

A DETAILED INVESTIGATION INTO THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THURCASTON



PRODUCED BY

MIDLANDS RURAL HOUSING

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1. Summary

- A housing need survey was carried out in the Parish of Thurcaston in February 2015.
- Results obtained showed there was a need for up to 1 affordable home and 3 open market (sale) homes for the local people of Thurcaston enabling them to be suitably housed within the community.
- These could be developed on a 'rural exception site', 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 these homes be developed as part of a larger development.

2. Introduction

Average property prices in rural areas have increased more than urban areas in monetary terms over the past 5 years¹ 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 750,000². 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 Thurcaston.

Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) work with local authorities, town and parish councils, registered providers (housing associations/registered social landlords), private developers and local communities in order to investigate the need for, and facilitate, affordable and local needs homes in towns and villages throughout the Midlands. The first step in this research is to undertake a Housing Needs Survey which will give an overview of the current housing situation in a parish and provide details of the need for local housing.

The Thurcaston & Cropston Housing Needs Survey questionnaires were delivered to every household in the Parish at the beginning of February. The return date for the survey was 2nd March and returns were made via a postage paid envelope directly to MRH. Survey forms were distributed to all households in both villages of the Parish as well as to those who contacted MRH to say that they had moved away or had a strong connection to the Parish and wished to complete a form. In total 423 survey forms were distributed to Thurcaston.

¹ Halifax Rural Housing Review 2013 - "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."

² National Housing Federation, Rural housing research report 2013

3. Purpose of the Survey

The survey was conducted in order to obtain clear evidence of any local housing need for a range of housing tenures for Thurcaston residents. This evidence will be made available to Charnwood Borough Council and Thurcaston & Cropston 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 the planners evidence that can be used to obtain an element of 'local needs' housing in negotiations with house builders, should such possibilities 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 and parish council activities. Such information can be acted upon locally and taken on board in the decision making process when housing issues arise.

4. Respondent details

A total of 423 survey forms were distributed and 108 were received in return, giving a return rate of 26% against the number distributed. In our experience this is an average level of response for a survey of this kind but it should be noted that only those who have a housing need, or are interested in a local needs development and general village life, are likely to respond.

i) Household type

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

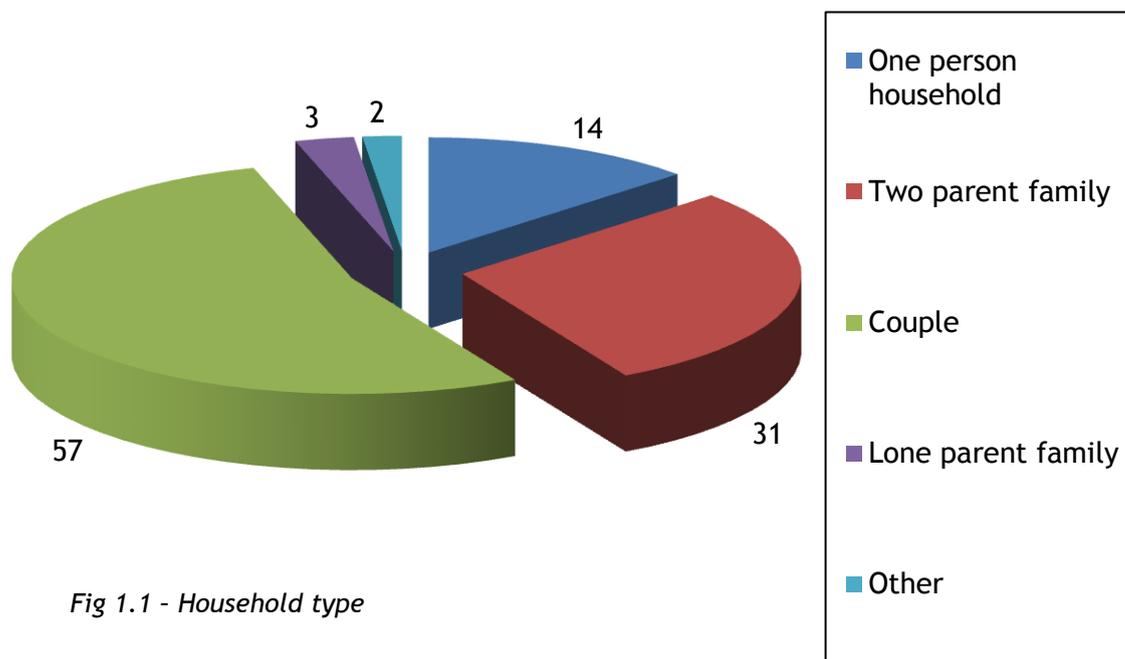


Fig 1.1 - Household type

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; 53% of total responses were from this group.

29% of responses came from two parent family homes and 13% were from one person households.

