



HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

**Balcombe Parish
MID SUSSEX DISTRICT
2010**

Action In Rural Sussex

Contents Page

List of Appendices	3
Introduction	4
Balcombe Parish	5
Method	7
Response	8
Part 1 – You and Your Household	9
Second Homes	9
Description of Current Home	9
Number of Bedrooms in Current Home	9
Tenure of Current Home	10
Adaptations	10
Other Family Members	10
Does any family member need to move now or in the next 5 years?	11
Support for Affordable Housing	11
Length of Residency	12
Older Peoples Housing	13
Is your current home suitable for your circumstances?	13
Would you prefer to remain in your own home?	14
Do you feel that you need to move in order to meet your housing needs?	14
If you expect to move, what type of accommodation do you think you will need?	14
Important aspects in choosing a prospective home	16
Part 2 – Housing Needs	17
Local Connection	17
Housing Register	17
Current place of residence	17
When accommodation is required	17
Affordability	18
Assessment	21
Household composition	22
Summary of Need	22

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Balcombe Letter
Appendix 2 Balcombe Housing Needs Survey
Appendix 3 Balcombe Suggestion Sites
Appendix 4 Other Comments

Introduction

Action in rural Sussex was asked by Balcombe Parish Council to carry out a Housing Needs Survey in August 2009. The aim of the survey was to determine the existing and future housing needs of residents in Balcombe, particularly those on low or modest incomes. This report identifies the affordable housing that is required by local people in Balcombe and reports on the views of residents regarding an affordable housing development within the parish.

The role of the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) is to provide independent support, advice and information to Parish Councils and community groups concerned about the lack of affordable housing in their rural communities.

Action in rural Sussex (AirS) is a registered charity (No.1035401) whose purpose is to improve the quality of life of local communities, particularly for disadvantaged people, and to facilitate the development of thriving, diverse and sustainable communities throughout rural Sussex.

Balcombe Parish

Balcombe is a village and civil parish in the Mid Sussex district within West Sussex. It is located 31 miles (50 km) south of London and 16 miles (26 km) north of Brighton. According to the 2001 census, the usual population of the parish was 1,765 persons, of whom 850 were male and 915 were female, living in 686 households. There were a further 28 homes that were vacant at the time and 3 second homes making a total of 714 dwellings in the parish.

The village has a primary school, a village shop, hair dressers, tea rooms and a haberdasher. It also boasts a main line railway station with trains direct to London in under an hour making it a popular village for commuters.

Figure 1 shows that there is a high proportion (45%) of detached homes in the Parish followed closely by semi-detached (43%), with flats being in lowest supply (12%). The 2001 census data revealed there to be 3 second homes within the village. Table 1 shows that there are a higher number of detached and semi detached homes within Balcombe in comparison to district-wide numbers. This table also clearly shows that there are a lower percentage of flats in the parish when compared with the whole of the Mid Sussex District.

Figure 1. Housing Types in Balcombe

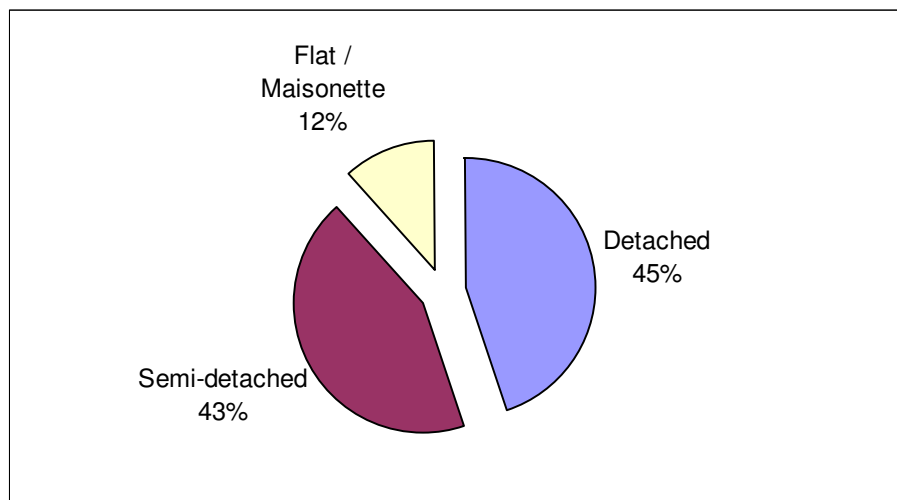


Table 1. Housing Type in the Mid Sussex District and Balcombe Parish

Housing Type	Mid Sussex District	Balcombe Parish
Detached	19,648 (36.9%)	320 (45%)
Semi-detached	25,025 (47%)	311 (43%)
Flat / Maisonette	8,496 (15.97%)	84 (12%)

(Source: Census 2001)

From the 2001 Census data and as seen in Figure 2 the predominant tenure in Balcombe is owner occupied followed by private rent and housing association or council rent.

