



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

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HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

WESTLEIGH
North Devon

APRIL/MAY 2010



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

Exmoor, North Devon & West Somerset

The Rural Housing Project has been running since 2002 and is a partnership between Exmoor National Park Authority, North Devon Council, West Somerset Council, English Rural Housing Association, Falcon Rural Housing, Hastoe Housing Association, Devon & Cornwall Housing Association, North Devon Homes Ltd and Magna Housing Association. It has been working hard to address the shortage of affordable housing within a predominantly rural area. The area covered by the project displays an extreme disparity between incomes and house prices, which makes it hard for many to gain secure footing within the housing market.

The Rural Housing Project is designed to help promote and deliver affordable rural housing strategically across the project area and helps deliver Exmoor National Park housing policies within the Park. This is being achieved by informing people about affordable rural housing, providing help and advice, carrying out research at a parish level to assess the affordable housing need and bringing together the community and various partners to help deliver housing where it is needed.

One of the tasks for the project is to work with the Parish Council and the local community to assist them in carrying out a housing needs survey, in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish.

WESTLEIGH PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Introduction



Westleigh is a civil parish in North Devon which includes the hamlets of Ashridge, Eastleigh, Webbery, Alverdiscott and Stoney Cross. Westleigh village stands on a hill overlooking the River Torridge, 2½ miles north east of Bideford. The parish has a population of 328¹.

Average House Prices in the Westleigh area:

<u>Beds</u>	<u>July 2010</u>
2-3	£243,000
4	£452,100

Average Rental Prices (per month) in the Westleigh area:

<u>Beds</u>	<u>March 2010</u>
2	£531
3	£663
4	£797

Local Amenities

Westleigh has a pub, a church and a village hall but no shops.

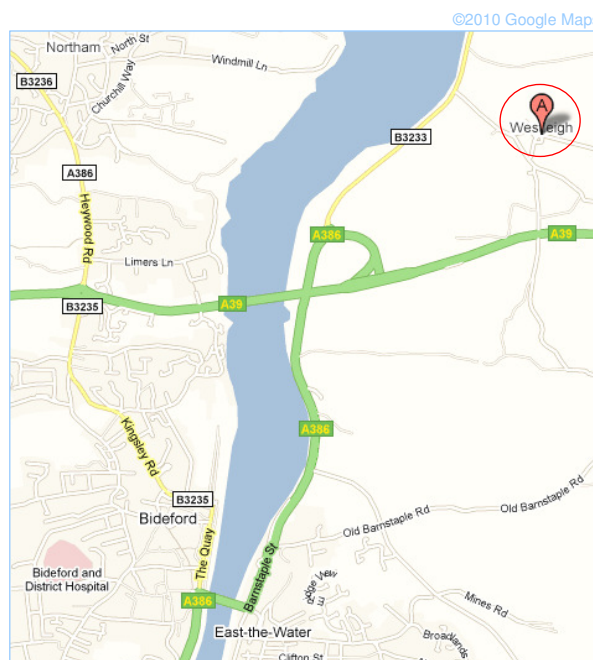
Shopping: Post Offices at Instow, 0.9 miles and East-the-Water, 1.8 miles. Comprehensive range of shops available in Bideford, 2.6 miles away and Barnstaple, 7½ miles.

Schools: Primary Schools at Instow and East-the-Water. Secondary Schools at Bideford.

Health: Doctors, Dentists, Hospital, Vets at Bideford.

Transport: Buses go along the main coast road but not into Westleigh village. Nearest train station is Barnstaple.

Library: Main library in Bideford; mobile library from Barnstaple visits Westleigh Village Hall fortnightly on a Wednesday.



Main industry and employment:

Bideford: tourist centre, Torridge District Council HQ, fishing & cargo port.

Barnstaple: main employers are local government, North Devon District Hospital, a large pharmaceutical company and the Royal Marines base at nearby Chivenor.

¹ Source: Office for National Statistics Last Updated: 28 April 2004

The Survey

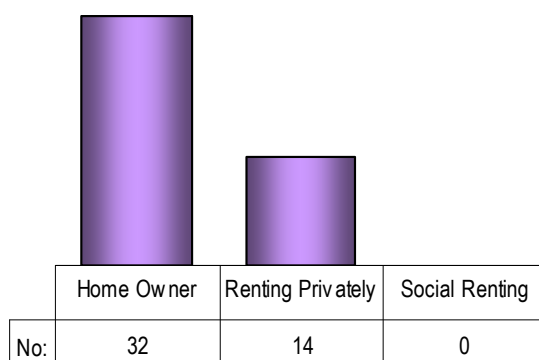
Following discussions with Westleigh Parish Council, and with its agreement, housing needs survey forms were sent to 149 dwellings in Westleigh Parish², along with covering letters from the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Rural Housing Enabler, and some background information (copies are appended to this report).

A total of 46 forms were sent back, representing a return of 31%.

