



# **Cannington Parish Housing Needs Assessment**


**2014**

## **Final Report**

**JULY 2014**



## **Cannington Parish Housing Need Assessment (2014)**

	
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**Key Survey Findings**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2014, Cannington Parish Council contacted the Sedgemoor District Council Affordable Housing Development Team (AFHDT) asking the team to carry-out a housing-need-survey (HNS) of local people. This piece of work was intended to help inform the work being carried out in respect of the Cannington Neighbourhood Plan. **Following the Parish Council meeting 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014 it was agreed that all CBL applicants which have Cannington as first choice of parish should be issued the HNS survey again. This has now been carried out and the replies have now been combined with the original survey to create this report.**

The purpose of this exercise was to look into what (if any) unmet housing need existed in the parish of Cannington. The Parish Council promoted the assessment. Local people, who felt that they had some form of unmet housing need, were encouraged to complete a short initial expression of interest form, followed by the more detailed housing need assessment form. The AFHDT also wrote to every household registered for affordable-housing (in Cannington) on the homefindersomerset housing register ("CBL"). Despite personally writing to the CBL applicants, a significant number of these households failed to respond to the survey. **A further 46 HNS were sent to the CBL applicants which have Cannington as first choice of parish. Out of the 46 surveys sent we received 14 back, 3 of the applicants were no longer interested in affordable housing and 11 filled out the survey which have been incorporated into this report.**

Only responses to the assessment have been used to inform the conclusions of this report. The assessment took the form of a single-stage survey. Assessment forms were available from the Cannington PC as well as by contacting the AFHDT. The assessment sought to provide an insight into what (if any) unmet housing need existed locally from people with a connection with Cannington. People with no obvious local connection were free to submit an assessment form.

There were a total of 20 responses received. All 20 respondents felt they had some form of unmet housing need. **Along with the 20 original responses we received a further 14 responses from the CBL applicants.**

### Key Findings

It is important to note that the Cannington Housing Needs Assessment offers a snap shot of the housing situation in the parish at the time of the survey. This will alter with increasing/decreasing values of housing, policies of lenders, and the economic climate, demographic changes in the community and as individuals situations change.

**The original figures have been left in the chart but crossed through and the new figures have been inserted in red to see the changes that the additional information from the CBL applicants made.**

### Cannington: Affordable Housing Need: ~~14~~ **23** units

#### ~~11~~ **18** x Affordable Rented

~~2~~ **4** x 1-bed general need flats for rent;  
1 x 1-bed general needs flat (disabled adapted);  
~~4~~ **2** x 2-bed general need flat for rent;  
**1** x 1 bed bungalow for rent  
**1** x 2 bed bungalows for rent  
5 x 2-bed houses for rent;  
~~2~~ **3** x 3-bed houses for rent;  
**1** x 4 bed houses for rent;

#### ~~3~~ **5** x Affordable Homeownership or Self Build

1 x 2-bed houses for AFH homeownership  
**2** x 2 bed bungalows for AFH homeownership  
1 x 3-bed houses for AFH homeownership  
1 x 4-bed houses for AFH homeownership  
**Note:** each of the above has indicated an interest in self build or custom build.

<b>Affordable Housing Net Need</b>	1bedF	1bedB	2bedF	2bedB	2bedH	3bedH	4bedH	Total
AFH Rented	35	1	42	01	5	23	01	4418
AFH Homeownership	0	0	0	02	1	1	1	35
<b>Total(s)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>4423</b>

<b>Potential Combined Affordable Housing Demand</b>	<b>Minimum Bedroom Requirement</b>					Source: Homefindersomerset data base as at June 2014.
Bedrooms Required	1	2	3	4	6	
Assessed via HNS	3	4	1	0	0	HNS assessed & on CBL
Assessed via HNS	0	3	2	1	0	HNS assessed, not on CBL
No HNS Assessment	22	16	7	1	0	No HNS, but on CBL
<b>Potential Combined Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>

Most surprisingly, and despite 54 applicant's taking the time to register themselves for affordable housing on the Homefindersomerset CBL system, only 8 bothered to complete a housing need assessment form. It has not been possible to accurately assess the housing need for 46 CBL applicants. **The 46 applicants have been resent the HNS for further clarity on what their housing need is, out of the 46 HNS sent 14 replied, 3 no longer interested in affordable housing and the other 11 showing a need for affordable housing now or in the future.**

Whilst the quantifiable affordable housing need discovered from the housing need assessment is **4423**, and notwithstanding earlier comments concerning the robustness of CBL, the above table sets out a possible level local affordable-housing demand taking into the combined figures from people responding to the housing need assessment and people registered on the CBL system. **This chart will remain the same as the figures are from the CBL system as the assessed need has now been quantified following the further survey.**

Using this calculation, the potential affordable-housing need could be as high as 60 homes. However, it likely that a number of those registered on the CBL system no longer have a housing need (and neglected to remove themselves from the CBL system), may not actually be in housing need and-or do not have a strong connection with Cannington.