Figure 2. Housing Tenure in Balcombe

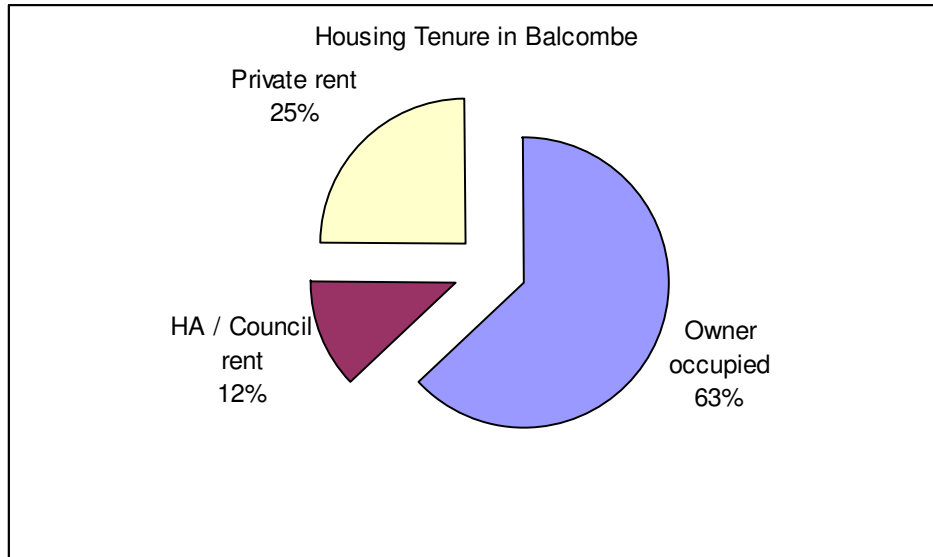


Table 2. Housing Tenure for the UK, Mid Sussex District and Balcombe parish

Tenure	UK	Mid Sussex	Balcombe Parish
Owner occupied	70%	81.7%	431 (63%)
HA / Council rent	19%	10.1%	83 (12%)
Private rent	10%	6.7%	172 (25%)

(Source: Census 2001)

Method

Action in rural Sussex worked with Balcombe Parish Council and Mid Sussex District Council to agree the method and process by which the housing need survey would be conducted. The standard Defra Housing Need Survey with amendments was agreed and consisted of two parts, the first part was for all households to fill in and the second was for those who are in housing need to complete. A copy of the covering letter and the housing need survey are included in the appendices.

The survey was delivered by post to the 714 households in the parish. A pre-paid envelope was included for residents to return the survey by 11th May 2010 to Action in rural Sussex for analysis.

Response

Overall 714 questionnaires were sent out one to each household in the parish. A total of 216 forms were returned, giving a response rate of 30% from the 714 households. This is a good response rate for a housing needs survey.

From the responses that were received, 214 households were living in their main home and 2 households said it was their second home. Therefore the number of respondents analysed for this survey is 214, as the respondents who stated their property was their second home were not required to fill in the questionnaire.

Part 1 – You and Your Household

Second Homes

2 respondents said the property was their second home, 214 respondents said that the property was their main home. All respondents answered this question.

Description of Current Home

The majority of respondents (164) described their homes as a house, this was followed by 23 respondents describing their home as a bungalow, 15 respondents live in a flat/maisonette, 10 households live in retirement housing, 8 of which are in the social sector, and 2 of which are in the private sector. As can be seen in Table 3, 3 respondents described their property as 'other'. 2 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 3. Current property description

Description of Current Home	Number of respondents
House	164
Bungalow	23
Flat / Maisonette	15
Sheltered/retirement housing (social sector)	8
Sheltered/retirement housing (private sector)	2
Other	0
No Response	2
TOTAL	214

Number of Bedrooms in Current Home

Table 4 demonstrates that 24 respondents said that they had a bed-sit or one bedroom, 34 had two bedrooms, 72 respondents had three bedrooms and 82 respondents have four or more bedrooms. 2 respondents did not answer this question.

