

# **West Lavington**

**Parish Housing Needs Survey**

**Survey Report**

**October 2017**

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## 1. Parish Summary

The parish of West Lavington is in Devizes Community Area within the local authority area of Wiltshire.

The two villages of West Lavington and Littleton Panell form the Parish of West Lavington located in the centre of Wiltshire. The parish covers an area of 2,395 hectares and has a population of approximately 1,500.

The parish lies across the northern escarpment of Salisbury Plain. Water from several springs near the foot of the scarp flows north as the Semington Brook to join a tributary from Market Lavington before entering the Avon valley.

The villages of West Lavington and Littleton Panell are below the escarpment on the A360 road between Devizes, 6 miles to the north, and Salisbury, 19 miles to the south. Together the shape of the two villages is predominantly linear, stretching along the main road. Substantial other parts of the parish are countryside and open farmland, although opportunities for residents to access the latter are somewhat restricted because much of the land on the Plain belongs to the Ministry of Defence.

The Domesday Book of 1086 records that land including two water mills at 'Liteltone' were held by William of Aldrie, a tenant of William d'Eu. West Lavington was originally part of a large estate held by Queen Edith wife of Edward the Confessor, which included both the present day Lavington villages and in 1086 was known as Laventone. When the Bishop of Salisbury became the chief tenant in the west village, it was referred to as Bishop's Lavetone. It first became known as West Lavington in the early 1600s to distinguish it from East Lavington now Market Lavington.

Much of the built up area is now a Conservation Area. The predominant traditional building material is brick, although the use of stone is not uncommon, particularly in some of the older and larger buildings. Chalk blocks are evident in the Old Manor, close to the church. There are a handful of properties in the two villages that still retain thatched roofs.

There are 49 listed buildings within the parish: 47 are Grade II, Dial House is Grade II\* and All Saints Church, completed in the late 13th or early 14th century, is Grade I. Historically, the church was the centre of the village.

There are few buildings in West Lavington or Littleton Panell taller than two storeys with the notable exceptions of the tower of All Saints Church and the grander old houses including Hunts House, Dial House, the Parsonage, the old Vicarage, West Lavington Manor, Littleton Lodge and A 'Beckets. In addition to All Saints, there are two other places of worship, Ebenezer Baptist Chapel and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

Significant development has taken place since the Second World War comprising new estates and individual houses infilling the old building lines. As a result of the post war developments, the centre of the two villages now focuses more or less on the crossroads where the B3098 crosses the A360.

West Lavington and Littleton Panell host three excellent educational facilities - Dauntsey's School (a large independent co-educational boarding and day school for 11 to 18 years old in

an estate of more than 150 acres), Dauntsey Academy Primary School (a seven class primary school catering for pupils aged 4 to 11), and Lavington Pre-school, providing care and education for children age 2 to 5.

The parish is fortunate to have some excellent and essential community facilities. There is a surgery, youth club, a pub, two shops (one including a Post Office), a village hall, a playing field with two football pitches and senior play equipment, a youth shelter, a BMX track, a junior playground, many footpaths and other rights of way and green spaces.

Traffic and parking are major issues. Traffic volumes and speed, particularly along the A360 through the villages, and the narrowing of the highway in front of All Saints Church, are of significant concern. As with many villages with an infrastructure fixed by old buildings, parking capacity has also proved to be a challenge.

Nevertheless, residents of West Lavington and Littleton Panell value greatly the traditional landscape views and historic open character of their villages and their surrounding area on the edge of Salisbury Plain. These aspects have overwhelming public support and it will be important that any future development seeks to enhance and preserve the environment and does not seriously prejudice the character of the area.

## **2. Introduction**

In February 2017, Wiltshire Council's Development Officers discussed carrying out a rural housing needs survey with West Lavington Parish Council, to establish if there was a proven need for affordable housing in the parish and potentially to use the findings of the survey to inform the parish plan.

Such surveys assist officers in identifying those areas with the greatest housing problems so that scarce financial resources can be put to best use.

Experience has shown that these surveys need to be carried out at regular intervals if the results are to remain relevant in identifying trends.