Nevertheless, the above figures pose an interesting question for the Parish Council. Does the Parish Council wish to make any further attempts to assess the non-responding CBL applicant's to ascertain whether the true level of unmet local affordable-housing need is higher than the current **4425** units?

## **REPORT PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is report the findings flowing from the Cannington 2014 Housing Need Assessment Update. Only responses (by survey form) have been used to inform the conclusions of this report. The results of the assessment are of course a snap-shot in time, but provide a useful indication of what unmet housing need exist in Cannington.

## **SEDGEMOOR DC AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

The Sedgemoor District Council Affordable Housing Development Team (AFHDT) is a small team dedicated with specific responsibility to oversee the delivery of new affordable housing. The team are part of the wider SDC Strategy and Development Service. This service is responsible for developing and implementing many of the Council's key strategies and policies.

Building upon a successful track-record of delivering affordable-homes in rural communities, the AFHDT provides support and advice to parish councils, landowners, developers and registered providers with the aim of developing new affordable-housing. The AFHDT has developed its own housing need assessment processes, which provides publically available independent and robust evidence for future housing growth in rural communities.

This assessment was undertaken by Duncan Harvey, Affordable Housing Policy & Development Manager. Duncan has over 20 years housing experience including development of rural housing policies & strategies and community engagement to deliver rural affordable housing. He has an extensive knowledge base on national, regional and local planning policy, development and housing management issues. He has significant experience in undertaking or commissioning housing need and other housing focused surveys. Duncan has an Honours degree in Housing and is the Chairperson of the Somerset Affordable Housing Lead Officer Group.

## **CANNINGTON PARISH**

Data from the Census 2011 and other national statistic sources can be accessed down to ward and parish level via the National Statistics web site of the Office for National Statistics.

Cannington, the parish had a population of 2,271 (2011 Census). There are three settlements within the parish – Cannington village, along with Rodway and Bradley Green. Cannington (the village) is located 2.5 miles west of Bridgwater off the A39.

Cannington is a mixed community, relatively well off for services. Cannington Centre for Land-Based Studies (part of Bridgwater College) is an important part of the settlement, providing good employment opportunities, and there is now also a training centre for the nuclear decommissioning industry. Yeo Valley Farms is a major employer in the area. There is also local employment also at Brymore School, and some smaller businesses. Other workers commute to Bridgwater and Taunton with a smaller number travelling west to Hinkley Point power station and Minehead. Regular bus services to Bridgwater, Williton, Watchet and Minehead, but only Bridgwater is commutable for 9 – 5 working, and Taunton with a change of bus at Bridgwater.

The village has a primary school, 2 pre-school groups, secondary boarding school, Cannington Centre for Land-Based Studies, 1 convenience shop, 5 other shops including 3 food and newsagent, ATM, Post Office, 2 churches, village hall, 4 pubs, doctor's surgery, golf course and youth club.

Cannington (the village) is considered a rural settlement. In the affordable housing arena, settlements with a population of less than 3000 are classed as villages. In Planning terms, Cannington is viewed as one of Sedgemoor's Key Rural Settlements.

## THE CANNINGTON PARISH HOUSING MARKET

As at the 2011 census, there were 973 dwellings in the parish. The 2011 census indicated that there were 2,271 usual residents forming 936 households.

**Owner Occupation:** is the dominant tenure across the parish accounting for 71.05% of all homes. This compares to the Sedgemoor district average of 71.3%.

**Private Rented:** At 13.9% there is a modest private rented housing supply, which is below the Sedgemoor district average of 16%. This includes people occupying properties on a rent-free basis.

**Affordable Housing Households:** As at the 2011 census, Cannington had an affordable-housing stock of 141 homes, equating to a slightly above district average of 15.05%. This compares with the Sedgemoor district average of 12.7%. At 132 homes, the vast majority of the affordable housing stock is rented, with mere 9 properties provided on a shared-ownership basis (affordable homeownership). These homes have generic allocation criteria. This means that as-and-when a vacancy arises; local people are not automatically given initial priority for the property.