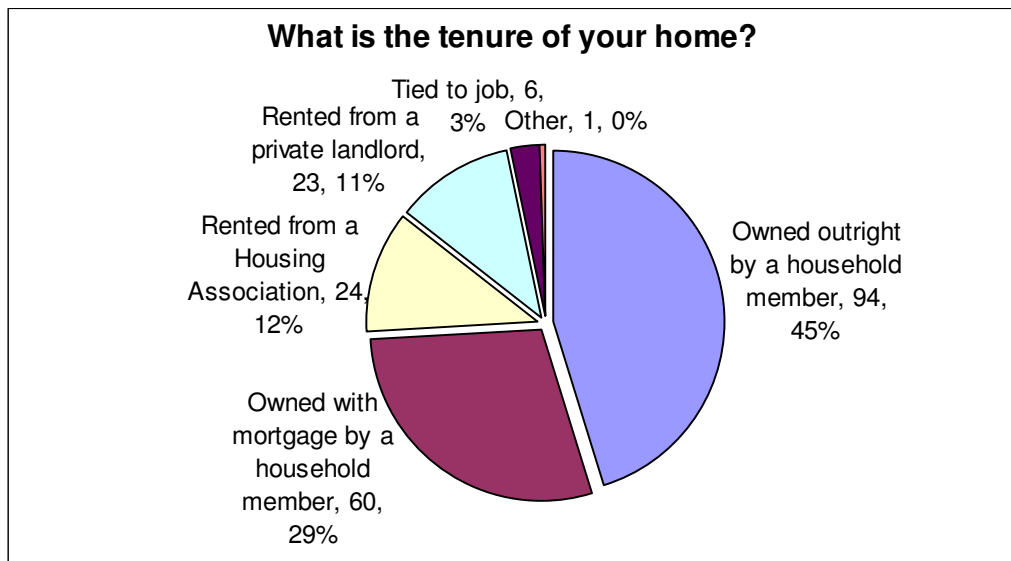
Table 4. Number of bedrooms in current property

Number of bedrooms	Number of respondents
Bed-sit / one bedroom	24
Two bedrooms	34
3 bedrooms	72
4 or more bedrooms	82
No Response	2
TOTAL	214

Tenure of Current Home

As seen in Figure 3, the majority of respondents (94) own their homes outright, closely followed by owning the property with a mortgage (60). 24 are renting from a Housing Association, 23 respondents are renting from a private landlord, 6 respondents said that their property was tied to their job, 1 respondent described their home as temporary accommodation (house owned by relative) and 6 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 3. Current Tenure of Home



In summary from Figure 3,

- 74 % are owner occupiers
- 12% rent their property from a housing association
- 11% rent their property from a private landlord
- 3% live in properties that are tied to their jobs

Adaptations

8 respondents said that their current home required adaptations to become suitable for the needs of a household member. 196 respondents said that their home did not require any adaptations and 10 households did not respond to this question.

Other Family Members

23 households reported knowing of a family member who has had to move away from the parish in the last 5 years due to difficulties in finding a suitable home locally.

Does any family member need to move now or in the next 5 years?

From Table 5, it can be seen that 36 respondents said that a household member will need to move, 21 said it was needed within 5 years and 15 said they needed to move in 5 or more years. 163 respondents said that they did not need to move and 15 households did not answer this question.

Table 5. Does the household need to move

Does the household need to move	Number of households
Yes, within 5 years	21
Yes, in 5 or more years	15
No	163
No Response	15
TOTAL	214

Support for Affordable Housing

Out of all the responses to the survey 167 (78%) of households were in favour of a small affordable housing development for local people in Balcombe if there was a proven need, as seen in Figure 4. 33 respondents (15%) said that they would not support an affordable housing development and the remaining 14 (7%) respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 4. Support for an Affordable Housing Development in Balcombe

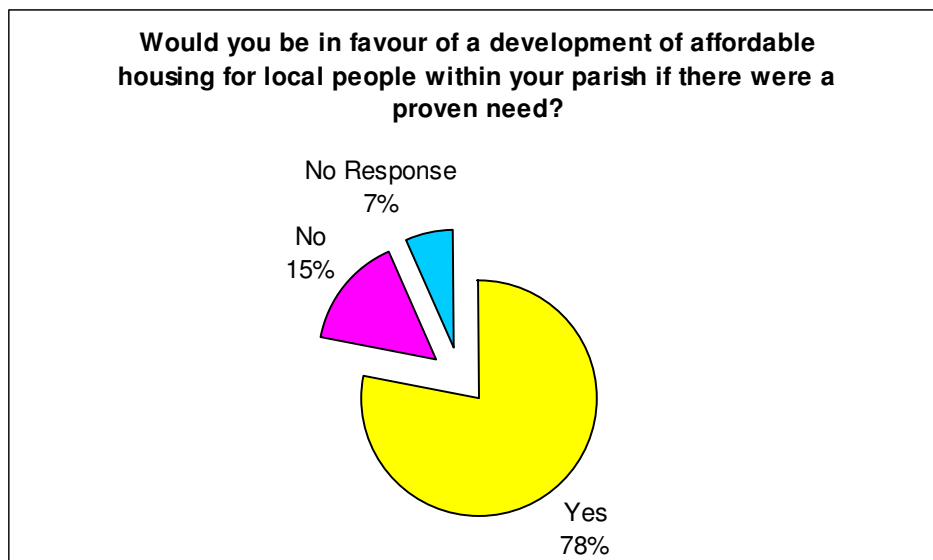


Table 6. Support for Affordable Housing in Balcombe and length of residency

Number of years of residency	Yes	No	No Response	TOTAL
Less than 3	16	6	1	23
3 – 10	39	16	2	57
11 – 20	23	2	0	25
21 – 30	32	3	1	36
31 – 40	18	2	1	21
41 – 50	13	3	0	16
51 +	17	2	6	25
Did not state length of residency	9	0	2	11
TOTAL	167	33	14	214

Length of Residency

From Table 9 it can be seen that approximately 62% of respondents have lived in the parish for more than 10 years. 51% of the households have lived in the parish for over 20 years.