- The Principal Development Officers are employed by Wiltshire Council's Service Development and Enabling Team to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing.
- The Principal Development Officers work closely with rural communities, housing associations, local authorities and landowners to meet the affordable housing needs of rural communities.
- The survey is funded by members of the Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership (WRIP).<sup>1</sup>
- 'The Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership brings together representatives from the economic development, regeneration, spatial planning, service development and enabling teams of Wiltshire Council together with Registered Provider [housing association] partners

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<sup>1</sup> The members of WRIP that contribute to the survey funding are Wiltshire Council and six Registered Providers of social housing (housing associations) - Aster, GreenSquare, Guinness, Stonewater, Selwood Housing and Wiltshire Rural Housing Association.

and the Homes and Communities Agency to enable and promote the sustainable delivery of new build housing in the rural communities of Wiltshire.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Aim

The aim of carrying out the survey is to investigate the affordable housing needs of local people (or those who need to live in the parish) in West Lavington parish.

- 'Housing need' can be defined as the need for an individual or household to obtain housing that is suitable to their circumstances.
- It implies that there are problems or limitations with the household's current housing arrangements and that the household is unable to afford or to access suitable accommodation in the private sector.
- Such problems may be concerned with housing costs, size, location, layout, state of repair, or security of tenure either immediately or in the future.

### 4. Survey Distribution and Methodology

In order to carry out the housing needs survey, questionnaires were delivered to the Parish Council for distribution on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

To encourage a good response, households were given a pre-paid envelope in which to return the completed survey. The council applies the data protection policy to responses, ensuring that all survey responses remain anonymous.

Residents were asked to return the completed surveys in the pre-paid envelopes by 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The forms were recorded and analysed by the Service Development Officers at Wiltshire Council.

- A total of 537 questionnaires were distributed to the parish.
- Everyone was asked to complete the first section of the form.
- If a household considered itself in need of, or likely to be in need of, affordable housing within the next five years, it was invited to complete the rest of the survey.
- There was a very good response rate of 36.1% with 194 replies received.
- This report describes the views only of the residents who returned the questionnaires and these views may not be representative of the wider population of West Lavington.
- 6 responses were made online.

### 5. Key Findings

This report is divided into two parts. The first section looks at existing households in the parish in order to provide a description of the current housing in West Lavington. This section also describes the levels of new housing, if any, which would be supported by respondents to the survey.

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<sup>2</sup> Para 1.1, 'Purpose', *Terms of Reference for the Wiltshire Rural Investment Partnership*. Full WRIP membership: Wiltshire Council, Aster, Wiltshire Rural Housing Association, GreenSquare, Guinness, Stonewater, Selwood Housing, the Homes and Communities Agency, and the Wiltshire Community Land Trust.

The second section examines the households who have declared a need for new housing in West Lavington. The section begins by describing the overall need for both market and affordable housing in the parish. A financial assessment is then made in order to determine the numbers of households who have a current need for new affordable housing. The results of this assessment are summarised in the recommendations of the report (Section 8).

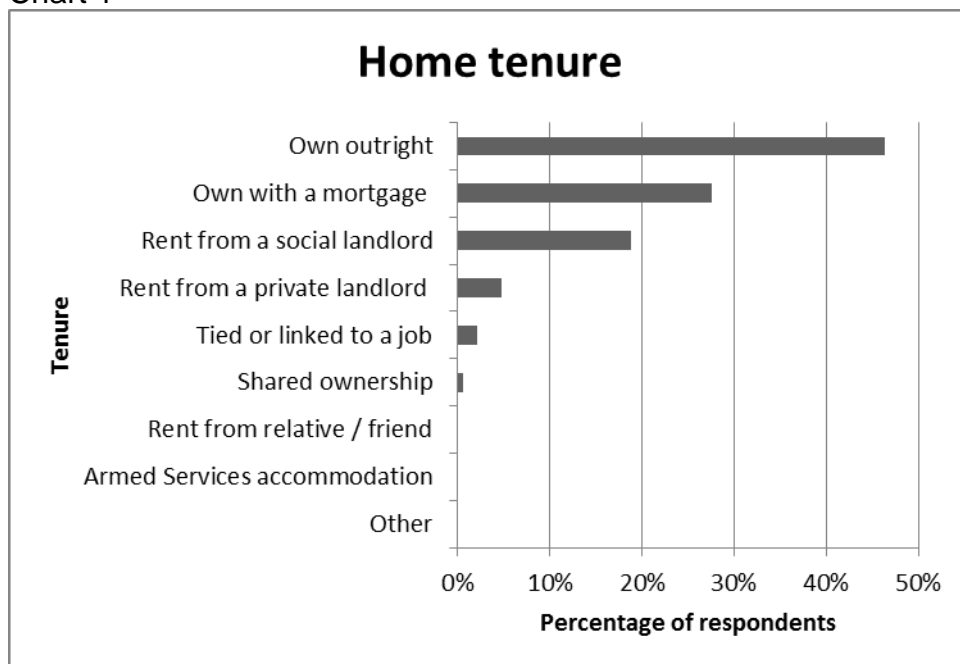
**Part One – Households currently living in the parish**

