

# A DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF SOMERBY



PRODUCED BY  
**MIDLANDS RURAL HOUSING**

**APRIL 2016**



# CONTENTS

1.	SUMMARY	2
2.	INTRODUCTION	2
3.	RURAL HOUSING AND THE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY	3
4.	CONCLUSION	4
	<b>APPENDIX 1 - HOUSING NEED ANALYSIS</b>	<b>5</b>
	i)    RESPONDENT ANALYSIS	5
	ii)   HOUSE PRICE DATA	9
	iii)  LOCAL CONTEXT - FOR SALE	10
	iv)   LOCAL CONTEXT - SOLD	10
	<b>APPENDIX 2 - RESPONDENT DETAILS</b>	<b>11</b>
	i)    HOUSEHOLD TYPE	11
	ii)   TENURE	12
	iii)  PROPERTY TYPE	13
	iv)   LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN PARISH	14
	v)    TYPE OF HOUSING REQUIRED IN THE PARISH	15
	vi)   REQUIREMENT FOR NEW HOMES	16
	vii)  MIGRATION AND REASONS FOR LEAVING	17
	viii) SUPPORT FOR HOMES TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS	18
	ix)   LIFE IN THE VILLAGE	19
	x)    ADEQUATE HOUSING IN THE VILLAGE	22
	<b>APPENDIX 3 - CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	<b>23</b>

## 1. Summary

- A Housing Needs Survey was carried out in the Parish of Somerby in March-April 2016.
- Results obtained showed there was a need in the next 5 years for up to 14 affordable homes and 5 open market (sale) homes for local people enabling them to be suitably housed within the community.
- Local needs affordable homes could be developed on a 'rural exception site'<sup>1</sup>, 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, Somerby 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](http://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 Somerby, 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 the Housing Needs Survey of the Parish (which comprises the villages of Burrough on the Hill, Leesthorpe, Pickwell and Somerby).

<sup>1</sup> 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 years<sup>2</sup> 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 750,000<sup>3</sup>. 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 Somerby Housing Needs Survey questionnaires were delivered to every household in the Parish at the beginning of March. The return date for the survey was 4<sup>th</sup> April 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 381 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 Somerby residents. This evidence will be made available to Melton Borough Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Group and Somerby 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> National Housing Federation, Rural housing research report 2015

## 4. Conclusion

MRH has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of Somerby Parish 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 a need for affordable and open market properties in the next 5 years, for those with a connection to Somerby.**

Of the 10 respondents who indicated a housing need in the next 5 years:

- **5 were assessed as being in need of open market housing (for local people) to purchase**
  - 1 x 3 Bed house - open market purchase
  - 4 x 2 Bed bungalow - open market purchase
- **5 were assessed as being in need of affordable housing for rent and shared ownership**
  - 1 x 1 Bed bungalow - affordable rent
  - 1 x 1 Bed flat - affordable rent
  - 2 x 2 Bed house - shared ownership
  - 1 x 1 Bed house - shared ownership

These results were cross referenced with the Melton Borough Council Housing Register. Respondents to the Housing Needs Survey who were also on the Housing Register were not analysed again (so no double counting has taken place), and there were a further 9 households who have been assessed as being in housing need who feature on the Housing Register but did not complete a Housing Needs Survey questionnaire. These households all have a connection to Somerby Parish and their housing needs are as follows:

- **9 were assessed as being in need of affordable housing:**
  - 2 x 1 Bed bungalow - affordable rent
  - 3 x 2 Bed house - affordable rent
  - 3 x 3 Bed house - affordable rent
  - 1 x 4 Bed house - affordable rent

**THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR**  
**5 OPEN MARKET HOMES AND 14 AFFORDABLE HOMES**  
**IN SOMERBY PARISH FOR THOSE WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION**

## Appendix 1 - Housing Need Analysis

Of the 128 returns, 116 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

The following table lists details of the 12 respondents who stated that they are in housing need in the next 5 years as well as those assessed as being in need on MBC's Housing Register. Respondents were asked to identify what they felt is needed in terms of property type and size together with a preferred tenure type. In reality it may not be possible to meet the aspirations of each respondent. Incomes and likely property prices are considered in order to ensure that any proposed future homes would indeed meet the needs of those to be housed. Therefore a 'likely allocation/purchase' is suggested to outline realistic provision.

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
11	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Elderly couple living in own house	Present home too expensive, too large, cannot manage stairs	2 / 3 bed bungalow - Open market purchase	2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase
20	Yes 2-5 years residency	No	Family with 2 children, living in an affordable rented house	Present home too small	2 bed house / bungalow - Affordable rented	N/A - Already satisfactorily housed



Ref	Local Connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Preferred home and tenure	Likely allocation
27	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Parents and 2 adults in own house	Couple setting up home together	3 bed house / bungalow - Open market purchase / private rented / shared ownership	2 bed house - Shared ownership
41	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Family with 1 child, living in privately rented house	Renting but would like to buy	2 / 3 bed house - Open market purchase / shared ownership	2 bed house - Shared ownership
44	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Couple living in own house	Present home too large	3 bed house - Open market purchase	3 bed house - Open market purchase
65	Yes 2-5 years residency	No	Single person living in privately rented house	Present home too expensive, renting but would like to buy, to be closer to work	1 / 2 bed house / bungalow - Open market purchase / shared ownership	1 bed house - Shared ownership
74	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Single person living in own house	Present home too large.	3 bed bungalow - Open market purchase	2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase
79	Yes 2-5 years residency	No	Two adults living in privately rented house	Family break-up	1 bed house / flat - Affordable rented	1 bed flat - Affordable rented

Ref	Local Connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Preferred home and tenure	Likely allocation
82	Yes 5-10 years residency	No	Couple lodging with another household	Present home too small, renting but would like to buy, cannot manage stairs	2 / 3 bed bungalow - Open market purchase	2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase
84	Yes 5-10 years residency	No	Single, elderly person, living in privately rented house	Cannot manage stairs	1 / 2 bed bungalow - Affordable rented	1 bed bungalow - Affordable rented
94	Yes 10+ years residency	No	Elderly couple living in own house	Present home too large	2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase	2 bed bungalow - Open market purchase