Appendix 4 highlights additional comments which respondents made on the survey.

Older Peoples Housing

To help us identify future needs for older people's accommodation and services, a section on older peoples housing was included in this survey. This section specified an age range of 50+ and received a response from 134 residents

Out of the 134 respondents to this part of the questionnaire, all gave details of their age. 20 respondents were aged between 50 – 59, 43 respondents were aged between 60 – 69, 41 respondents were aged between 70 – 79, 27 were aged between 80 - 89 and 3 respondents were over 90 years old.

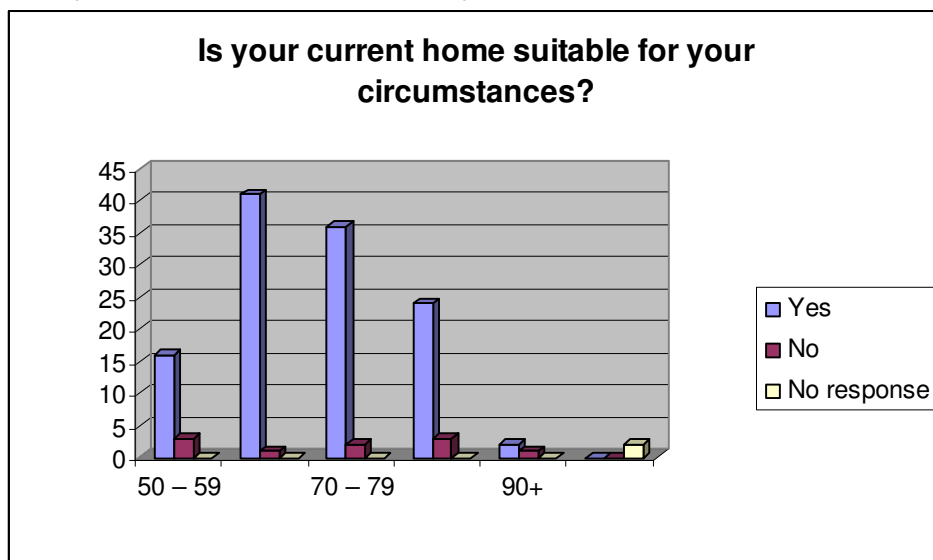
Table 7. Ages of respondents

50 – 59	20
60 – 69	43
70 – 79	41
80 – 89	27
90+	3

Is your current home suitable for your circumstances?

10 households claimed that their current home was not suitable for their circumstances 3 of these households were between 50 - 59 years of age, 1 was between 60 – 69, 2 were aged 70 – 79, 3 were aged 80 – 89 and 1 was over 90. 122 were satisfied that their current home was suitable, the majority of these respondents (41) were aged between 60 - 69, 16 were aged between 50 - 59, 36 were aged 70 - 79, 24 were aged 80 - 89 and 2 were over 90, 2 respondents to the older persons section of this survey did not respond.

Figure 5. Is your current home suitable for your circumstances?

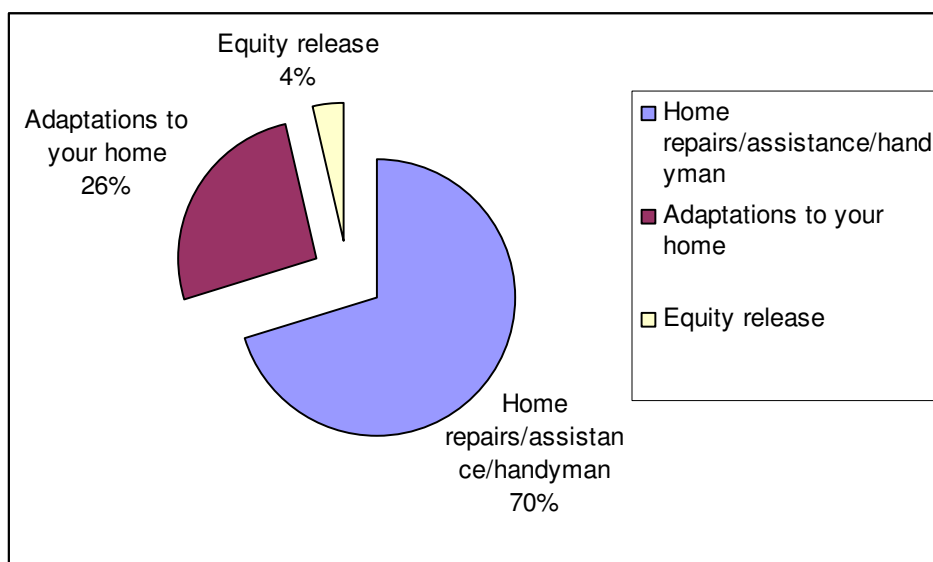


Out of the 10 households who found their current housing unsuitable, 4 responded that it was because their home was too large, 2 could not manage their garden, 1 responded that their home was too small, 1 found their rent too expensive and 1 found access difficult.

