



# **DENSTONE**

# **HOUSING NEEDS**

# **SURVEY**

Midlands Rural Housing  
in partnership with  
East Staffordshire Borough Council,  
Trent & Dove Housing  
and Denstone Parish Council  
August 2010



Thank you to the  
residents of Denstone  
Parish for their help and  
support with this survey.



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## Executive Summary

Midlands Rural Housing completed a Housing Needs Survey in Denstone parish during May/June 2010, to assess the housing need in the parish. As well as requesting specific housing information, the survey asks some general questions relating to the quality of life in the parish.

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people. Affordable housing may be provided through both rental and shared ownership schemes and is for people with a strong connection to the parish.

Denstone is a sought after and desirable place to live. It is a popular and pleasant rural parish within easy reach of nearby towns and cities providing good employment, shopping and leisure opportunities.

Levels of home ownership are high and availability of rental properties is relatively low. Housing stock is largely family sized 3 -5 bedroom properties. There is clear evidence of a shortage of small starter homes.

Denstone's sought after position and low levels of small properties and rental stock inevitably lead to house prices being high and out of reach for local people on low incomes.

The housing needs survey has identified nine respondents claiming a need for affordable housing. All have close connections to the parish.

The resulting breakdown is:-

**4 x 2 bed houses for Homebuy**  
**3 x 1 or 2 bed houses for rent**

**1 x 3 bed house for rent**  
**1 x 4 bed house for rent**

**Our recommendation is that a mixed development of nine affordable dwellings should be considered to alleviate the current housing needs in Denstone.**

East Staffordshire Borough Council has not yet concluded its consideration of this report and how much new affordable housing is justified in Denstone parish.



## Introduction

Midlands Rural Housing works with local authorities and other partners to increase the availability of affordable homes for local people in rural areas. Rural parishes are those with a population of fewer than 3000 people. In 2005 MRH established the Trent Valley Partnership to work closely with authorities in the East Midlands region.

In September 2008 Trent Valley Partnership joined with Trent & Dove Housing and East Staffordshire Borough Council in order to enable the appropriate development of affordable housing in East Staffordshire Borough.

This needs study looks at the shortfall in housing in Denstone Parish. Denstone has a population of 1,031 in 355 households (2001 Census). 360 survey forms were produced for distribution to residents throughout the parish.

During May 2010, East Staffordshire Borough Council delivered a Housing Needs Survey form to every household in the parish. The closing date for responses was 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

### 1. Purpose of the Survey

The aim of the survey was to assess the housing need in the parish of Denstone, in order to provide East Staffordshire Borough Council with the information it requires to meet local housing needs.

### 3. Housing Costs

#### Property Values: Jan - Mar 2010 - East Staffordshire

	Av Detached	Av Semi	Av Terrace	Av Flat	Av Overall Price	No. Of Sales
<b>West Midlands</b>	£ 293,127	£ 153,191	£ 123,320	£ 111,073	£ <b>174,932</b>	9,908
<b>Staffordshire</b>	255,686	136,821	120,189	106,050	<b>171,180</b>	1,491
<b>East Staffordshire</b>	248,773	134,613	109,620	86,543	<b>155,126</b>	213

Source: Land Registry

The table above provides a comparison of the property prices across the West Midlands Region, the County of Staffordshire and East Staffordshire Borough. It shows that, overall, prices in East Staffordshire are lower than elsewhere in the region. A family wanting to purchase an average terrace house would need to be earning around £33,000 per annum to secure a mortgage.

Data from the Land Registry shows the following average house prices in Denstone Parish (Postcodes ST14 5D\*, 5H\*, 5P\*), based on sales between January 2008 and June 2010.

Detached - £285,833 (Based on 3 sales)

Semi-Detached – £167,928 (Based on 7 sales)

#### **Overall - £203,300 (Based on 10 sales)**

There have been no sales of terraced properties or flats recorded in the last ten years.

**As can be seen from a comparison with the previous table, house prices in Denstone are higher than in East Staffordshire as a whole and would be prohibitively expensive for people on low incomes.**



## 4. Affordable Housing in East Staffordshire

East Staffordshire Borough Council's Housing Strategy states that the Council is no longer a direct provider of affordable housing, but has a strategic and enabling role in its provision. The Council has established working partnerships with key stakeholders such as registered social landlords and currently, Trent & Dove Housing Ltd. manage the housing register on behalf of the Council. East Staffordshire Borough Council will work in partnership with Trent & Dove Housing and other Housing Associations to continue providing affordable housing in the borough.