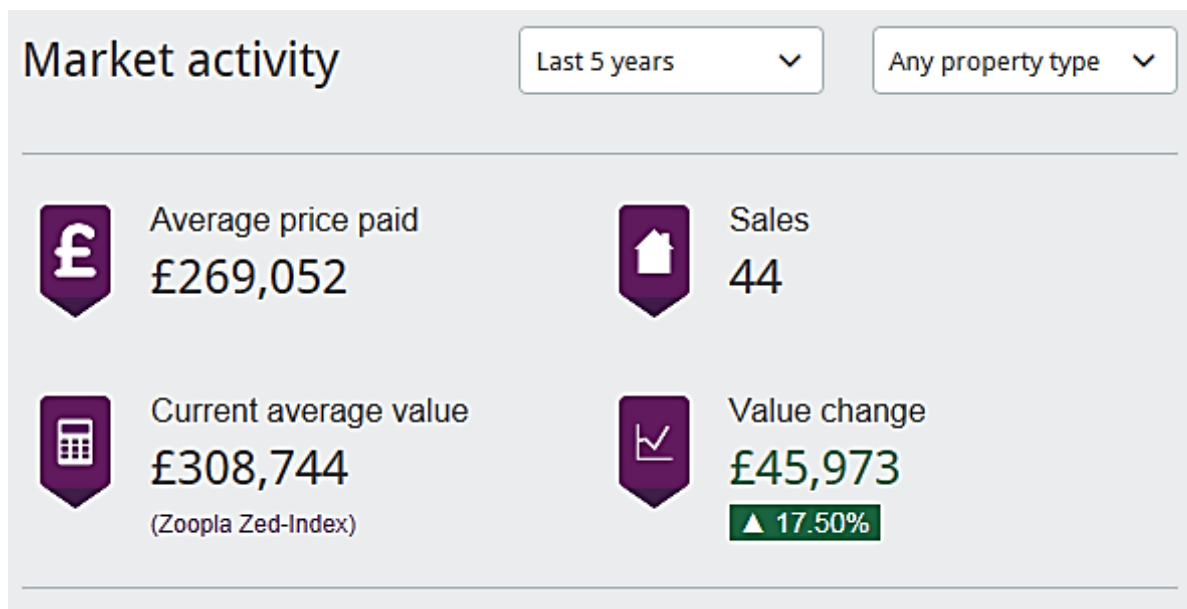
**RESPONDENTS THAT DID NOT COMPLETE A SURVEY FORM BUT ARE ON MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S HOUSING REGISTER AND HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AS BEING IN IMMEDIATE HOUSING NEED**

	Local Connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Likely allocation
LA 1	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Privately renting	2 bed house - affordable rented
LA 2	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Affordable renting - unsuitable	3 bed house - affordable rented



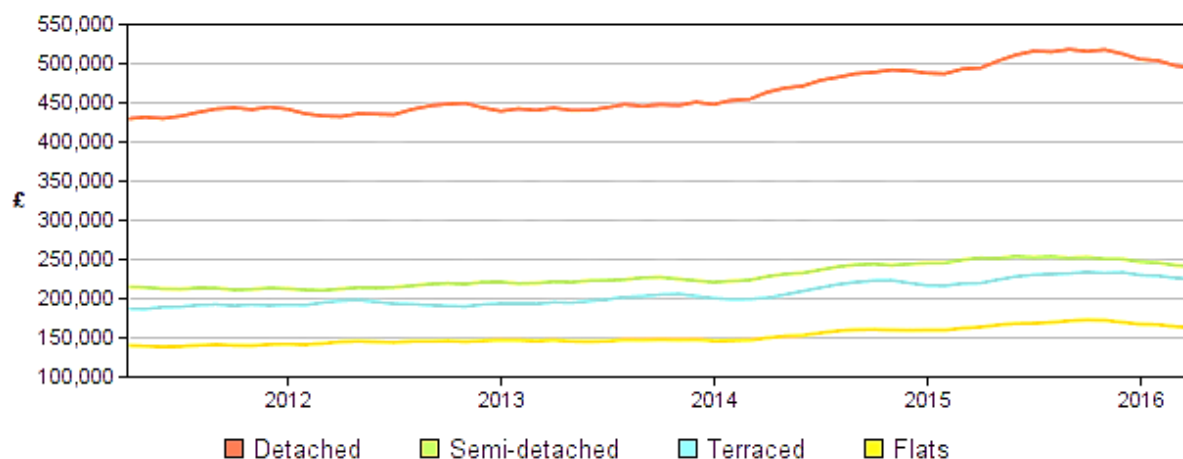
	Local Connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Likely allocation
LA 3	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Private home	2 bed house - affordable rented
LA 4	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Affordable renting - unsuitable	2 bed house - affordable rented
LA 5	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Affordable renting - unsuitable	3 bed house - affordable rented
LA 6	Yes	Yes	Family with children	Affordable renting - unsuitable	4 bed house - affordable rented
LA 7	Yes	Yes	Single person (60+)	Affordable renting - unsuitable	1 bed bungalow - affordable rented
LA 8	Yes (Burrough)	Yes	Family with children	Affordable renting - unsuitable	3 bed house - affordable rented
LA 9	Yes (Burrough)	Yes	Couple (60+)	Private renting	1 bed bungalow - affordable rented

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 17.5% (£45,973).

**Value trends in Somerby, 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 Somerby in April 2016 (source: [www.zoopla.com](http://www.zoopla.com)).

#### Current asking prices in Somerby, Leicestershire

Average: **£339,633**

Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	-	-	£229,950 (1)	£289,000 (1)	£499,950 (1)
Flats	-	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	£229,950 (1)	£289,000 (1)	£499,950 (1)

#### Current asking rents in Somerby, Leicestershire

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

There are currently only three properties for sale (the 'cheapest' asking price is £229,950) and none for rent in Somerby.

### iv) Local context - properties sold

#### Property value data/graphs for Somerby, Leicestershire

Property type	Avg. current value	Avg. £ per sq ft.	Avg. # beds	Avg. £ paid (last 12m)
Detached	£492,952	£218	4.1	-
Semi-detached	£239,969	£213	3.2	£225,000
Terraced	£223,860	£195	2.9	£239,375
Flats	£161,991	-	-	£170,000

Affordability is calculated using a mortgage multiplier of 3.5 times household income with a 20% deposit.

The average property price for actual sales since March 2015 (total 6 sales) can be seen on the right hand column of the chart above. Based on the affordability criteria explained above, to purchase a semi-detached house at the average price paid since March 2015 (£225,000) would require a deposit of £45,000 and income in excess of £51,000 per annum.

## Appendix 2 - Respondent details

A total of 381 survey forms were distributed and 128 were received in return, giving a return rate of 34% against the number distributed. In our experience this is a good level of response for a survey of this type in a settlement of this size.