Cannington Household Tenure Structure: Census 2011			
Tenure	Cannington %	Sedgemoor %	England %
Owner Occupied	71.05%	71.30%	63.40%
Private Rented	13.90%	16.00%	18.10%
Affordable Units	15.05%	12.70%	18.50%

### Cannington Affordable Housing Supply and Demand

Sedgemoor District Council (the homefindersomerset CBL system) maintains a register of affordable housing demand ("the waiting list"). Whilst a useful, this register should not be used as the definitive evidence of unmet housing need. Each and every CBL applicant is able to choose a preferred place to live. At present, there are just 54 applicants seeking an affordable home in Cannington. **As the figures are a snapshot in time there is no need to re calculate the requirements on the CBL system as there is only a period of 3 months between the original and updated survey.**

Waiting List (CBL) Affordable Housing Demand Bedrooms Required Cannington 1 <sup>st</sup> Area Choice	Minimum Bedroom Requirement					54 (Total)
	1	2	3	4	5+	
	25	20	8	1	0	

Source: Homefindersomerset data base as at June 2014.

Of these, 22 applicants currently live in the parish. Whilst it would be reasonable to assume that some of the remaining 32 applicants have some form of other strong local connection with the parish, it has not been possible to accurately determine this.

Comment for Note
<p>It is important to note that the applicant information from the homefindersomerset housing system <u>has not been</u> used to inform this housing assessment.</p> <p>Most surprisingly, and despite 54 applicant's taking the time to register themselves for affordable housing on the Homefindersomerset CBL system, only 8 bothered to complete a housing need assessment form. It has not been possible to accurately assess the housing need for 46 CBL applicants. <b>The</b></p>

subsequent HNS that was re sent to the 46 CBL applicants had a somewhat larger reply this time around, 14 applicants replied to the survey 11 of them saying that they had a housing need now or in the future.

This low level of CBL applicant response is not uncommon. When chasing non-responding CBL applicants (in earlier survey's elsewhere), many stated (incorrectly) that they thought the CBL form and HNS form had the same purpose. Furthermore, a chase up of non-responding CBL applicants often found the CBL information was inaccurate, the applicant had moved, were not in fact in housing need or no longer needed help with their housing.

Based on experience elsewhere and whilst the CBL data is a useful indicator of potential affordable housing demand, it would inadvisable to use this information as a definitive assessment of unmet true local affordable housing need.

**Recommended Action**

~~Whilst this report makes a clear recommendation in terms of future affordable housing provision, the fact that a staggering 46 CBL applicants failed to respond to the HNS poses an interesting question for the Parish Council:~~

~~**Question:** Does the Parish Council want Sedgemoor District Council to make contact with the 46 non-responding applicants in an attempt to clarify whether any of these have a true unmet affordable housing need and whether if any of these have a local connection with Cannington? – The HNS survey was reissued following a decision taken at the Parish Council Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014, a further 46 surveys were sent out to the CBL applicants. 14 of the applicants replied to the survey.~~

Whilst Cannington has an “above district average” affordable-housing stock, it might be argued that there is a mismatch between what affordable-housing currently exists in Cannington (in terms of unit size, designation etc) versus what affordable maybe required in the future. Circa 35% of the affordable housing stock is designated for older people. There are very few smaller affordable homes (flats and smaller houses) capable of accommodating younger single people or couples with or without a child.

Since January 2013, there have been 11 affordable-housing vacancies in Cannington. These have been almost exclusively been properties specifically designated for older people.

**Cannington Parish Homeownership**

Owner occupation is the overwhelming tenure across Cannington. There are currently 18 homes on the market for sale in Cannington at an average asking price of circa £207,000. House prices have risen by circs 5.6% over the past year.

CANNINGTON Typical Asking Prices (Housing) ( Zoopla 2014)					
Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	£64,000	£89,000	£165,960	£252,633	£411,225



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Property type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Flats	None	£110,000	None	None	None

The average asking price would prove problematic to many people (who aren't already in the owner-occupied sector). However, a snap shot (as described above) would suggest that opportunities to access the homeownership sector can still be found. Whilst some potential first-time home buyers have the income to service a mortgage, many are unable to provide the requisite deposits and are now subject to recently introduced "more" stringent mortgage assessment criteria.