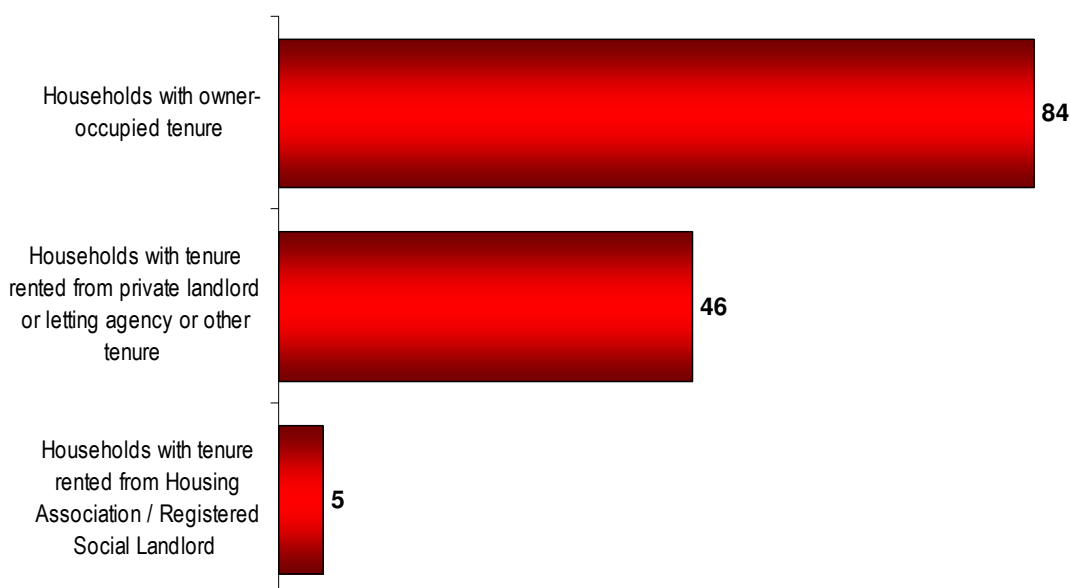
Of these 46 returns, 5 households completed Part Two, indicating that they are in need of affordable housing in the parish. These are dealt with in detail later in the report. The following data relates to the parish and all the forms returned, whether or not they completed Part Two.

Tenure

Most of those responding to our survey were home owners, as follows:



Government statistics on households in Westleigh Parish³ also show a similar proportion being rented privately; local estate Tapeley Park has a number of properties on its estate that would fall into this category. None of the replies received were from people renting from housing associations, however there are five socially-rented homes in the parish.



² Addresses provided by North Devon Council, all sent out to "The Occupier"

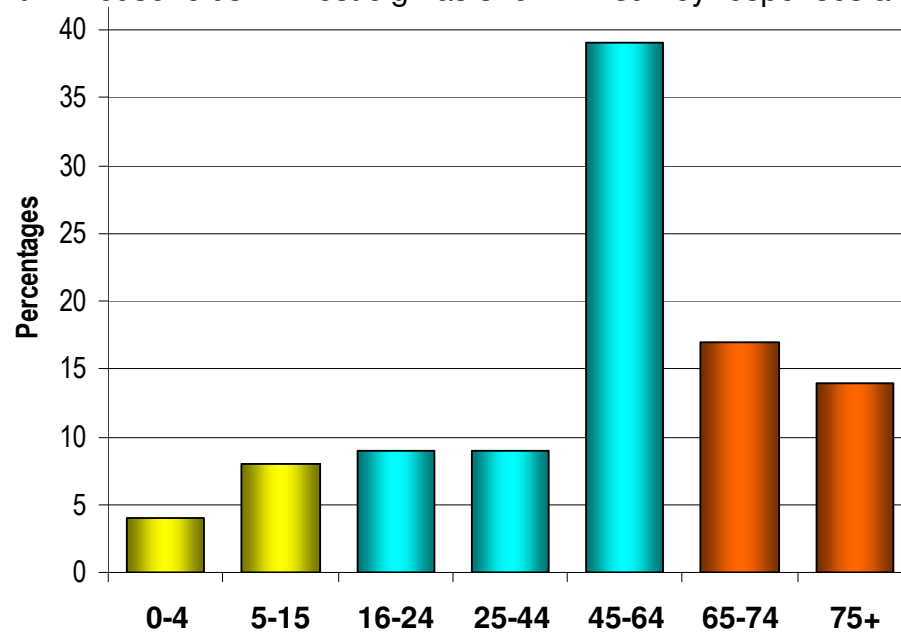
³ Office for National Statistics, Census 2001, updated April 2004

The higher number of private rental housing may mean there is a hidden level of housing need, as private renting is an insecure form of tenure.

One property in Westleigh was reported as being a second or holiday home; the Office for National Statistics states that there are in fact 9 in total.

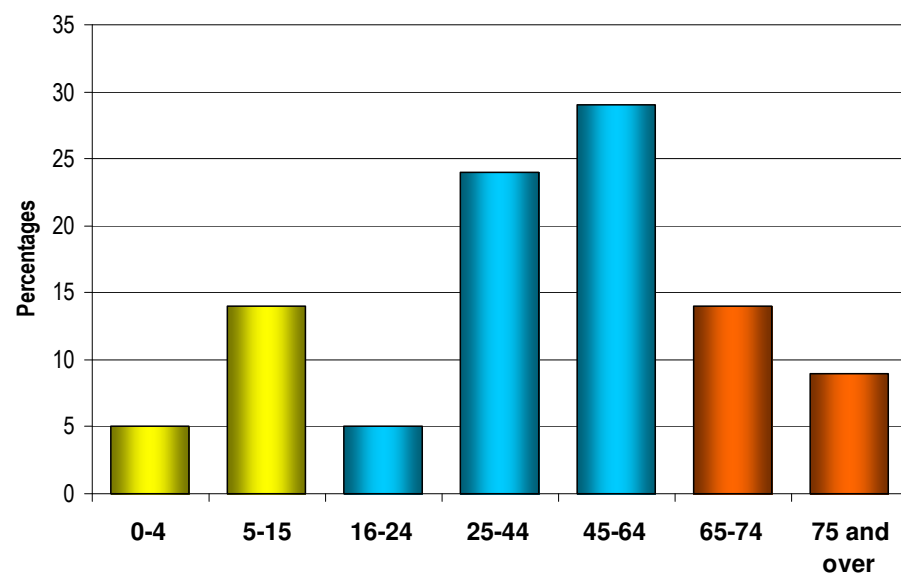
Age Range

Age ranges within households in Westleigh as shown in survey responses are as follows:



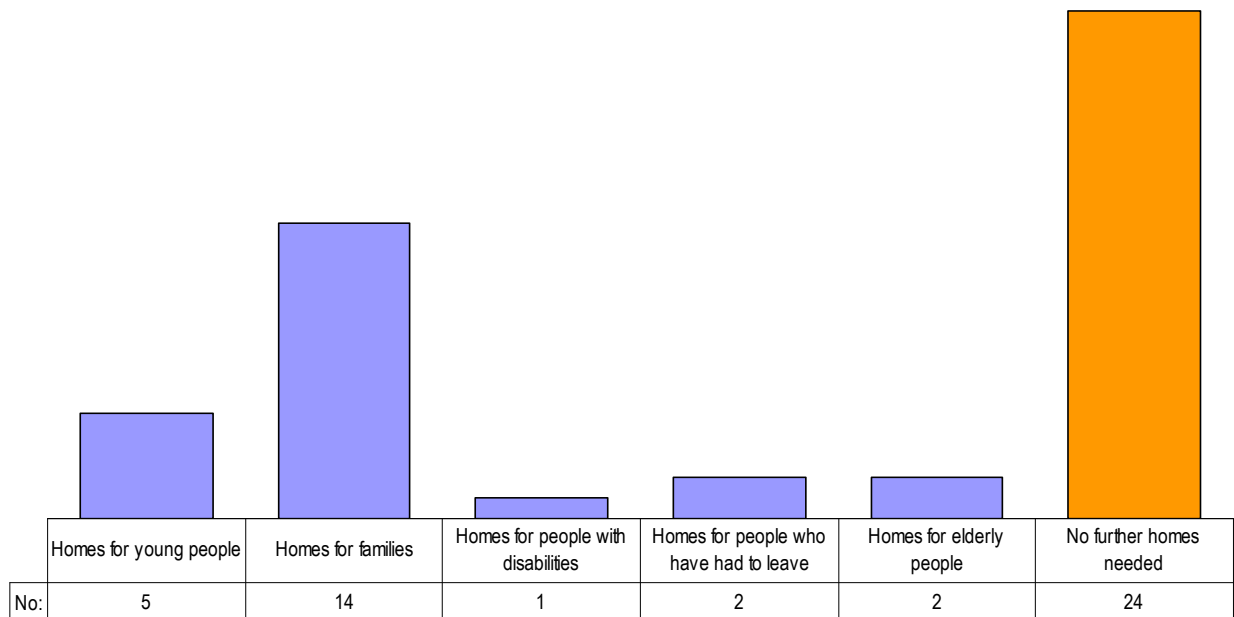
This is a slightly different proportion to census data, as follows:

Data from Office for National Statistics (updated April 2004)



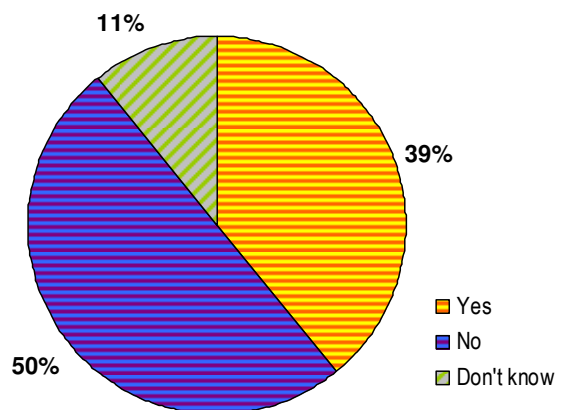
Perception of Housing Need

Respondents felt that those in greatest need of new homes in the parish were as follows:



When asked if need were to be proven, would they be in favour of a small number of new homes to help meet the housing needs of local people, 50% said no, they would not be in favour. This is an unusual result; very rarely in housing needs surveys conducted by the project has there not been a clear majority in favour.

Comments and points of view expressed at this point are set out on pages 11-12.

