

# Hilperton

## Parish Housing Needs Survey

Survey Report

January 2017

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**N.B.**

The parish boundary of Hilperton changed in April 2017 due to the Community Governance Review, this resulted in 264 residential properties a school, a public house, and other facilities moving from Hilperton to Trowbridge parish. There is no way of identifying which, if any, of the affected households responded to the housing needs survey in 2016, and as such it is not recommended that any changes are made to the recommendations in the report.'

The Parish Summary in this report has been written giving details of the parish after the boundary change.

## 1. Parish Summary

The parish of Hilperton is in the Trowbridge Community Area within the local authority area of Wiltshire Council.

It is one mile to the east of Wiltshire's county town, Trowbridge. The towns of Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham, Devizes and Westbury are all less than ten miles away, and it is twelve miles to the south east of the historic city of Bath

In the 2011 census the population of Hilperton was 4,967 and was made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. The average age of people in Hilperton is 39, while the median age is higher at 40.<sup>1</sup>

The parish now has 1,665 houses of a great variety, types, ages and styles, from the oldest found in the Conservation Area, surrounding St Michael and All Angels Church to the newest at the Paxcroft Mead development.

The village itself is a long ribbon settlement and a large part of the old village is designated a Conservation Area.

It is at the top of a gradual incline on a bed of mainly Oxford Clay with alluvium in parts. The highest point in the parish, at the parish church of St Michael, is sixty-four metres above sea level, and is on a par with the top of the spire of St James Church in Trowbridge. The land drops away to 30 metres on the northern parish boundary formed by the River Avon and the Kennet and Avon canal. At 40 metres, on the southern boundary is Paxcroft Mead, a housing development commenced in 2000, which doubled the number of houses in the parish.

Hilperton has a history going back to Saxon Times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The land around the parish is mainly arable or grazing land.

At the centre of the old village is Hilperton House, a fine early 18th century private residence. It is Grade II\* listed. It was once visited by Queen Mary and could be considered as the most important house in the village. It is a favourite village feature with many residents. Behind its wall is a large, spring fed pond at one time thought to be the origin of the village name – 'hilsprintun' or hill with springs. At one time, there were over 60 wells in the village and many still remain in private gardens.

The village centre is a Conservation Area and boasts listed buildings including Hilperton House, as mentioned above, the village war memorial and the village 'Blind House'.

There are three places of worship in Hilperton, St. Michaels and All Angels Church, in the village centre is Grade II listed. It is not known if there was a Saxon church here but there was certainly a Norman church of the 13th century.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

In Whaddon, St Mary's the Virgin, or the 'church in the field' is a small, simple Norman church, with a nave, chancel and north chapel. It stands high above the River Avon, and was probably built in the twelfth century but it has undergone extensive alterations with a major restoration in 1878/79. It still features windows and doors from the 14th and 15th centuries. Of interest is a tombstone on the church floor opposite the south door dedicated to the Rev. Edward Cooper, an uncle of Jane Austen. There was a close relationship between the Austen family and their Cooper cousins. Outside, the brick wall enclosing the churchyard is an unusual feature in this part of Wiltshire, and dates from the 18th century.

Located in Horse Road (Hilperton Marsh) is the church of St. Mary Magdalen, built in 1889 by local people. The chancel was completed in flint but there was a shortage of money to finish it, so a 'flat pack' nave made of corrugated iron was purchased from Harrods of Knightsbridge. The church is affectionately known locally as the 'tin church'.

There is one primary school, Hilperton Church of England School, Newleaze. Older children travel to Trowbridge to attend secondary schools.

There are two public houses: The Lion & Fiddle in the village, the Kings Arms in Hilperton Marsh.

Hilperton has a strong sense of community spirit, with many thriving special interest groups. The village hall and playing field in Whaddon Lane, St Mary's Church which doubles as a centre for those in the Marsh area.

A wide range of activities for all ages are covered, from toddlers, play-groups, scouting and guiding groups, walkers, gardeners, women's institute to over sixties. Football, skittles and darts are the main sports played. Events such as coffee mornings, church fete, open garden day, and Christmas pantomime raise money for village charities, and take place throughout the year. There are three halls/rooms available for letting. The village hall, the church room at St. Michael's, and the hall at St. Mary Magdalen in Hilperton Marsh.

