

Agenda item no. 8

Report to	Burwash Parish Council
Subject	Results from the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire
Date	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
From	Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

# Burwash Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Questionnaire results - Overview

## 1. Background

1.1 This report sets out the results from the Parish wide Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire. The details are set out within the attachments to this report.

1.2 There were a total of 138 returned questionnaires which represents 13% of the 1,050 Parish households. The age breakdown of the returnees compared to the age profile within the 2011 census for the Parish shows an over representation of returns from the 65+ age group and an under representation of the under 14 and 15 to 29 age groups. The returns from the other two age groups were broadly in line with census data. Consideration will be needed on how we can capture the views of the two underrepresented age groups.

1.3 Currently Rother District Council are reviewing their new homes targets in order to comply with Government requirements. They are keen to understand the views of local communities within this process and have asked us to ensure we share these findings with them. The two key areas covering this are the questions concerning the call for sites which asked for suggestions for where new homes could be provided and, as importantly, where additional homes should not be provided.

In terms of the suggested location of sites the two with the most suggestions were

- a. Oakleys Garage
- b. Rectory Court

There were 12 other areas which were suggested as being suitable for development.

The most suggestions for areas which shouldn't be considered for development were

- a. Anywhere in the AONB.
- b. Denton Homes/Shrub Lane site.

There were 10 other areas which were not felt to be suitable for development.

1.4 All of these locations will need to be fully considered before reporting to Rother District Council.

## What respondents would like to see in the Neighbourhood Plan - a summary of survey comments

### HOUSING

The most frequent comments on this section of the survey were calls for **affordable housing for young people and families** without whom, wrote one respondent: “Burwash will die.” People wrote about the need for houses for first time buyers and “nice family homes for young local families” and “two-to-three bedroomed houses that are not as big as the proposed development for Shrub Lane so that our young people” can stay in the area if they so wish. One respondent stated specifically that s/he did not want to see more five bedroomed executive houses for commuters and another called for the majority of houses in any new development to be earmarked for first time buyers.

A number of respondents connected the need for **smaller homes for young families on lower incomes** with the needs of **older people thinking of downsizing**. There was support for **sheltered or supported accommodation for older people**, with specific mentions of retirement bungalows or flats. Several called for a resolution to the Rectory Court situation, and for the return of earmarked accommodation for the elderly on this site.

Some people questioned the need for any new housing at all and others saw it as inevitable, even desirable. The calls were for a controlled, measured approach with no or minimal incursion on AONB land and a cross section of designs and types. The second most frequent comment on the survey (after the call for affordable housing for young people or first time buyers) related to the desire for **“small pockets” not large developments**. One wrote that any new houses should be of good design and quality, and built in small clusters. Respondents wanted the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that any developments were **sympathetic to and in keeping with the area and local architecture**. Any developments should be subject to infrastructure considerations, the provision of school and surgery places and job opportunities.

There were several calls for the Neighbourhood Plan to focus on **reinstating or redeveloping existing sites in Burwash** – The Bell, Oakley’s Garage and Rectory Court were mentioned – alongside **concerns and calls to protect green belt, National Trust and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**.

One commentator felt that the recent house completions and those (developments) on the Local Plan should be seen to meet our **housing targets**. Individual commentators had specific calls – for example no new houses in Burwash village or no new houses in Burwash Common (Luck Farm was mentioned in this context). Another individual said that building in Burwash Common was a possibility.

## HELP FOR BUSINESSES

A smaller number of respondents commented on the businesses. Many making individual points. They centred on:

### Protection

Protect the remaining three pubs – important for the community and employment opportunities

Resist *change of use* applications (from business to residential)

Retain local shop

A chemist would be good

### Support

We want Burwash to thrive – and we need to encourage people to work and set up businesses in the community

Relieve new business of any locally raise taxes and support grant applications

When we run promotional events all business should be included, not just the high street

Available buildings should be offered to local trades

Question whether support necessary – we already have entrepreneurial people in the Parish – or sensible, as it leads to more road congestion.