### **Cannington Parish Private Rented Accommodation**

Whilst Cannington has a modest private rented housing sector, the availability and choice of such housing is low. As per the above owner occupier sector, accurately assessing the price and availability of private rented properties across the parish has proved challenging. There was limited private rented housing data available, with only 1 property available for rent. This was a 5-bed house, at a monthly rent of £1,798 pcm. As and when reasonably priced appropriate housing becomes available, benefits and financial support is available for private tenants renting property or a room from a private landlord. If they are on a low income, they may be able to claim and receive Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

### **Second Homes, Holiday Lets and Empty Properties**

Current Information suggests that there are circa 30 unoccupied empty homes or second homes-holiday lets in Cannington. Empty properties can have an extremely negative impact on a local community, as they deteriorate rapidly and as well as being unsightly can often become targets for vandalism and crime. Reducing empty properties is an important priority for Sedgemoor District Council, and they can provide advice and assistance to owners of empty properties which they would like to sell or rent out. Sedgemoor District Council has worked in partnership with owners and local Housing Associations to bring empty properties back into use, and also maintain a list of accredited private landlords.

## **THE ASSESSMENT RATIONALE**

In early 2014, Cannington Parish Council contacted the Sedgemoor District Council Affordable Housing Development Team (AFHDT) asking the team to carry-out a housing-need-survey of local people. This piece of work was intended to help inform the work being carried out in respect of the Cannington Neighbourhood Plan.

The purpose of this exercise was to look into what (if any) unmet housing need existed in the parish of Cannington. The Parish Council promoted the assessment. Local people, who felt that they had some form of unmet housing need, were encouraged to complete a short initial expression of interest form, followed by the more detailed housing need assessment form. The AFHDT also wrote to each households registered for affordable-housing (in Cannington) on the homefindersomerset housing register ("CBL"). Despite personally writing to the CBL applicants, a number of these households failed to respond to the survey.

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The assessment took an analytical assessment of each and every individual respondents housing need. As far as has been practical, the assessment evaluated fact and was specifically designed to avoid it being a local “opinion poll” on housing. In reality, the assessment sought to answer a simply, yet fundamental question, “was there any unmet local housing need from local people in Cannington?” rather than “I think there is a need for housing”. It is not the purpose of the assessment to gauge local opinion on the merits or otherwise of the future provision of any new Cannington housing. This assessment and recommendations contained within this report deal with need rather than desired or perceived future housing requirements in Cannington. This report includes a clear statement “recommendations” on the unmet housing need in Cannington. The report conclusions are justified within the body of this report.

## **THE ASSESSMENT ASSUMPTIONS**

The personal data provided from survey responses has been used to assess individual respondent’s personal housing need-requirement. For each and every respondent, the assessment has tried to answer questions such as “Is the respondent in housing need or not?” The assessment also tried to clarify “what type, size and tenure of housing does the respondent need and what can they afford?”

### **The Housing Affordability Assessment** (What Can Someone Afford For Their Housing)

Sold house prices and current open market prices have been used as markers to assess those who can afford open market housings and those in need of affordable housing. By using “real house price data”, and taking a conservative view on the current average house price of houses in the parish, I have used the urban segment house prices (above) to assess the price at which someone can buy a property (entry level at which it would be feasible to get onto the housing ladder).

Shared Ownership (now known as “help-to-buy”) is an affordable-housing tenure designed to help people into homeownership. I have made a judgement in terms of what people can afford to buy a share of an affordable shared ownership or shared equity property. An estimate of £70,000 has been used as the being affordable for shared-ownership housing.

To determine whether households could afford to buy a house on the open market in the parish, weekly household income has been used, along with additional income, savings and current equity holdings (income + savings + equity).

Whilst mortgage lenders offer a broad range of mortgage types (“products”), with variable deposit requirements), this report assumes that mortgage lenders commonly require deposits in the range of 10% - 25%. Assuming a requirement for a 10% deposit, a property worth £150,000, the applicant would need a minimum of £15,000 to secure a loan. The table below shows the notional purchasing power (assuming 10% and 25% deposits). Where there is only one household income, an earnings multiplier of 3 has been assumed. In households with more than one income an earning multiplier of 3.5 has been assumed. Whilst it is likely that individual households will have different mortgage product, interest charges and repayment periods. For the purpose of this assessment, it has been assumed the interest rate is 5% and 25 year repayment period.