### i) Household type

Question 1 of the questionnaire asked village residents to indicate the type of household they are.

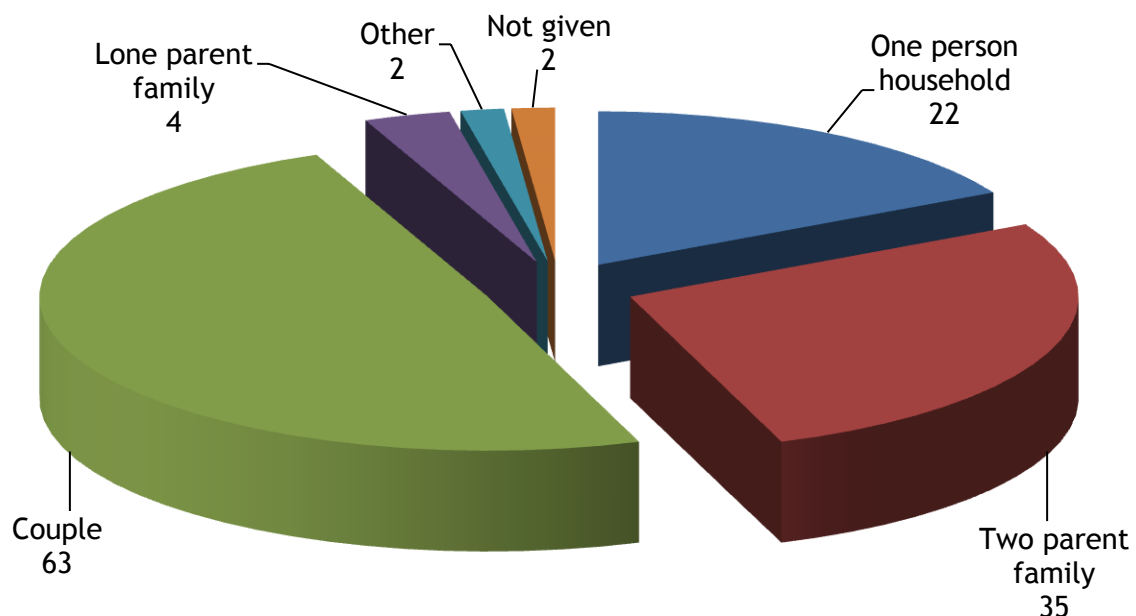


Fig 1.1 - Household type

The chart above (fig 1.1), shows the breakdown of households that responded to the survey.

The largest number of responses was from households containing couples; 49% of total responses were from this group.

27% of responses came from two parent families; 17% from one person households and 3% from lone parent families.

## 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):

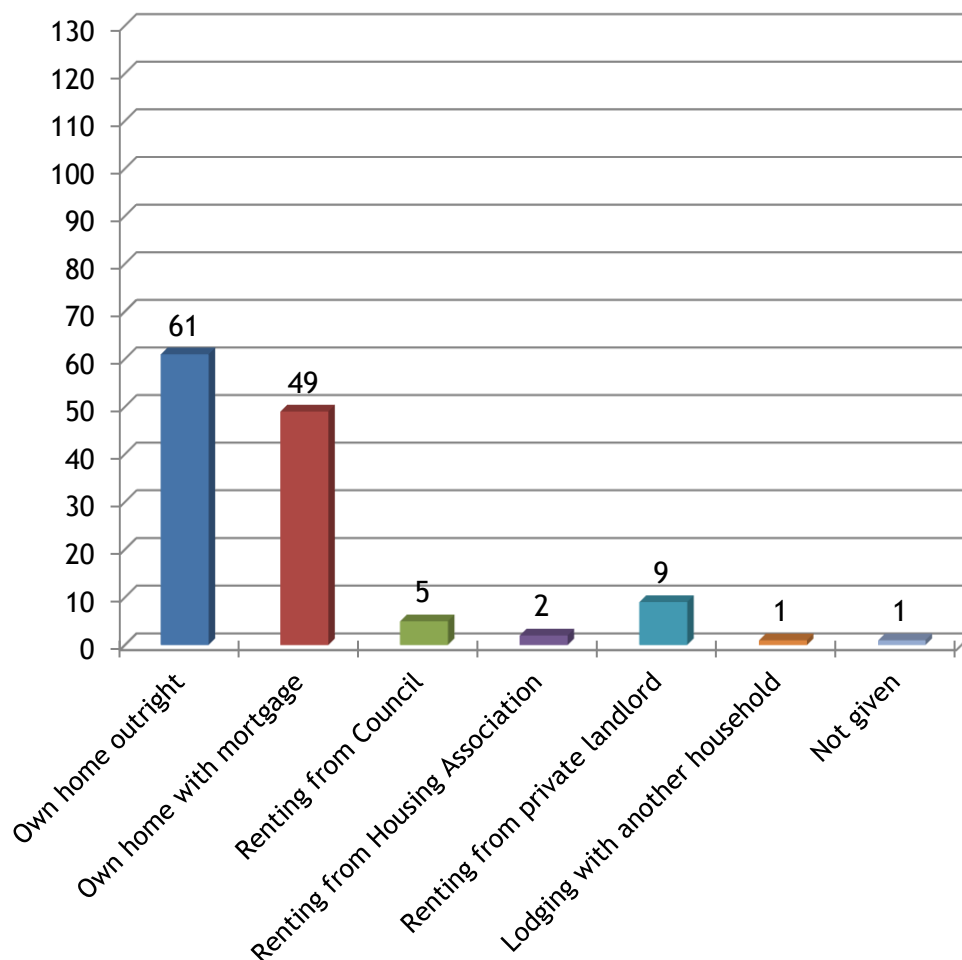


Fig 1.2 - Tenure of respondents

It shows that 'owner-occupiers' were by far the largest tenure group accounting for 86% of replies (48% of total survey respondents owned their home outright and have no outstanding mortgage on their property and 38% have a mortgage on their home).

13% of respondents live in rented accommodation (5% rent from Council/Housing Association and 8% rent privately).

