

A DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THORPE ARNOLD



PRODUCED BY
MIDLANDS RURAL HOUSING

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1. Summary

- A Housing Needs Survey was carried out in the Parish of Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold in June/July 2016.
- Results obtained showed there was a need in Thorpe Arnold village in the next 5 years for up to 0 affordable homes and 0 open market (sale) homes for local people enabling them to be suitably housed within the community.
- Where local needs affordable homes (elsewhere in the Parish) could be developed on a 'rural exception site'¹, if available, and subject to local support some open market sale homes could be used to cross-subsidise the affordable homes.
- The alternative to this is that the local homes that are needed are developed as part of a larger development if the opportunity arises and if the needs cannot be met by existing properties.
- The housing needs that have been identified, along with the potential ways to meet them if desired and necessary, will be explored further by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the Parish Council, the local community, Melton Borough Council and Midlands Rural Housing.

2. Introduction

Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) is one of the leading providers of rural housing services in the UK. MRH works with government organisations, developers, architects, builders, parish councils, local authorities, and housing providers to assess the needs for as well as enable access to excellent affordable homes in the Midlands. More details of the work of MRH can be found on the web site (www.midlandsrural.org.uk).

In Leicestershire, MRH works on behalf of a collaborative rural housing partnership. The Leicestershire Rural Housing Group is guiding the work of Midlands Rural Housing to assess and meet the housing needs of people in the villages of Leicestershire. Partners are focused on delivering affordable homes for local people and having a positive impact on our rural areas. The Group is a dedicated formal partnership between the County Council, six rural District and Borough Councils (including Melton Borough Council) and three Housing Associations who fund enabling work in Leicestershire to investigate housing needs and bring forward affordable housing schemes where they are needed. The Group also includes non funding organisations such as the Rural Community Council, National Housing Federation and the Homes & Communities Agency.

Melton Borough Council (MBC) instructed MRH to investigate the local housing needs of the residents of Thorpe Arnold, Leicestershire. This formed part of a rolling 5 year programme of Housing Needs Surveys that MBC have to understand the housing needs of its rural communities. MRH worked with the Parish Council to agree and arrange separate Housing Needs Surveys for the two villages of the Parish (Thorpe Arnold and Waltham on the Wolds).

¹ An exception site is a piece of land outside but touching the village boundary that can be developed as an exception to normal planning policy. Planning permission is only granted on sites where it has been demonstrated that housing is needed and the homes provided will be affordable and reserved for local people as a priority in perpetuity i.e. now and in the future.

3. Rural housing and the Housing Needs Survey

Average property prices in rural areas have increased more than urban areas in monetary terms over the past 5 years² forcing many local residents to move away from their towns and villages in order to find suitable and affordable homes. House prices in the countryside are now from £20,000 to £50,000 higher than in urban areas, despite average wages being lower.

The number of people on waiting lists for affordable homes in rural England has soared to around 750,000³. New household formation is outstripping supply by 3 to 1 (source: CLG). Increasing house prices and the limited availability of appropriate properties has resulted in local people being unable to find a home within their community and this may be happening in the Parish.

The Thorpe Arnold Housing Needs Survey questionnaires were delivered to every household in the village during June. The return date for the survey was 15th July and returns were made via a postage paid envelope directly to MRH. Survey forms were distributed to all households and businesses as well as to those who contacted MRH to say that they had moved away from the villages or had a strong connection to the Parish and wished to complete a form. In total 45 survey forms were distributed.

The Housing Needs Survey was conducted in order to obtain clear evidence of any local housing need for a range of housing tenures for Thorpe Arnold residents. This evidence will be made available to Melton Borough Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Group and the Parish Council; used to inform Housing Strategy; and provide clarity on what type and tenure of housing is required to meet local needs.

In addition, the information can be used positively in the planning process. It provides a foundation on which to negotiate 'planning gain' opportunities with developers. In short, it gives planners and parish organisations evidence that can be used to obtain an element of 'local needs' housing in negotiations with house builders, should such situations arise in the village.

