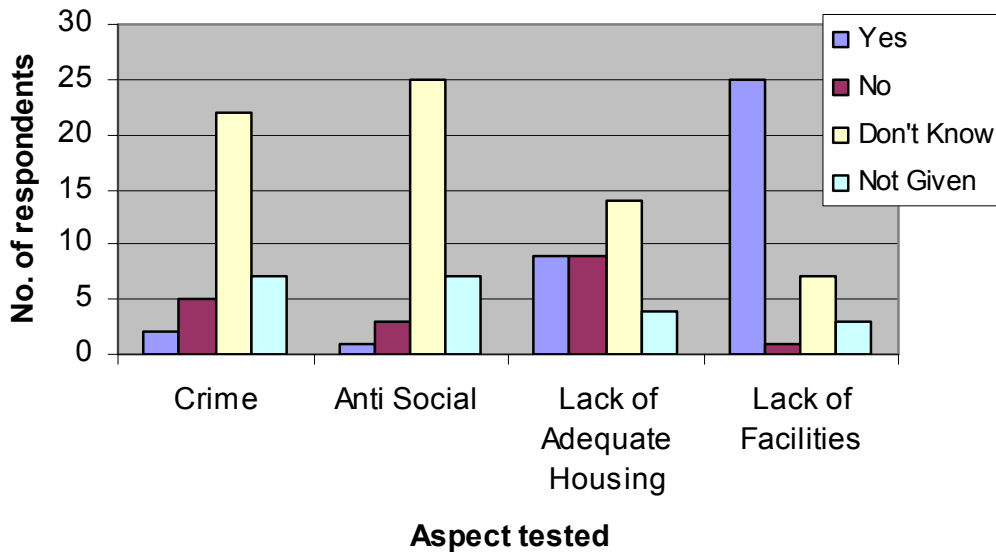
Positive aspects of Stretton on Fosse



The second chart shows respondents' views about negative issues that might exist in the parish. This is more of a mixed bag of views. Crime and Anti-social behaviour stand out purely for the level of 'Don't know(s)' attributed to them. With regard to adequate housing the community was equally divided with 25 % of respondents perceiving that there is a lack of adequate housing, and 25% perceiving that there is not.

The one area in which a majority of respondents do appear to reach agreement is regarding the lack of facilities within the parish. For example: Post office / shops, public transport services, etc. Nearly 70 % of respondents feel that the parish does lack certain essential resources. Respondents were asked to elaborate on their views regarding local facilities and responses to this question are shown in appendix A.

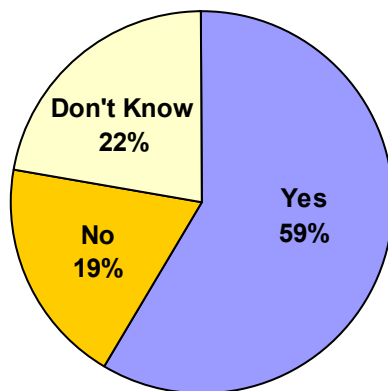
Negative aspects of Stretton on Fosse



11 Local support for a small housing development

The chart below shows the level of support within the community for the possible future provision of a small housing development of affordable homes for local people being developed within the parish. The chart shows that there is a high level of support amongst the respondents for such a scheme. Only 19 percent of respondents were completely against such a scheme. Comments received from the respondents with regard to the development of such a scheme are given in appendix B.

Level of support for a small affordable housing development for local people



12 Housing needs analysis

Of the 36 returns, 32 were from people who would be considered as adequately housed and therefore would not be looking for alternative accommodation in the next 5 years. These respondents completed the survey form primarily to offer their support or objection towards a 'local needs' housing development, to give their comments regarding the 'sustainability' of Stretton on Fosse and comment on its facilities. They were therefore discounted from the rest of the analysis. Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing is concerned there are 4 returns where the respondents have given details of their specific housing need.

The following table lists the responses identifying what type of housing they would prefer and our assessment of their need:

RESPONDENT	PREFERENCE	REALITY
Young couple currently living in Tied accommodation in Evesham wishing to return to village where one had grown up and whose parents are still resident.	3 Bed House Rented / Shared Ownership	2 Bed House Rented
Single parent currently living in parish. Parents lived there for 35 years. Needs larger accommodation due to two children of different sexes	3 Bed House Rented	3 Bed House Rented
Couple, currently in Moreton. Wishing to return to parish to be closer to one's family. Previous residency 22 years.	1/2 Bed House or Flat Renting	2 Bed House Rented
Family currently in Moreton wishing to move to parish where they have close family.	3 Bed House Rented	3 Bed House Rented

Therefore the housing needs derived directly from the survey are:

2 x 2-bed house for rent

2 x 3-bed house for rent

13 Conclusions and recommendations

Warwickshire Rural Community Council, in partnership with Stretton on Fosse Parish Council and Warwickshire Rural Housing Association has conducted a detailed study of housing need in the parish of Stretton on Fosse. The survey has not only investigated housing needs, but also ascertained residents' views regarding life in the village, as well as identifying local support for a development to meet local needs.

WRHA's recommendation is that a single development of four social housing dwellings be considered as detailed in Section 12. This development would alleviate the current housing need for those who cannot afford to secure a suitable property in Stretton on Fosse, but wish to stay in the parish or return to be close to family members that are currently resident.

14 Acknowledgements

Warwickshire Rural Community Council and Warwickshire Rural Housing Association would like to thank all volunteers who helped to deliver the survey forms, Cllr Chris Howe, Chairman of Stretton on Fosse Parish Council and Sue Finlay, Clerk to Stretton on Fosse Parish Council

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Appendix A: Comments regarding facilities

The following are a list of comments (wants) provided by respondents of the Housing Needs Survey:

Shop	23 respondents listed this as the facility most lacking in the parish.
Improved Bus Service	12 respondents listed this.
Post Office	13 respondents listed this.
Village School	2 respondents listed this.

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

The following comments were received from respondents to the Housing Needs Survey regarding their feelings about the development of a small-scale affordable housing scheme for local people. They are reproduced verbatim:

- Lack of affordable housing.
- Shortage of Affordable Housing especially for young people.
- More three bedroom houses with gardens.
- Lack of three bedroom houses available to those who want to stay in the village.
- I do know of two families living in very cramped accommodation, people like this would benefit.
- I would need to know more about the scheme before knowing how I feel about it.
- Depends on how it is going to be policed as to who gets the chance to buy and what restrictions are placed on re-selling.
- We don't want Stretton-on-Fosse to end up like Shipston. Keep the village as it is now.
- We would be completely opposed to any further housing schemes in this village. About 20% of the housing is already Housing Association / Council Housing / Shared Ownership. The problem in this village would not appear to be provision, but simply that people have moved into the available housing and have not seen it as an opportunity to get started, but have stayed for life in council housing.
- I feel the village already has a good proportion of housing scheme properties.
- Lack of low cost housing for low income local families.
- Houses in the parish seem expensive so I presume there is a need for low cost housing as there are people working in the parish on the lower end of the salary scales, however we don't know if this is true.
- Lack of property for first time buyers.
- Too many new 4+ bedroom houses or houses being extended to 4+ bedroom.
- Preferably not situated right beside the existing small housing schemes – too ghetto-like.