3% of responses were from single parent households and 2% from 'other' households.

ii) Tenure of all respondents

The current household tenure of respondents is given in the chart below (fig 1.2):

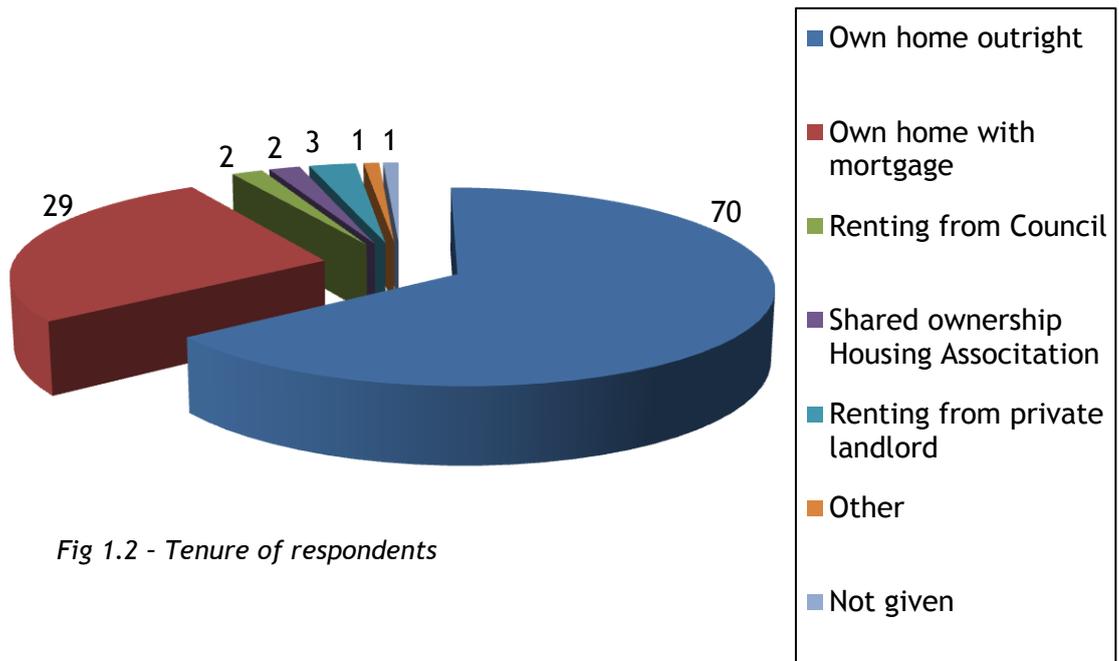


Fig 1.2 - Tenure of respondents

It shows that ‘owner-occupiers’ were by far the largest tenure group accounting for 92% of replies (65% of total survey respondents owned their home outright with no outstanding mortgage and 27% have a mortgage on their home).

5% of respondents live in rented accommodation (2% renting from the council and 3% renting privately) and 2% lived in shared ownership property.

iii) Property Types

The following chart (fig 1.3) details the type of property that respondents currently reside in:

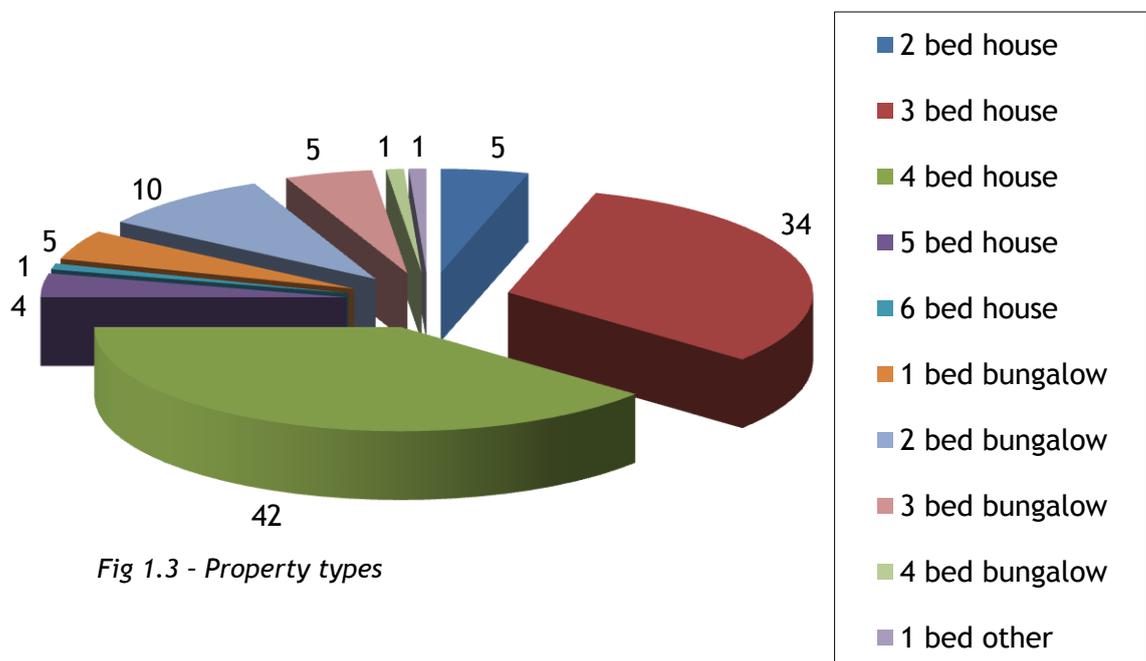


Fig 1.3 - Property types

80% of respondents live in a house and 19% live in a bungalow. Those living in 4 bedroom houses were the largest group (39% of responses), followed by those living in 3 bedroom houses (31%).

iv) Length of residence in village

The length of time that respondents have lived in Thurcaston is given in the chart below (fig 1.4):