### Jobs

Local jobs essential if young people are to stay in the village (local working would also reduce traffic)

Since “regrettable” closures of Laundry and Garage we need to generate employment - and advertise vacancies locally

Help companies who employ people with disabilities

We need businesses other than retail eg engineering or IT that offer employment and training for the young

### Location

No businesses in Burwash Common - need help

Convert any available retail outlets to workshops or pop-up shops

Keep business in the towns to prevent more traffic in lanes

## HELP FOR THE ELDERLY

### Housing

Where respondents made a comment, most related to the need for **assisted or sheltered retirement property**. A couple spoke of warden supported flats in the centre of the village.

Many commentators questioned the continuing delays in “sorting out” **Rectory Court**.

A few looked at **downsizing options**; one suggested older people are living in large homes because there’s nowhere suitable to go.

One called for councils to be pressured to pay nursing homes enough to keep them open.

### Living

Some respondents felt there were already facilities, clubs and help for the elderly, and advised promoting the services of Age Concern (Age UK) or the Red Cross. Others called for the provision of home care, more carers and a companionship scheme.

### Transport

The need for more buses and better transport links was highlighted

### Access

Improve access at Westdown Lane

Dropped kerbs at crossings

Avoid narrow pavements

## PROMOTING RETAIL

A relatively small number of respondents commented on this area – but those that did shared the view that we want a thriving village and that the existing retailers need to be encouraged, supported and protected. Residents should be encouraged to shop locally. It was felt that local shops made the village more interesting, provided jobs and reduced traffic. Two comments echoed the business section respondents – the need to relieve new businesses of any locally raised taxes – and the potential for pop-up shops in our area.

The type of shops was commented on, such as the need for a hardware store – but no more antique shops, and the potential for a Hurst Green-style community store in Burwash Common. Competition from supermarkets was a factor and one respondent said no more supermarkets should be allowed in the area.

## Protecting the countryside

Common comments:

Particularly important we do not encroach into the AONB or greenfield development

Confine house building to brownfield or minimal in-filling

Protect hedges, woodland, wildlife, views, footpaths & rights of way

## Facilities for the young

Common comments:

Good facilities are already provided

Need more community involvement – not necessarily facilities

Better public transport (Sat bus service)

Playing fields must be preserved or re thought

Enlarge facilities to include badminton/basketball possibly a swimming pool

## Protect the High Street

Common comments:

Essential as it is in AONB and full of character

Find a solution to Rectory Court (and the Bell)

Control parking (eyesore – too many parked cars) and speeding

Promoting tourism

None in Burwash Common/Weald

Stop putting up road signs and stop the proposed traffic calming measure

Ensure any building or renovation fits into the existing buildings - well designed & good quality traditional materials

## Tourism Promotion

Common comments (bold high frequency):

**Work with Batemans to promote the village**

**More shops facilities**

**Protecting the High Street will help to promote tourism**

**Protecting the AONB / High St**

Improve signposting of public footpaths. Free guides to local walkers (circular)

More should be done, the area is well positioned to promote tourism

Encourage provision of self-catering accommodation

## Other – Transport/Health

Common comments (bold high frequency):

**Improve public transport including (more) regular services including weekend and evening to Heathfield, Tunbridge Wells, Etchingham, Roberstbridge and Hastings**