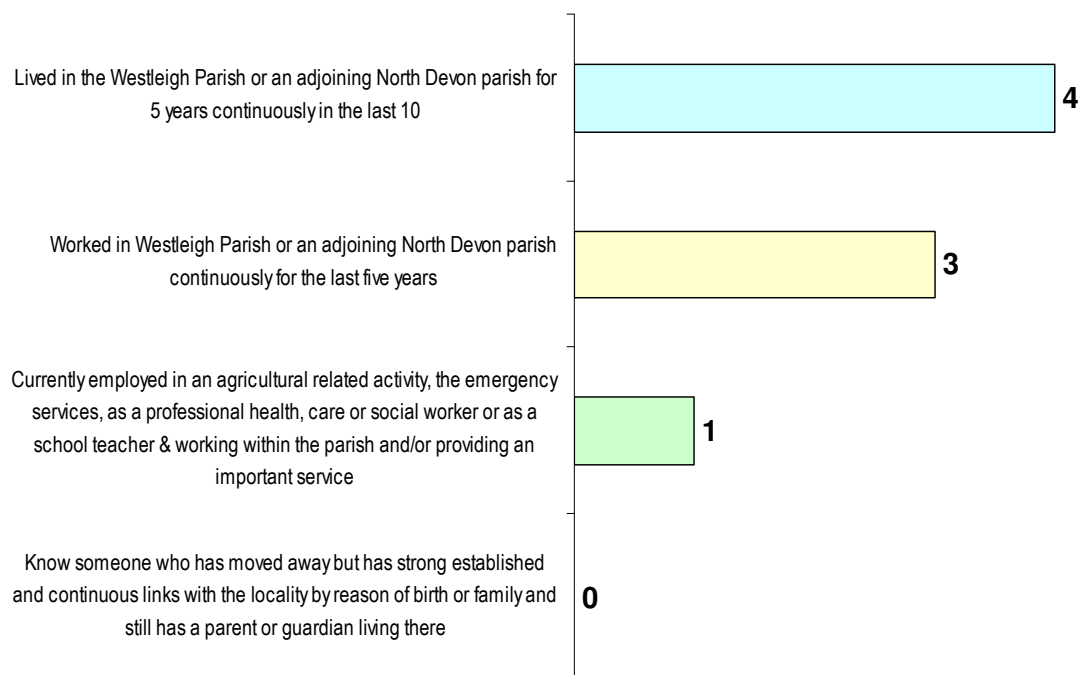


PART TWO

Five Part Two sections were returned indicating a need for affordable housing in Westleigh Parish.

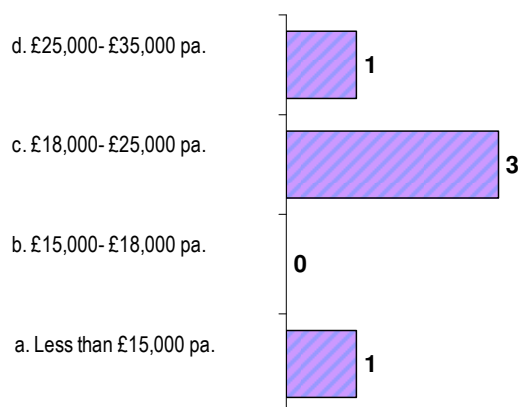
Local Connection

Any affordable homes delivered in Westleigh would be for people living or working in the parish, or an adjoining one, or for those who can show that they have a long-term connection with the area. These categories are defined in the North Devon Council Local Plan. The respondents ticked these boxes, some ticking more than one, as follows:



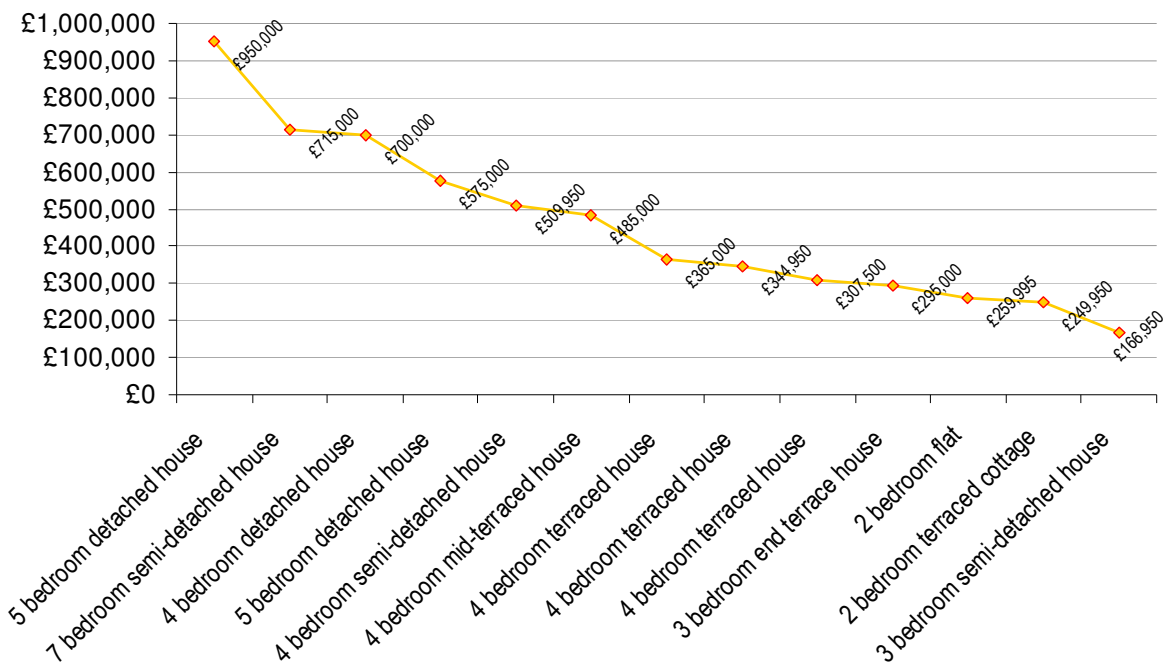
Income and Savings

Those in housing need stated that their annual household incomes fell into the following ranges:



Four had no savings, while the other one had savings of £30,000.