The Borough Council has concluded, on the basis of Strategic Housing Market Assessment, that there is a borough-wide requirement for 169 new affordable homes per year.

The Borough Council states that it will use its planning powers to enable the development of new affordable housing and one of its strategic actions will be to conduct a rolling programme of Rural Housing Surveys.

## 5. Planning Context

Planning policy at national, regional and local levels imposes strict restraints on new housing development in rural areas. However, Borough Council policy does allow that where new housing would meet a specific, locally identified, need, there is the potential available to provide affordable housing on 'rural exception sites'. These are sites that would not normally be released for housing development.

Any affordable housing that may be provided on a 'rural exception site' would be subject to planning permission which has the effect of limiting occupation of the properties to local people on low incomes. Local people might be defined as including people who are:

- Continuously living in the parish for at least the last five years.
- Previously a resident of the parish for at least five years and with family (parent, child, brother or sister) currently living in the parish.
- With current or confirmed permanent employment in the parish.
- Needing to live locally to give support (i.e. care) to or be supported (i.e. cared for) by a family member (parent, child, brother or sister) currently living in the parish.

## 6. Respondents' Details

The following sections of this report detail the responses from the questionnaires distributed and returned during May/June 2010, in Denstone parish.

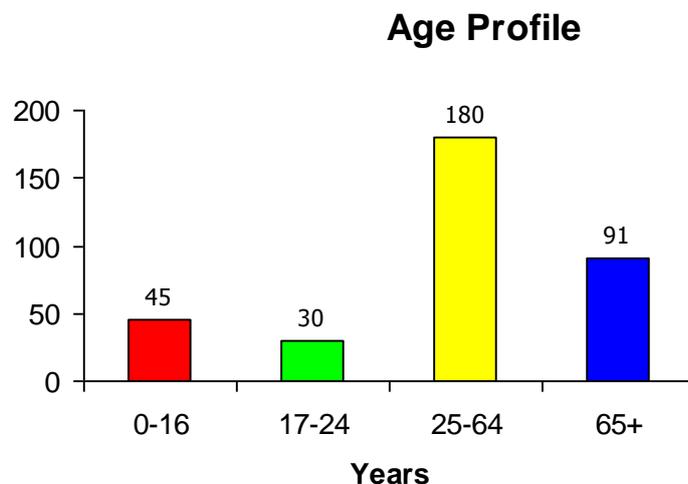
Respondents individual details have been kept confidential and any identifiable attributes have not been included in the results. Any comments that have been made may also have been edited so as not to identify individual circumstances.

The following results are a snapshot in time and provide the village and East Staffordshire Borough Council with an insight into the parish in terms of current housing need, the desirability of the village and the current level of facilities serving the local community.

A total of 143 survey forms were received giving a return rate of 40%. This is an excellent response, taking into consideration that only people who have a housing need or those who are interested in commenting on local matters are likely to respond.