The information obtained from a Housing Needs Survey is also invaluable at the local level, particularly in relation to local authority, parish council and neighbourhood planning activities. Such information can be acted upon locally and taken on board in the decision making process when housing issues arise.

² Halifax Rural Housing Review 2015 - "a house in a rural area costs £206,423 on average, which is 13 per cent more than the typical cost of a property in an urban area at £182,710."

³ National Housing Federation, Rural housing research report 2015

4. Conclusion

MRH has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of Thorpe Arnold village up to 2021. This study has not only investigated the affordable housing need of the Parish, but also the need for market rent level housing and open market housing.

The survey has identified no need for affordable or open market properties in the next 5 years, for those with a connection to Thorpe Arnold.

THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR 0 OPEN MARKET HOMES
AND 0 AFFORDABLE HOMES IN THORPE ARNOLD FOR THOSE
WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION

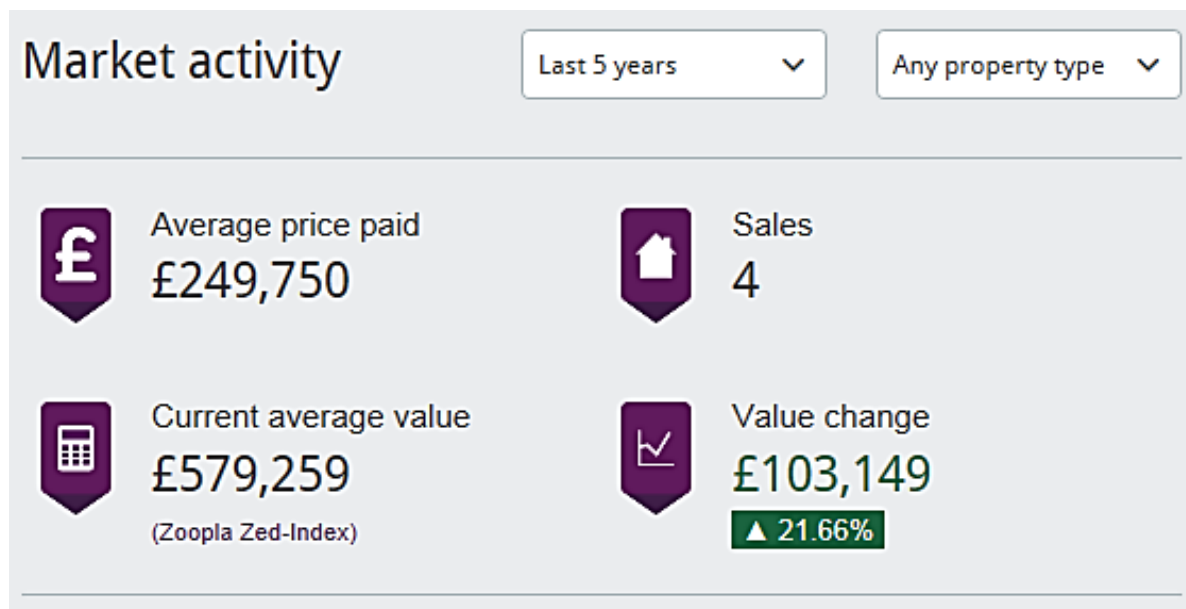
Appendix 1 - Housing Need Analysis

Of the 18 returns, all were from people who felt that they were adequately housed at present. These respondents completed a form primarily to offer their support, objection or thoughts towards 'local needs' housing and comments on life in the village. It was, therefore, not necessary to process these in the 'housing needs analysis' as they had not indicated a housing need for the next 5 years.