Would you prefer to remain in your own home?

Of the 122 households who found their current home suitable for their circumstances, 4 respondents would prefer not to remain in their own home and 109 would prefer to remain in their current home, 9 respondents skipped this question. Out of the 122 who would prefer to remain in their current homes, 21 would like assistance within their homes. Figure 6 shows that 19 out of 21 respondents would like home repairs assistance, or a handyman. 7 respondents said that adaptations to the home would be useful to them. 1 respondent would find equity release useful.

Figure 6. Would any of the following assist?



Do you feel that you need to move in order to meet your housing needs?

18 respondents claimed that they needed to move to meet their housing needs, 104 did not.

If you expect to move, what type of accommodation do you think you will need?

Of the 18 respondents who need to move in order to meet their housing needs, the majority of respondents (18) described their ideal accommodation as a home which better meets their needs, but not specially built for older people. All 18 went on to describe other forms of housing which would also meet their needs.

9 would like a home which is specifically designed for older people but does not come with any support services; a house, an apartment and a bungalow were all equally popular with 3 responses each.

9 would like a home in a development for older people with some limited support services, also known as sheltered housing; a house, an apartment and a bungalow were all equally popular with 3 responses each.

2 respondents would like a development for older people with a more extensive range of support services. 1 would prefer a bungalow, and 1 would prefer a house.

There was no support for a residential or nursing home.

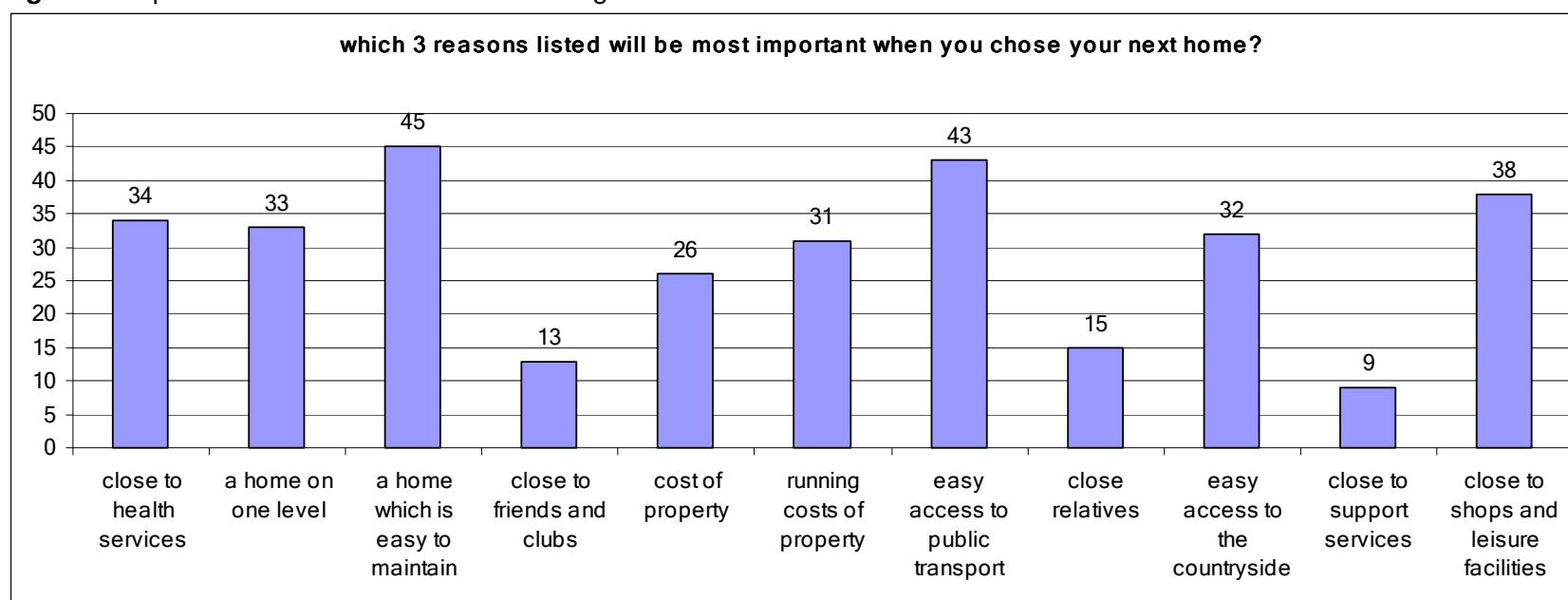
Table 9. Type of Accommodation required.

