

# Housing Needs Survey Project Brief

## 1. Purpose and aims

- 1.1. The purpose of the Housing Needs Survey is to undertake a comprehensive and robust housing needs assessment, to obtain good quality information and data about current and future housing needs at a local level, that will be used to inform the development of local housing strategies and policies, as well as determine the type and tenure of housing needed in the district.
- 1.2. A Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) was conducted and published in 2017 in preparation for the development of the Local Plan (and later updated in 2019) and provides an assessment of the future housing requirements in an area. However due to the complexity of the housing market, SHMAs may not provide definitive estimates of housing need, demand, and market conditions in specific localities. SHMAs are usually valid for 5 years.
- 1.3. The aims of the Housing Needs Survey are to establish an up-to-date and comprehensive understanding of current and future housing needs across all tenures and client groups in the District. The aims include:
  - To provide valid and robust information to compliment and bridge the data published in the SHMA 2017.
  - To determine the current and future affordable housing need in the district, now and over the next 5 years.
  - To identify the needs of groups in society, who's needs cannot be clearly identified through the sole use of secondary data – blended families, the disabled, older person, extended families etc.
  - To provide the Council with primary data on housing need that can be used to inform the development of reports, development plans, development of local housing strategies and housing-related strategical documents, and delivery of services.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. All district residents will be invited to complete the survey. This will give the Council a good indication of the type of homes needed in those areas, as well as the type and need for housing related services.
- 2.2. An acceptable sample of responses that is representative of the population and achieves the required level of confidence, should be around 1058 or more, to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within +/-3% of the surveyed value. This is in accordance industry standards with regards to questionnaires (please see HouseMark STAR features, pages 12-13).

2.3. Data from secondary resources will be used to support the research and development of the HNS, and subsequent reports. These resources include:

- SHMA 2017 & 2019 update
- Office of National Statistics (ONS) – housing & demographic data,
- 2021 Census and data
- Data from DDC waiting list (obtained from Kent Home Choice)
- KCC Statistical Bulletins (Kent Analytics)
- English Housing Survey
- Indices of Deprivation

2.4. We anticipate that the survey initial research and development period will be between 4-5 months; then 8-10 weeks where the survey is open to residents to complete, and another 6-8 weeks where the data and research is evaluated and assessed. From the evaluation a report will be written and published with the findings.

2.5. A proposed timeline for the Housing Needs Survey has been provided in section 9.

### **3. Methodology**

3.1. The survey will be conducted as a questionnaire. This is our preferred method for following reasons:

- A questionnaire is familiar type of survey format
- It is the best way to gather large amounts of data
- It is easy to create and disseminate to the intended audience
- It is cost effective
- It is an adaptable method for collecting data (i.e., it can be completed using different formats – see Accessibility)

#### Limitations

- Questions may not be answered correctly, or not fully.
- We are reliant upon the accuracy of the data
- Depending on the response we receive, it could take time to analyse and evaluate the data.

3.2. Section 4 highlights some design functions we will incorporate or consider to mitigate the limitations identified in 3.1.

3.3. We may also conduct the survey in person via in person housing events, where residents can complete the survey with a member of staff.

3.4. In development and preparation for the HNS, we will consult with several departments to ensure that the questionnaire will provide robust data that can be used interdepartmentally. Those teams involved (to some capacity) have been identified in section 6.2.

## **4. Design and accessibility**

4.1. It is important that the Survey can be accessed and understood by a wide range of people from different backgrounds, therefore careful consideration will be given to the design and format used when developing the survey. We will:

- Ensure that questions are short and in plain English
- Avoid the use of 'jargon'
- Ensure that the questions and answer options are clear and unambiguous
- Utilise sections to give the survey structure and notes/explanation to provide helpful information
- Provide an indication of how long the questionnaire will take to complete
- The questionnaire is available in several formats such as large print and text to speech.
- Ensure that the questionnaire is both accessible to and completed by as many people as possible, the following formats will be available:
  - Online via DDC website (this is our preferred method)
  - Paper version (if this is requested by a resident)
  - In-person (Housing Surgeries – pre-publicised drop-in sessions where members of the public can complete the questionnaire with a member of staff).
  - Over the phone

4.2. Details will be published on our website, in our tenant newsletter, via Keep Me Posted bulletins, and at community events that are held in the run-up to the Survey, on how residents can complete the survey.

## **5. Who will conduct the research?**

5.1. The Strategic Housing team will develop the questionnaire, oversee the role-out of the survey and collation of data. This is to help reduce costs and give the Council greater control over the method, collection, and display of the research data.