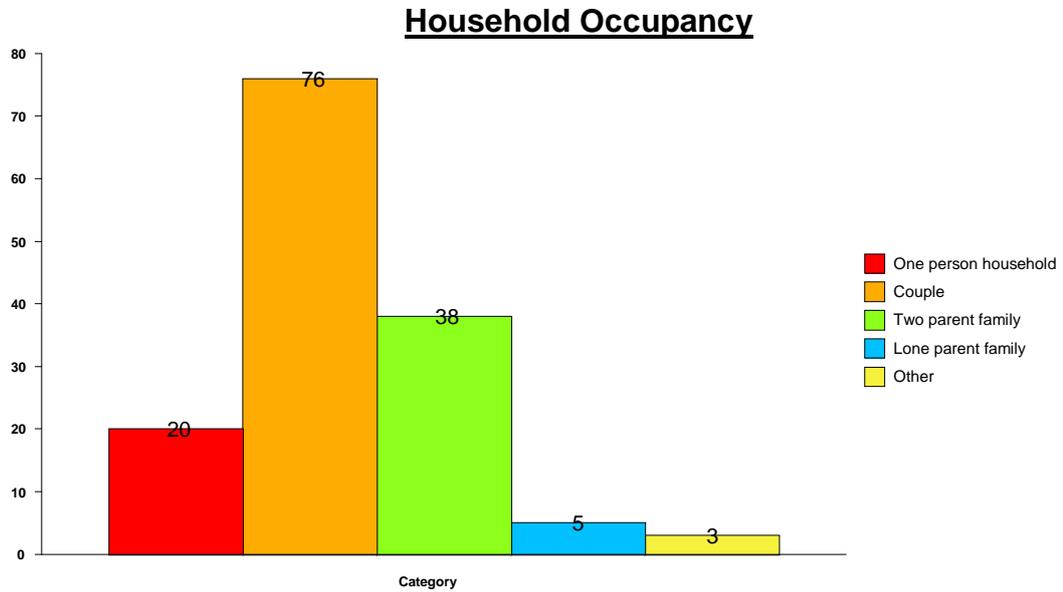
### 6.1. Age Profile

The chart below shows the age profile of the 346 people captured on the 143 survey forms returned. The responses show that the largest single group of the population in Denstone, representing 52%, are people between 25 and 64 years of age. Young adults represent almost 9% of the population and it is this group in particular who typically have difficulty finding affordable accommodation.



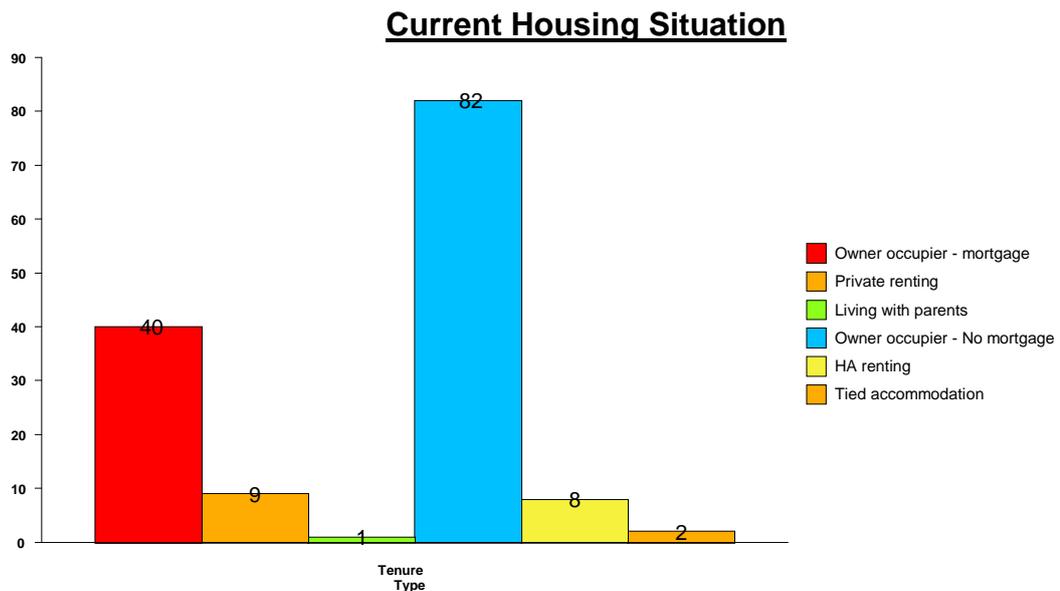
## 6.2. Household Size and Mix

The following chart shows the number of households in each size/mix category. 30% of households contain families with children, 68% of households contain singles or couples.