**Get buses to match up with train times**

**Smaller buses and more routes**

**Better (disabled) parking for shops and surgery**

**Keep GP surgery and pharmacy in the village + + provide prescriptions at lunchtime**

**Safety because of parking on High Street and Shrub Lane – ban on lorries (not delivery lorries)**

Safety for walkers on lanes including a footpath from Burwash Weald to Burwash

Improve quality of roads in the area, trim hedgerows & upgrade road surfaces

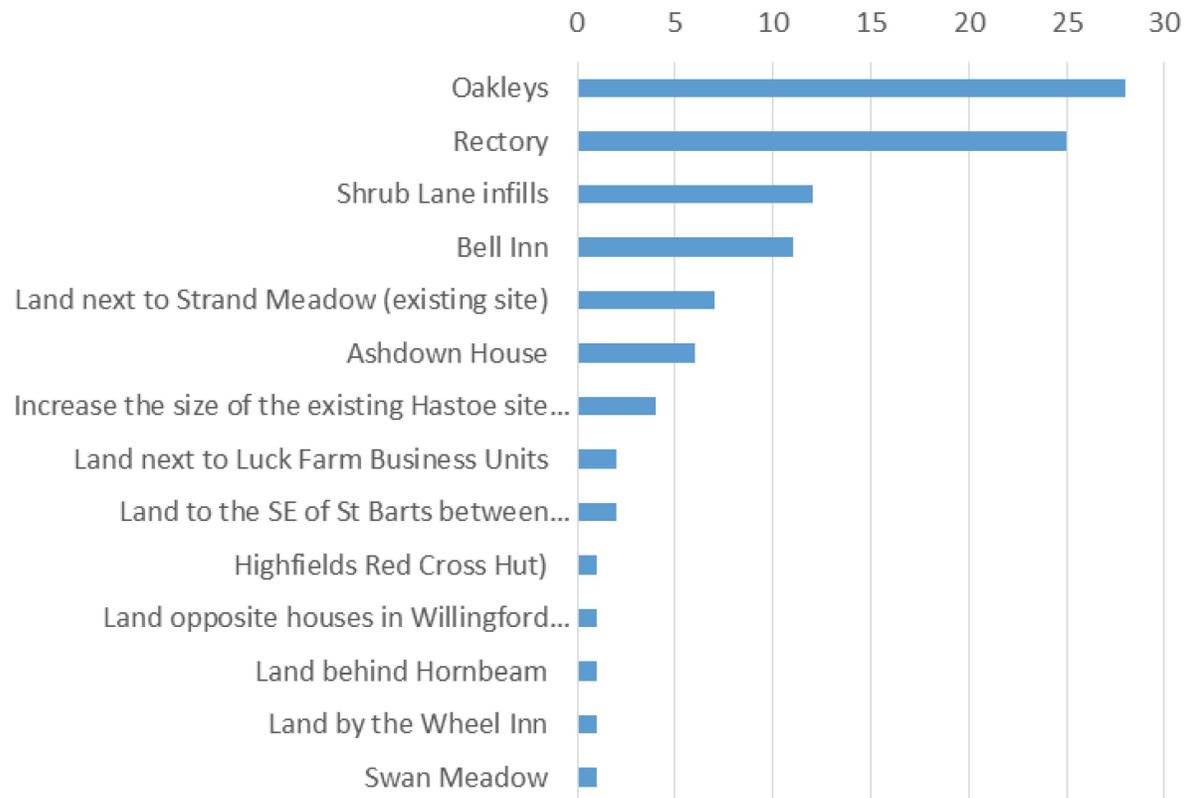
Every new home impacts on services. Joined up thinking.

