

# WESTERHAM AND CROCKHAM HILL HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY DECEMBER 2023



In partnership with Westerham Town Council

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## INTRODUCTION

Kent's Rural and Community Housing Enabling service (RACE) undertook a local Housing Needs Survey in Westerham and Crockham Hill. The survey was undertaken as part of Sevenoaks District Council's 5-year district wide programme of local housing needs surveys being carried out by RACE.

Housing Needs Surveys investigate the affordable housing needs of people who live in or have close ties to a parish, town or rural area and provide an independent report of that need, using a transparent and robust methodology. They also investigate the needs of older households of any tenure needing to downsize or move to more suitable housing for their needs.

The Westerham and Crockham Hill Housing Needs Surveys is valid for 5 years, to November 2028.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2021 ['Parish Councillors' Guide to Rural Affordable Housing'](#) states that 'Across the country there is a lack of affordable housing to rent or buy in many villages, in some there is none at all. This causes hardship for people across the generations, young people just starting out on an independent life, families trying to provide for their children and older people who have lived in the village for most of their lives but whose growing frailty means they can no longer manage in their current home.' Due to high property prices within the Sevenoaks District, the same challenges arise in more urban settlements and towns.

The Kent Rural Housing Protocol ['A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities'](#) states that 'Within the County of Kent, most land (85%) is classed as "rural" and over 40% of businesses in Kent are based in rural areas. KHG recognise that provision of affordable housing is vital to ensure that communities continue to thrive and prosper.'

Small developments of local needs housing can provide affordable homes for local people, thereby enabling them to stay in their community, benefit from family and friends' networks and contribute to local life. This can make a real difference to the sustainability of communities and the vitality of local services and amenities.

The housing needs of older people has also been a subject of concern given the growing numbers in that age group whose needs are not being met by the market. A nine-month enquiry starting in 2017 on Housing and Care for Older People concluded in their report<sup>1</sup> that 'policy makers must recognise the growing housing needs of older people living in the countryside. It recommends that Local Planning Authorities ensure provision of new homes for older people, noting the value of both the building of small village developments – "perhaps six bungalows on an unused scrap of land" – or larger scale retirement schemes in towns close by.'

RACE is an independent service for Kent, delivered through the [Kent Housing Group](#) and is supported by Local Authorities across Kent and Medway, including Sevenoaks District Council. RACE's Rural Housing Enablers (RHE) will undertake a housing needs survey, analyse the results and where appropriate, help identify potential suitable sites for the development of new local needs housing, ie Rural Exceptions Sites, or to secure a proportion of the affordable housing to be provided on larger sites to meet the needs of local people, ie Local Lettings Plans.

If new local needs housing is to be developed on a Rural Exceptions Site, a partnership will be established between the Parish/Town Council, the preferred housing provider, eg housing association, and the local authority. Proposals for new local needs housing will be developed and

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<sup>1</sup> [Rural Housing for an Ageing Population](#): Preserving Independence. Happi 4- The Rural HAPPI Inquiry. April 2018. Jeremy Porteus

the community consulted. The independent role of the RHE helps to ensure any eventual local needs housing scheme proceeds smoothly and for the benefit of the community.

## HOUSING IN WESTERHAM AND CROCKHAM HILL

The Census 2021 tells us 69% of households in the Westerham and Crockham Hill are owner occupiers, 15% live in social housing and 16% live in private rented housing or are living rent free. The housing stock comprises 15% flats and 85% houses or bungalows. There are 285 affordable rented properties in the settlement.

There are a total of 285 social housing properties in the Westerham and Crockham Hill area of which 5 are provided as local needs housing. The majority of social housing properties are owned by West Kent Housing Association. This follows the transfer of the Sevenoaks Council housing stock in 1989. Social housing is let in accordance with the Sevenoaks District Allocation Policy or direct by the landlord Housing Association. The majority of social housing vacancies are allocated to those with a connection to the Sevenoaks District, i.e. the new tenant is unlikely to necessarily have a local connection to Westerham and Crockham Hill.