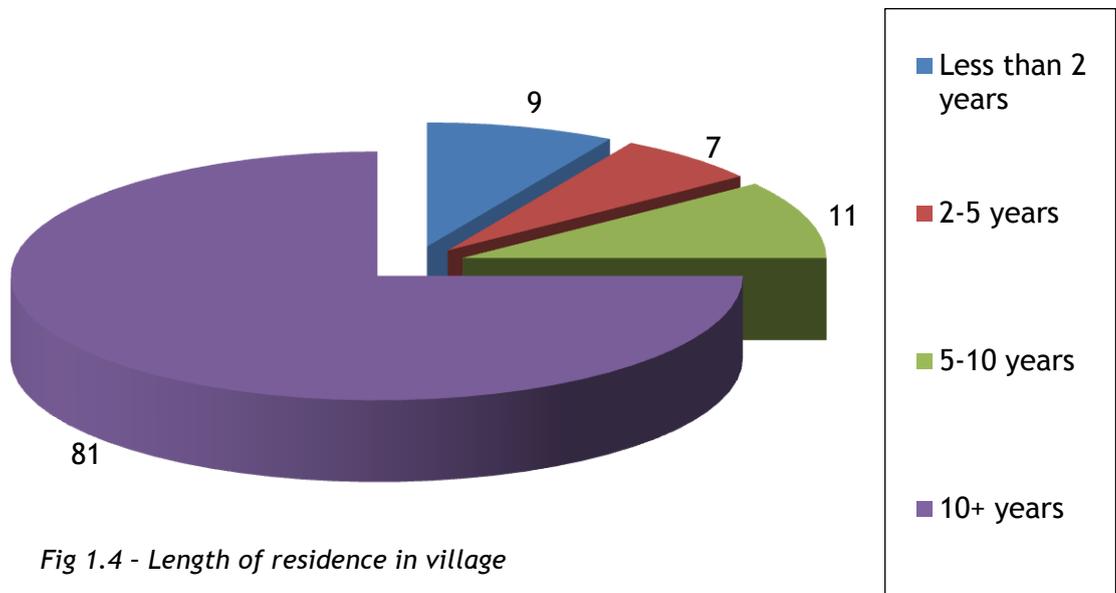


Fig 1.4 - Length of residence in village

It shows that 75% of completed surveys came from households that have lived in the village for over 10 years.

10% of respondents have lived in Thurcaston for between 5 and 10 years, and 6% have been there for between 2 and 5 years. 8% of responses came from those who have lived in the village for less than 2 years.

v) Type of housing required in the village

The questionnaire asked for opinions on the type of housing that respondents believed is needed in the village. The results are given in the chart below (fig 1.5):

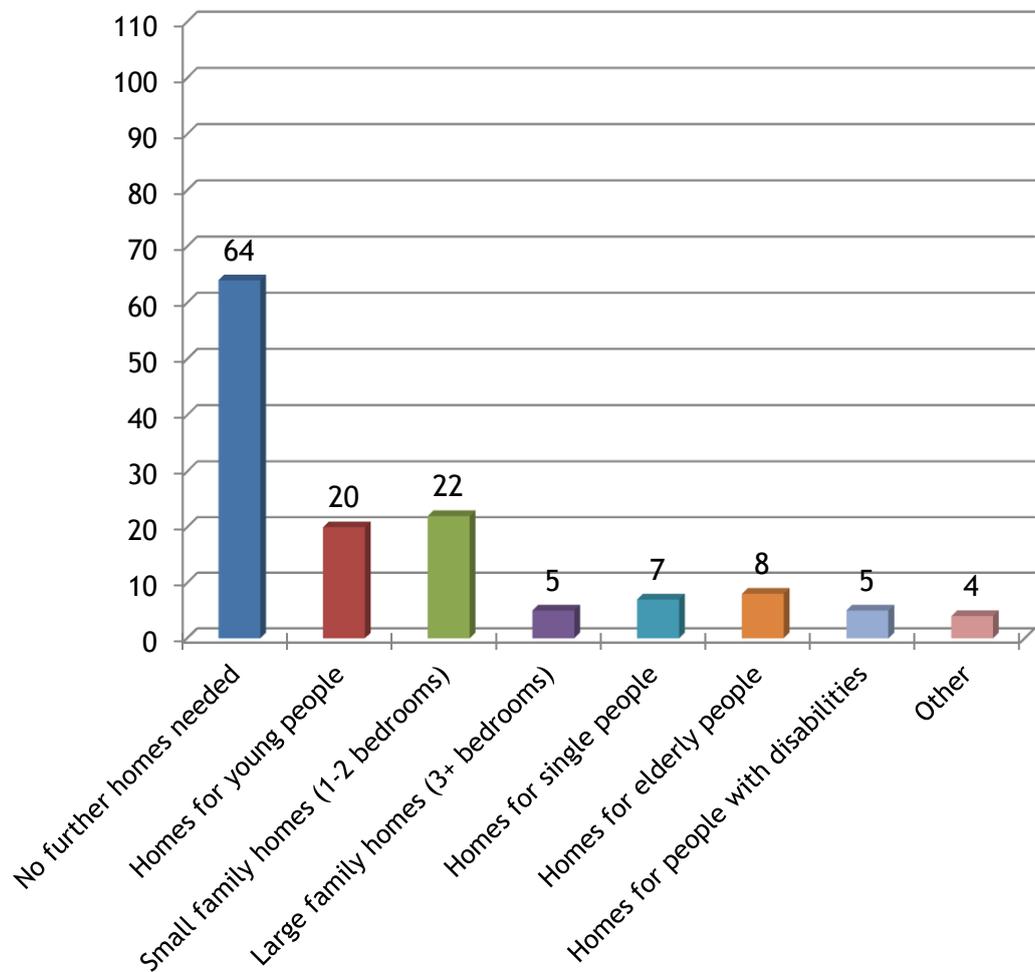


Fig 1.5 - Type of housing needed in Thurcaston

It shows that 59% of respondents thought that no further homes were needed in Thurcaston.

