

Churchill and Blakedown Housing Needs Survey

1. Introduction

The Churchill and Blakedown hearing statement (10 December 2020) raises issues with the Midlands Rural Housing Needs Survey undertaken in early 2015 and the data used from this survey to support the allocation of site WFR/CB/3 in the Local Plan for car parking and 50 houses.

2. Churchill and Blakedown Housing Needs Survey 2015

The Housing Needs Survey was undertaken on behalf of the Council by Midlands Rural Housing and was undertaken to collect detailed housing needs across all tenures in line with Housing Act 1985 requirements. The data was collected from a postal survey sent to residents of the parish and those with a connection to the parish. 777 surveys were sent and 233 were completed and returned. Of these 118 households identified a need to move in the next 0 – 10 years. The report, based on the raw data, was written and sent to the Parish Council highlighting the overall requirement of 118 in 10 years. However, the Council focused on the 0 – 5 year period, as it would anticipate undertaking a further HNS after 5 years, and this gave the housing need figure of 7 households in need of some form of affordable housing and 44 in need of some form of open market housing including properties for rent. The Parish Council asked for some greater analysis of the data and because not all the surveys were fully completed we then only produced needs data for the parish council where we had a full data set. This meant removing people had said they didn't want to move but subsequently said they were in housing need and identified the type and size of the property they wanted to move into. The Council believed this illustrated a confusion with the survey rather than an indication that those residents weren't in housing need but agreed to undertake further analysis and a second report was produced which showed a housing need of 7 households requiring affordable housing and 18 requiring open market housing for sale only. Removed from the second survey were the 6 households interested in self build and/or private rented (with no clear reason why).

The Parish Council responded again requesting that we consider the natural churn that could potentially arise in the village as people left which could mean more properties becoming available (for sale) within the parish. This was an unusual approach, not one the Council had been requested to do before and wasn't considered to be particularly robust as there was no way of guaranteeing that properties that become available on the open market would be purchased by people living within the parish in housing need. There was a further issue in that the survey didn't have detailed household income data and therefore the Council couldn't clarify that those on housing need could actually afford to purchase the type of property they wanted to assuming it became available on the open market.

It is the Council's understanding that the second version of the HNS wasn't signed off by the PC as they continued to dispute the figures.

The data from the HNS is now more than five years old. The survey itself was conducted during February and March 2015 so it is closer to six years old and, under normal circumstances, we would have updated the information in 2020.

3. Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan

In 2016 the Parish also submitted a draft Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan and included in this was the assumption that much of the housing needs of the Parish could be met by turnover. The Council objected to this as there was no evidence to substantiate it.

4. Housing completions and property process in Churchill and Blakedown

Since the survey was undertaken in 2015 there have only been fairly limited housing completions in the village; 8 open market properties and 3 for shared ownership. There has also been 137 properties sold on the open market but of these over 106 properties were above lower quartile price and 74 over median price. Utilising the income data (Cameo) from the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) in 2017 75% of the Churchill and Blakedown residents couldn't afford to purchase a property in their village at lower quartile rates and 93% at median so it would be reasonable to assume that, of those in housing need wishing to purchase a property in 2015, a substantial number have not been able to meet their own housing needs through these open market sales. The average detached property sold for £519k which is substantially higher than even upper quartile prices in the OAHN 2017, reflective of the rise in property prices in the parish.

In considering the types of properties that have come to the open market there has been an oversupply of 3 bedroom or larger properties and an undersupply of bungalows and two bedroom properties, based on the 2015 data.

The Council's most recent review of the housing register data for Churchill and Blakedown identified an affordable housing need of 70 households. This has grown considerably since the 2015 survey and is indicative of the overall supply and house prices in the District which remains out of reach of many in the district.

5. Conclusion

The Housing Need Survey 2015 data concluded there would be a requirement for 118 households over the period 2015 – 2025. Whilst the data about the exact numbers included in the Housing Needs Survey have clearly been debated by the Parish and District Councils it would be fair to assume that not all housing needs over the ten years have been met through either new build development or market turnover due to the mismatch in terms of type, size and price that is evidenced in this paper.

It is also clear that the need for affordable housing has grown over time and that there are currently 70 households looking for affordable housing in the parish. The Council therefore feels it can justify the need for new housing development within the parish to meet local needs.