	House	Bungalow	Apartment	Response Count
A home which better meets your needs but is not specially built for older people.	7	3	8	18
A home which has been specially designed for older people but does not come with any support devices	3	3	3	9
A home in a development for older people with some limited support services, (for example a community alarm service) also known as sheltered housing	3	3	3	9
A home in a development for older people with a more extensive range of support services (for example assistance with bathing, meals, access to care staff)	1	1	0	2
A residential or nursing home	0	0	0	0
Total	14	10	14	38

Important aspects in choosing a prospective home

Households were asked to pick 3 important aspects of choosing a future home. 97 households responded to this question. As can be seen in figure 6, the most important considerations with 45 votes, was a home which is easy to maintain. Easy access to public transport was the second most important aspect with 43 votes. The third most important considerations (38) were close to shops and leisure facilities.

Figure 6. Important considerations when choosing a new home



Part 2 – Housing Needs

There were 23 respondents to part 2 of the questionnaire, each respondent was able to identify up to 3 households who would describe themselves as in need of affordable housing, out of which a total of 29 households were identified as being in need.

Local Connection

Of these 29 households 27 have a strong local connection, either currently living in the parish (11 households), having used to live in the parish (8 households), having relatives living in the parish (6 households) or are working in the parish (2 households). 2 households did not respond to this question and have therefore been discounted from the total in need.

Housing Register

Only 6 of the 27 households with a local connection who indicated a housing need are on the housing register.

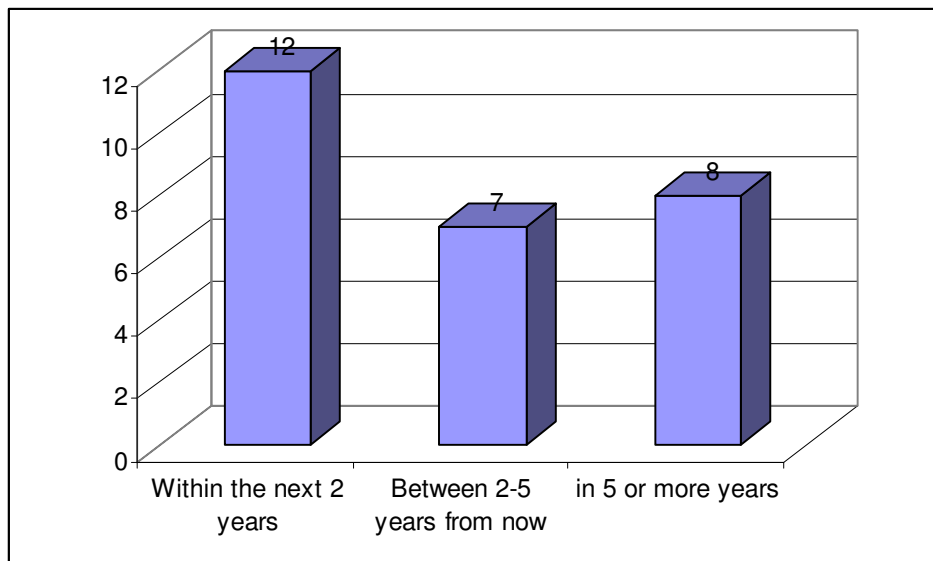
Current place of residence

17 of the 27 households in housing need are a household who are currently in the parish, 9 of this 17 are living together as a household, 1 is within another household within the parish and 7 are currently living with parents. The remaining 7 households live outside of the parish. 3 did not respond to this question.

When accommodation is required

12 households in housing need stated that they would need to move within 2 years, as demonstrated in Figure 5, 7 households needing to move within 2 to 5 years and 8 households wished to move in 5 or more years.

Figure 7. When would you need to move home?



As shown in Table 7 when asked why the household needed to move, 12 respondents said it was to set up an independent home, 3 households need a smaller home, 5 need a cheaper home, 1 a larger home, 1 a more secure home, 1 needs to change tenure and another 1 wanted to be closer to a carer. 1 household specified that they wished to return to the village they grew up in. 2 households did not respond.