The village hall has changing facilities and showers for formal football matches on the adjoining playing field which is used for informal recreation too. There is a well-equipped play area which is maintained by the parish council, as is the playing field. Also located close to the village hall are the allotments and community orchard.

As with many villages with an infrastructure fixed by old and attractive buildings with no off street parking, traffic and parking can be a problem especially in the village centre.

There is a regular bus service to Trowbridge and Melksham with less regular services to Frome and Devizes.

## 2. Introduction

In the summer of 2016, Wiltshire Council's Development Officers discussed carrying out a rural housing needs survey with Hilperton 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>2</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 and the Homes and Communities Agency to enable and promote the sustainable delivery of new build housing in the rural communities of Wiltshire.'<sup>3</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 Hilperton 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.

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<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</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.

## 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 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

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> November 2016. The forms were recorded and analysed by the Service Development Officers at Wiltshire Council.

- A total of 2009 questionnaires were distributed to the parish.
- Everyone was asked to complete the first section of the form.
- If a household considered itself in need, 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 good response rate of 25.9% with 521 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 Hilperton.
- 15 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 Hilperton. This section also describes the levels of new housing, if any, which would be supported by respondents to the survey.

The second section examines the households who have declared a need for new housing in Hilperton. 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 Hilperton was their main home. 100% of those who replied said that it was.

The 2011 Census data for Hilperton indicates that 78.7% of households in the parish were owner-occupying, 11.4% were renting from social landlords, 8.7% were privately renting and 1.0% of households were living rent free.<sup>4</sup>

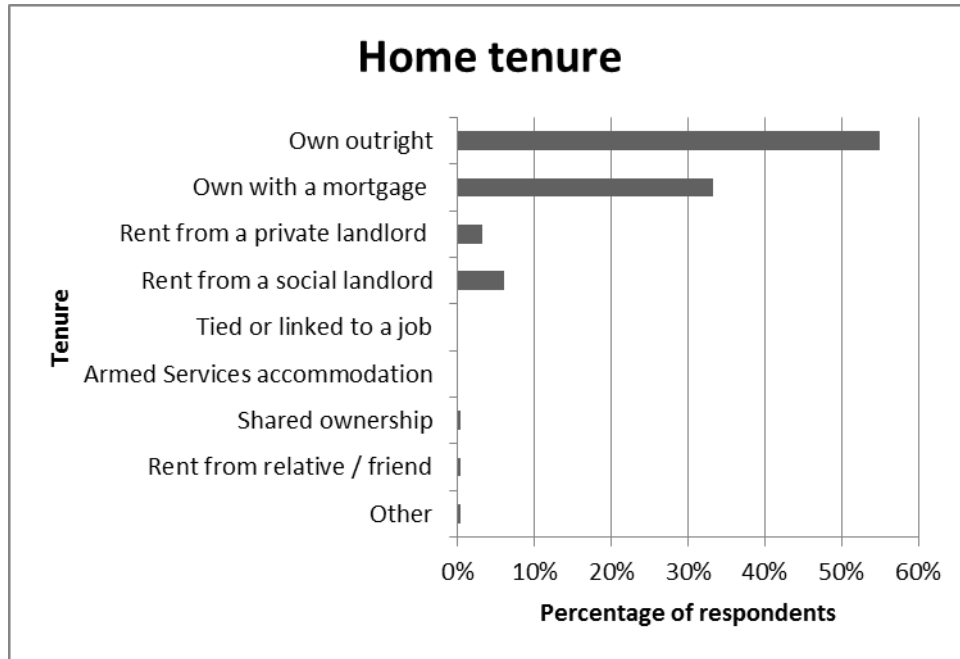
The chart below shows the tenure of respondents to the survey. The majority (88.3%) of respondents were owner-occupiers, while 7.2% of respondents were living in socially rented

