



**Beckley Parish  
Housing Needs Survey  
Summary**

**Survey undertaken in May 2024**

## **Introduction**

In 2024 Action in rural Sussex was commissioned by Beckley Parish Council, to assess the scale and nature of the need for locally affordable housing in the Parish.

The study identified households whose housing needs were not being appropriately met currently on the open market within the parish.

## **Methodology**

An assessment of the level housing need was undertaken using a postal Housing Need Survey to every household in the parish, together with an online option for completion. The survey gathered information on the household make-up of those with an affordable housing need (e.g. single adult, family with children, older couple, 65+ etc.), current housing type, tenure and circumstance, gross household income and savings, and details of respondent's local connection to the area.

Eligibility for affordable housing was based on two main aspects. Firstly, the housing in which the individual/household resided was not adequate for their needs e.g. too few bedrooms. Secondly, that they cannot afford an appropriate property which would meet their needs to rent or buy on the open market within the local area. This was determined by comparing respondents' financial information against the baseline rental and purchase costs for a property, which would meet their current requirements.

A total of 117 responses were received from the 522 households in Beckley Parish – 101 by post and 16 online. This represents an overall response rate of 23% - a good response rate for a survey of this nature.

## **Property prices**

In order to develop a baseline of the affordability of property within the parish, sale price information was gathered of properties sold in the Beckley area during the previous 12 months.

Rental costs were calculated by identifying the cheapest property of each bedroom size being marketed for rent in the Beckley area at the time of compiling the report.

## **Incomes**

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics) found the 2023 average (mean) gross income in Rother District was £44,839 and the mid value (median) gross income was £31,019 per year.

## **Affordability**

Property costs indicate an entry level gross annual household income requirement of some £48,000 to rent a one-bedroom property – assuming direct housing costs did not exceed 30% of annual gross household income.

To buy a one-bedroom property, costs indicated an income of £46,029 was required – assuming a 10% deposit and 3.5 x income to value multiplier. The purchaser would need to have savings for a deposit of £17,900.

This highlights an affordability issue for over half local wage earners.

## Key Survey Findings

### General

- The 2021 census highlighted that there was a significantly higher proportion of larger (potentially more expensive) homes in Beckley Parish, compared to the Rother District as a whole.
- There was very strong support (84%) for local affordable housing provision if there is a proven need.
- A majority of respondents (55%) would like to see community led housing provision.

### Affordable housing need identified.

The key findings identified from this Housing Needs Survey are:

- 15 households were identified as needing affordable housing due to the inadequacy of their current housing in meeting their needs and their inability to afford to rent or purchase a suitable property on the open market in the parish.
- All households responding had a local connection to Beckley Parish.
- The largest classification of households in need of affordable housing was single adults (aged 18+) - 10 (66%). This was followed by adult / family with children (aged under 18) - 3 (20%). The balance being an adult couple (aged 18 - 64 - no children) - 1 (7%), and an older couple (aged over 65) - 1 (7%).
- The most common reason identified in the survey for households seeking to move was to set up an independent home - 8 (53%). For two (13%) of the households the reason given was that the current home is expensive to run / maintain. Two (13%) wanted a more secure form of tenure. Other reasons given included: current rent/mortgage is unaffordable- 1 (7%), need to be nearer to a carer or dependent - 1 (7%). One respondent was in receipt of a notice to quit.
- The largest proportion of respondents - 12 (80%) required a one-bedroom property. This was followed by two bedroom - 2 (13%), and four bedroom 1 (7%).
- One household indicated a need for ground floor accommodation.
- Renting from a local community organisation was the most preferred option - 5 (33%) of respondents. This was followed by renting from a housing association or local authority - 4 (27%), buying on the open market - 3 (20%), and renting from a private landlord - 2 (13%). One household (7%) would prefer shared ownership.
- One of the households, a local authority tenant seeking larger affordable housing, may be able to address their housing need by a transfer or mutual exchange.
- Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, 3 of the households in need of affordable housing appear to be able to afford shared ownership - depending on the shared ownership scheme, and a more detailed assessment of their income / expenditure and mortgage eligibility.
- Housing need is pressing for most respondents - 11 households (73%) need to move either now or within two years. Four households (27%) need to move between two and five years from now.

- Three of the 15 households in need of affordable housing identified that they are on a local authority or housing association housing register for a rented home. No households in need of affordable housing identified that they are on a local authority or housing association housing register for shared ownership.

### **Market preferences identified**

As part of the process of reviewing the responses from households who completed Part 2 of the Housing Needs Survey, 4 households were identified who could not be categorised as in need of affordable housing due to their income and savings, or because they were currently housed in a way that met their requirements.

Whilst currently ineligible for affordable housing based on the current criteria, it is important that we consider these households that possess either a housing aspiration or housing need, to enable us to better understand the housing market locally.

Two of the households first preference was for some form of private ownership – buying on the open market.

Based on their income, savings, and circumstances, one of the households may be able to buy a shared ownership property – depending on the shared ownership scheme, and a detailed assessment of their income / expenditure and mortgage eligibility.

The key characteristics of the households identified as falling into the market housing need category were:

- Single older person (aged over 65) – 3 (75%) and single adult (aged 18+) – 1 (25%).
- All 4 households possessed a local connection to the Beckley Parish through living in the area, working locally, family connection, or past residence.
- Current housing comprised of 2 (50%) households own a property with no mortgage, and 2 (50%) renting privately.
- Two (50%) indicated a preference for one bedroom, and 2 (50%) indicated a preference for two bedrooms.
- Two (50%) indicated a need to move either now or within two years, and 2 (50%) indicated a need to move a need to move between 2 and 5 years from now.
- Three households needed sheltered housing, and 2 indicated a need for ground floor accommodation.
- One household in need of market housing was on a local authority or housing association register for shared ownership.

**For further information** on the survey please contact: Action in Rural Sussex  
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