### iii) Property Types

Questions 4 and 5 asked about size and type of home. The following chart (fig 1.3) details the type of property that respondents currently reside in:

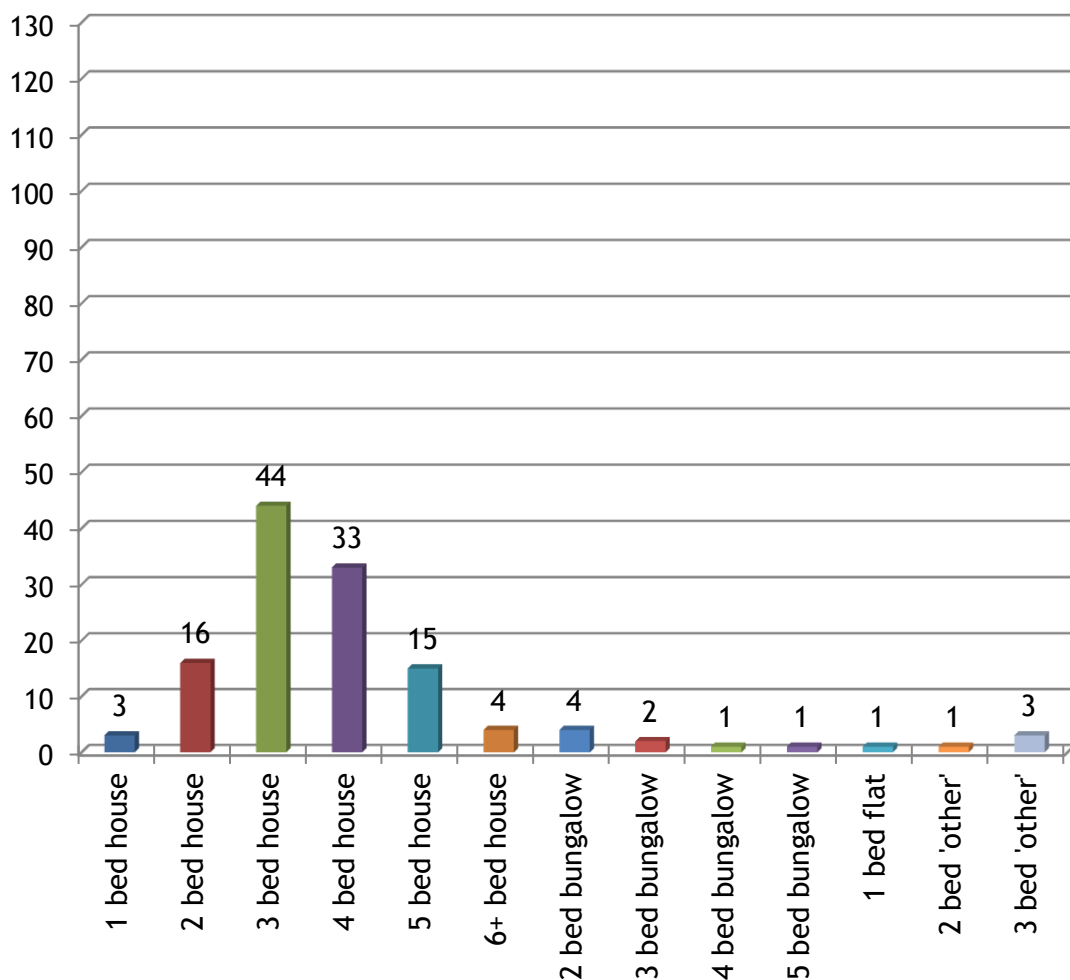


Fig 1.3 - Property types

Fig 1.3 shows that 82% live in a house and 16% live in a bungalow.

Those living in 3 bedroom houses were the largest group (34%), followed by those living in 4 bedroom houses (26%), 2 bedroom houses (13%), and 5 bedroom houses (12%).

iv) Length of residence in village

The length of time that respondents have lived in Somerby was asked at question 6. The responses are given in the chart below:

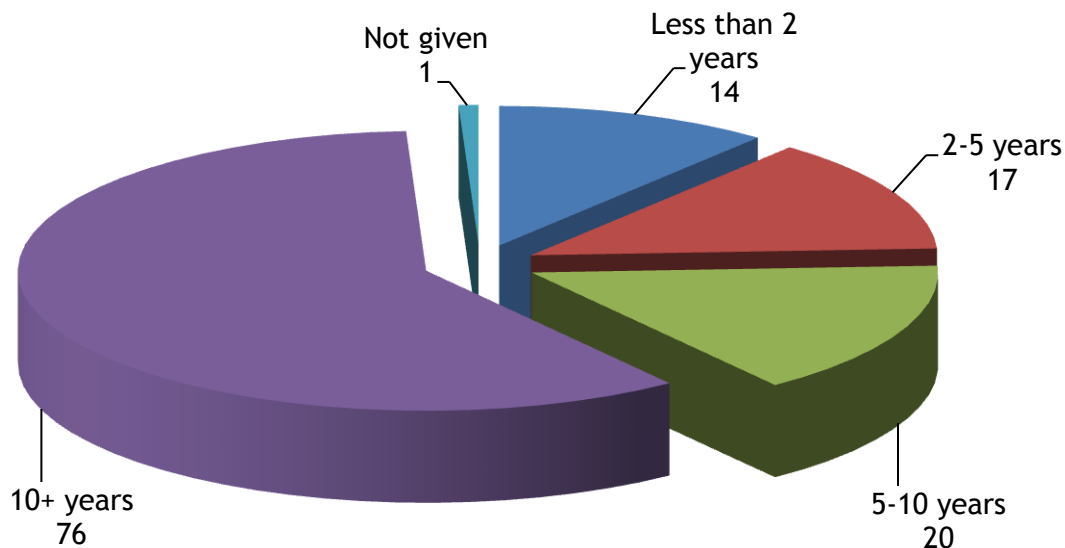


Fig 1.4- Length of residence in village

Fig 1.4 shows that of 59% completed surveys came from households that have lived in the village for over 10 years.

16% of respondents have lived in Somerby for between 5 and 10 years, 13% have been there for between 2 and 5 years and 11% of responses came from those who have lived in the village for less than 2 years.



v) **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 1.5):