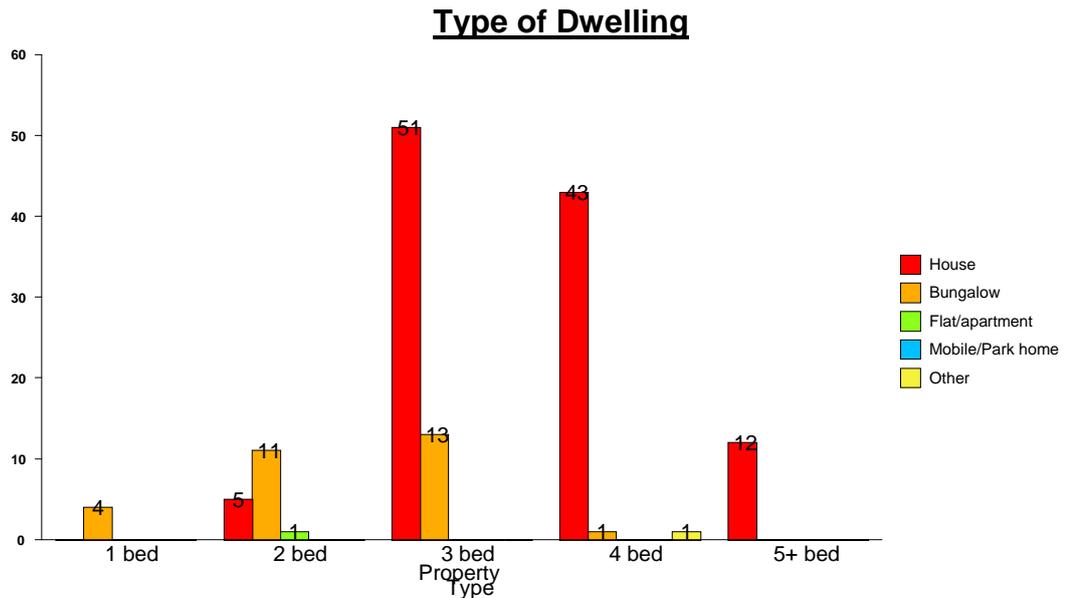
## 6.3. Tenure of all Respondents

The following chart shows current household tenure of all respondents. Owner-occupiers make up 86% of households. Rented accommodation makes up 12% of total households and is split almost equally between private and social renting.



## 6.4. Property Types

The following chart shows that the largest groups of respondents were occupants of 3 bedroom houses at 36%, followed by occupants of 4 bedroom houses at 30%. 1 and 2 bed properties make up almost 15% of respondents. The evidence shows these are mainly bungalows, suggesting that there may be a shortage of small starter homes in Denstone.



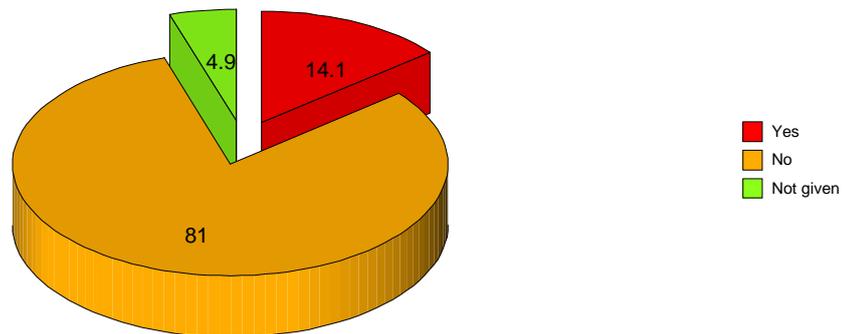
## 6.5. Ethnicity

Respondents' results showed that the majority of the demographic is White British. This corresponds to the recent Countryside Agency report which found that rural settlements had lower levels of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents than that of urban cores and that there were only 136,000 BME residents in rural areas throughout the country.