		Interest (APR)		5%		Term (years)		25	
Income £pa	Mortgage multiplier	Deposit	Mortgage Obtainable	Purchasing Power	Monthly mortgage cost	Deposit	Mortgage Obtainable	Purchasing Power	Monthly mortgage cost
£10,000	3	25%	£30,000	£40,000	-£169	10%	£30,000	£33,333	-£169
£15,000	3	25%	£45,000	£60,000	-£253	10%	£45,000	£50,000	-£253
£20,000	3	25%	£60,000	£80,000	-£337	10%	£60,000	£66,667	-£337
£25,000	3	25%	£75,000	£100,000	-£421	10%	£75,000	£83,333	-£421
£30,000	3	25%	£90,000	£120,000	-£506	10%	£90,000	£100,000	-£506
£35,000	3	25%	£105,000	£140,000	-£590	10%	£105,000	£116,667	-£590
£40,000	3	25%	£120,000	£160,000	-£674	10%	£120,000	£133,333	-£674
£45,000	3	25%	£135,000	£180,000	-£759	10%	£135,000	£150,000	-£759
£50,000	3	25%	£150,000	£200,000	-£843	10%	£150,000	£166,667	-£843

Income £pa	Mortgage multiplier	Deposit	Mortgage Obtainable	Purchasing Power	Monthly mortgage cost	Deposit	Mortgage Obtainable	Purchasing Power	Monthly mortgage cost
£10,000	3.5	25%	£35,000	£46,667	-£197	10%	£35,000	£38,889	-£197
£15,000	3.5	25%	£52,500	£70,000	-£295	10%	£52,500	£58,333	-£295
£20,000	3.5	25%	£70,000	£93,333	-£393	10%	£70,000	£77,778	-£393
£25,000	3.5	25%	£87,500	£116,667	-£492	10%	£87,500	£97,222	-£492
£30,000	3.5	25%	£105,000	£140,000	-£590	10%	£105,000	£116,667	-£590
£35,000	3.5	25%	£122,500	£163,333	-£688	10%	£122,500	£136,111	-£688
£40,000	3.5	25%	£140,000	£186,667	-£787	10%	£140,000	£155,556	-£787
£45,000	3.5	25%	£157,500	£210,000	-£885	10%	£157,500	£175,000	-£885
£50,000	3.5	25%	£175,000	£233,333	-£983	10%	£175,000	£194,444	-£983

In summary, where it is considered that the household's affordability potential is insufficient to purchase on the open market or shared ownership, affordable rent or social rent has been recommended.

### **The Housing Need Assessment** (Is the household suitably or unsuitably housed)

#### **Accommodation Mismatch**

- Overcrowded according to the bedroom standards (including caravans).
- Difficult to maintain (e.g. too large) even with equity release.
- Households containing people with mobility impairment or other specific needs living in unsuitable dwelling (e.g. accessed via steps), which cannot be made suitable insitu.

#### **Current Home Facility and Condition**

- Lacks a bathroom, kitchen or inside WC and household does not have the resources to make fit.
- Sharing a kitchen, bathroom or WC with another household.
- Subject to major disrepair or unfitness and household does not have the resources to make fit.

#### **Social Reasons**

- Need to live independently or need housing due to divorce/separation.
- Needs to live near immediate family/friends to give or receive support.
- Harassment from other living in the vicinity which cannot be resolved except through a move.
- Inaccessibility of accommodation to employment.
- Households with tenure under notice, real threat of notice or lease coming to an end;
- Housing is too expensive for households.

#### **Is the household unable to afford to rent or buy on the open market?**

- There is a demonstrable disparity between the family income and/or assets and local house prices or rents.

Where a 1 bed unit is requested for rent (and in light of the 2012 Welfare Reforms), it is assumed that a 1 bedroom unit is appropriate. If a single person or a couple have expressed a need for a house or a flat - this is accepted. If a preference was not given, then a house is given as the preferred recommended option. If it is a family, a house has been recommended. Bungalows have been recommended for older households, over 55 or for those who state they have mobility concerns. If a bungalow has been requested without justification, a level access property has been recommended.

## KEY FINDINGS

It is important to note that the Cannington Housing Needs Assessment offers a snap shot of the housing situation in the parish at the time of the survey. This will alter with increasing/decreasing values of housing, policies of lenders, and the economic climate, demographic changes in the community and as individuals situations change. **There were a total of 20 responses received from the original survey plus and additions 11 from the CBL applicants felt they have some form of unmet housing need.**

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- ~~2~~ 3 x 3-bed houses for rent;
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#### ~~3~~ 5 x Affordable Homeownership or Self Build