Local needs housing is where priority is given to those with a strong local connection to the area. There is one local needs housing scheme in the area – St Mary’s Court, Westerham – which is managed by Moat. The scheme provides 5 social homes for those age 55 years or older. Moat have provided relet information for the last 5-year period which shows only one home has become available.

High property prices mean that some local people are unable to afford a home in Westerham. At the time of writing the report the cheapest 1-bed property for sale was a maisonette for £265,000; for a first-time buyer to afford this property an estimated 10% deposit of £26,500 would be required along with an income of approximately £53,000 based on a mortgage of 4.5 x income. The cheapest 2-bed available was an end of terrace house for £300,000; a deposit of £30,000 and an income £60,000 would be required. The cheapest available private rented property was a 3-bed house for £1650 pcm; an income of approximately £66,000 would be required to afford this property (affordability is based on rent being no more than 30% gross income). There were no 1 or 2 beds found available to rent.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

An A5 postcard providing information and online links for completion of the survey was posted to every household in Westerham and Crockham Hill in November 2023. Only residents with a housing need were asked to respond; options were provided for those unable to use the online method. 2061 surveys were distributed with 17 completed surveys returned.

### **SUMMARY**

Of the 17 returns, a need for up to 5 affordable homes, for the following local households was identified:

- 1 single person
- 4 families with children
- 4 households currently live in Westerham and Crockham Hill, 1 lives outside but has previously lived there.

In addition to the above, there was a requirement for 9 properties for the following older homeowners:

- 5 single people
- 4 couples
- All 9 households currently live in Westerham and Crockham Hill

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

17 surveys were completed. 3 surveys were disallowed for the following reasons:  
 2 x incomplete surveys so that an assessment could not be made.  
 1 x no local connection to Westerham and Crockham Hill stated.

### Identified need for Affordable Housing

<b>Total Number of Affordable Homes Required</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Respondent Current Location</b>	4 x live in Westerham and Crockham Hill 1 x lives outside
<b>Respondent Current Housing</b>	2 x private rent 1 x renting from Local Authority 1 x renting from Housing Association 1 x living with relatives
<b>Household Composition</b>	1 x single person 4 x families
<b>Tenure Preference (more than one choice allowed)</b>	5 x Affordable Rent 2 x Shared Ownership 3 x First Homes 1 x Open market } Low-cost home ownership
<b>Level Access Housing Required</b>	0
<b>Number of older people requiring affordable housing</b>	0
Analysis shows that none of the respondents indicated sufficient deposit towards a low-cost home ownership option. This indicates that the majority need is for rented affordable housing, ie social housing.	

<b>Number of Self-Builds Required</b>	<b>0</b>
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### Identified need for alternative housing for older homeowners.

<b>Total Number of Homes Required</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Respondent Current Location</b>	9 x live in Westerham and Crockham Hill
<b>Respondent Current Housing</b>	9 x owner occupier
<b>Household Composition</b>	5 x single people 4 x couples
<b>Tenure Preference (more than one choice allowed)</b>	7 x open market 2 x self-build
<b>Type of housing required (more than one choice allowed)</b>	4 x flat 5 x house 6 x bungalow 5 x level access required 4 x cohousing for older people

## ADDITIONAL INDICATION OF LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Information obtained from the Sevenoaks District Housing Register shows that of the 935 applicants currently registered, 88 have indicated a local connection to Westerham and Crockham Hill, requiring the following social housing: 24 x 1 bedroom, 35 x 2 bedrooms, 20 x 3 bedroom and 9 x 4 bedrooms.

## CONCLUSION

The Westerham and Crockham Hill Housing Needs Survey demonstrates that at least **5 new affordable homes** are required to meet the needs of local people. From the responses received it demonstrates that at least **9 open market properties** for older homeowners wanting to downsize or move to more suitable housing, are required.