## 6.6. Migration

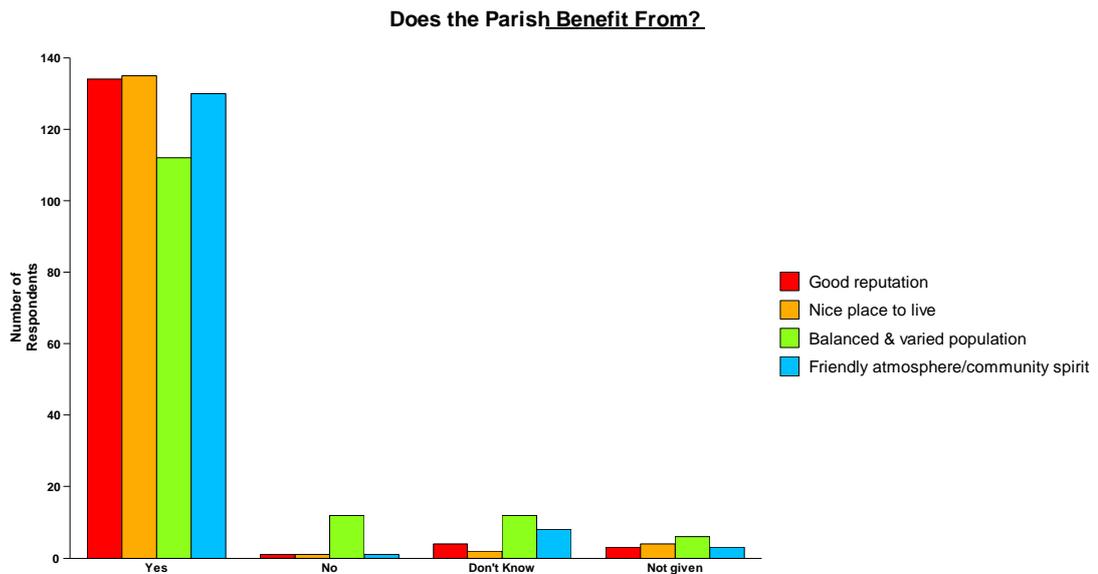
The chart below indicates that there have been a number of local people forced to move out of the village in order to secure suitable housing. 14.1% of respondents were aware of somebody who needed to move out to find affordable or suitable accommodation.

### **Migration - % of Respondents Aware of Leavers in Last 5 Years**

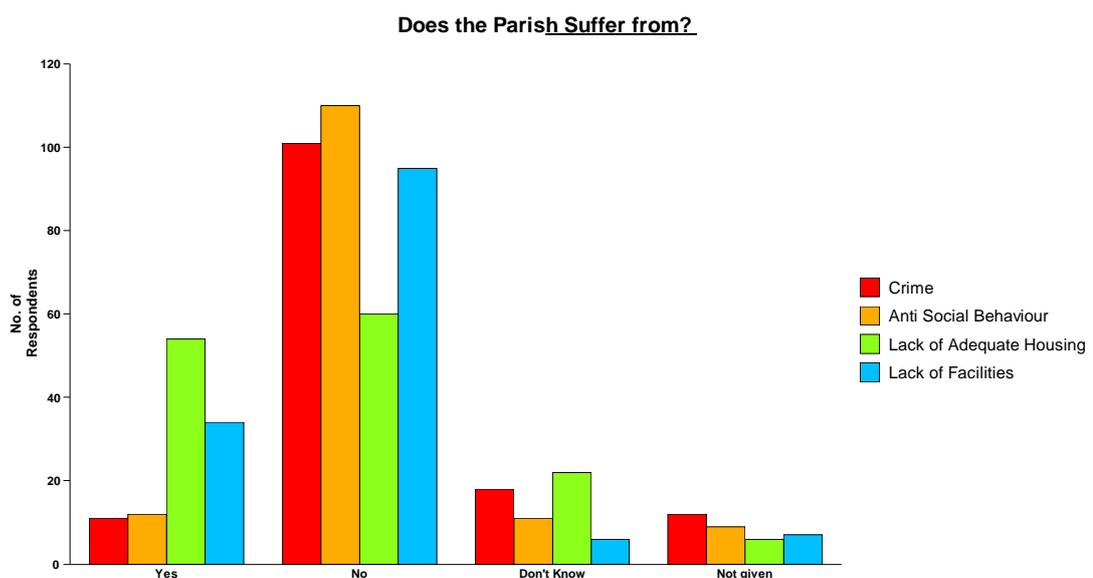


## 7. Sustainability Issues

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to the perceived advantages and disadvantages of living in Denstone. The purpose of these questions is to build-up a picture of life in the parish and to identify any issues that could form a threat to the long-term sustainability of the village. The following two charts detail respondents' answers, from which we can gain an indication whether any affordable housing provided in the village will be sustainable in the future, i.e. will people want to live there in the future?



From the chart above it can be seen that the vast majority of residents consider that Denstone has a good reputation, is a nice place to live, with a balanced and varied population and friendly community spirit.