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

- Small family homes
- Homes for young people

vi) Requirements for new homes

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

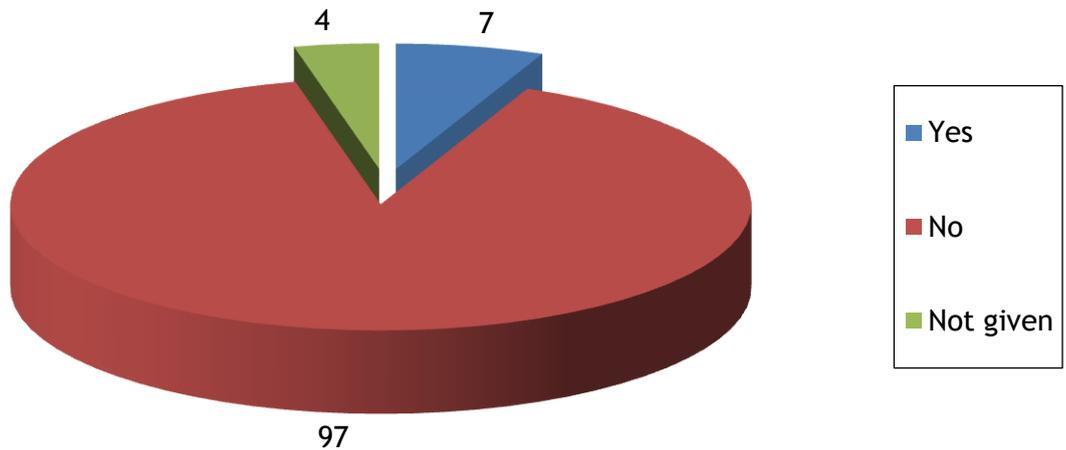


Fig 1.6 -New homes required for people currently living in respondents' home

It can be seen from the chart, above, that 6% of responses came from households that contained individual/s who need to set up home separately in the foreseeable future.

vii) Migration and reasons for leaving

The survey 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.

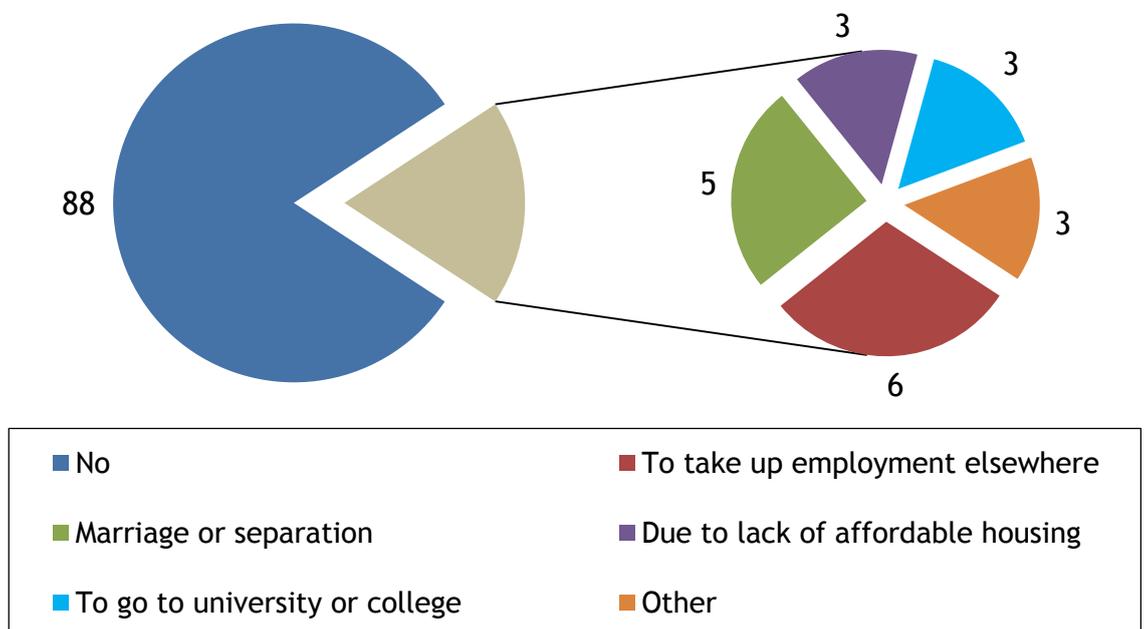


Fig 1.7 - Migration and reasons for leaving

Fig 1.7 shows that 19% of village residents who returned questionnaires were aware of others who have had to leave the village in the last 5 years.

The reasons for members of the households leaving can be seen in the chart above, but it is worth noting that 3% involved those who have left due to a lack of affordable housing.

viii) Support for small number of homes to meet local peoples’ needs

One of the fundamental questions in the survey is that which asks whether people are in favour of a small number of homes in the village to meet the needs of local people.

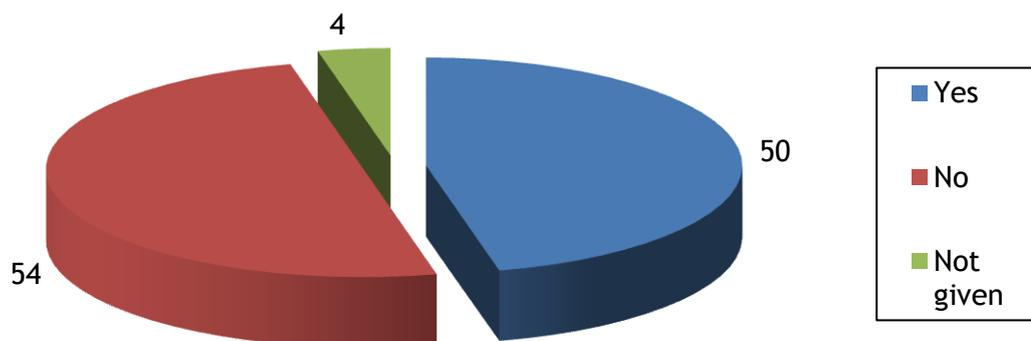


Fig 1.8 - Support for homes for local people

Fig 1.8 shows that 46% of respondents are in support of a small number of homes to meet local peoples’ needs, while 50% said that they are not in support.