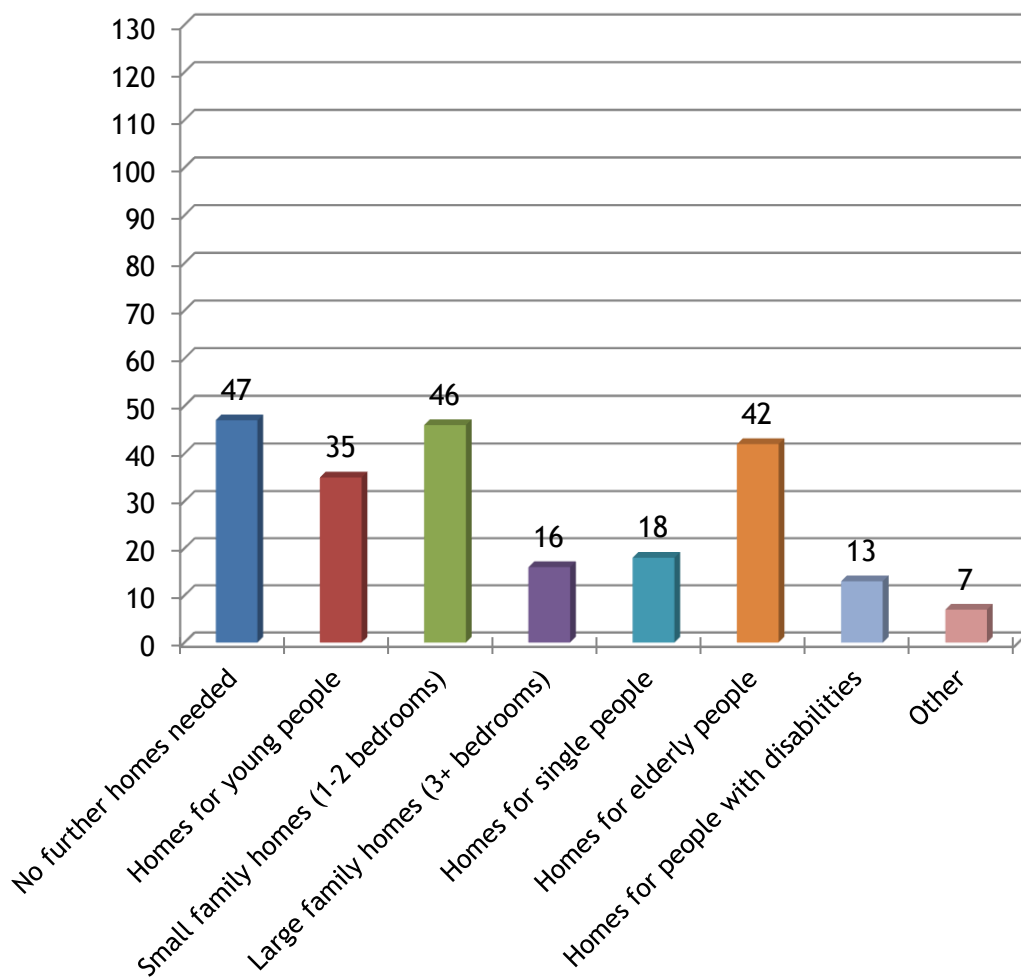


Fig 1.5 - Type of housing needed in the village

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 1.5 shows that 37% of respondents thought that no further homes were needed in Somerby.

Of those that believed more homes were needed, the most popular choices were:

- Small family homes (36%)
- Homes for elderly people (33%)
- Homes for young people (27%)

vi) Requirements for new homes

Respondents were asked at question 8 whether anyone living in their household has a need to set up home separately in the village in the next 5 years.

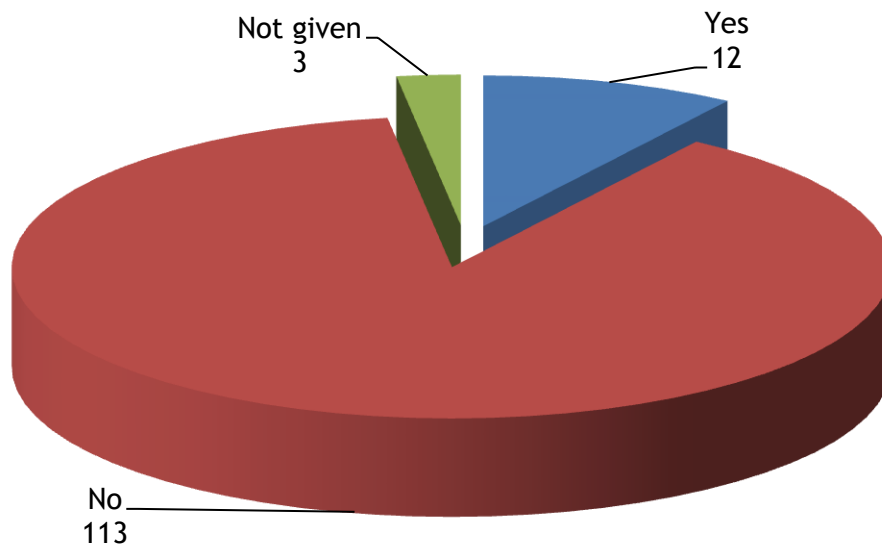


Fig 1.6 -New homes required from within household

It can be seen from fig 1.6, above, that only 9% of respondents felt that someone within their household has a need to set up a separate home in the village in the next 5 years. 85% of responses felt that this was not the case.

vii) Migration and reasons for leaving

Question 8 also asked whether respondents had experienced former members of their household leaving the village over the last 5 years and, if so, what the reasons were for them leaving.

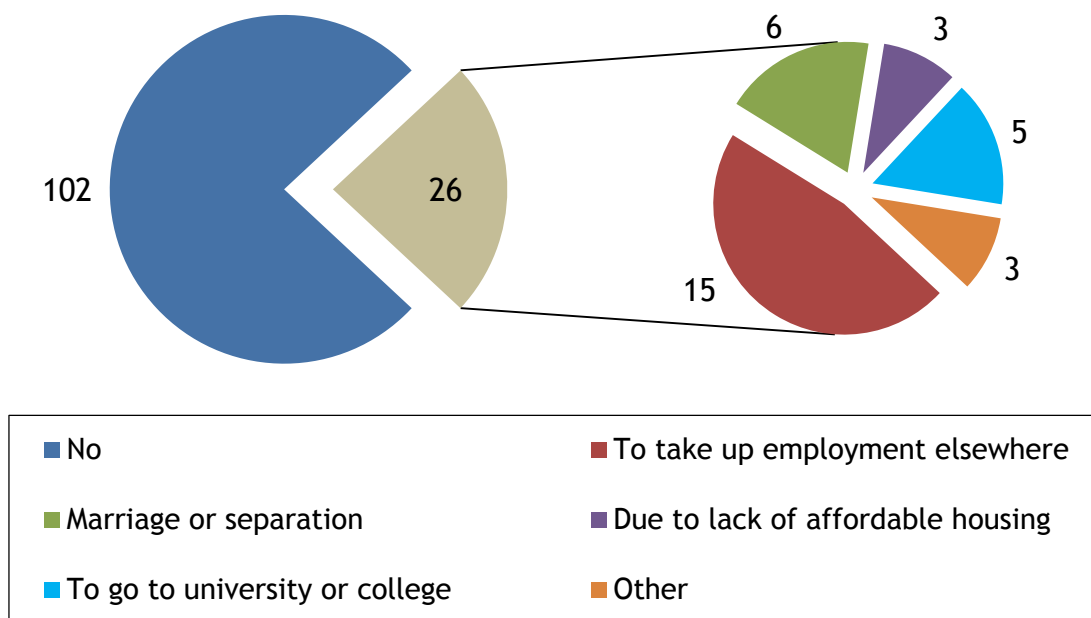


Fig 1.7 - Migration and reasons for leaving

Fig 1.7 shows that 20% of village residents who returned questionnaires were aware of other household members who have had to leave the Parish in the last 5 years.