i) Respondent analysis

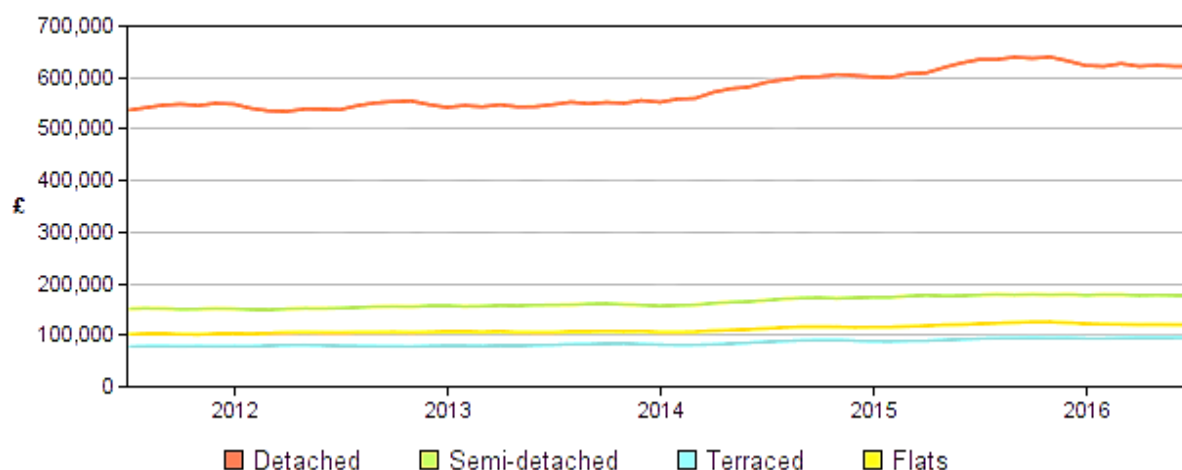
RESPONDENTS BELOW HAVE A NEED THAT IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS						
Ref	Local Connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Preferred home and tenure	Likely allocation / purchase
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

ii) House price trends



Property prices in the village have, overall, increased over the past 5 years. During that period prices have increased by an average of 21.66% (£103,149).

Value trends in Thorpe Arnold, Melton Mowbray



iii) Local context - properties for sale

By way of local context, the tables below shows prices of properties that were for sale or private rent in Thorpe Arnold in July 2016 (source: www.zoopla.com).

Current asking prices in Thorpe Arnold

Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	-	-	-	-	-
Flats	-	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	-	-	-

Current asking rents in Thorpe Arnold

Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	-	-	-	-	-
Flats	-	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	-	-	-

There are currently no properties for sale or rent in Thorpe Arnold.

iv) Local context - properties sold

Property value data/graphs for Thorpe Arnold

Property type	Avg. current value	Avg. £ per sq ft.	Avg. # beds	Avg. £ paid (last 12m)
Detached	£619,731	£262	4.3	-
Semi-detached	-	-	-	-
Terraced	£93,590	-	-	£104,000
Flats	-	-	-	-

Appendix 2 - Respondent details

A total of 45 survey forms were distributed and 18 were received in return, giving a return rate of 40% against the number distributed. In our experience this is a very good level of response for a survey of this type in a settlement of this size.

Given the total numbers of responses it was not felt worthwhile to display the analysis to all questions but some key findings are shown below.

i) Type of housing required in the village

Question 7 of the survey asked for opinions on the types of housing that respondents believe are needed in the village. The results are given in the chart below (fig 1.1):

