



South Northamptonshire Council



Housing Needs Survey FAQs

During September and October 2014 South Northamptonshire Council is undertaking a housing needs survey across the whole district of south Northamptonshire.

Why is South Northamptonshire Council doing a housing needs survey?

As a local authority we have a duty to assess housing needs under the Housing Act 1985 and more recently the National Planning Policy Framework asks local authorities to find out about the need for housing (both market and affordable).

In the survey we ask you a number of questions to identify your current and future household needs for the next five years. This information will help us to understand and work towards improving housing provision and meeting identified local housing need.

We need to find out information about your household income and housing needs to help us to assess the need for affordable rented, shared ownership and / or home ownership housing.

The local authority can estimate the overall number of new homes required in the district by looking at population projections, but this housing needs survey will provide us with a more detailed understanding of resident's needs. This includes the sizes of new homes required in particular parts of the district, informing decisions on planning applications and working with housing associations to build more affordable housing where it is needed.

Why is the Council doing a Housing Needs Survey when there is already a Housing Register (or Waiting List)?

The survey seeks to identify housing need across all tenures. This includes affordable housing, shared ownership, private rented and open market home ownership. If the need was solely judged by the register, it would not identify everyone who has a need for certain types of housing.

Also, many residents do not always join the housing register as they do not think that there are properties available locally that will suit them. For example older residents living in family homes who wish to remain in their village but there isn't enough suitable smaller housing for them to move into. These people may not register onto our list as they know there is nothing suitable for them in the village.

I do not need to move house. Why do I need to complete the survey?

As well as finding out about the housing needed in the district we would also like to know your views about housing locally.

What is affordable housing?

Affordable homes are a way of helping people who cannot afford to buy or rent housing on the open market. The housing is usually provided by a housing association and can be available for rent or part buy through schemes known as Shared Ownership. This scheme allows people to buy and own a percentage of their home, and pay rent on the remaining share.

What is open market housing?

These are homes available to anyone from anywhere with the means to buy a home, sometimes with the help of a loan, called a mortgage, from a bank or building society.

What is private rented housing?

These are homes that are owned, managed or let out by a private landlord. The landlord can be an individual or a company.

What is Shared Ownership housing?

Shared Ownership homes are properties where a purchaser buys a share of between 25% and 75% of the market value of the property. The purchaser pays rent on the remaining share of the property, which is owned by a housing association.

What is a housing association?

This is an independent, not for profit organisation that builds and manages homes which are for rent and shared ownership. They work alongside the council to house people who cannot access housing on the open market.

Does the survey mean that more homes will be built in my area?

No, the survey will simply ensure that planning decisions are made on the basis of good evidence and does not mean that new homes will be planned in your area. The evidence could support new development or equally it could support a decision not to allow new development.

What is meant by a separate/2nd household

Anyone over 18 living in a main household, either on their own or with a partner and/or family, or spending time away from home for educational purposes, counts as a separate household **IF** they wish to find a home of their own in the next 5 years.

For example: If your 25 year old son still lives at home but would like to move he counts as a separate household and needs to complete a separate survey, even if the rest of the household do not wish to move.

If you are uncertain how to respond to the survey for your specific family circumstances, please feel free to contact the Strategic Housing Team on 01327 322082 for clarification.

How do you define close family?

Close relatives are generally defined as parents, adult children or siblings.

What is permanent employment?

We consider this to be where you have a permanent contract; a fixed term contract of more than 6 months or a rolling contract where the contract has been in place for 6 months or longer.

Why must I provide personal financial information?

The information on income and savings is key to determining the size and tenure of any new affordable homes that are required to meet local housing need. Affordability in housing terms is determined by comparing a household's income with the cost of meeting their housing needs on the open market. This can only be done if we have information on both the type and size of home you need to move into AND what income you have to pay for it.

I do not have a computer or internet access. How can I complete the survey?

There are computers for public use in libraries which are free to use on Fridays.

There is also a public access computer at the Council offices in Towcester and at South Northants Homes, Burcote Road, Towcester.

We are also working in partnership with South Northants Volunteer Bureau who have an information bus that travels around the district. The bus has two computers that residents can use. The timetable of where and when the bus will be is shown below:

Where	When	Time
Forest Road, Hartwell Main Road, Hackleton	Tuesday 23 rd September	12:00 – 1:30pm 2pm – 4pm
High Street, Potterspury Hesketh Road, Yardley Gobion	Monday 29 th September	12:00 – 1:30pm 2pm – 4pm
High Street, Shutlanger High Street, Paulerspury	Tuesday 7 th October	12:00 – 1:30pm 2pm – 4pm
Chapel Lane, Stoke Bruerne Butt Mead, Blisworth High Street, Blisworth	Wednesday 15 th October	12:00 – 1pm 1:30pm – 2:30pm 2:30pm – 4pm
High Street, Potterspury Hesketh Road, Yardley Gobion	Monday 20 th October	12:00 – 1:30pm 2pm – 4pm

South Northants Council is also working in partnership with South Northants Homes Sheltered Schemes to promote the new Credit Union. As part of this computer access will be available at the following locations during the specified times:

If you are still unable to complete the survey online please phone us on 01327 322082.

Are my responses confidential?

Yes, all information given will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purposes for which it was given.

When and how will I be able to see the results of the housing needs survey?

The full report will be available on our website, www.southnorthants.gov.uk We will also be sending full reports to each of the parish / town councils and are happy to be invited to their meetings to discuss the findings in greater detail. We would expect the final report to be available in Spring 2015.

For further information please contact:

The Strategic Housing Team

South Northamptonshire Council

Phone: 01327 322082

Email: housingstrategy@southnorthants.gov.uk