Encouraging more agriculture

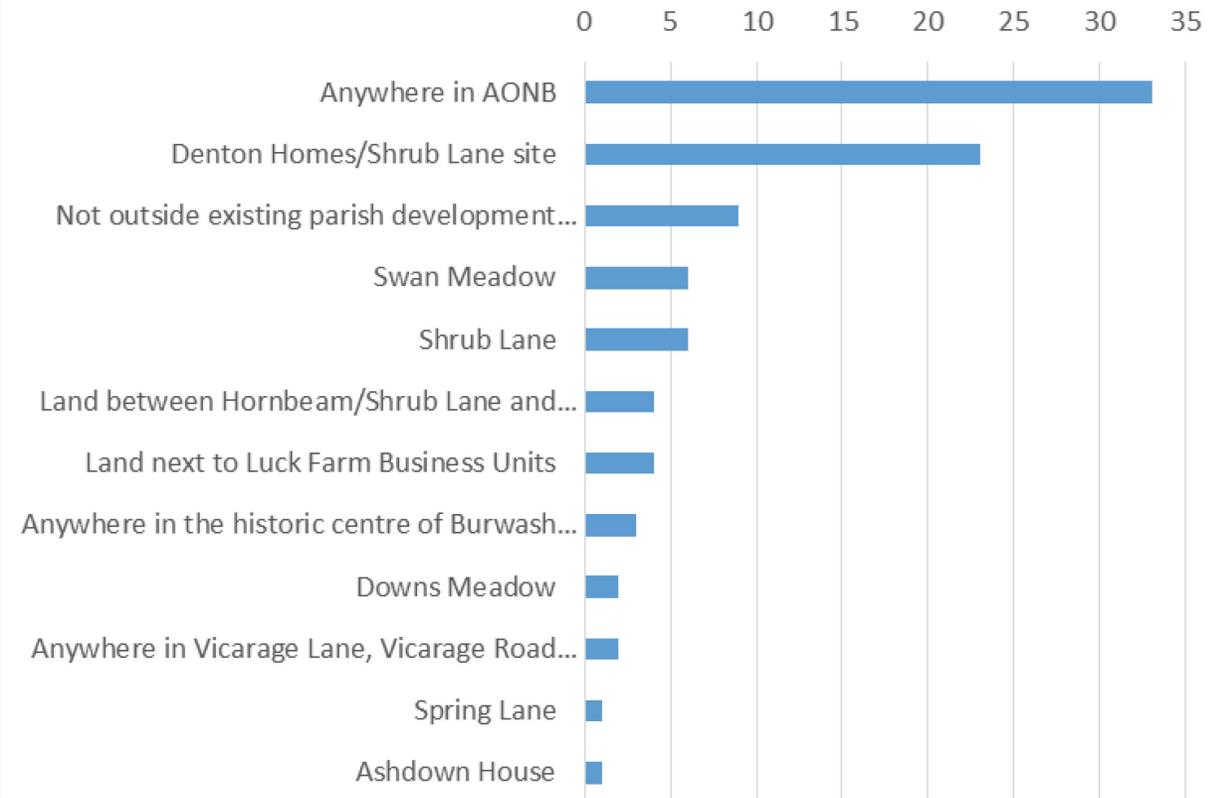
Promote self help

More houses means we need more doctors, nurses, larger surgery, school, sewage disposal!!

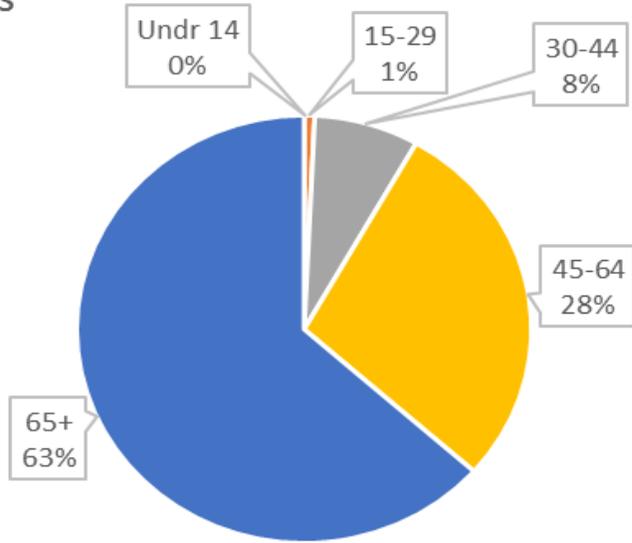
### Call for sites - should be developed