Those that answered ‘no’ to this question and provided a comment have had the comments summarised as shown below:

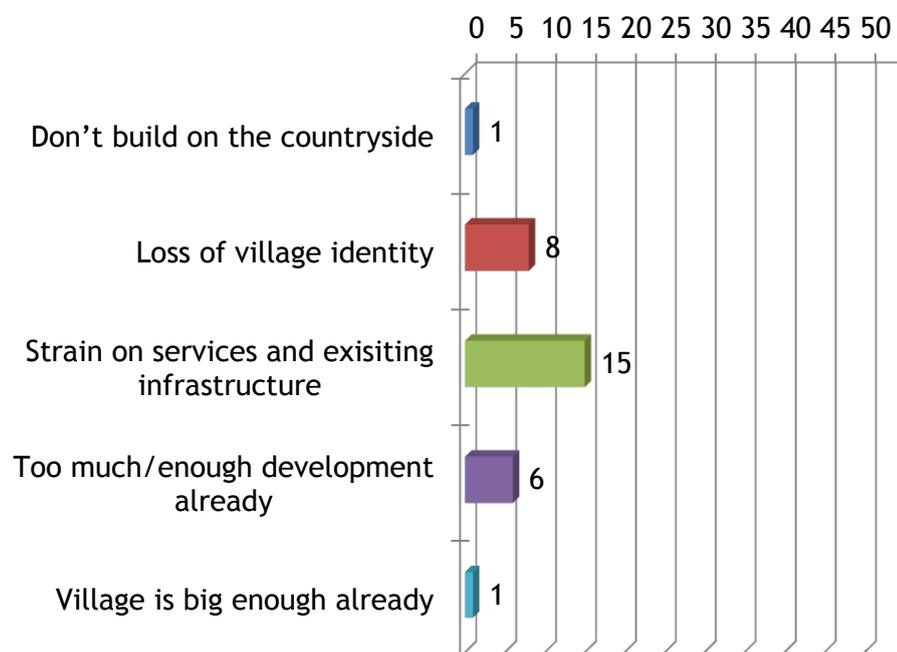


Fig 1.9 - Concerns over supporting small number of homes for locals

The most common reason highlighted concerns that there would be additional strain on existing services and infrastructure.

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 any homes that may be subsequently provided in the village will be 'sustainable.' Ensuring that people will want to take up residency and tenancy and live in a village both now and in the future are important factors when considerations around the provision of new homes take place.

The first question asked village residents how they felt about the 'positive' factors of life in the village.

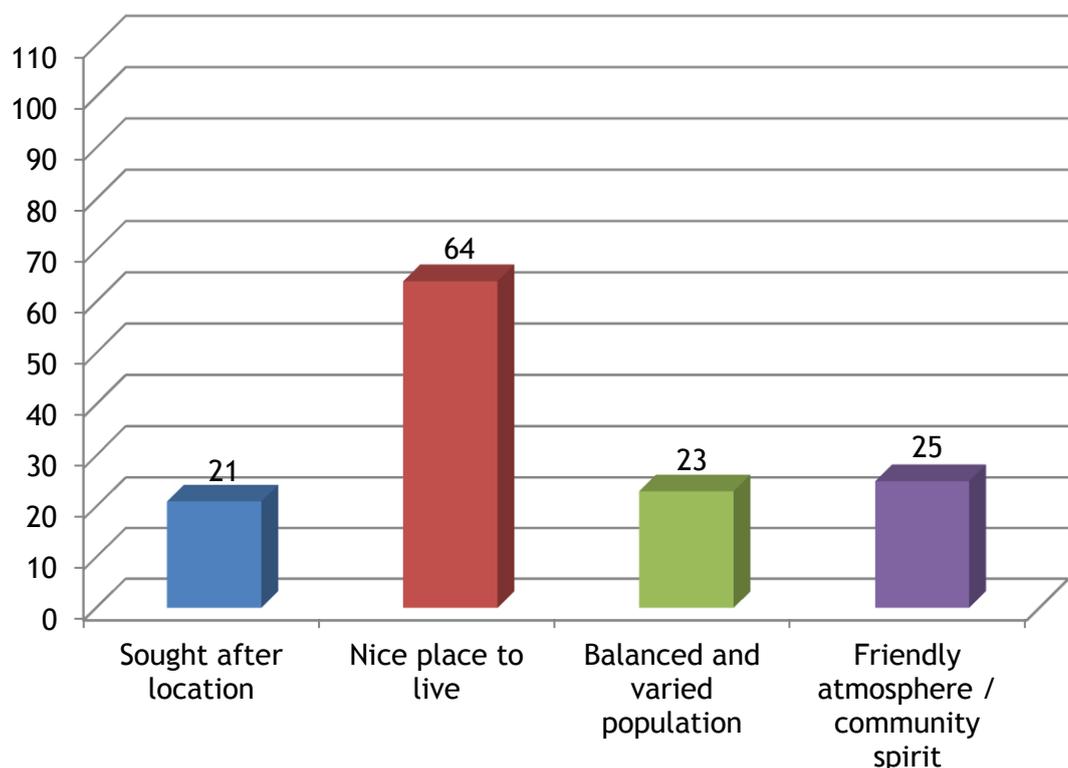


Fig 2.0 - Life in the village - positive factors

From fig 2.0, above, it can be seen that several respondents hold positive views about life in Thurstaston. 59% believed that the parish is a nice place to live; 23% feel it has a friendly atmosphere / community spirit; 21% believe it has a balanced and varied population and 19% believe it is a sought after location.