The first question asked on the survey was whether the respondents’ home in West Lavington was their main home. 100% of those who replied said that it was.

The 2011 Census data for West Lavington indicates that 61.2% of households in the parish were owner-occupying, 18.3% were renting from social landlords, 14.1% were privately renting and 5.6% of households were living rent free.<sup>3</sup>

The chart below shows the tenure of respondents to the survey. The majority (74.0%) of respondents were owner-occupiers, while 18.8% of respondents were living in socially rented properties, 4.7% were renting from a private landlord or letting agency, 2.1% were living in accommodation tied to their employment, 0.5% were living in shared ownership properties, and none were living in a tenure described as ‘other’. These results indicate a bias in the survey responses toward those living in owner-occupied homes and the rest of this section should be read with this in mind.

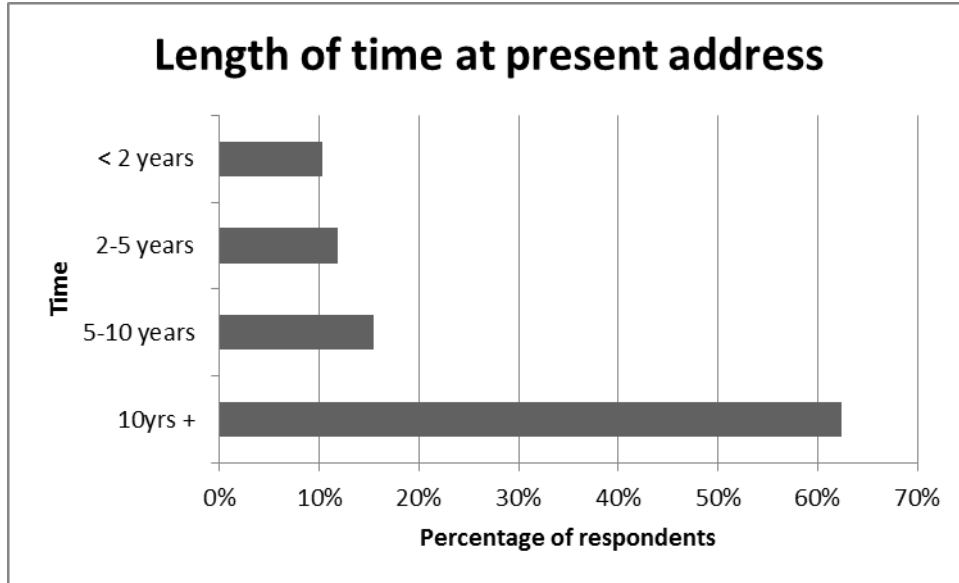
Chart 1



The chart below indicates the length of time that respondents have lived in their current home. It shows that the majority of people who responded to the survey have lived in the parish for more than ten years, which is appropriate for the high levels of owner occupation among survey respondents:

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

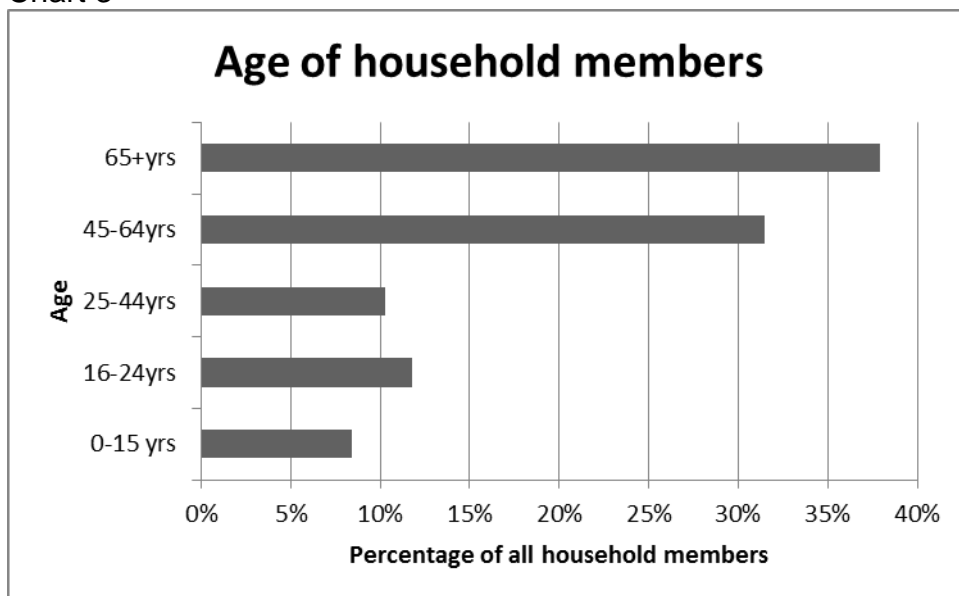
Chart 2



The largest proportion of respondents to the survey lived in three bedroom homes (37.8%), with a lower proportion of respondents having four bedrooms (23.3%) or two bedrooms (20.2%) in their property. Those living in homes with five or more bedrooms made up 11.4% of respondents and 7.3% of respondents lived in homes with one bedroom.

The spread of ages recorded in the survey indicates that over a third (37.9%) of respondents' household members were aged 65+:

Chart 3



As shown in the chart above, there were significant numbers of households responding to the survey with members aged 45-64. This indicates a spread of different household types in West Lavington, from older person households with fewer members, to younger households with children.

The distance travelled to work can also be a good measure of the sustainability of local housing development, as more people working locally can indicate an ongoing need for local housing. The table below shows how far people in the respondents' households travelled to work:

Table 1

Persons in household	Distance to work				
	Up to 2 miles	2 - 10 miles	10 - 50 miles	50 miles +	Total
Person 1	25	29	37	12	103
Person 2	13	20	19	7	59
Person 3	2	3	2	0	7
Person 4	0	3	0	0	3
Person 5	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>172</b>

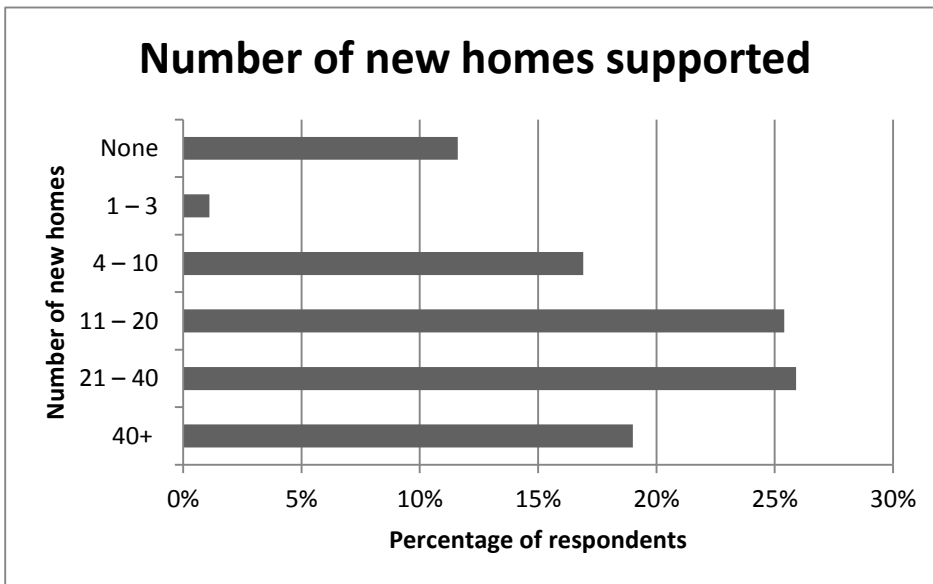
These results suggest a mixed level of sustainability for new housing development in West Lavington, indicated by the survey respondents' access to local sources of employment. While 55% of the households' working members usually travel less than ten miles to their place of work, 45% travel more than that, suggesting a potential lack of more local sources of employment.