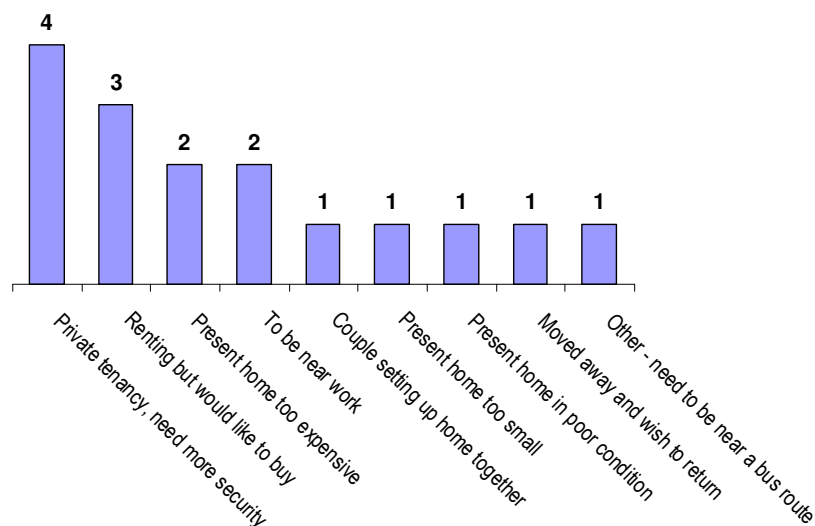
A mortgage calculator showed that a household with an income of £35,000 could borrow up to £136,500 on a mortgage⁴. As at 19/7/2010 the only residential properties for sale in or within a mile of Westleigh⁵ were as follows:



This suggests that all houses in the parish are out of the reach of households with two dependent children and an annual total income of less than approximately £61,000 unless they have substantial savings for a deposit.

Identifying Housing Need

The survey asked for reasons why people need to move. Again, sometimes ticking more than one box, the reasons were given as follows:-



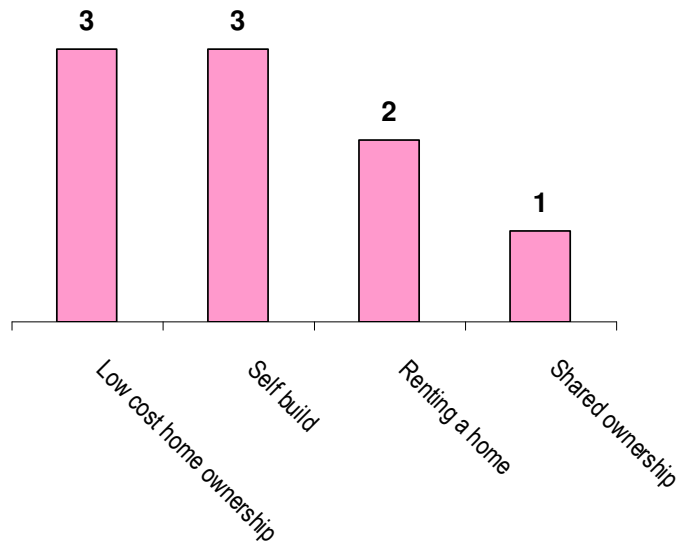
All five said they would not be able to remain in their present home, even if alterations, adaptations or support were provided.

⁴ www.halifax.co.uk

⁵ www.rightmove.co.uk

Four needed to move 1-3 years, the other did not specify.

Depending on affordability, the respondents ticked tenure boxes they would be interested in as follows:-

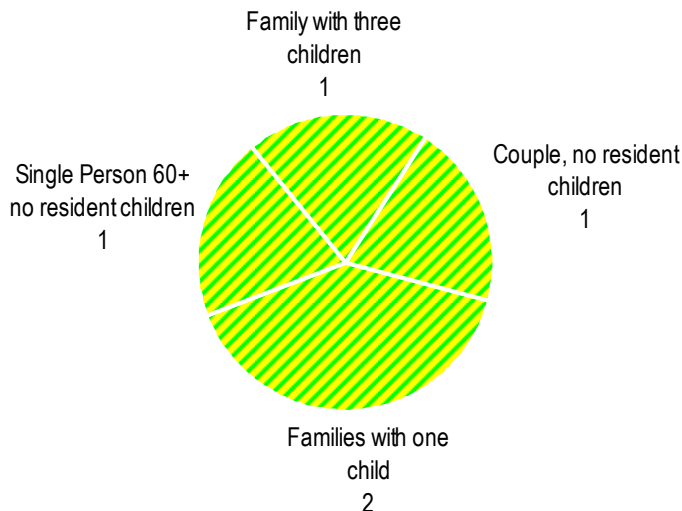


Parish choices were as follows:

	<u>1st choice</u>	<u>2nd choice</u>	<u>3rd choice</u>
1.	Westleigh	Instow	-
2.	Instow	Westleigh	Horwood, Lovacott & Newton Tracey
3.	Instow	Westleigh	-
4.	Instow	Westleigh	Horwood, Lovacott & Newton Tracey
5.	Horwood, Lovacott & Newton Tracey	Westleigh	Instow

Three of the households are already on the North Devon Housing Register.