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

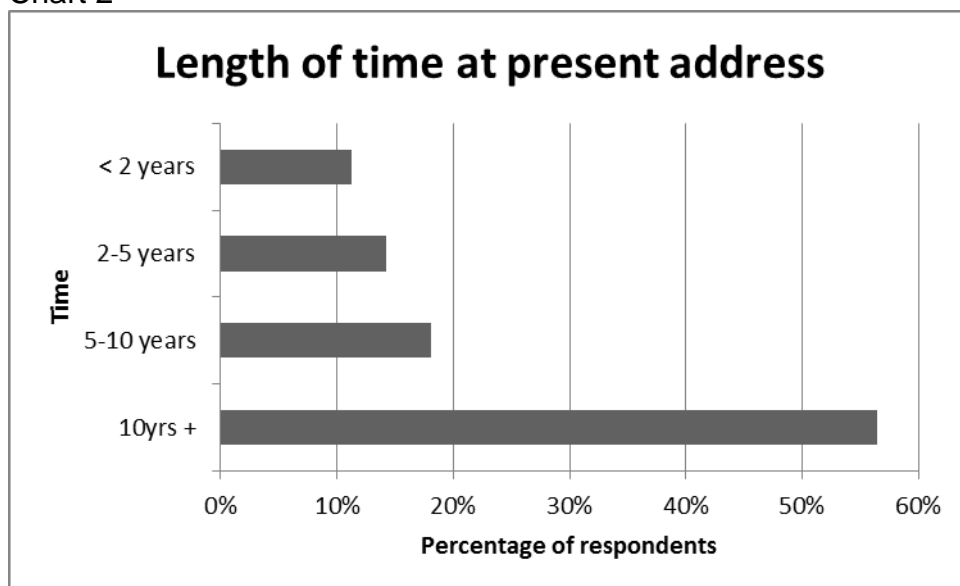
properties, 3.2% were renting from a private landlord or letting agency, none were living in accommodation tied to their employment, and 0.4% were living in a tenure described as 'other'. These results indicate a bias in the survey responses toward those living in owner-occupied homes and the rest of 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:

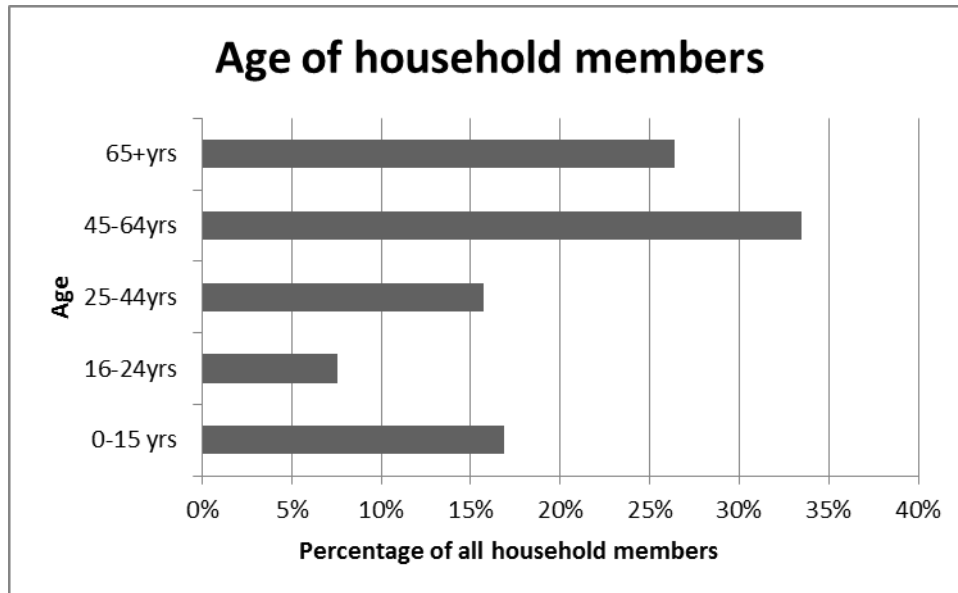
Chart 2



Many respondents to the survey lived in large family homes, with 9.2% of respondents having five or more bedrooms in their property. 37.1% lived in four bedroom homes, 38.3% had three bedrooms, 13.4% two bedrooms and 2.0% of respondents lived in homes with one bedroom.