Respondents were also asked whether anyone currently living in their household would need separate accommodation in the parish now or in the near future, to which 6.5% of respondents (twelve households) answered 'yes', indicating a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish.

Respondents were then asked how many new homes they would support being built in the parish. A large majority of respondents (88.4%) were in support of some new housing in West Lavington, with the next most popular options being for between eleven and twenty new homes (25.4% of respondents) or between twenty and forty new homes (25.9% of respondents). The proportion of respondents opposed to any new housing in West Lavington parish was 11.6%:

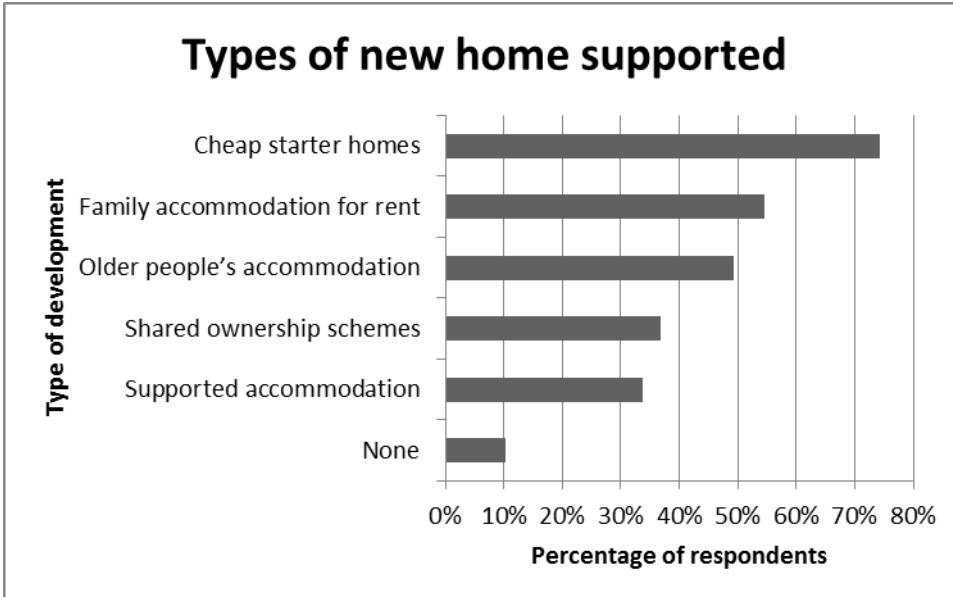


Chart 4



Respondents to this section were finally asked what types of housing development, if any, they would support. The types of housing considered most needed in West Lavington by the survey respondents were affordable starter homes for young people (74.3%) and family accommodation for rent (54.5%). Full results are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