- 1 x 2-bed houses for AFH homeownership
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Affordable Housing Net Need	1bedF	1bedB	2bedF	2bedB	2bedH	3bedH	4bedH	Total
AFH Rented	<del>3</del> 5	1	<del>4</del> 2	<del>0</del> 1	5	<del>2</del> 3	<del>0</del> 1	44 <del>18</del>
AFH Homeownership	0	0	0	<del>0</del> 2	1	1	1	<del>3</del> 5
Total(s)	<del>3</del> 5	1	<del>4</del> 2	<del>0</del> 2	6	<del>3</del> 4	<del>1</del> 2	44 <del>23</del>

### Households "In Need" of Affordable Housing (within the next 3years)

(\*) Could afford shared-ownership (but have no deposit or insufficient deposit), therefore rented recommended

Ref Nos	Respondent Reason for Needing Housing	What Local Connection	Respondent Desired Housing	Affordability Potential (£)	Number in Household	Recommend AFH Tenure	Recommend Bedroom(s)
1	Need more home security	Live +5yr	2bh Rent	63,000	2	Rented	2
2	Looking for 1 <sup>st</sup> home	Live +5yr	3bh OO	91,600	2	Rented (*)	2
3	Expensive PR, want to buy	Live +5yr	3bh OO	121,000	4	SO or SB	3
4	Setting up home together	Live +5yr	2bh Rent	27,300	2	Rented	1
5	Current home insecure	Live +5yr	3bh Rent	28,500	4	Rented	3
6	Setting up home together	Live +5yr	2bh Rent	27,000	2	Rented	1
7	Looking for 1 <sup>st</sup> home	Live +5yr	3bh OO	45,500	2	Rented	2
8	Current too expensive	Family	2bh OO	75,000	1	SO or SB	2
9	Current home insecure	Live +5yr	4bh OO	110,500	5	SO or SB	4
10	Looking for 1 <sup>st</sup> home	Family	3bh OO	45,500	2	Rented	2
11	Current home insecure	Live +5yr	3bh Rent	63,700	5	Rented	3
12	Current home too small	Live +5yr	2bh SO	51,500	2	Rented	2
13	PR in poor condition	Live +5yr	2bb Rent	27,300	2	Rented	2
14	Medical	Live +5yr	2bb Rent	45,500	2	Rented	1
23	Medical	Live +5yr	1bb Rent	27,300	2	Rented	1
24	Medical	Live +5yr	2bb Rent	118,300	2	SO	2

25	Current too expensive	Live +5yr	4bh Rent	100,100	7	Rented	3
26	Medical	Family	2bf Rent	27,300	3	Rented	2
28	Moved away like to return	Job offer	1bf Rent	118,300	2	Rented	1
29	Medical	Live +1yr	2bb SO	136,500	2	SO	1
30	Moved away like to return	Born +14yr	1bf Rent	27,300	1	Rented	1
32	Private tenancy ending	Children schooling	4bh Rent	63,700	6	Rented	4
33	Receive family support	Family	2bb Rent	9,100	2	Rented	2

Most surprisingly, and despite 54 applicant's taking the time to register themselves for affordable housing on the Homefindersomerset CBL system, only 8 bothered to complete a housing need assessment form. It has not been possible to accurately assess the housing need for 46 CBL applicants. This has now been changed as the 46 CBL applicants were re sent the HNS of which 14 replied 11 of them filling out the survey form.

Potential Combined Affordable Housing Demand	Minimum Bedroom Requirement					Source: Homefindersomerset data base as at June 2014.
	1	2	3	4	6	
Bedrooms Required						
Assessed via HNS	3	4	1	0	0	HNS assessed & on CBL
Assessed via HNS	0	3	2	1	0	HNS assessed, not on CBL
No HNS Assessment	22	16	7	1	0	No HNS, but on CBL
<b>Potential Combined Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>

Whilst the quantifiable affordable housing need discovered from the housing need assessment is 44 23, and notwithstanding earlier comments concerning the robustness of CBL data on their own, the above table sets out a possible level local affordable-housing demand taking into the combined figures from people responding to the housing need assessment and people registered on the CBL system.

Using this calculation, the potential affordable-housing need could be 60 homes. However, it likely that a number of those registered on the CBL system no longer have a housing need (and neglected to remove themselves from the CBL system), may not actually be in housing need and-or do not have a strong connection with Cannington.