The spread of ages recorded in the survey indicates that over half of respondents' household members were aged 45 years or older:

Chart 3



As shown in the chart above, there were significant numbers of households responding to the survey with members aged 45-64 there are smaller numbers responding from the lower age ranges and with children aged under 16. This indicates a spread of different household types in Hilperton, 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				Total
	Up to 2 miles	2 - 10 miles	10 - 50 miles	50 miles +	
Person 1	53	93	70	18	234
Person 2	38	65	44	2	149
Person 3	4	4	8	0	16
Person 4	1	1	0	0	2
Person 5	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>401</b>

These results suggest a reasonable level of sustainability for new housing development in Hilperton, indicated by the survey respondents' access to local sources of employment with

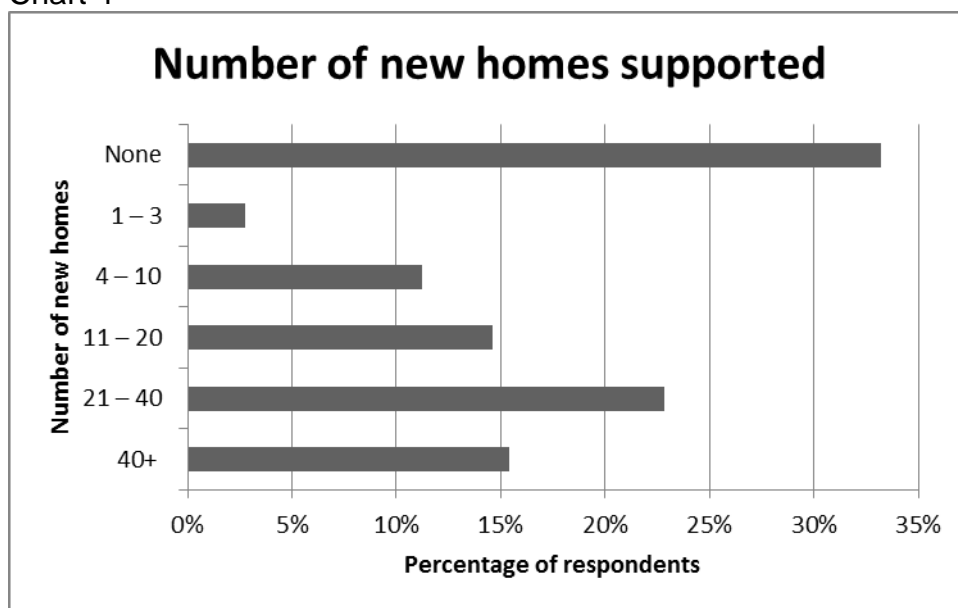


65% of the households' working members usually travel less than ten miles to their place of work.

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 5.6% of respondents (27 households) answered 'yes', indicating a low level of sustained need for housing in the parish.

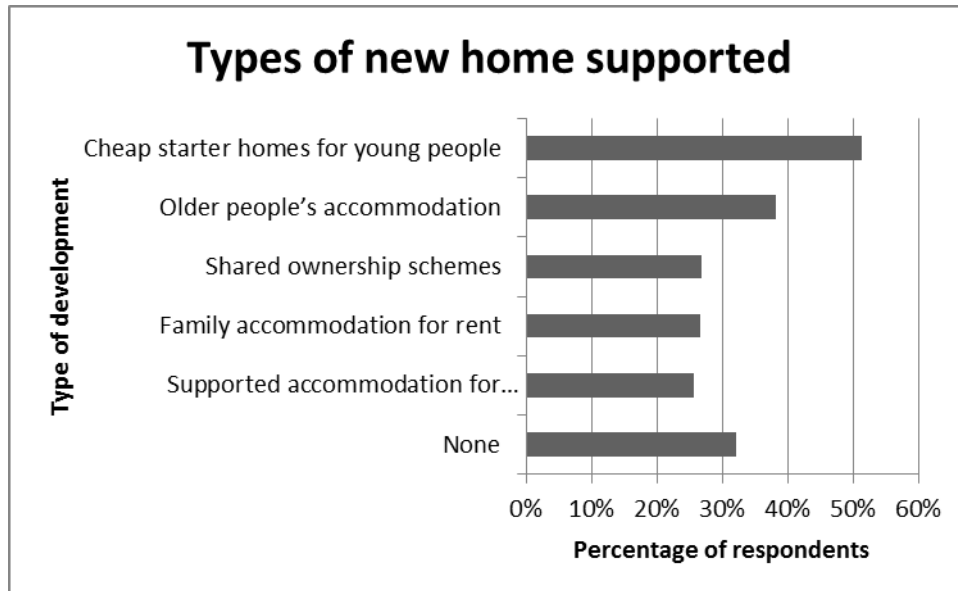
Respondents were then asked how many new homes they would support being built in the parish. The majority of respondents (66.8%) were in support of some new housing in Hilperton, with the most popular quantity (22.8% of respondents in favour) being for between twenty one and forty new homes. 33.2% of respondents were opposed to any new housing in Hilperton parish:

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 Hilperton by the survey respondents were affordable starter homes for young people (25.6%) and older persons' accommodation (19.0%). Full results are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

Chart 5



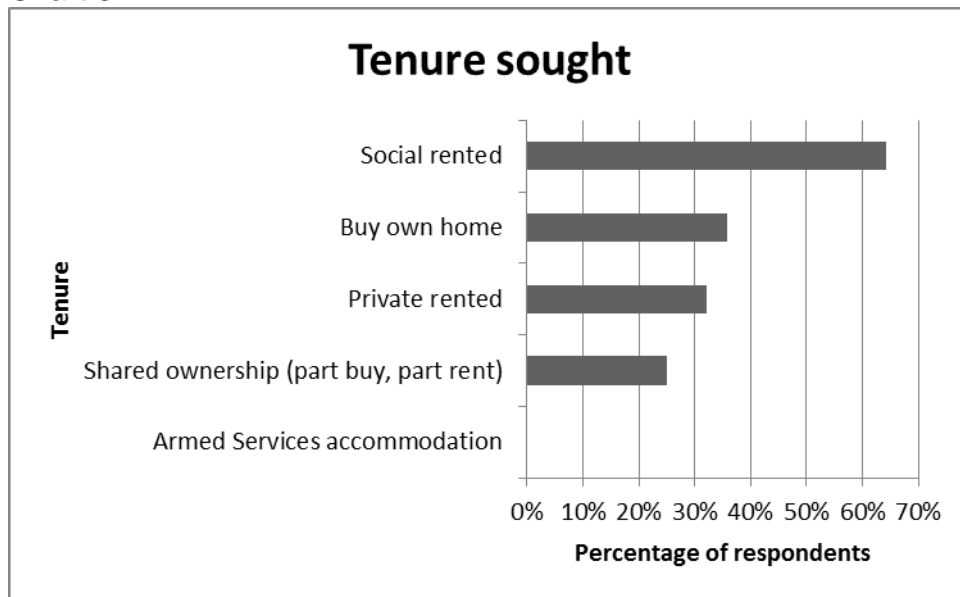
## Part two – Households requiring accommodation in the parish

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 Hilperton are then made in order to describe in more detail the need for specifically affordable (i.e. non-market) housing.

Twenty nine respondents replied to this section of the survey, indicating their need for housing in Hilperton. The prevailing reason given for needing to move was that respondents were currently living with their families but wanted to live independently in the parish (ten households).