Chart 5



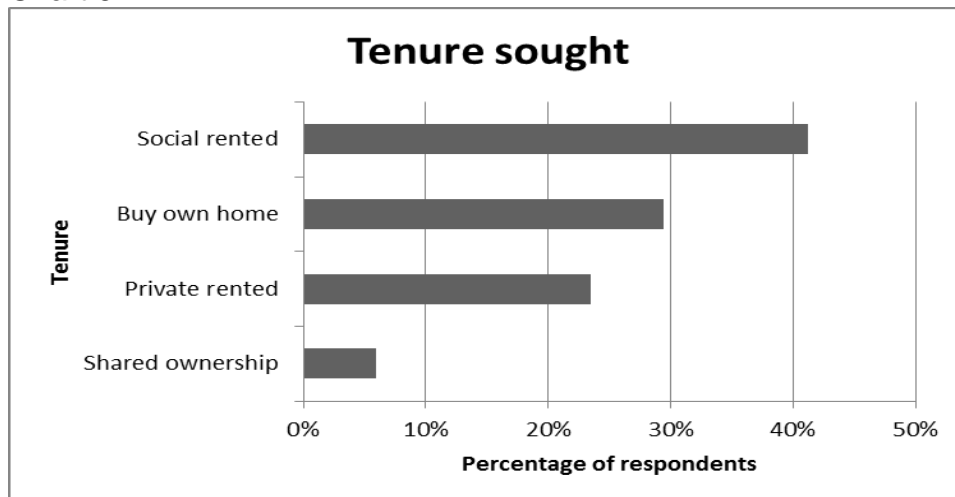
## Part two – Households requiring accommodation in the parish

This section of the report looks initially at all the responses to section two of the survey in order to give a broad picture of the need for both market and affordable housing in the parish. A financial assessment and an evaluation of the current affordable housing in West Lavington are then made in order to describe in more detail the need for specifically affordable (i.e. non-market) housing.

Eleven respondents replied to this section of the survey, indicating their need for housing in West Lavington. The most frequent reasons given for needing to move were that respondents were currently living with their families but wanted to live independently in the parish (five households), to be closer to friends/other family (four households) and access problems (three households). More than one reason could be given.

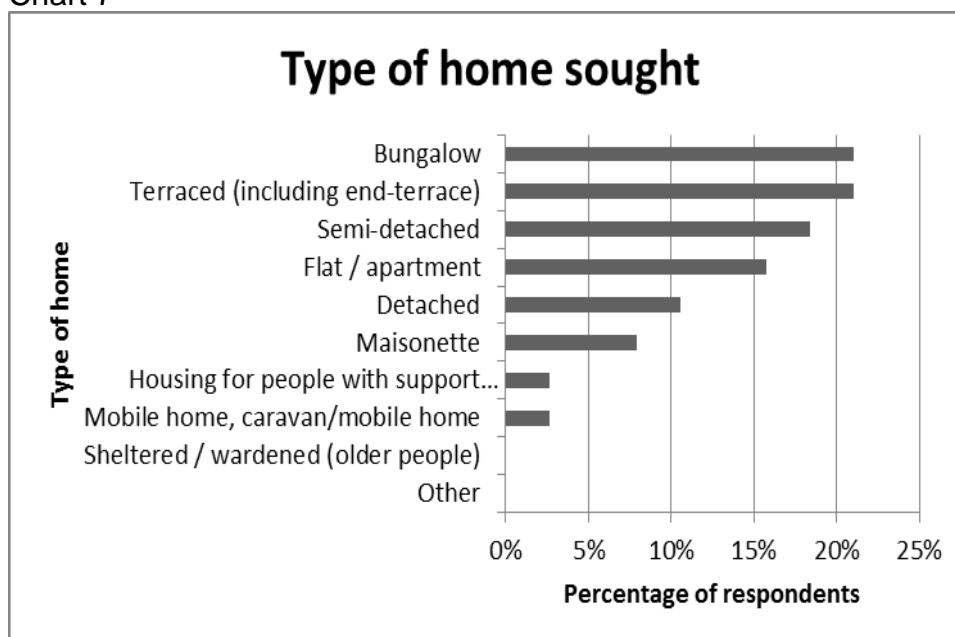
The respondents requiring accommodation in the parish were asked what type of tenure they sought. The expressed need was for all types of tenure, with socially rented homes the most desired. Households could indicate more than one response:

Chart 6



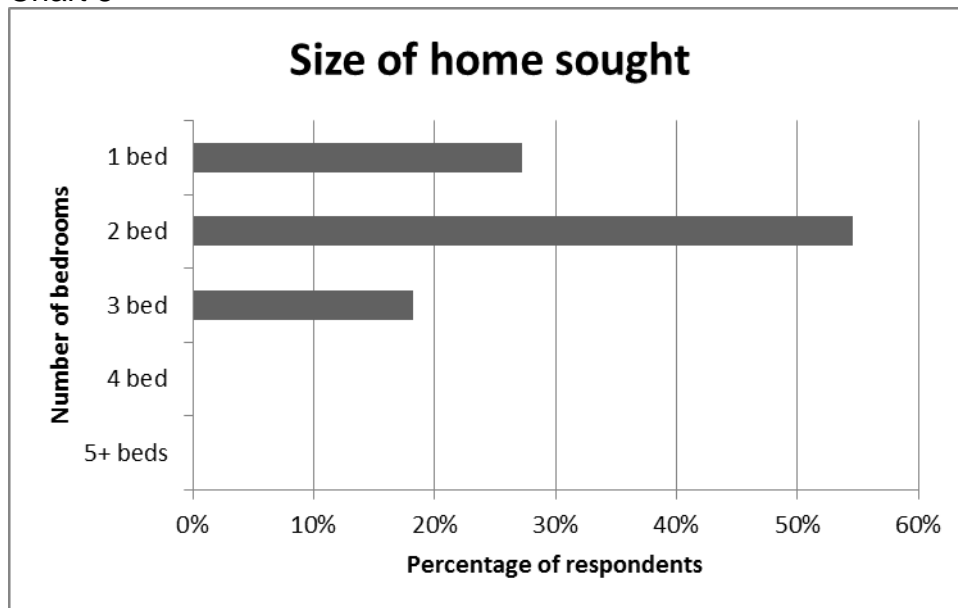
Respondents to this section were also asked what type of housing they required. The most sought-after types were bungalows and terraced properties. Full responses are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

Chart 7



In terms of size, the most popular option was for two bedroom homes and respondents also expressed a need for properties with one or three bedrooms. No need was declared for homes with four or more bedrooms:

Chart 8



The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in West Lavington to meet their needs, to which nine households answered 'yes'.

In order to assess the need for **affordable** housing in West Lavington, it is necessary to consider the equity, income and savings levels of respondents. Please note that due to the need to preserve the confidentiality of respondents, only a short summary of the financial assessment is presented below.

Only two of the households responding to this section of the survey reported having equity in an existing property, and the estimated levels of savings among the respondents were very low, with only two households declaring any savings. Income levels were also notably low. Five of the nine respondents that reported their household income had gross incomes of less than £16,999, while the remaining four that provided this information reported a gross household income of between £20,000 and £25,999. The median gross income bracket reported by the eleven respondents was £15,500-£16,999pa.

Comparing income, savings and equity levels with affordability in West Lavington suggests that eight of the eleven households would require public assistance in order to achieve their required housing and so would be considered 'in housing need' as defined in Section 3 of this report. These households inform the recommendations of this survey for new affordable housing in West Lavington, presented in Section 8.

Of the three households not considered 'in housing need', one household did not provide sufficient detail to enable their need to be assessed. Two households stated they wish to downsize and have adequate funds available to do so; one of these two households stated there was a lack of suitable housing available in the parish to meet their needs.

## 6. Affordability

In order to investigate affordability, further research has been carried out on house prices in the area.

It is possible to estimate the average property prices in the West Lavington area:<sup>4</sup>

Bedrooms	Oct 2017
1	£148,900
2	£198,400
3	£269,700
4	£415,300
5+	£610,000

### Example calculation for a mortgage

Typically, a household making a single application can obtain a mortgage of 3.5 times their annual income, or 3x annual income for joint applications. Households would generally expect to need a deposit of around 15% of the total price.

If an average two-bedroom property sold in West Lavington cost £198,400 then a household may require £29,760 as a deposit. Annual household income would have to be at least £48,183 for a single applicant or £56,213 for joint applicants. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicates that the gross annual median income of employed persons in Wiltshire in 2016 was £21,817:<sup>5</sup>

- It would be unlikely that a household would be able to purchase a property in this parish without a large deposit, some equity in an existing property or a substantial income.
- First time buyers would generally struggle to meet the criteria necessary for obtaining their own home.
- In some cases intermediate housing (shared ownership or low cost market housing) would be a suitable option, whilst in other instances affordable rented accommodation would be appropriate.

