

Knebworth Housing Need Survey August 2004

Conclusions

Knebworth was a popular place to live with 70% of those households that needed to move wishing to remain in the parish.

Knebworth is an expensive place to live with the entry level home requiring a first time buyer to have an annual income of around £42,000.

There was a high level of support for an affordable housing scheme to meet local needs.

The survey identified up to 52 households considered in housing need (including 14 who wished to buy and the thirteen local households on the housing register). Of these 42 wished to rent and at least a further 5 who wished to buy would only be able to afford to rent.

Nine of these households in need live in housing association stock. There is therefore some scope for transfer within the stock, or release of social housing stock if these households were to be housed in new more suitable accommodation.

Subject to allocation policies there may be scope to house those local households on the Councils housing register that require rented accommodation within the Councils stock – however the **majority of those in need identified by the survey were not on the housing register.**

35 households reported a need for some form of adaptation to their home in order to meet their needs. These households were from both rented and ownership sectors. 5 households required some form of support either from live in staff or visiting warden or warden alarm call.

There was a high apparent level of interest for self build, particularly from those with higher income levels and including those who were already home-owners (18% of current households in need found their existing home too expensive).

The present survey format in use does not encourage those wanting further information on self build to request this directly from CDA.

The Parish Council may therefore wish to consider publicising the interest in self build and suggest any interested parties provide their names and addresses to CDA with a view to these being forwarded to the Self Build Agency. The agency can then arrange a meeting to cover the topic should there be sufficient interest.

We believe that the level of need warrants a small housing scheme of up to approximately 21 homes (including 10 one bed and 8 two bed) to meet these specific local needs. This could be on existing infill or redevelopment sites or under the Councils Rural Housing exception policy (see note on right to acquire). Such a scheme would help sustain the local family structures and support networks in the Parish. However, residents in any such scheme will have a right to acquire, including buying shared ownership homes.

We would further recommend that priority should be given to those with a strong local connection when letting the Councils homes in the area.

No option was given on the questionnaire for households to register an interest in intermediate rented housing. However, there is some evidence that some of those who wished to rent could afford a rent greater than a housing association rent but less than market rent. (Also, some of the 9 households that wished to buy but could not afford to do so may consider intermediate rented housing as an alternative to shared ownership or staying put.)