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

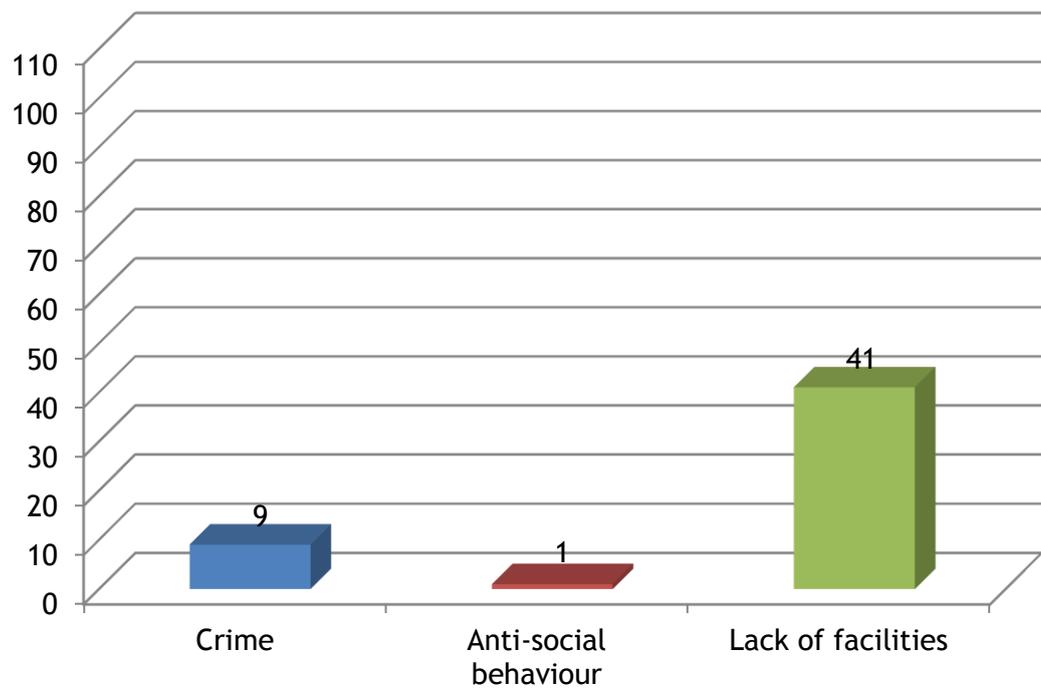


Fig 2.1 - Life in the village - negative factors

As can be seen from fig 2.1 above, some respondents consider that Thurstaston suffers from the 'negative factors' that affect many communities. 38% of respondents stated that there is a lack of facilities in the village; 8% believe there is some crime.

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

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

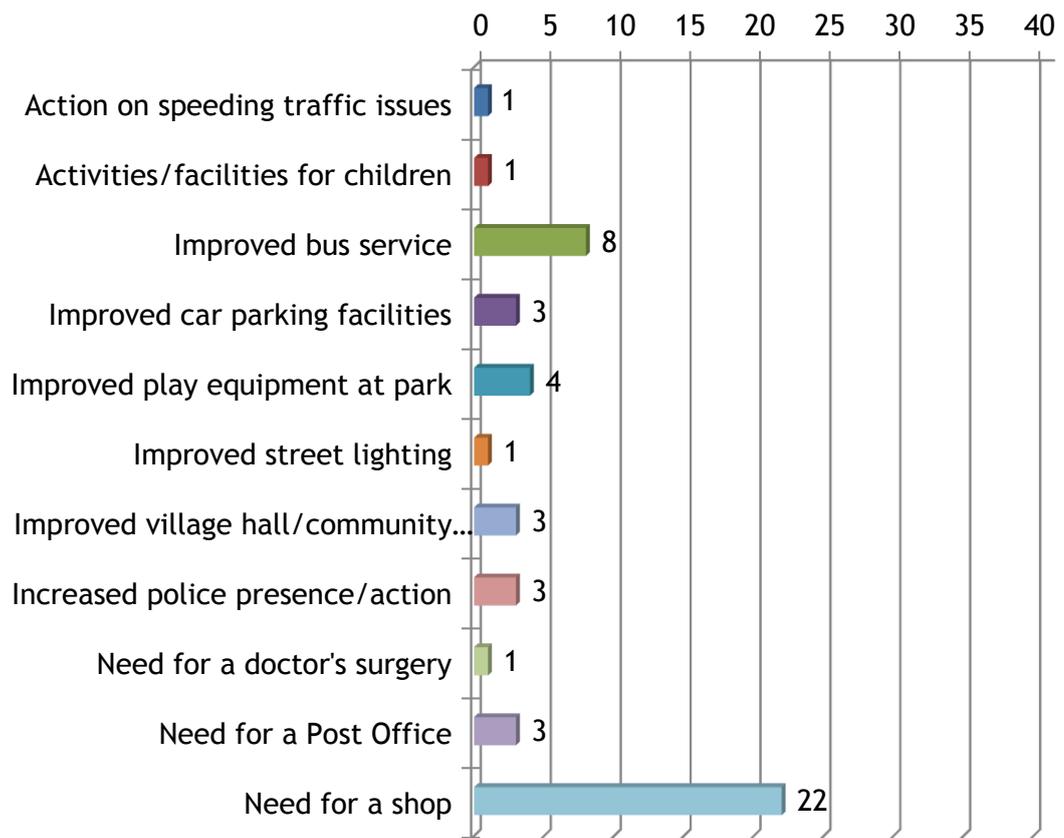


Fig 2.2 - Issues of concern / areas for improvement in the village

Of the 41 responses (38%) who felt that the village lacked facilities, a need for a shop was the major concern highlighted.

x) Adequate housing in the village

Respondents were asked if they felt that there was a lack of adequate housing in the village.