All five households returning Part Twos appeared to meet the local connection criteria and to be in need of affordable local housing. Their household sizes were as follows:



Rural Housing Enabler's Comments and Recommendations

There are five households identified as in housing need and all meet local connection criteria. One household has sufficient income and savings to seriously consider some form of low cost home ownership, if it is available. Two other households aspire to this but their financial circumstances are more marginal.

Based on this level of housing need, our recommendation is for five new houses as follows:

	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms
Rented	2	1
LCHO/Self-build		2

All five households chose the same three parishes as their preferred location: Instow, Westleigh, Horwood/Lovacott/Newton Tracey, with the preference generally in that order.

This survey was conducted deliberately as part of a cluster of parishes, and once these are all completed, conclusions will be reached as to the best locations for new housing.

Westleigh is identified as a Rural Settlement within the Local Plan – Policy HSG4 applies, which would allow a small residential development where this does not harm the rural character and setting of the settlement. At least 50% of dwellings would need to be affordable to meet the needs of the local community.

Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler
July 2010

Comments from Westleigh Parish residents on the provision of a small number of new homes to help meet the housing needs of local people

Those who said “yes”

- We need to help young people and young families set up home – in a rural area with low income it's very difficult for them and we need young people to stay in villages – the old need the young and the young need the old.
- Family homes would be good, to ensure the continuation of a local primary school. Many people we know who are in their 20's would love to be able to bring up a family near their parents but can't due to houses costing too much.
- The village would benefit from extra homes for young families. It is nice to have a mix of young and old.
- If they can be built on infill space and if parking can be available – there is already a major problem with parking spaces in the village.
- Any impact from a small number of new homes would be as nothing compared with the several hundred currently being built at East-the-Water under the current structure plan on the edge of the parish. This has hugely increased traffic on the Westleigh/Eastleigh roads already, rendering them impossible to walk safely.
- Any developments to be in keeping with the character of the Westleigh village.
- Any new housing must fit in aesthetically with existing properties, which are cottages. Stone, cob and thatch style most desirable using traditional building methods, no mass produced cheap building methods.
- That any new houses built RETAIN their local connection criteria permanently. The Lake District manages this procedure well. Devon would be greatly helped if it followed a similar route.

Those who said “no”

- No room, no parking facilities, no public transport, road congestion.
- There are plenty of affordable homes in surrounding areas, adding more homes to the village would ruin the nature of the village.
- As there are plenty of houses being built within a 10 mile radius that aren't being filled, why should any more be built to change a beautiful area? We also feel there should be a restriction of second homes in the area.
- Further houses would ruin the village and not actually help with housing; considering availability in other areas already being built and some of which have been empty for considerable time.
- The infrastructure around this village is insufficient to allow further – even limited – development. To enlarge the road system for example would penalise the whole community for very limited return. Better that council should seek to provide accommodation where needed from existing housing stock.
- There is no justification for new homes in the village e.g. no young couples needing housing. Further housing would add to traffic congestion which is already a serious problem.

- I believe Westleigh to be of a small village and if a few homes were built – it would give Taperley opportunity to develop further land. I also believe there is “under occupancy” in the N. Devon Homes of which no-one seems to address.
- There are a significant number of new developments in this area presently. Until such time as there is an upgrade to the infrastructure (road, rail etc.) struggle to see how in the long term the area will cope.
- Will spoil our lovely village.
- Rural character of parish would be spoilt – also this has always been a “green belt” area where further development was not allowed.
- Westleigh is a small traditional unspoilt village surrounded by farming land, totally inappropriate for any further housing of any sort.
- I personally know of 6 homes in Bideford which are empty and able to house families and are not in use. There are obviously many more. Can we concentrate on existing housing rather than planning for more?
- From same person:
 - Presumably anyone renting would have the right to buy. This makes the whole affordable housing idea laughable.
 - The infrastructure would need radical overhaul, turning a village into a suburb of Bideford extends towards Barnstaple.
 - Overhauling any existing property so people, as they get frailer, can stay in their own homes would be a better solution.
- The village is in a conservation area, thus any building should be strictly controlled; any housing considered should be of cottage style to blend in with the existing village properties; no modern properties would be acceptable. There are a number of infill sites in various parts of the village – I would suspect that the matter has already been decided.
- Plenty of housing now being provided off Manteo Way, adjacent to Westleigh area. No more to spoil our environment which we’ve looked after for years!!
- There are many empty homes in the area as well as large numbers of new homes being built all the time only a couple of miles away where the infrastructure is better equipped for more housing.
- Westleigh is a parish of character houses in an area of outstanding beauty. Already there are considerable parking problems and no infrastructure to support more houses. Affordable housing is better suited to the nearby towns of Bideford and Barnstaple.
- New homes are and would not be in keeping with the village. Infrastructure not suitable for additional people and traffic.
- I consider locals currently living in the parish are doing so because it is ideal the way it is.

April 2010

Dear Parishioner

Westleigh Parish Housing Needs Survey

We need your help to assess whether there is a need for local needs affordable housing in the parish and an independent survey is considered to be the best way to do this.

Enclosed is a letter from the Rural Housing Enabler and a two part survey form. If you are suitably housed and will not need a change of housing in the next five years please complete and return Part One in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

If you consider your household to be in local affordable housing need, are likely to need to move to another home in Westleigh Parish, or an adjoining parish, now or in the next five years and you feel you will need help to obtain an affordable home, you will need to complete and return both parts of the survey form. If you know of a Westleigh person/household **or** anyone from any of the adjoining parishes of Instow or Horwood, Lovacott and Newton Tracey who needs to live in this parish and help to obtain an affordable home, they will need to complete their own survey forms. Additional forms can be obtained from the Rural Housing Project; contact details are on the enclosed letter and survey forms.