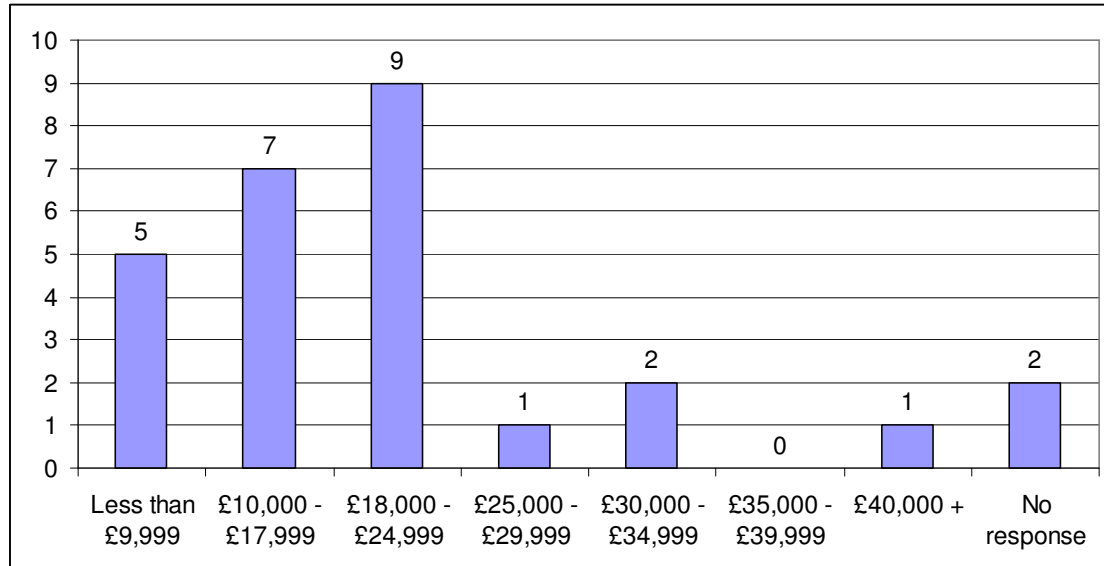
Table 7. Reason for needing to move house

Reason for moving	Number of respondents
Need to set up an independent home	12
Need a smaller home	3
Need a larger home	1
Need a cheaper home	5
Need a more secure home	1
Need to change tenure	1
Need to be closer to carer	1
Other	1
No response	2
TOTAL	27

Affordability

To enable an accurate calculation of the number of people that are in housing need and cannot afford to either purchase or rent on the open market, respondents were asked for their gross annual income and the amount of savings they have. Figure 6 outlines the annual incomes for those in housing need and who have a local connection. In Balcombe the annual incomes of those who consider themselves to be in housing need is between £10,000 and £35,000. One household earned in excess of £40,000.

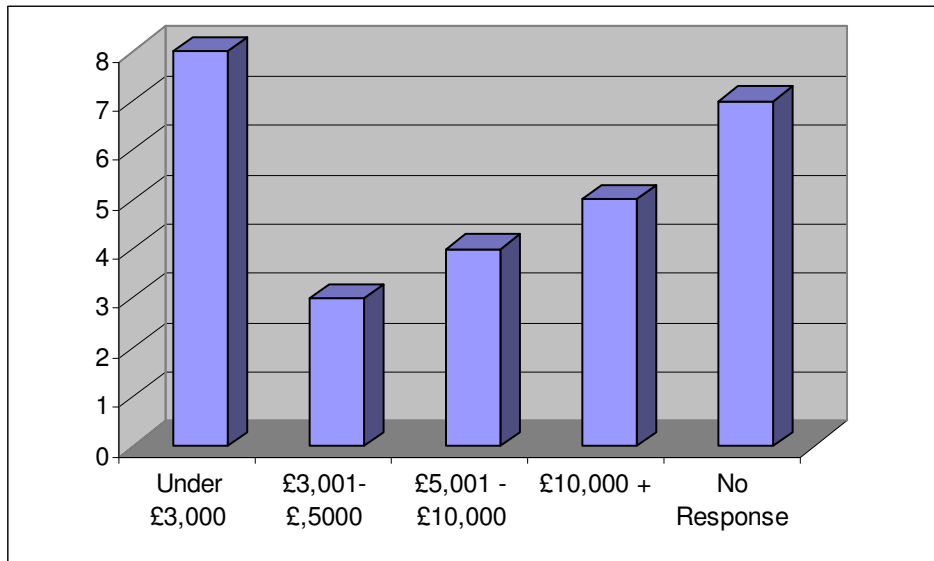
Figure 8. Annual Incomes of Households in Housing Need with a local connection



From Figure 8 it can be seen that

- 12 (44%) households have an income below £18,000 which is the lowest level income that would be considered for shared ownership housing.
- 21 (77%) households in need have an income of less than £25,000 per annum.
- 24 (88%) have an income below £35,000.
- 4 (14%) households have an income of over £24,999, however, due to the compositions of their households, none of these households would not be able to afford the type of property they require on the open market, but could be considered for shared ownership housing.
- 2 (7%) respondents did not answer this question and therefore due to insufficient data they have been excluded from the total of households in need, reducing the total of those in housing need to 25

Figure 9. Savings of Households in Housing Need with a local connection



From Figure 9, it can be seen that 8 households out of the 25 that are in housing need have savings below £3,000, 3 households have savings between £3001 and £5,000. 4 households had savings between £5,001 and £10,000 and 5 households had savings of over £10,000 7 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 8. Average House Prices in Mid Sussex

	Average Price	Income Required
Detached	£424,345	£109,117
Semi-Detached	£268,514	£69,046
Terrace	£224,382	£57,698
Flat	£173,951	£44,730

Table 8 shows the Land Registry's figures for Mid Sussex from January – March 2010. From these figures the cheapest entry levels have been calculated for purchasing a property in the district. On the basis of a 90% mortgage (with a 10% deposit) and a 3.5 x gross income lending ratio it can be seen that the lowest income needed to purchase a flat would be £44,730. Even the households with highest incomes are unable to afford a flat with a mortgage.