The reasons for members of the households leaving can be seen in the chart above and it is worth noting that 3 cases involved a lack of affordable housing.

viii) 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.

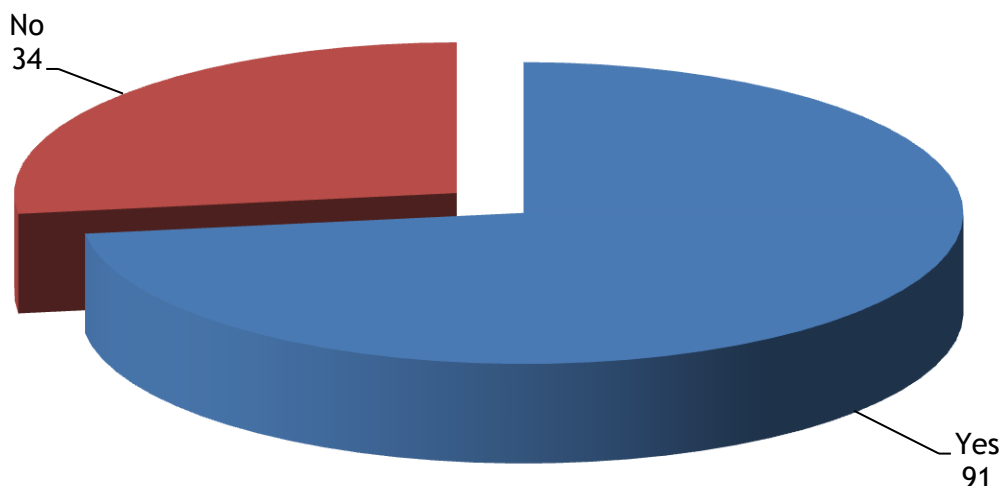


Fig 1.8 - Support for homes for local people

Fig 1.8 shows that 71% of respondents are in support of a small number of homes to meet local peoples' needs, while 27% said that they are not in support. 2% did not provide an answer to this question.

Of the 34 respondents who answered 'no' (27%) any reasons specified are shown below.

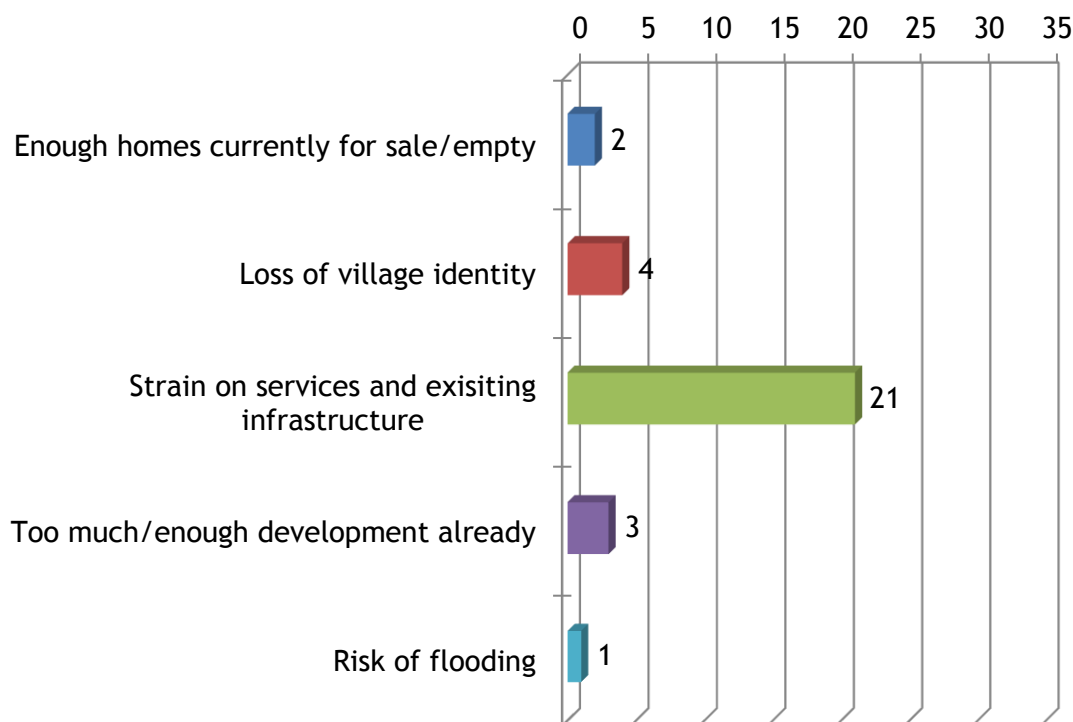


Fig 1.9 - Concerns over new homes being built

It can be seen that the main concerns are focussed on the strain on infrastructure and services.

ix) Life in the village

The following two charts detail respondents' answers to the 'life in the village' questions.

The views expressed allow a picture of life within the village to be built up. This information can help assess whether a village can be considered desirable and sustainable. Ensuring that people will want to take up residency and live in a village both now and in the future are important factors when considering the provision of new homes.

The first question (question 19) asked village residents which of the 'positive' factors of life in the village best described Somerby.