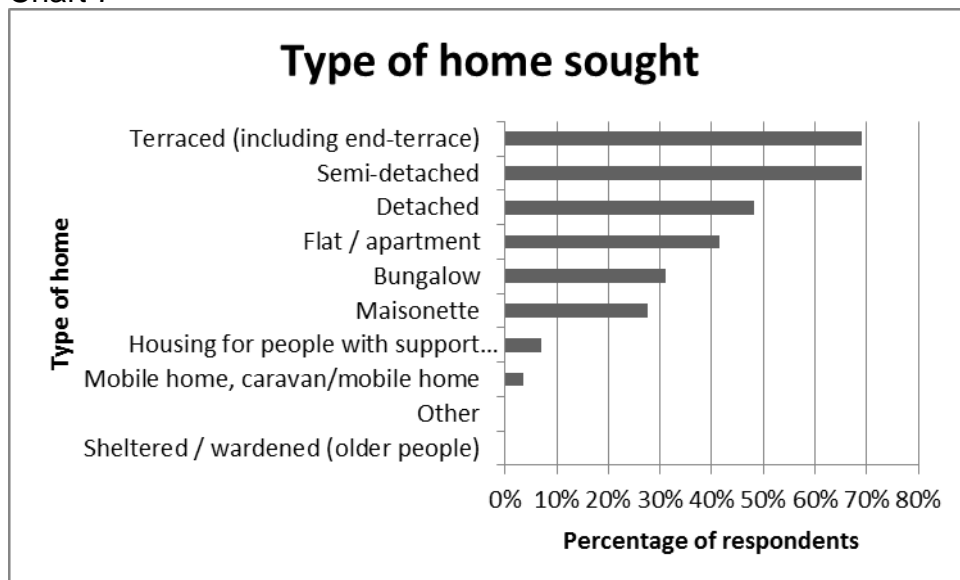
The respondents requiring accommodation in the parish were asked what type of tenure they sought. The expressed need was for all types of tenure, with socially rented homes the most desired. Households could indicate more than one response:

Chart 6



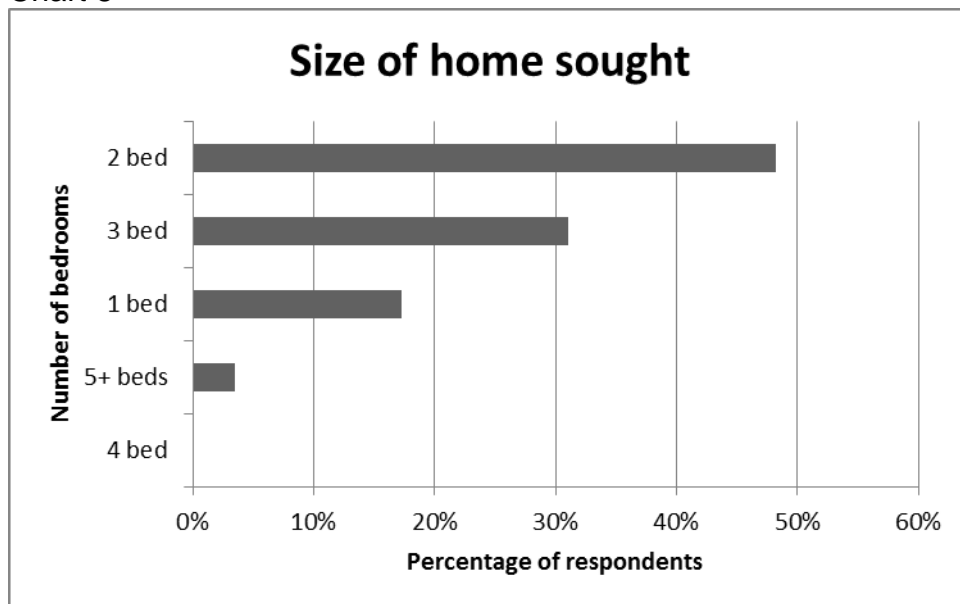
Respondents to this section were also asked what type of housing they required. The most sought-after types were terraced (including end-terrace) and semi-detached properties. Full responses are given in the chart below (more than one answer could be given):

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 and three or five bedrooms. No need was declared for homes with four bedrooms:

Chart 8



The respondents were then asked if there was a lack of suitable existing housing in Hilperon to meet their needs, to which 81% of respondents answered 'yes'.

In order to assess the need for **affordable** housing in Hilperon, 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 one of the households responding to this section of the survey reported having equity in an existing property, although this may be because respondents are not aware of the current value of their homes. The estimated levels of savings among the respondents varied, with 15 households declaring less than £14,999 in savings and only two households declaring more than £14,999 in savings (both of those having between £30,000 and £39,000). Income levels were also notably low. 18 of the 28 households reported gross incomes of less than £25,999, while 10 reported a gross household income of over £26,000pa. The median gross income bracket reported by the 28 respondents was £21,500-£22,999pa.