Assessment

In order to assess the eligibility of respondents for a local needs housing scheme it is necessary to ensure that each has a local connection to the parish and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market.

27 respondents fulfilled the local connection criteria; however 2 were excluded as they did not provide any financial details.

A property search on www.rightmove.co.uk was also carried out to provide an indication of current prices of properties available in Balcombe. Table 9 shows the lowest prices for properties on sale in Balcombe and the local area and Table 10 shows the lowest prices for renting in the area. From this study undertaken in May 2010, an entry level home (lower quartile of prices) was £300,000 for a 2 bed flat, this rises to £499,950 for a 4 bed detached house. Table 9 shows that the income required for purchasing a property in Balcombe is significantly higher than the already high figures for purchasing a home in the Mid Sussex district as show in table 9, and as such, even the households, in housing need, with the highest incomes are unable to afford a 1 bedroom flat with a mortgage on the basis of a 90% mortgage and a 10% deposit.

Table 9. Lowest current property purchase prices in Balcombe and the Local Area

Property Type	Location	Lowest Price	Income Required	Deposit Required
1 bed flat	*Staplefield	£195,000	£50,143	£19,500
2 bed flat	Balcombe	£300,000	£77,143	£30,000
3 bed detached house	*Ardingly	£289,950	£74,559	£28,995
4 bed detached house	Balcombe	£499,950	£128,559	£49,999

*Table 9 indicates that there were no 1 bed or 3 bed properties available in Balcombe at the time of this property search. The nearest properties available to purchase were found in Staplefield and Ardingly following a search within a 3 mile radius of the parish.

Table 10. Lowest current property rental prices in Balcombe and the Local Area

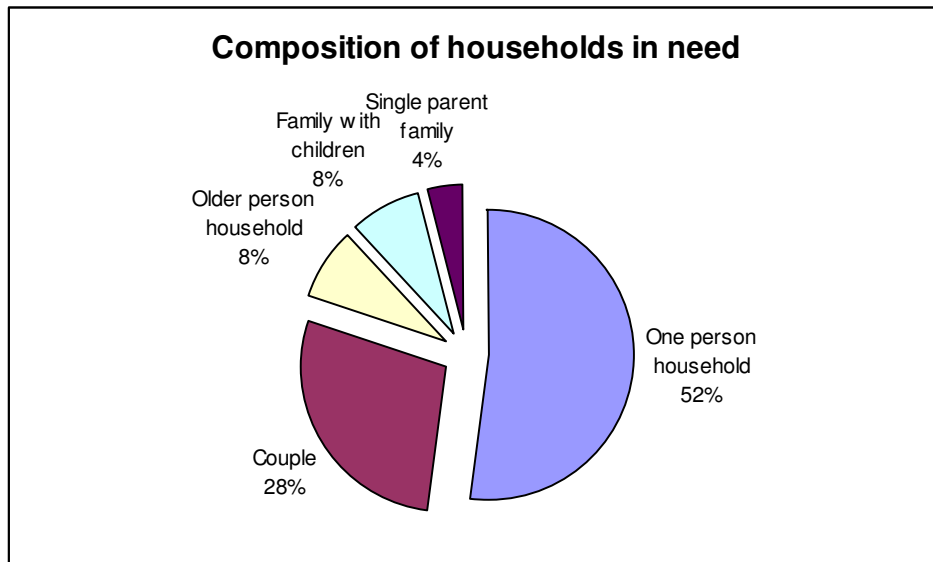
Property Type	Location	Lowest Price
1 bed flat	*Turners Hill	£400 pcm
2 bed flat	Balcombe	£1325 pcm
3 bed detached house	Balcombe	£1300 pcm
4 bed detached house	Balcombe	£1650 pcm

*Table 10 indicates that there were no 1 bedroom properties for rent within the parish of Balcombe at the time of the property search. The nearest property available for rent was found in Turners Hill following a search within a 5 mile radius of the parish.

Household composition

The household makeup of the 25 households with a local connection who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market are as follows and are also shown in figure 10.

Figure 10. Composition of Households in Need



As a percentage breakdown this equates to the following:

- 13 are one person households
- 7 are couples without children
- 3 are families with children
- 2 are older person households

Figure 11. Composition of families in need

Family – 1 child	1
Family – 2 children	0
Family – 3 children	0
No response	2
Total	3

Summary of Need

There are 25 households in housing need who have a local connection and who cannot afford to either purchase or rent on the open market.

Single person households	13
Couple without children	7
Families with children	3

Older person household	2
No response	0
Total	25