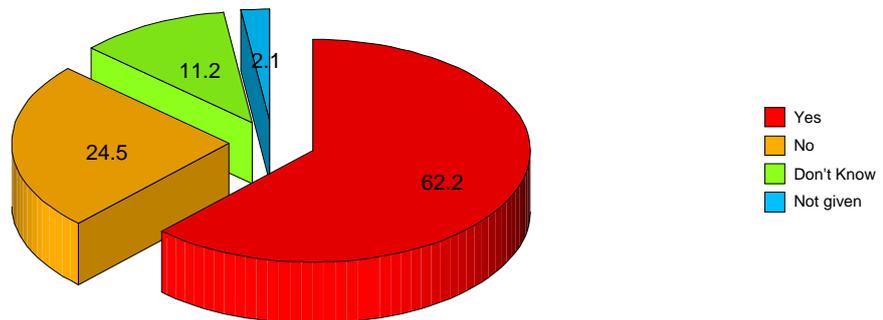


The second chart above shows that although very few respondents consider Denstone suffers from crime or anti-social behaviour, around 40% consider that there is a lack of adequate housing and around 25% think there is a lack of facilities.

## 8. Support for a Small Housing Development

The chart below shows the level of support for a small development of affordable homes for local people, being built in the parish. The chart shows there is a good level of support within the community at 62.2% in favour. Conversely, just fewer than 25% of respondents were against such a scheme.

**% In Favour of a Small Scheme**



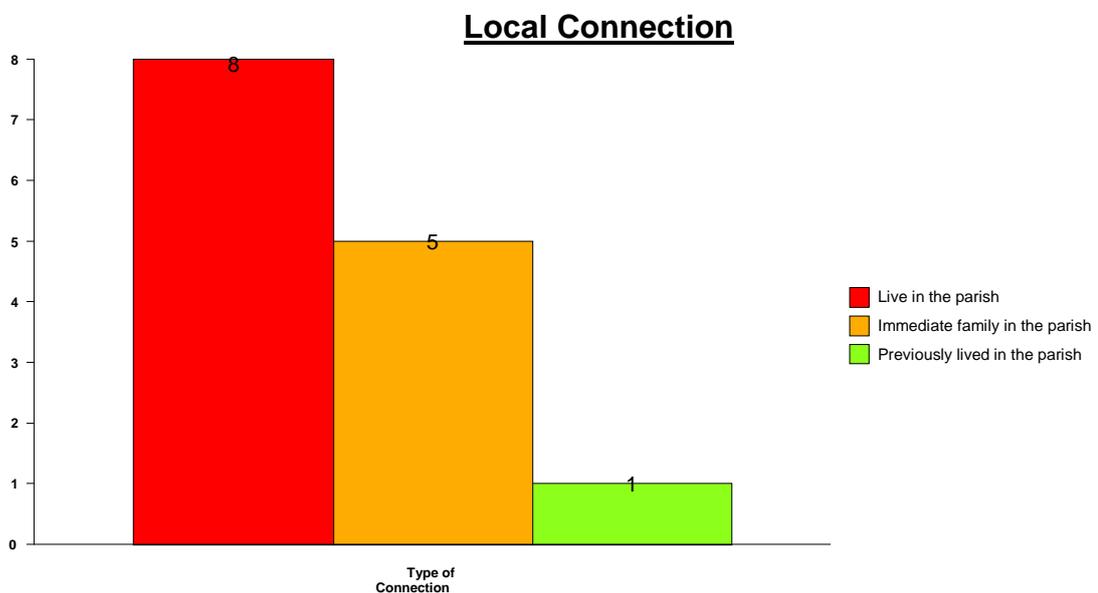
## 9. Housing Needs Analysis

Out of the 143 returns, 134 were from people who would be considered as adequately housed and would not be looking to move to alternative accommodation within the next 5 years. These respondents completed a survey form primarily to offer their support or objection towards a 'local needs' housing development, as well as to give their comments regarding the sustainability of Denstone and comment on its facilities. These were therefore discounted from the rest of the analysis.

Accordingly, as far as the requirement for affordable housing is concerned, there are 9 returns detailing a housing need.