Comparing income, savings and equity levels with affordability in Hilperon suggests that 14 of the 29 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 Hilperon, presented in Section 8.

Of the households not considered to need public assistance in order to achieve their required housing, one household specified that they would like to purchase, rather than rent, a new

home. However as this household declared a very low income and limited savings, it did not meet the financial criteria for low cost home ownership and as such is excluded from the recommendations of this report. It is possible that changing financial circumstances may mean that in the future this household would be suitable for low cost home purchase in Hilperton. Their requirement was for a three bedroomed home. Four households specified that private rented accommodation would satisfy their housing needs and the levels of income and savings indicate that this is realistic. Two respondents that were contacted following completion of the survey have declared that they are no longer in need of affordable housing. One household did not complete their questionnaires in sufficient detail to be included in the affordable housing assessment.

## 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 Hilperton area:<sup>5</sup>

<b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>Jan 2017</b>
1	£124,100
2	£174,000
3	£227,000
4	£334,000
5+	£438,000

### 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 Hilperton cost £174,000 then a household may require £26,100 as a deposit. Annual household income would have to be at least £42,257 for a single applicant or £49,300 for joint applicants. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicates that the gross annual median income of employed persons in Wiltshire in 2015 was £21,467:<sup>6</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.

<sup>5</sup> House price estimates from the Mouseprice local area guide to the BA14 postcode area, [www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-price/](http://www.mouseprice.com/area-guide/average-house-price/) . Please note that the BA14 postcode covers a wider area than Hilperton parish and that there may be significant internal variation in house prices.

<sup>6</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2015, 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.

- 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.

## 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 January 2017, there were 14 households on the Wiltshire Council Housing Register seeking affordable accommodation in Hilperton parish: six of these households are also described in Section 8 of this report as in need of affordable housing. The remaining eight households on the Register are seeking properties with between one and four bedrooms, and any full assessment of housing need in the parish must take account of the Register.<sup>7</sup>
- The 2011 Census recorded 220 social homes in the parish.<sup>8</sup> These properties represent 11.4% of the total housing in Hilperton, which is lower than the Wiltshire affordable housing average of 14.7%.<sup>9</sup>
- The social housing in Hilperton had a 7.7% re-let rate in the past year: from the quarter 4 of 2015 -16 to quarter 3 of 2016-17, 17 social homes were re-let in the parish. Below is a breakdown of the bed size of properties let in Hilperton from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December<sup>10</sup>

Number of beds	Number of properties let
1	1
2	12
3	2
4	2
5	0

- The low levels and turnover of social housing, for all but 2 bedroom properties, in the parish suggest that **one** 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.
- 81% of respondents described a lack of suitable accommodation for their needs in the parish, and it is notable that while Hilperton has a reasonable proportion of privately

<sup>7</sup> Wiltshire Council, Housing Strategy, live tables.

<sup>8</sup> Table QS405EW, 2011 Census: Tenure – Households, English parishes / Welsh communities.

<sup>9</sup> Table QS405EW, 2011 Census: Tenure – Households, local authorities in England and Wales.

<sup>10</sup> Wiltshire Council, Housing Strategy, live tables.

rented homes (8.7% of the total parish stock), the turnover of these isn't high and rents are generally higher than the LHA. The lack of availability of low cost privately rented homes in Hilperton does indicate a need for an open-market or mixed tenure development in the area.

## **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. Please note that this report provides a description of the affordable housing need only of those who responded to the survey, and as such may underestimate the total affordable housing need in the parish. As described in Section 7, the survey is only a quarter of the evidence required to fully assess housing need in the parish. Wiltshire Council's Housing Register, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and the advice of allocation staff who manage the Register **must** also be taken into account in properly determining local housing need.

### **Subsidised rented housing <sup>11</sup>**

- 4 x one bedroom homes (1x bungalow/ground floor accommodation)
- 4 x three bedroom homes

### **Shared ownership / discount market homes <sup>12</sup>**

- 1 x one bedroom home
- 3 x 2 bedroom homes
- 1 x three bedroom homes

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

- None

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<sup>11</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>12</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.