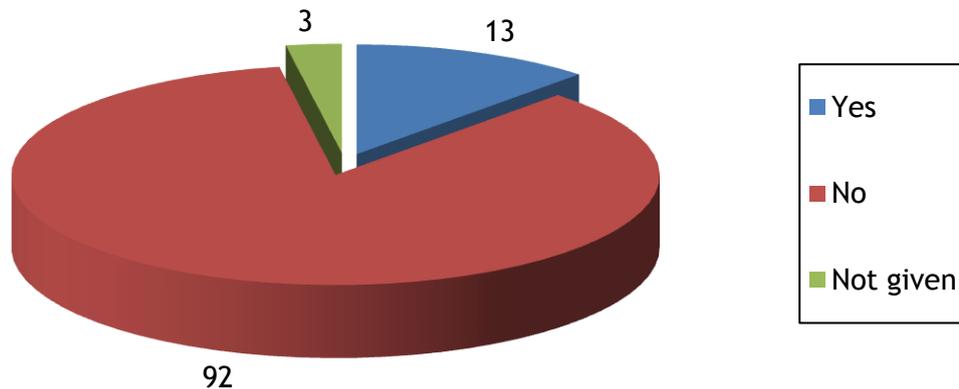


Fig 2.3 - Perceptions on the provision of adequate housing in the village

Fig 2.3 shows that 85% of respondents believe that there is not a lack of adequate housing in Thurcaston, with only 12% of respondents believing that there is a lack of adequate housing.

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

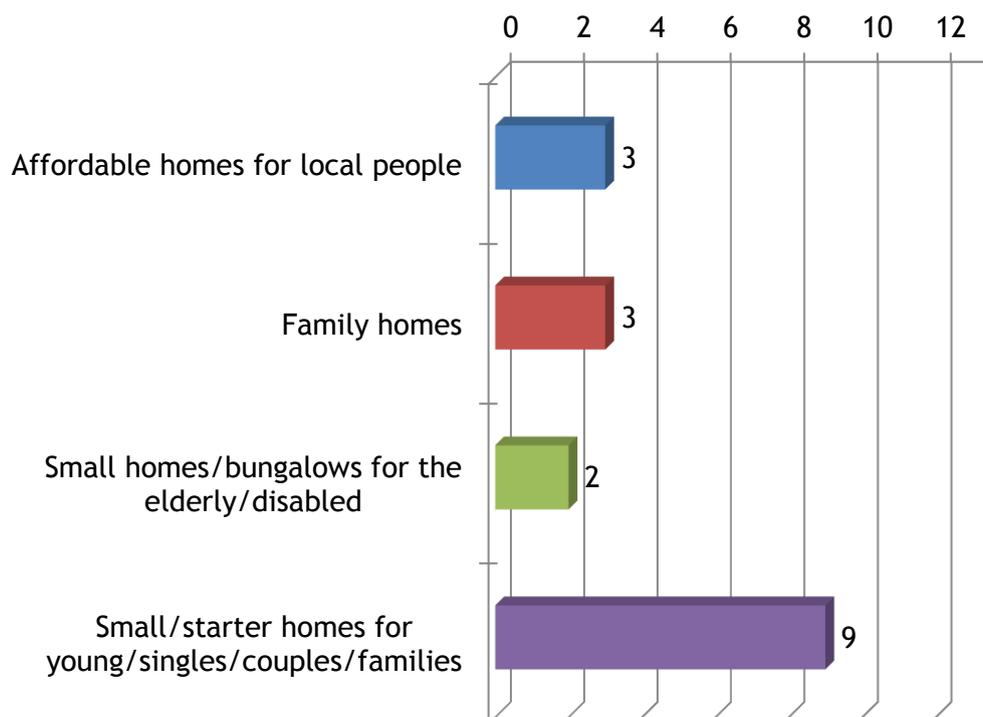


Fig 2.4 - Types of homes that are needed in the village

Of the 13 responses (12%) who felt that the village had a lack of adequate housing, their specific comments show that small starter homes for young people is the housing group felt to be most in need.

5. Housing Need Analysis

Of the 108 returns, 104 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 as well as to give their comments regarding life in the village. These were, therefore, discounted from the rest of the analysis.

As far as the requirement for housing, 4 returns indicated a need.

i) Respondent analysis

The following table lists details of those respondents who stated that they are in housing need. 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' is suggested to outline realistic provision.