### 9.1. Local Connection

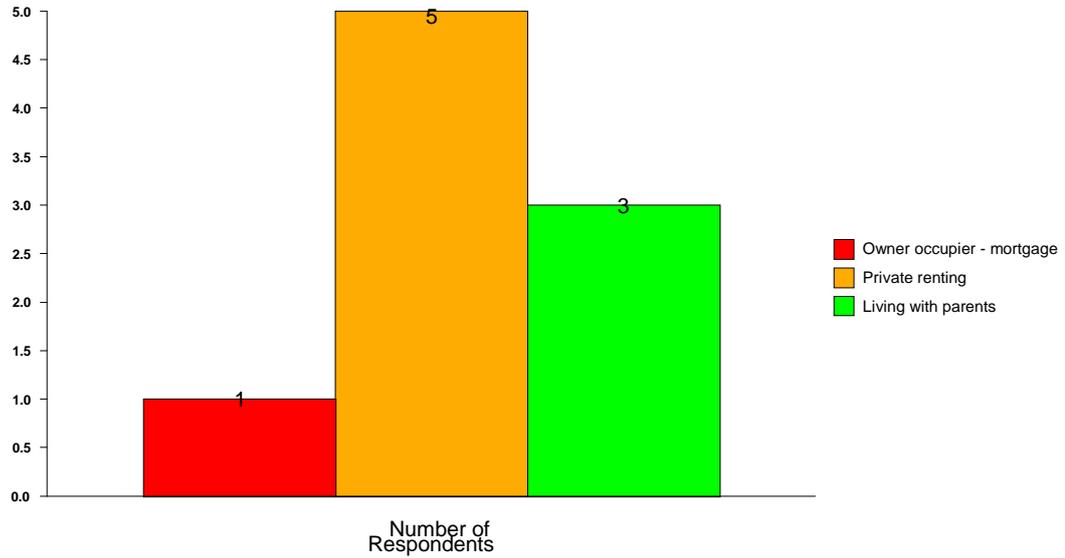
The graph below shows the type of local connection held by respondents with a specific housing need. There were 9 responses in total, 8 of whom are currently living in the village. 1 respondent is living out of the parish and has a need to live closer to immediate family living in Denstone.



## 9.2. Housing Tenure

The chart below shows the housing circumstances of respondents with a specific housing need.

**Housing Tenure - Respondents in Need**



### 9.3. Respondents in Need Details

The tables below list the respondents who have expressed a housing need, what type of housing they would prefer, and our assessment of their need.

#### **Single**

RESPONDENT	ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED	REALITY TENURE
Living with parents, requires independent accomm. within 2 years. Residency 14 years.	2 bed house. Homebuy.	2 bed house. Homebuy.
Living with parents, requires independent accomm. within 2 years. Residency 34 years.	2 bed house or bungalow. Homebuy.	2 bed house. Homebuy.

#### **Elderly**

RESPONDENT	ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED	REALITY TENURE
Single person living out of parish in privately rented property, needs independent accomm. close to immediate family. Family resident in parish for 15 years.	2 bed house. Rented.	2 bed house. Rented.
Couple living in 3 bed house, require smaller, cheaper accomm within 2 years. Residency 15 years.	2 bed house or bungalow. Rented.	2 bed house. Rented.

#### **Families**

RESPONDENT	ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED	REALITY TENURE
Lone parent with 4 children, living in privately rented property, require cheaper accomm. within 2 years. Residency 3 years.	4 bed house. Rented.	4 bed house. Rented.
Couple living in privately rented property, require cheaper accomm. and security of tenure. Residency 39 years and immediate family in the parish.	2 bed bungalow. Rented.	2 bed house. Rented.



Lone parent with 3 children, living in privately rented property, require cheaper accomm. within 2 years. Residency 11 years.	3 bed house. Rented or Homebuy.	3 bed house. Rented.
Couple living with parents, require independent accomm. closer to employment, within 2-5 years. Residency 31 years.	2 bed house. Homebuy.	2 bed house. Homebuy.
Family of 3, living in privately rented property, require cheaper, independent accomm. and change of tenure, within 2-5 years. Residency 4 years.	2 bed house. Rented or Homebuy.	2 bed house. Homebuy.

Therefore the housing needs derived directly from the survey are:

**4 x 2 bed houses for Homebuy**  
**3 x 1 or 2 bed houses for rent**

**1 x 3 bed house for rent**

**1 x 4 bed house for rent**



## 10. Numbers Registered on Waiting List

The East Staffordshire Housing Register (waiting list) has approximately 2200 people wanting social rented accommodation in the borough. Although most of these will not have a local connection to Denstone, the numbers give an indication of general demand for affordable housing.