Nevertheless, the above figures pose an interesting question for the Parish Council. Does the Parish Council wish to make any further attempts to assess the non-responding CBL applicant's to ascertain whether the true level of unmet local affordable-housing need is higher than the current 14 units? Following the Parish Council meeting 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014 it was agreed that all CBL applicants which have Cannington as first choice of parish should be issued the HNS survey again. This has now been carried out and the replies have now been combined with the original survey to create this report therefore the above sentence has been deleted accordingly.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING (and key to the above recommendations)**

The housing assessment has highlighted a number of households who fit the description of people in need of affordable housing. Affordable housing is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (as published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012) as including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

**Rented:** Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are

determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

In rural communities, such as Cannington, we generally encourage a preference for social rent where possible. Social rent is considered the more affordable form of renting. However, the funding mechanism used to deliver any affordable homes will have a direct influence over whether or not social rented units can be provided.

**Affordable Homeownership:** Often called intermediate housing is housing for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the affordable housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

The role of self-build or customer build housing in rural communities is become increasingly more popular as a way of satisfying an unmet housing need. This report has recommended 3 local people for affordable-homeownership (termed “shared ownership”). All three respondents have expressed an interest in a self-build option as an alternative.

The terms ‘affordability’ and ‘affordable housing’ have different meanings. “Affordability” is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. “Affordable Housing” refers to particular products outside the main housing market (as described below).

Affordable-housing can be described as housing made available for people who cannot otherwise afford housing available on the open market. We are living through a period of economic uncertainty and changeable market conditions, the cost of housing can come down, it is better to consider affordable-housing to be housing made available for those people who cannot otherwise afford housing in the prevailing market.

**No Obvious Housing Need or Unable to Complete an Assessment: 6 9**

A further 6 were assessed as being adequately housed or deemed capable of resolving their own housing requirements in the private sector. **This figure increased to 9 following the survey being sent to the 46 CBL applicants.**

Households Not Being In Housing Need	TOTAL
Unsuitably housed, insufficient evidence to determine a need	2
Unsuitably housed could satisfy needs on open market	0
Suitably housed, insufficient evidence to determine a need	0
Present accommodation suitable for needs	0 3
Not in need within next 5 years	0
Insufficient evidence to determine a need	2
Could satisfy needs on open market	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 9</b>

**NATIONAL BACKGROUND DELIVERY OF RURAL AFFORDABLE HOMES**

This extract from a South West National Housing Federation booklet sums up why the provision of rural affordable homes is important to developing or maintaining a sustainable and vibrant community. For individual households on lower incomes, moving away from the village where they grew up or

have close family & support networks is a reality unless there is an adequate supply of appropriate homes for them to rent or buy.

“Rural settlements are particularly impacted by a shortage of affordable housing. Many villages are at risk of losing vital shops and services as young families and those on modest incomes are priced out. Though average wages are lower in rural areas, the average price of a house in rural England is now over £40,000 more expensive than in urban areas, meaning young people and low earners are moving out to urban areas. The consequences are clear - 1,200 village shops have already closed nationally over the last two years and 600 rural pubs closed in the last year alone (2009). Rural exception sites have been established to help rural communities meet local affordable housing needs by permitting affordable housing development as an exception to normal planning policy. Parish councillors can help consider whether an affordable housing development is needed, support consultation with local residents and work with the local authority to ensure lettings are made to the members of the local community in greatest housing need”

In 2008, Matthew Taylor MP undertook a ground breaking review of rural policy. His report ‘The Taylor Review of rural economy and affordable housing: A Living Working Countryside’ made significant recommendations to Government on policy changes to improve the economic and community sustainability of rural England. It set out a vision for “flourishing, vibrant communities that will be genuinely sustainable’ and stated ‘this country’s rural communities cannot stand still. Change is inevitable whether development takes place or not and the choices we make today will shape the character of tomorrows towns, villages and hamlets that make up our countryside’. His assessment of villages and hamlets states ‘...the choice is between becoming ever more exclusive enclaves for the wealthy and retired, or building affordable homes to enable people who work in these communities to continue to live in them. In many cases, just a handful of well-designed homes, kept affordable in perpetuity for local people, will make all the difference...”

Development of the appropriate type of homes in the parish, which are ear marked for local households, becomes a win-win for both the community and the individual in housing need. This research will help the local community understand if there is a local housing need which requires investigation and resolving.

## **LOCAL PLANNING “HOUSING” POLICIES**

**The Sedgemoor Core Strategy and Affordable Housing:** The Core Strategy was formally adopted at the Full Council meeting on 12th October 2011 and has replaced the Sedgemoor District Local Plan 1991-2011 as the 'development plan' for the District. The adopted Core Strategy (CS) can be viewed via the following link [www.sedgemoor.gov.uk](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk)

The Core Strategy sets out a 20 year vision for the District and establishes the spatial strategy and spatial policies and outlines the key infrastructure and investment decisions required to deliver this. It is central to achieving the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Sedgemoor and the Council's identified priorities.