5.2. Other teams within the Council will also be involved (in some capacity) throughout the development of the survey as well as the collection of data (as identified in 6.2).

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Financial impacts**

- Research into general costs for external organisations to conduct the Housing Needs Survey are between £20,000 - £40,000.

- To mitigate these costs, we suggest that the survey is developed and managed inhouse by the Strategic Housing team in collaboration with other service areas identified in point 6.2. We estimate the cost to the Council to be minimal, and restricted to the following:
  - Cost to print copies of the survey, where requested
  - Cost to post the survey to consultees, where requested
  - Cost to hire even spaces (if required)
  - Cost to produce leaflets / posters / advertisements
  - Diverted staff resources, primarily from the Strategic Housing team

## 6.2. Operational impacts

- The development and subsequent oversight of the survey will be time-consuming and require staff resources to be diverted across service areas to contribute to a successful role out. The following teams will be involved in some capacity:

Department / team	Major/Medium/Minor involvement	Tasks
Strategic Housing	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the HNS questionnaire, both online and paper versions</li> <li>• Management and oversight of the Survey process</li> <li>• Engagement with residents at events</li> <li>• Updating and managing 'Housing Needs Survey' webpage</li> <li>• Data analysis and evaluation</li> <li>• Development of HNS report and follow-up cabinet report (if required)</li> </ul>
Housing	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with the development of the questionnaire</li> <li>• Support with informing tenants about the HNS and how to complete it</li> <li>• Support with analysis of the data</li> </ul>
Community Development	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with resident engagement</li> <li>• Support with Housing Surgeries 'in-person' events for residents to complete the survey (if required)</li> <li>• Provision of event equipment</li> </ul>

Design & Print	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of publication content for compliance</li> <li>• Design of publication content</li> </ul>
Communications	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing communication content for compliance</li> <li>• Posting social media communications to encourage residents to respond to the HNS.</li> </ul>
Accounts	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with the analysis and evaluation of data (if required)</li> </ul>
Governance	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the questionnaire and ensure we are meeting our Data Protection &amp; GDPR obligations.</li> </ul>
Planning	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support with the development of the questionnaire.</li> </ul>

## 7. Outcomes

### 7.1. Strategic Housing

- Provides data on the type and size of homes needed in the district.
- Can inform whether there is a demand and need for affordable home ownership products such as Shared Ownership or First Homes.
- The data obtained will be used to develop a new Housing Strategy, which also encompasses housing development, housing-related services and need in rural areas.

### 7.2. Housing Management & Options

- Provides data on the types of housing services residents need in their communities to live independent and healthy lives.
- The data will provide indicators for future housing need, and whether residents will be joining the housing register.
- Data from the survey can capture whether residents have the correct information to make informed decisions about their housing requirements, i.e., how to request for modification of their homes, how to downsize if their property is too big or how they can request to transfer.

### 7.3. Property Services

- Can provide an indication of the quality of current housing stock, and repairs or maintenance needed.
- Can provide an understanding of the types of adaptations or modifications to homes to help support independent living.

#### 7.4. Community Development

- Can provide an indication whether a community or locality requires additional Council engagement.

### **8. Data protection**

- 8.1. For this survey, no personal information will be gathered as this is not required to complete the questionnaire.
- 8.2. The postcode of the consultee will be obtained to provide an indicator of where they are providing a response from. This will allow us to group data by areas, wards, parishes, towns, and villages. It will also allow us to compare data from urban and rural areas, and areas of deprivation.
- 8.3. Information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence. Consultees will be made aware of the purposes of the survey, how their feedback benefits them, how it benefits the Council and what we will use their data for.
- 8.4. Information will be gathered and extracted via forms onto a excel spreadsheet to make it easier to analyse and evaluate.
- 8.5. The Governance team will be consulted on the draft version of the questionnaire to ensure that no questions are asked that could determine personal data.

## 9. Proposed timescales

Task	Months									
	Aug 22	Sept 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23
Research for HNS	Yellow	Yellow								
Questionnaire development		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow					
Internal consultation 1			Yellow							
CMT consulted			Yellow							
Staff preparation / training			Yellow	Yellow						
Internal consultation 2				Yellow						
Communication & marketing					Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
HNS Period						Green	Green	Green		
Evaluation of data								Yellow	Yellow	
Report generated									Yellow	
CMT consulted									Yellow	
Findings published										Yellow