The housing needs survey is an important source of evidence in measuring the housing needs of local people. Complementary indicators of housing need, including data from the Sevenoaks District Housing Register, verified local registrations of interest held by partner Housing Associations and data captured through ongoing engagement within the local community, can also provide suitable robust evidence. The Housing Needs Survey together with complementary indicators, ensure local housing needs data remains valid over a five-year period. All such evidence may be used to support the delivery of new affordable homes to meet the needs of local people.

## Appendix 1. Paper Version of Housing Needs Survey



The Rural and Community  
Housing Enabling Service

### WESTERHAM AND CROCKHAM HILL HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Rural and Community Housing Enabling service (RACE) is working with Westerham Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council to establish whether there is a need for affordable housing and/or housing for older residents including current homeowners, in Westerham and Crockham Hill.

It is widely recognised that people living on low or even average incomes can face real difficulties trying to find a secure and affordable home in the area where they live and/or work in. That's why RACE are working with Westerham Town Council to understand what the local housing need is and how local people can be supported to stay close to their support networks, work or education. We also know that some older people, including homeowners, can struggle to find alternative housing that better suits their needs whilst enabling them to remain in their community.

This survey is designed to see if such housing is needed in Westerham and Crockham Hill for people with strong local connections (the local connection criteria can be seen at Q5).

Details on how to return the survey are at the end of this form.

If you or anyone in your household has a housing need, even if they've had to move away to find housing elsewhere, please complete this survey by **13th December 2023**. Households might be single people, couples or families. It is only necessary to complete this survey if you feel you are in housing need. Please complete one survey per household in housing need. The survey should take no more than 15 mins to complete.

The findings of this survey will be produced in a report and published on the Westerham Town Council website in the new year at [www.westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk/](http://www.westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk/) To find out more about RACE go to [www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/race](http://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/race) If you are unable to access these websites but would like to know more, please use the contact details at the end of this form.

Rural and Community Enabling (RACE) is the data controller for any personal information collected in this survey. Your information will be used to understand the housing need in the surveyed area. Collection and processing is being conducted under the public task lawful basis. We will always anonymise your data before using it in any publically available reports. We won't share your personal information with any third parties unless we are required or permitted to do so by law. For more information about your data protection rights please see our data protection pages Privacy Policy Kent Housing Group or contact the Data Protection lead at [RACE@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:RACE@ashford.gov.uk)

1. Are you in need of affordable housing? (Housing Association rented housing at 50%-80% of open market costs. Shared ownership (part rent/part buy). First Homes - purchase with a minimum 30% discount)

- Yes  
 No

2. Are you an older person/household wanting to downsize/move to more suitable housing for your needs?

- Yes  
 No

3. When do you need new housing?

- Now  
 Within the next 3 years

4. If you currently live in Westerham or Crockham Hill, do you wish to stay there?

- Yes  
 No  
 N/A

5. If you live outside of Westerham or Crockham Hill, do you wish to return?

- Yes  
 No  
 N/A

6. What is your connection with Westerham and Crockham Hill? Please tick any that apply

\*immediate family = mother/father, children, brother/sister. Extended family will only be considered if they have played an important role in the applicant's upbringing.

\*\*The applicant's place of work must be located in the parish

- I currently live in the parish and have done so continuously for the last 3 years  
 I have previously lived in the parish and have immediate\* family who currently live there and have done so continuously for the last 10 years  
 I have lived in the parish for a total of at least 5 out of the last 10 years  
 I am in permanent full time\*\* employment in the parish  
 I need to move to the parish to take up permanent full time\*\* employment  
 I am full time self-employed and the majority of my work is in the parish  
 I provide an important service in the parish that requires me to live locally e.g. unpaid carer, school crossing patrol etc.



7. What is your current housing situation?

- Private rented
- Renting from Local Authority
- Renting from housing association
- Shared ownership
- Owner occupier
- Living with relatives
- Other

Please specify

8. How many bedrooms does your current home have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

9. What type of household will be living in the new accommodation?

- Single person
- Couple
- Family
- Other

Please specify

10. What size will your household be in the new accommodation (total number of people)?

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 person | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 people | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 people |

Please use the boxes below to state the age and gender of each person who will be living in the new accommodation (include yourself).