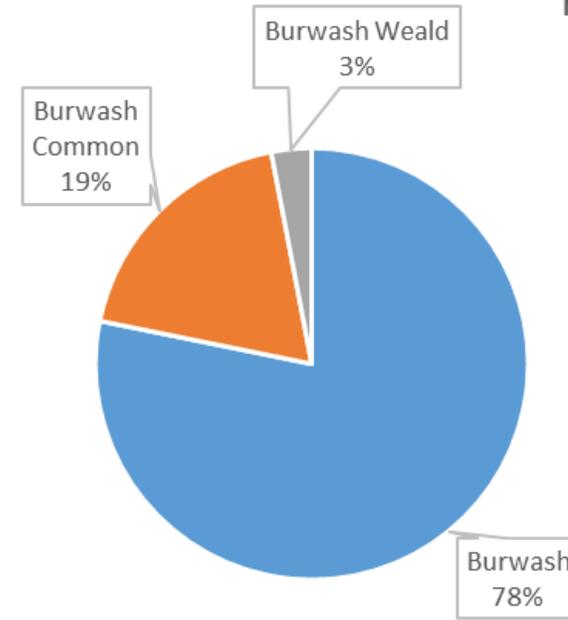
### Call for sites - Shouldn't be developed



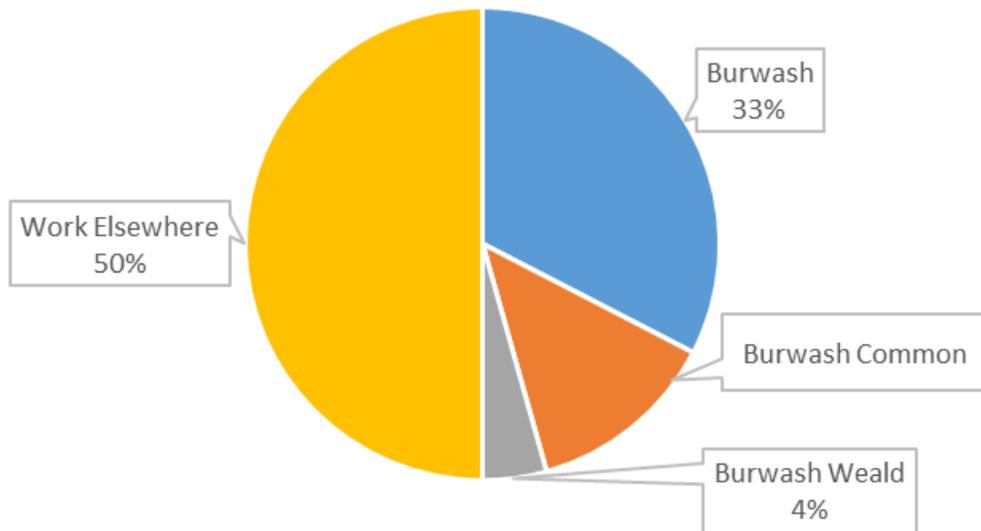
Respondents Age



Respondents Location

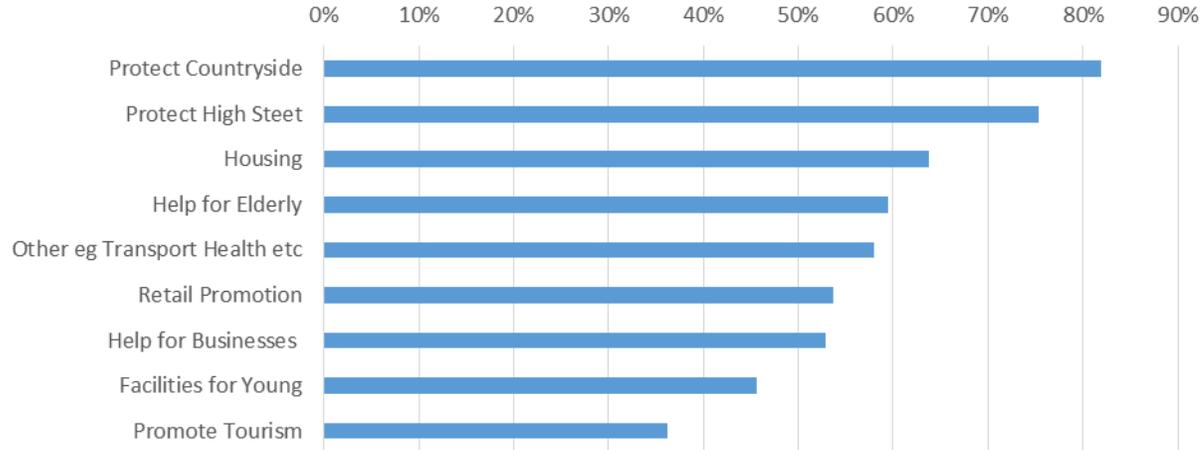


Respondents work location (where given)