It would help if you could return the form(s) as soon as possible.

When the survey and subsequent report is complete Colin Savage (Rural Housing Enabler) will attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the results and options for the parish. No information regarding individuals will be publicly identified or available at any stage of the survey or the report.

On behalf of the Parish Council, thank you very much for your participation.

Yours sincerely

Chairman
Westleigh Parish Council



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

EXMOOR HOUSE, DULVERTON, SOMERSET. TA22 9HL
01398 322249 cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

April 2010

Dear Parishioner

Westleigh Parish Housing Needs Survey

The Rural Housing Project's aim is to increase the provision of affordable housing for local needs, where it is needed, in rural communities across the project area of Exmoor, North Devon and West Somerset. I am the Rural Housing Enabler for the project area and one of my roles is to work with Parish Councils and local communities to assist them to carry out a Housing Needs Survey, in order to identify whether there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish. If a need is identified, I can work as an 'honest broker' between all parties, to take the project forward step by step, to hopefully provide affordable housing for local people.

Westleigh Parish Council is working with the Rural Housing Project to complete a Housing Needs Survey for Westleigh parish. It would be helpful if you would complete Part One, it is only a short questionnaire, and it will help provide an overall profile of population, housing tenure and views on affordable local needs housing in the parish. I enclose a prepaid envelope for your use.

You will only need to complete and return a Part Two form if you consider yourself or your household to be in local affordable housing need, are likely to need to move to another home in Westleigh parish now or in the next five years, and you feel you may need help to obtain an affordable home. This survey form does ask for detailed, confidential and sensitive information. I will need this information to assess whether you are in need of affordable housing and to consider you further. Please be assured that your individual survey forms will not be available to the Parish Council. I shall prepare a report based on the information provided but the report will only provide general numbers, trends, percentages, comments and identify the level of local affordable housing need. **The report will not include any name or addresses and will avoid any information that could identify a particular respondent.** I will then attend a parish council meeting to discuss the report and options for the parish. When the report has been considered, if there is a need for affordable housing for local people, we may need to approach the District Council, housing association(s) and/or other agencies that can facilitate the provision of affordable housing for the community.

Please return your completed form(s) to the Rural Housing Project as soon as possible. The form gives a deadline of 30th November, but the first week in December will be acceptable. Additional forms are available for anyone who has a need to live in the parish. If you would like to discuss the survey or want any assistance in completing the survey form, please feel free to call me, or my assistant Diane Blackman.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Savage

Colin Savage
Rural Housing Enabler



RURAL HOUSING PROJECT

EXMOOR, NORTH DEVON AND WEST SOMERSET

Address: Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL.
 Project Contact: Colin Savage Telephone: 01398 322249. Fax: 01398 323150.
 E-mail: cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

WESTLEIGH PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY – PART ONE

The Rural Housing Project is working with Westleigh Parish Council to identify the level of local affordable housing need within Westleigh Parish. This Part One survey form has been sent to every known household in the parish and can help provide a profile of the population, housing tenure and views on affordable housing in the parish. Extra forms are available from the Rural Housing Project. Please return completed forms to the Project in the envelope provided.

A. Your Household

(1) Please indicate the number of people in your household in the following age groups:

Age	0 – 4	5 – 15	16 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 – 74	75+
Male							
Female							

B. Your Current Home

(2) Are you:

A Home Owner		Lodging with another household	
Renting from a private landlord		In housing tied to job	
Renting from a housing association		Living with parents or relatives	
A shared owner (part rent/part buy)		Other, please specify	

(3) Is this your:

Main Home?		Second Home?	
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C. Housing Required

(4) Who do you think is in greatest need of a new home in the parish? (Please tick one)

Homes for families		Homes for elderly people	
Homes for young people		Homes for single people	
Homes for people who have had to leave		No further homes are needed	
Homes for people with disabilities		Other, please specify	

(5) If need is proven would you be in favour of a small number of new homes to help meet the housing needs of local people in the parish?

Yes		No	
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Please briefly explain your views (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

D.

**If you
or your household or someone in your household
or someone you know who has moved away and wishes to return (*please pass survey form on to them or request another form from the Rural Housing Project*)
consider that you meet the criteria set out below and are in need of affordable housing:**

PLEASE COMPLETE A "PART TWO" SURVEY FORM

Affordable housing could be provided for:

- Existing residents who have lived in the locality for a continuous period of at least five years and are in need of separate accommodation (defined as those setting up a new household as a result of cohabitation, marriage, divorce or separation, or those that have, or are about to leave, tied accommodation on retirement);
- Existing residents who have lived in the locality for a continuous period of at least five years and whose present accommodation has become either substandard or unsuited to their circumstances because of their age, an impairment, medical condition or to meet the needs of a growing family;
- People who have worked in the parish for a continuous period of at least five years or someone currently employed in an agricultural related activity, the emergency services, as a professional health, care or social worker or as a qualified primary or secondary school teacher and working within the parish and those who provide an important service and need to live closer to the local community;
and
- People who have moved away but have strong established and continuous links with the locality by reason of birth or family and still have a parent or guardian living there.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey form.