16. Do you or a member of your household have any particular or specialised housing requirements e.g. due to a disability or special need?

- No
- Yes

If you answered Yes, please state what they are

17. Please state the total gross annual income of the household in housing need (joint if a couple). Do not include housing benefit or council tax benefit.

- Under £10,000
- £10,000 - £15,000
- £15,000 - £20,000
- £20,000 - £25,000
- £25,000 - £30,000
- £30,000 - £35,000
- £35,000 - £40,000
- £40,000 - £50,000
- £50,000 - £60,000
- £60,000 - £80,000
- £80,000 +

18. If you are interested in Shared Ownership or First Homes, please tell us how much money you can raise towards a deposit on a new home

11.

Age

Person 1

Person 2

Person 3

Person 4

Person 5

Person 6

Person 7

Person 8

12.

Gender

Person 1

Person 2

Person 3

Person 4

Person 5

Person 6

Person 7

Person 8

13. Which tenure would best suit your housing need?

Indicate any options that apply

- Affordable Rent - rent levels are between 50%-80% of open market rent
- Shared ownership - part rent/part buy
- First Homes - purchase with a minimum 30% discount. Maximum price after discount is £250,000
- Open Market
- Self-Build - see your local authority self and custom build register. Call Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227000

14. What type of housing would you prefer?

Indicate any options that apply

- Flat
- House
- Bungalow
- Level access accommodation suitable for older persons/persons with disabilities without support
- Level access accommodation suitable for older persons/persons with disabilities with support e.g. extra care
- Cohousing for older people - a small development of self-contained homes for older people that includes shared spaces e.g. communal vegetable garden. The group will influence the design of the development and control its on-going management
- Other

Please specify

15. How many bedrooms would you need in new accommodation?

Please note - If you need affordable rented housing, your local authority housing register allocation policy will determine how many bedrooms you would be eligible for.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

16. Do you or a member of your household have any particular or specialised housing requirements e.g. due to a disability or special need?

- No  
 Yes

If you answered Yes, please state what they are

17. Please state the total gross annual income of the household in housing need (joint if a couple). Do not include housing benefit or council tax benefit.

- Under £10,000  
 £10,000 - £15,000  
 £15,000 - £20,000  
 £20,000 - £25,000  
 £25,000 - £30,000  
 £30,000 - £35,000  
 £35,000 - £40,000  
 £40,000 - £50,000  
 £50,000 - £60,000  
 £60,000 - £80,000  
 £80,000 +

18. If you are interested in Shared Ownership or First Homes, please tell us how much money you can raise towards a deposit on a new home

19. Why are you seeking a new home? Tick any that apply

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current home in need of major repair           | <input type="checkbox"/> Current home too expensive            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current home affecting health                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting up home with partner          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative accommodation due to age/infirmity | <input type="checkbox"/> To move to a better/safer environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless/threatened with homelessness          | <input type="checkbox"/> To be nearer family                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need smaller home                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability/disabled                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Access problems                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Private tenancy ending                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased security                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> First independent home                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining current home            | <input type="checkbox"/> Need larger home                      |

Please specify

20. Are you registered on your local authority housing register?

- Yes  
 No

21. We may wish to contact you again to update you on any local housing opportunities. If you are happy to do so, please provide your name and email or phone number. These will not be passed to any third parties.

Name:

Email, home address or phone number:

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

**You can return this form in the following ways: Post or take it in a clearly marked envelope to Westerham Town Council at Russell House, Market Square, Westerham, TN16 1RB or call Angela Howells, Town Clerk on 01959 562147. Alternatively you can call RACE on 07880 151872 for assistance.**

To apply for affordable rented housing you must register on Sevenoaks District Council's Housing Register. If you would like to register go to [www.kenthomechoice.org.uk](http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk) or contact Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227000