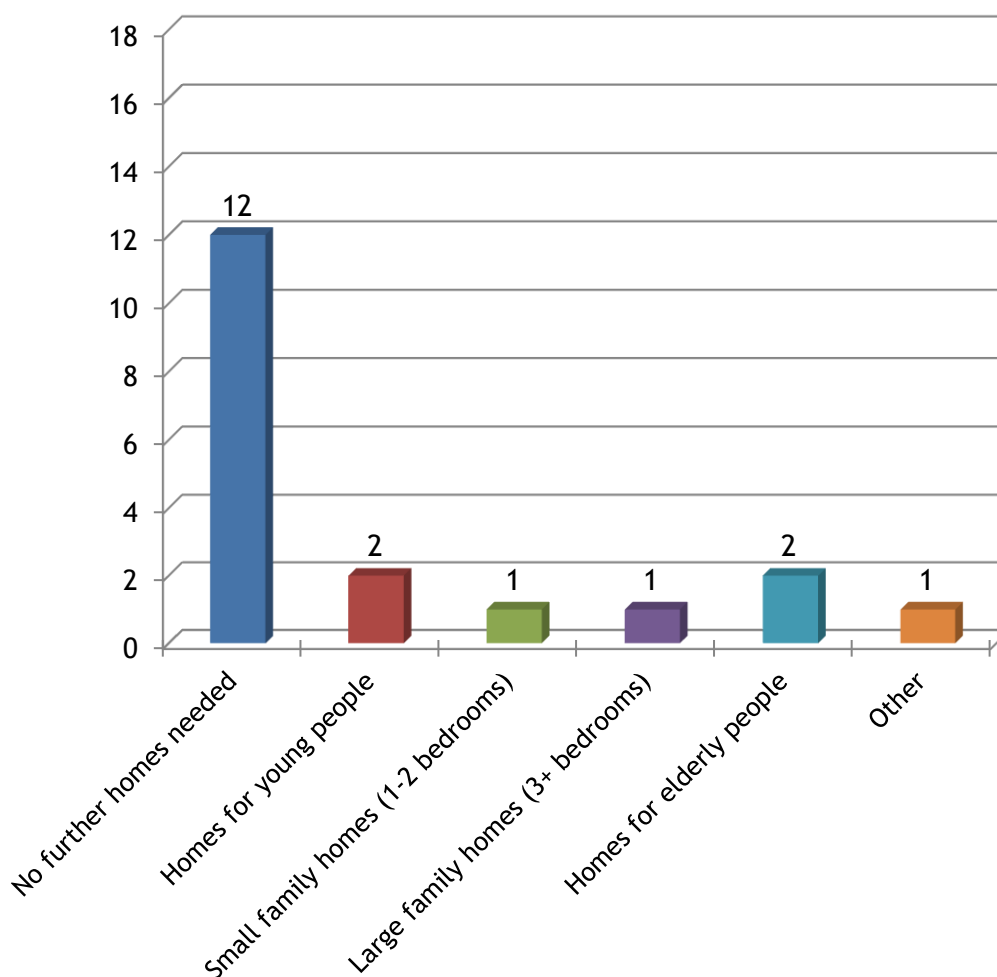


Fig 1.1 - Type of housing needed in the village

It should be noted that respondents were able to tick as many options as they felt appropriate, hence the total number is higher than the number of individual responses received.

Fig 1.1 shows that 56% respondents thought that no further homes were needed in Thorpe Arnold.

Of those that believed more homes were needed, the most popular choice was homes for young people.

ii) **Tenure of all respondents**

The current household tenure of respondents was asked at question 3 and the results are given in the chart below (fig 1.2):