The Core Strategy 'joins up' town planning and land use issues with plans and strategies of other stakeholders and service providers that deal with community issues such as health, community safety, housing, employment, community development, education, transport, the environment and regeneration. This approach is called spatial planning, and ensures development and investment decisions are guided by the objectives and long-term vision for the District. Spatial planning is not limited to things that the District Council control, therefore working with other partners and agencies will be essential

In terms of affordable housing, Policy D6 deals with the delivery of affordable housing. Policy D7 deals with Rural Local Needs. Policy D7 has designated Cannington as a Key Rural Settlement (KRS) and as such there policy D7 allows for rural exception of small scale housing development in or adjacent rural settlements outside of Key and Local Service Centres where the housing is 100%

affordable to meet an identified local housing need. A further CS policy (P4) allows for mixed tenure housing projects to come forward to address unmet local housing needs.

## **THE NEXT STEP TO ADDRESS LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED**

In rural communities such as Cannington, new affordable housing projects historically receive greater levels of local support where the homes are for local people. A local housing priority (“preference”) can be secured by s106 agreement. This ensures that the housing is both affordable and secured in perpetuity; within the s106 Agreement there is usually a local connection definition.

### **Local Housing Need**

This report has identified a need for 14 additional affordable-homes in Readers will have noted that a significant number of people registered for affordable-housing (on the CBL system) failed to respond to this survey. Is Cannington Parish Council satisfied this report offers sufficient and robust evidence of unmet affordable-housing need? Is there a case to contact non-responding CBL applicant's to clarify what (if any) housing need and local connection each has?

### **Establishing an Development Project Plan**

Assuming there is local commitment to tackle the under provision of affordable-housing (specifically for local people), should this form part of longer term neighbourhood planning process or a swifter bespoke housing project with its own project plan? In either case, support and advice will be available from Sedgemoor District Council (Affordable Housing Development Team– “AFHDT”).

### **Finding a Site**

The AFHDT would normally spend time with PC members to carry out an initial site identification exercise. We would normally recommend a public “call for sites” exercise. This will (hopefully) identify all and any development opportunity. At this stage, this could include land both within and adjacent to the village development boundary, along with other potential opportunities such as empty properties.

### **Delivery Options**

As Key Rural Settlement (KRS), The Sedgemoor Core Strategy offers a number of new-build planning policies which could be deployed to deliver additional affordable homes. The eventual scale of project and the availability of land (and its planning designation) will have a significant influence. At this point of time, I have assumed that if a suitable land parcel is available within the village development boundary, it would be unlikely that this could be secured for affordable-housing provision.

Policy D6 is a main-stream affordable-housing policy which would require any permitted development of 5 units or more to make an affordable-housing contribution. The precise level of affordable-housing provision will vary (between 15% and 40%) depending on a number of variables. There are no sites coming forward under this policy at this point-in-time.

Policy D7 is an exception policy, designed to specifically provide affordable-housing only. This policy permits housing development outside (albeit adjacent to) the village development boundary. Any housing development under this policy would secure the affordable housing in perpetuity and would require a significant injection of gap funding (almost usually from the public sector). This policy would effectively see 100% affordable-housing provision.

Policy P4 can be described as another exception policy, designed to specifically address a quantifiable unmet local housing need (invariable affordable-housing). This policy introduces the principle of open-market properties outside (albeit adjacent to) the village development boundary being built. The rationale of this policy is that sales receipts from the open-market properties will generate funds to pay for the affordable-housing units (no need for public sector gap funding required under D7). This policy would expect to see a minimum 40% affordable-housing provision.

**Delivery Models** (utilising policies D7 or P4)



Does Cannington Parish Council (CPC) have a preference for a particular policy or wish to retain an open mind?

Notwithstanding policy, which development partners should CPC consider being involved? Where D7 is preferred, some form of specialist affordable-housing provider is recommended. This would normally be a housing association or Sedgemoor District Council itself.

Would CPC wish to consider introducing other non-traditional models of affordable-housing provision such as some form of community led initiative (such community land trust) or self-build?

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

A limited number of copies of this report will be published. The report will be available on the Sedgemoor District Council web site [www.sedgemoor.gov.uk](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk).

If you would like to receive a copy of this report, you should contact

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