No properties have become available in Denstone since choice based lettings became operational in East Staffordshire. However, a 2 bedroom house in Yoxall attracted 25 expressions of interest, indicating a strong demand for homes in rural areas.



## 11. Conclusions & Recommendations

Midlands Rural Housing, in partnership with East Staffordshire Borough Council, has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of the parish. This study has not only investigated the actual housing needs, but has also ascertained residents' views with regard to living in the village, and has identified the level of local support for a development to meet local needs.

Denstone is a rural parish situated midway between the towns of Uttoxeter, Cheadle and Ashbourne and within easy reach of the A50 which gives good access to Derby, Stoke on Trent, and national motorway networks. Employment, shopping and leisure opportunities are available locally at Rocester, Ashbourne and Uttoxeter. Denstone is a sought after and desirable place to live. Residents find it a pleasant, friendly village with a good community spirit.

There is a high level of owner-occupation. Only 6% of housing stock is available for private rental. A further 6% of housing stock is available for social rent. However, by its nature, this accommodation is not readily available due to the long-term nature of tenancies.

85% of housing stock is 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses. The remaining 15% of stock is mainly small bungalows for the elderly. There is clear evidence of a shortage of starter homes which is strongly supported by respondent comments in appendix B. Although 85% of properties are family houses, only 30% of households contain families with children. Almost 70% are occupied by single people and couples, which suggests a high level of under-occupation in larger properties.

All the above factors lead to house prices being higher than average and unaffordable for people on low incomes. 40% of respondents believe there is a lack of adequate housing in the parish and 14% know of people who have had to leave to find suitable housing elsewhere. 62% of respondents said they would support a small development of affordable housing.

The housing needs survey has identified nine respondents reporting a genuine need for affordable housing. Two are lone parent families requiring low cost family accommodation and seven are people requiring small, 2 bedroom homes. Several are young singles or couples who would like the opportunity to get on the housing ladder and have shown an interest in shared ownership (Homebuy). This closely reflects the findings outlined above.

**Our recommendation is that a mixed development of nine affordable dwellings should be considered to alleviate the current housing needs in Denstone.**

East Staffordshire Borough Council has not yet concluded its consideration of this report and how much new affordable housing is justified in Denstone parish.



## 12. Acknowledgements

Midlands Rural Housing would like to thank Mrs Jenny Richardson, Chair of Denstone Parish Council and Mr Bob Beaumont, Clerk to the Parish Council, for their time and help in carrying out this Housing Needs Survey.

## 13. Contact Details

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## Appendix A: Comments Regarding Facilities

The following is a list of comments and suggestions on general improvements to the quality of life in the parish, from several respondents to the Housing Needs Survey:

- The bus service would be adequate if it was reliable.
- Public transport could be better.
- Many people have worked hard, supported by the Parish Council, to provide extra facilities and services for young and old. There is a good community spirit.
- Denstone needs more shops, a garage and activities for all ages to keep people in the village.



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

The following comments were received from respondents and give a general indication of their concerns for and against an affordable housing scheme. A random selection of comments has been reproduced.

- There is a lack of affordable housing for young people and couples starting on the property ladder. Affordable housing is required for the elderly & disabled in the centre of the village.
- Lack of adequate starter homes. Too many new homes appear to be large executive style properties that are too expensive for local people.
- There is a lack of first time buyer properties. Denstone has too many executive houses and not enough small houses for first time buyers and pensioners.
- The parish has a good mix of all types of housing now. Denstone has numerous properties for sale – why build more?
- Allocation of housing association houses needs to be fairer. In the past, they have not been allocated to local people.
- Affordable housing is vital to maintain the age range and social mix.
- I'm sure the village has enough quality housing for our requirements. Denstone is a very desirable place to live due to its type of housing. I would not like to see any new houses built as described.
- A development such as this is not suitable for the community of Denstone. More housing will create a village like Rocester. Leave Denstone as it is, apart from providing more facilities.
- There is a need in the village for affordable housing (2 bed) suitable for 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers and retired people wanting to downsize but still remain in the village.
- I do not want affordable housing. Denstone's quality is its quietness. We have good quality people and do not want unemployed people, not suited to village life. Denstone will be ruined.
- Denstone is a wonderful place to live and there is a need to share what it offers with all groups. Presently it is very difficult for people on low incomes to establish themselves here. We hope all future developments will include affordable housing.