Address: Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL.
Project Contact: Colin Savage Telephone: 01398 322249. Fax: 01398 323150.
E-mail: cbsavage@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk

WESTLEIGH PARISH HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY – PART TWO

Please complete this form if you consider that you are in need of local affordable housing in Westleigh parish and may need to move to another home in the parish or an adjoining one over the next five years. **Please return it to the Rural Housing Project in the envelope provided.**

Complete a separate form for each household in need of housing. If you require extra forms or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us (☎ 01398 322245 - Diane Blackman)

A. Local Connection.

It is intended that any affordable homes delivered in Westleigh will be for people living or working in Westleigh Parish, or an adjoining one, or for those who can show that they have a long-term connection with the area - for example, people who have moved away but would like/need to return.

Please tick any that apply to you

Have you lived in the Westleigh Parish or an adjoining* parish (please state) for 5 years continuously in the last 10?	
Have you worked in Westleigh Parish or an adjoining* parish (please state) continuously for the last five years?	
Are you currently employed in an agricultural related activity, the emergency services, as a professional health, care or social worker or as a qualified primary or secondary school teacher and working within the parish and/or providing an important service and need to live closer to the local community?	
Do you know someone who has moved away but has strong established and continuous links with the locality by reason of birth or family and still has a parent or guardian living there? If so, please put them in touch with the Rural Housing Project.	

* adjoining parishes = Instow and Horwood, Lovacott & Newton Tracey.

B. Identifying Housing Need

Why do you need to move? Please tick any that apply to you

a) First independent home		j) Currently homeless	
b) Couple setting up home together		k) Cannot manage stairs	
c) Present home too small		l) Present home in poor condition	
d) Present home too large		m) Renting but would like to buy	
e) Present home too expensive		n) Moved away and wish to return	
f) Private tenancy ending shortly		o) Need specially adapted home	
g) Private tenancy, need more security		p) For family support	
h) In tied housing, need more security		q) To be near work	
i) Family break up		r) Other please explain	

Which of the above is your main reason? Please state one only

When will you need to move? Tick one only

Within 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 + years	<input type="checkbox"/>

Could you remain in your present home if alterations, adaptations or support were provided?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, please specify what would be needed:

C. Affordability

Employment

Please indicate the nature of you and/or your partner's employment and whether it is full time, part time, casual or seasonal.

Your employment:

Your partner's employment:

Income

It will help us to assess the type of affordable housing you can afford if you can indicate your level of income. This would be combined income for couples/households.

Which of the following ranges of **annual income** does your household have? (Gross income, before deductions). Please tick the appropriate box.

a. Less than £15,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you prefer to state your weekly or monthly income please do so below: Weekly = Monthly =
b. £15,000- £18,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. £18,000- £25,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d. £25,000- £35,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e. £35,000 - £45,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f. Over £45,000 pa.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Savings

Do you have savings or equity you could use as a deposit for an affordable home or provide you with additional income?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please state amount (to nearest £500): £
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Depending on affordability, would you be interested in: Tick all that apply

a. Renting a home? (Most likely through a Housing Association)	
b. Low cost home ownership?	
c. Shared ownership? (part buy/part rent – through a Housing Association)	
d. Self build?	

D. Type and Location of Housing

Please complete the table below for anyone in your household needing to move with you:

Relationship to you e.g. partner, son, daughter	Age	Male/Female	Living with you now?	Would live with you in next home?
Yourself				

How many bedrooms would you need?

1 bed		3 bed		5 bed or more	
2 bed		4 bed			

Does anyone in the household wishing to move need the following? Please tick all that apply:

Access for a wheelchair	
Sheltered housing with a warden	
Residential care	
Accommodation on one level	
Help with personal care	
Other, please state	

Where do you need to live?

Please put in order of priority with ① by your first choice, ② = second and ③ = third choice.

Westleigh Parish		Marwood	
Heanton Punchardon		Other – please state	

E. North Devon District Housing Register

Is your household on North Devon District Council's Register?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This survey will help assess the level of local affordable housing need in your parish, however it is also important that if you consider that your household is in local affordable housing need, you ensure that your need is visible to all the relevant organisations by making sure you are on North Devon District Council's Housing Register - Devon Home Choice [the new, choice-based letting scheme]. It is essential to be registered in order to be considered for an affordable property, or receive an eventual offer of housing if suitable affordable housing is developed, or an existing property becomes available for which you meet the occupation criteria.

Address: North Devon Council
Civic Centre
North Walk, Barnstaple
Devon EX31 1EA
Telephone: 01271 327711
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm
E-mail: housingadvice@northdevon.gov.uk
Website: www.northdevon.gov.uk – housing link on home page.

F. Your Contact Details.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey form.

It would be very helpful if you could provide your contact details below. If a need is identified it may be necessary for the Rural Housing Enabler to stay in touch to ensure that you have the best chance of receiving an offer of housing if your need is verified. Initially a report will be prepared for the parish council based on the results of this survey. It is important to note that the report attempts to show general parish trends and the level of housing need within the parish and it is not our intention to identify particular households.

Once the report has been considered, if a need for affordable housing for local people is identified, it may be necessary to approach the District Council, Housing Association(s) and/or other agencies that can work towards the provision of such housing for the community. At that point, these organisations may need to access relevant needs information from your survey form. This information will only be available to the Rural Housing Project and other official agencies/organisations, for the purpose of providing local needs affordable housing.

Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone Number
E-mail Address