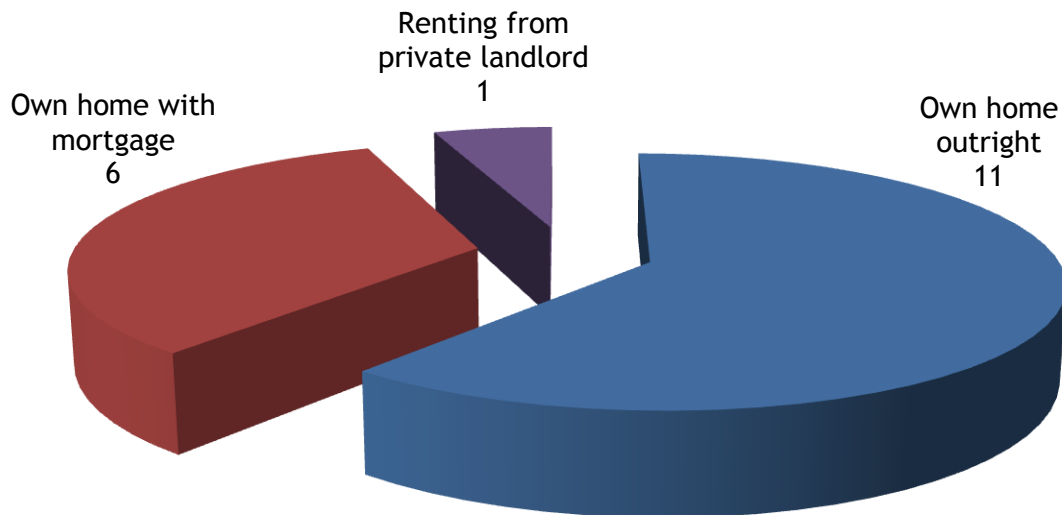


Fig 1.2 - Tenure of respondents

It shows that private renters were the largest tenure group accounting for 63% of responses.

The second largest number of responses were from 'owner-occupiers' (31%) with 6% of responses coming from those whose home is tied to their job.

iii) Support for small number of homes to meet local peoples' needs

A fundamental question in the survey was question 9 which asked whether people are in favour of a small number of new homes in the village to meet the needs of local people.

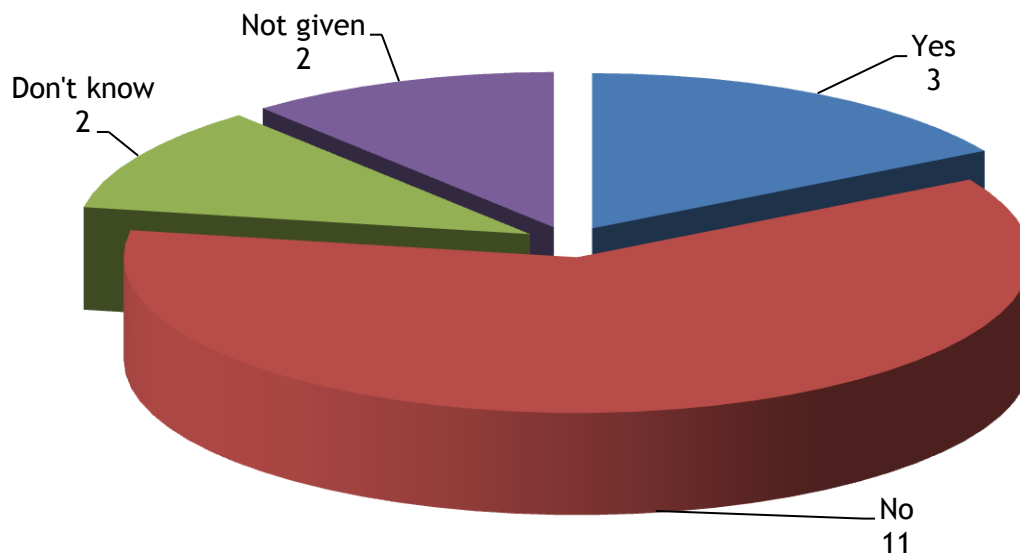


Fig 1.3 - Support for homes for local people

Fig 1.3 shows that half of respondents are in support of a small number of homes to meet local peoples' needs, while half said that they are not in support.

Comments from those against the development of any homes related mainly to concerns around the strain on existing services and infrastructure and the feeling that the village is big enough already.

iv) Comments on life in the village

Respondents were positive about life in Thrope Arnold, with 72% believing that it is a nice place to live. 50% felt that it has a friendly atmosphere and community spirit.

The main negative to come through the comments received was around the problems with speeding traffic.

Appendix 3 - Contact information

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