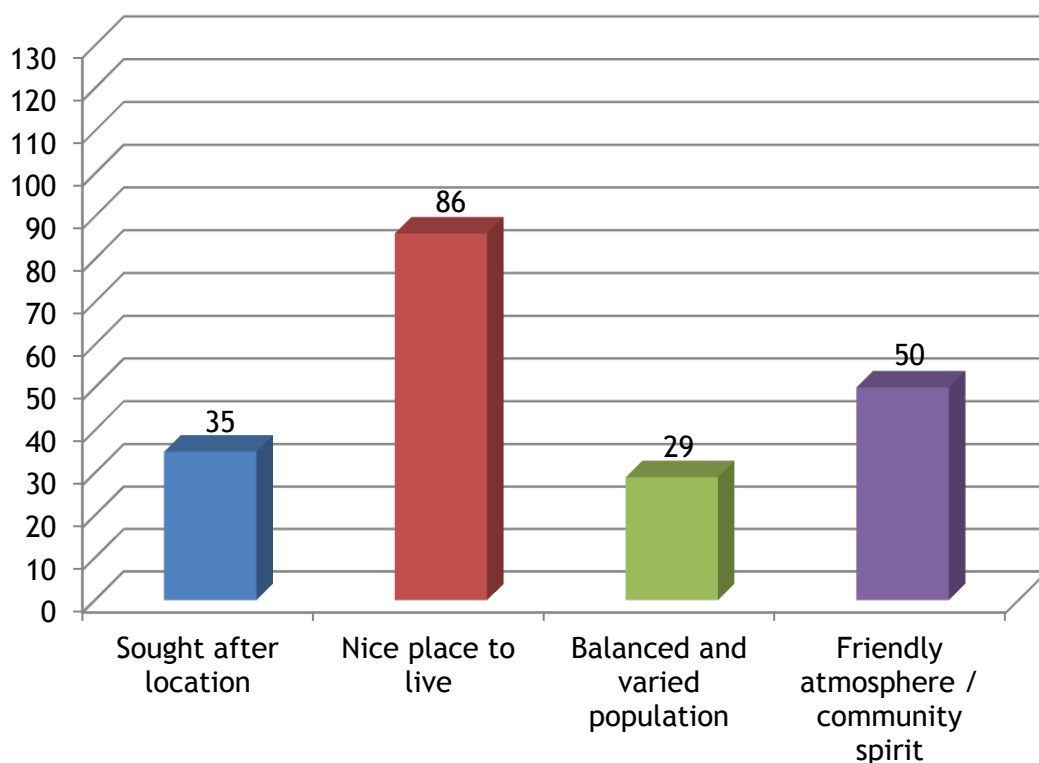
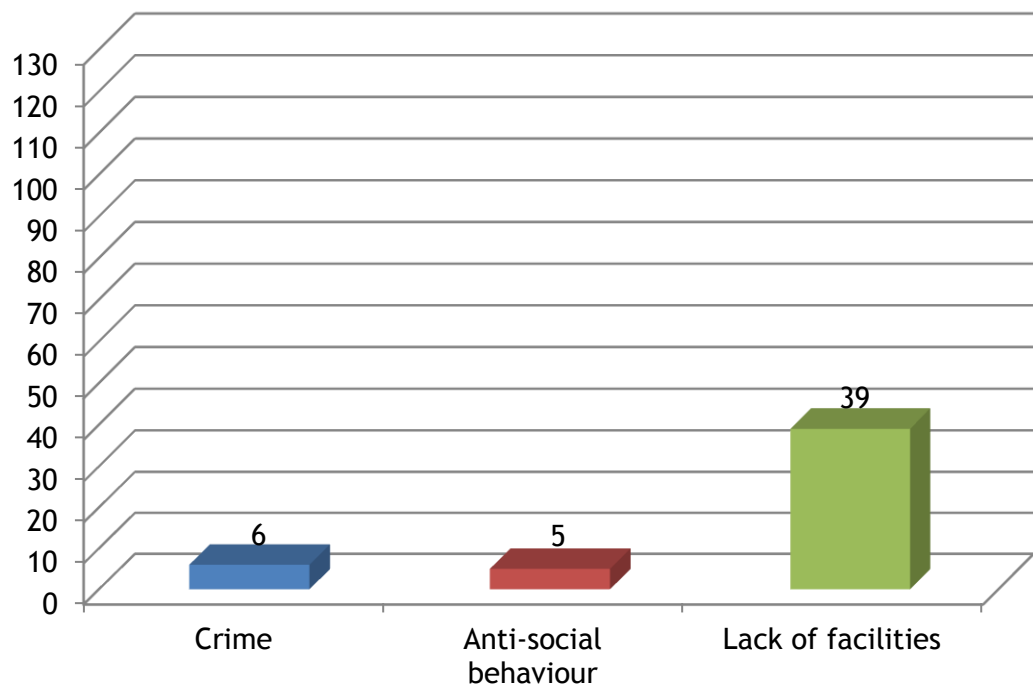


Fig 2.0 - Life in the village - positive factors

From fig 2.0, above, it can be seen that many respondents hold positive views about life in Somerby. 67% believed that the Parish is a nice place to live and 39% believe it has a friendly atmosphere/community spirit. However, only 27% believe it is a sought after location and 23% believe it has a balanced and varied population.

The second question (question 20) sought village residents' perceptions on the potentially negative aspects of life in the village.



*Fig 2.1 - Life in the village - negative factors*

As can be seen from fig 2.1 above, some respondents consider that Somerby suffers a little from some of the 'negative factors' that affect many communities. 30% of respondents stated that there is a lack of facilities in the Parish.

Only 5% of respondents felt that crime is an issue and just 4% thought that anti-social behaviour can be a problem.

Some respondents provided further details around their thoughts on this question. These can be found overleaf.

Do you feel that the Parish suffers from a lack of facilities? Those that answered 'yes' and provided a comment can be summarised as:

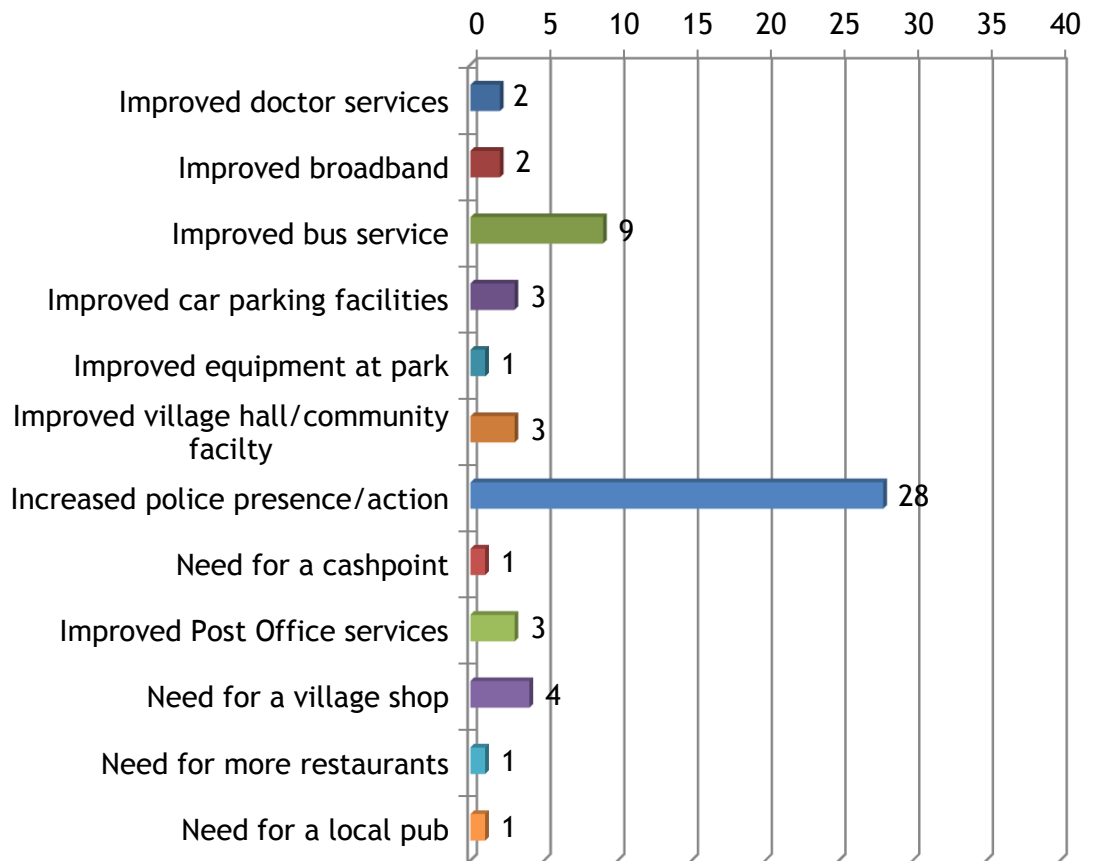


Fig 2.2 - Issues of concern / areas for improvement in the village

Of the 39 responses (30%) who felt that the Parish lacked facilities the highest number related to the desire for increased police presence / action and the bus service.



x) Adequate housing in the Parish

Question 21 asks respondents if they felt that there was a lack of adequate housing.

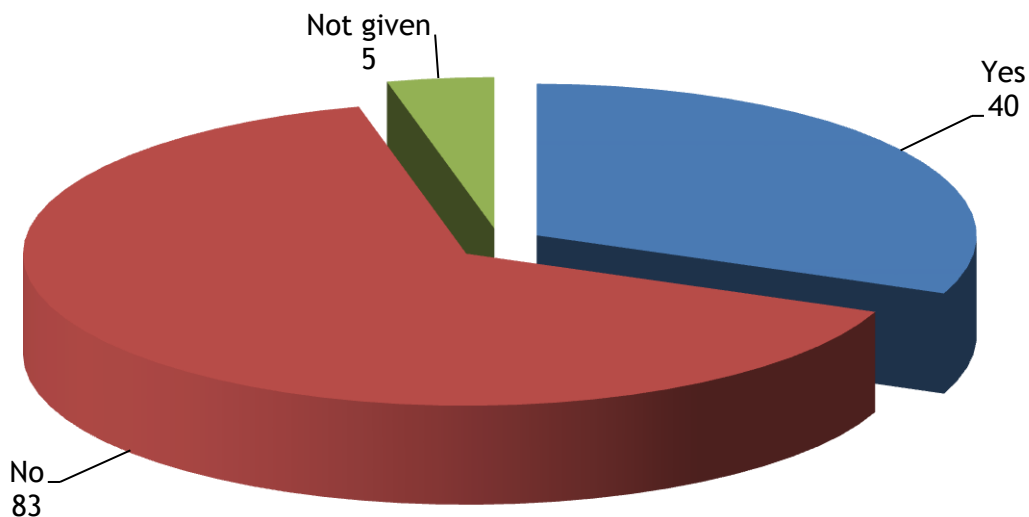


Fig 2.3 - Perceptions on the provision of adequate housing in the Parish

Fig 2.3 shows that 31% of respondents believe that there is a lack of adequate housing in Somerby, with 65% of respondents believing that there is not a lack of adequate housing.

Of the 40 responses (31%) who felt that the Parish had a lack of adequate housing specific comments are grouped below.

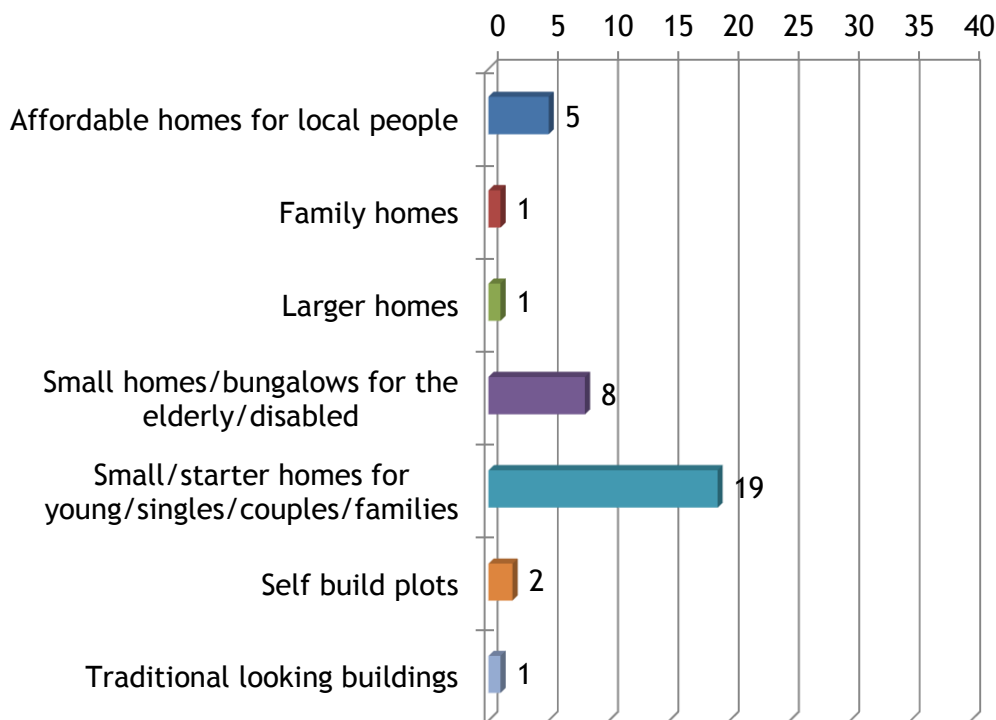


Fig 2.4 - Type of homes believed to be lacking in the village

## Appendix 3 - Contact information

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