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<sup>4</sup> House price estimates from the Mouseprice local area guide to the SN10 postcode area, [www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-price/](http://www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-price/) . Please note that the SN10 postcode covers a wider area than West Lavington parish and that there may be significant internal variation in house prices.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2016, resident analysis. Gross annual pay of employed persons resident in Wiltshire, [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk) . Note that while the mortgage calculation refers to household income, i.e. to the combined income of all persons in the home, the ASHE figure refers to individual income.

## 7. Summary

This survey's recommendations (see Section 8 below) concentrate on those households who are unable to afford accommodation on the open market.

This is just a quarter of the research needed for this assessment: the Housing Register of Wiltshire Council, the local Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the advice from allocation staff who manage the Register must also be taken into account.

- In October 2017, there were two households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in West Lavington parish: these households are also described in Section 8 of this report as in need of affordable housing. Any full assessment of housing need in the parish must take account of the Register.<sup>6</sup>
- There was one household which had applied to be on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in West Lavington but does not currently meet the eligibility criteria: this household will become eligible in the next 12 months and so are also included in Section 8 of this report as in need of affordable housing.
- The 2011 Census recorded ninety one social homes in the parish.<sup>7</sup> These properties represent 18.3% of the total housing in West Lavington, which is higher than the Wiltshire affordable housing average of 14.7%.<sup>8</sup>
- The social housing in West Lavington had a 2.2% re-let rate in the past year: from the third quarter 2016/17 to the end of the second quarter 2017/18, 2 social homes were re-let in the parish.<sup>9</sup>
- The very low turnover of social housing in the parish suggest that **none** of the households responding to section two of this survey and in need of affordable accommodation could meet their needs through accessing the existing social housing of the parish.
- Two of the households responding to Section 2 of this survey stated that buying their own home would meet their housing needs: both households own their homes outright and indicated they would like to downsize and currently have problems with access. Both households have sufficient funds to meet their needs, however one of them described a lack of suitable accommodation for their needs in the parish and one requires accommodation at one level. It is notable that, while West Lavington has a large proportion of privately owned homes (61.2% of the total parish stock), the turnover of these is low. These households are not included in the recommendations of this report for new subsidised rented homes, but the lack of availability of low cost privately owned homes in West Lavington does indicate a need for an open-market or mixed tenure development in the area.

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<sup>6</sup> Wiltshire Council, Housing Strategy, live tables.

<sup>7</sup> Table QS405EW, 2011 Census: Tenure – Households, English parishes / Welsh communities.

<sup>8</sup> Table QS405EW, 2011 Census: Tenure – Households, local authorities in England and Wales.

<sup>9</sup> Wiltshire Council, Housing Strategy, live tables.

## **8. Recommendations**

This survey's recommendations concentrate on households unable to afford accommodation on the open market.

The following indicates the minimum need over the next three years for new affordable housing development in the parish, based on the responses to the survey. The recommendations describe a snapshot of the need for affordable housing at the time the survey was conducted and do not take account of future changes in need, for example arising from the changing housing needs of employees of local businesses. The recommendations may not represent the parish's full housing need as responses were not received from every household, for example households which are on the Housing Register but have not completed a questionnaire are not included in these recommendations (see Section 7). In order to fully assess the housing need in the parish, the recommendations need to be considered alongside evidence provided by Wiltshire Council's Housing Register, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and the advice of allocation staff who manage the Register.

### **Subsidised rented housing <sup>10</sup>**

- 5 x one bedroom homes (1 x with adaptations [walk in shower] and 1 x bungalow/ground floor accommodation)
- 1 x three bedroom home

### **Shared ownership / discount market homes<sup>11</sup>**

- 2 x two bedroom home

### **Sheltered housing for older people**

- None

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<sup>10</sup> Please note that recommendations for numbers of bedrooms in subsidised rented properties are where possible made in line with the 'family size' criteria implemented as part of the Housing Benefit changes by the 2012 Welfare Reform Act.

<sup>11</sup> Please note that recommendations for numbers of bedrooms in shared ownership/discounted market properties are based on the number of bedrooms wanted by respondents, applicants can purchase the size of home they are able to afford.