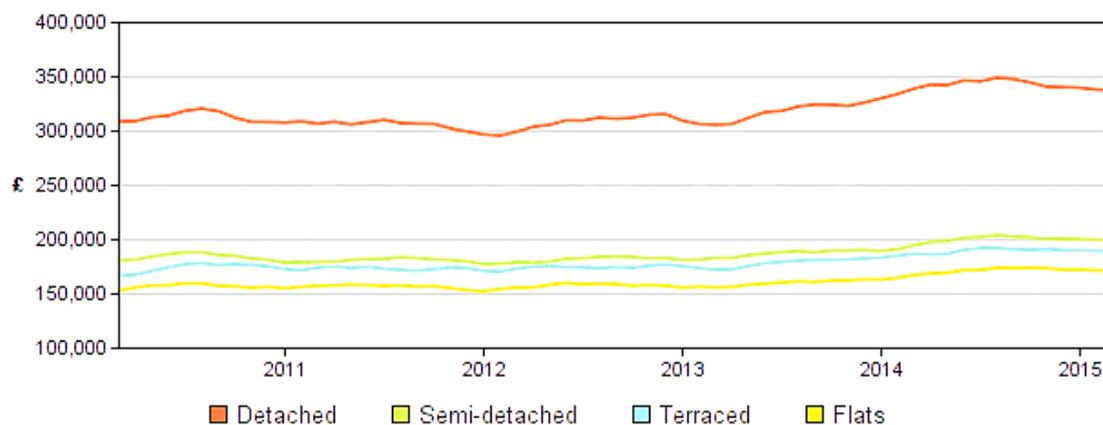
RESPONDENTS BELOW HAVE A NEED THAT IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS						
Ref	Local connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Preferred home and tenure	Likely allocation / purchase
25	Yes	No	Extended family living in own home	Couple setting up home together	2 bed house / flat - Shared ownership	2 bed house - Shared ownership
47	Yes	No	Family living in own home	Present home too large	No preference stated	2 bed house - Open market purchase

Ref	Local connection?	On Housing Register?	Household details	Reasons for need	Preferred home and tenure	Likely allocation / purchase
52	Yes	No	Couple living in privately rented home	Present home too small and in poor condition. Renting but would like to buy. Need to be close to employment.	2 / 3 bed house - Open market purchase	2 bed house - Open market purchase
70	Yes	No	Family living in own home	Present home too expensive. Family break-up.	3 bed house - Open market purchase / private rent	3 bed house - Open market purchase

ii) House price data

Property prices in the village have, overall, increased over the past 5 years. During that period prices have increased by an average of 10.38% (£25,142).

Value trends in Thurcaston, Leicester



iii) Local context - properties for sale

By way of local context, the table below shows prices of the four properties that were for sale in Thurcaston in March 2015 (source: www.zoopla.com). There were no properties available for rent.

Current asking prices in Thurcaston

Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	-	£110,000 (1)	-	£310,000 (2)	£475,000 (1)
Flats	-	-	-	-	-
All	-	£110,000 (1)	-	£310,000 (2)	£475,000 (1)

Current asking rents in Thurcaston

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

Property (for sale)	Price (£)	Property (for rent)	Price (£)
5 bed detached house	475,000		
4 bed detached house	310,000		
4 bed detached house	265,000		
2 bed bungalow (over 60's)	110,000		

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

Leaving aside the 2 bedroom bungalow available on an Over 60's residential scheme, the 'cheapest' available house in Thurcaston is a 4 bed semi-detached house at £265,000. Based on this affordability criteria it would require a deposit of £53,000 and an income of over £60,000 per annum to afford the 'cheapest' property currently available in Thurcaston.

The private rental market is currently offering no properties to rent in Thurcaston.

iv) **Local context - properties sold**

Property value data/graphs for Thurcaston

Property type	Avg. current value	Avg. £ per sq ft.	Avg. # beds	Avg. £ paid (last 12m)
Detached	£337,052	£176	3.8	£264,429
Semi-detached	£198,935	£152	3.1	£198,000
Terraced	£188,722	-	2.6	£110,000
Flats	£170,618	-	-	-

The average property price for actual sales since March 2014 can be seen on the right hand column of the chart above. The left hand column shows the current average property value. Based on the affordability criteria explained earlier, to purchase a terraced house at current average value (£188,722) would require a deposit of £37,750 and an income of £43,000 per annum. To purchase a semi-detached house at current average value (£198,935) would require a deposit of £40,000 and an income of £45,500 per annum.

With regard to properties sold during the last year, there were 16 property sales in Cropston between July 2014 and December 2014, as follows:

Month/Year	Property	Price (£)
July 2014	Detached House	250,000
July 2014	Semi-detached House	134,000
July 2014	Semi-detached House	108,000
Aug 2014	Detached House	250,000
Aug 2014	Terraced House	110,000
Aug 2014	Detached House	218,000
Sept 2014	Semi-detached House	159,000
Sept 2014	Semi-detached House	195,000
Oct 2014	Detached House	421,000
Oct 2014	Semi-detached House	238,000
Oct 2014	Freehold Bungalow	235,000
Oct 2014	Semi-detached House	245,000
Oct 2014	Detached House	182,000
Oct 2014	Detached House	410,000
Dec 2014	Semi-detached House	95,000
Dec 2014	Detached House	295,000

6. Conclusion

MRH has conducted a detailed study of the housing needs of Thurcaston. This study has not only investigated the actual affordable housing need of the villages, but also for market rent level housing and open market housing. In addition, the survey ascertained residents' views with regard to living in the villages and support for local needs housing to help sustain local communities.

The survey has identified an immediate need for affordable and open market properties.

Of the 4 respondents who indicated a housing need in the next 5 years:

- 1 was assessed as being in need of affordable housing for rent or shared ownership.

1 x 2 bed house - shared ownership

- 3 were assessed as being in need of open market housing (for local people) to purchase.

2 x 2 bed house

11 x 3 bed houses

THEREFORE, THERE IS AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR
1 AFFORDABLE HOME AND 3 OPEN MARKET HOMES IN
THURCASTON FOR THOSE WITH A LOCAL CONNECTION

7. Contact information

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