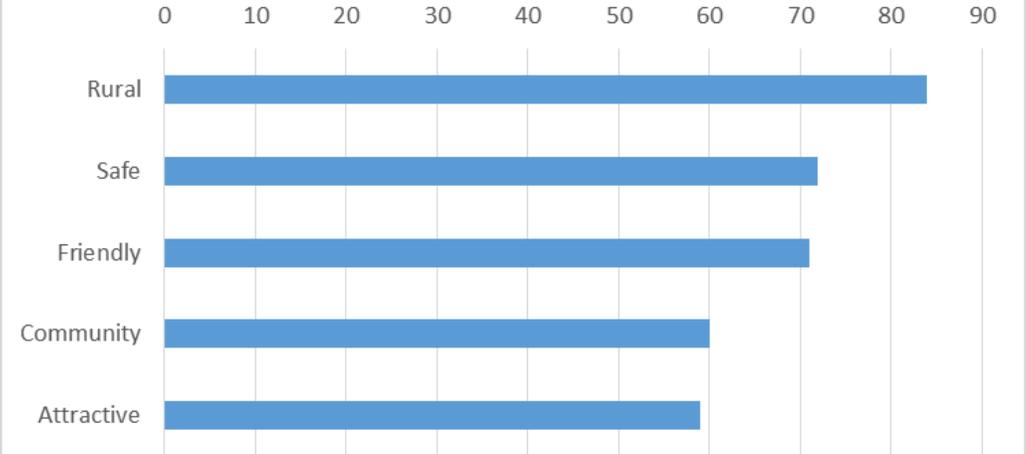


The average number of years respondent's have lived in their respective village is 23 ½ years

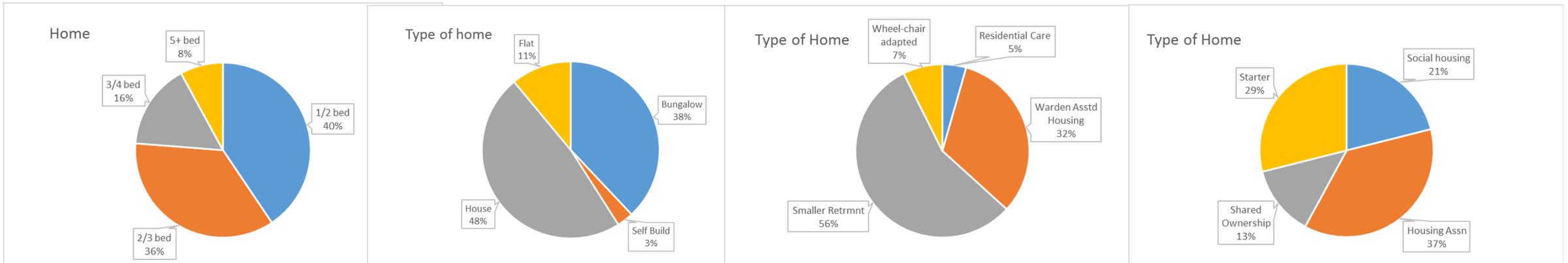
## 2. Neighbourhood Plan - what do you want to see included? (All % based on 138 respondents)



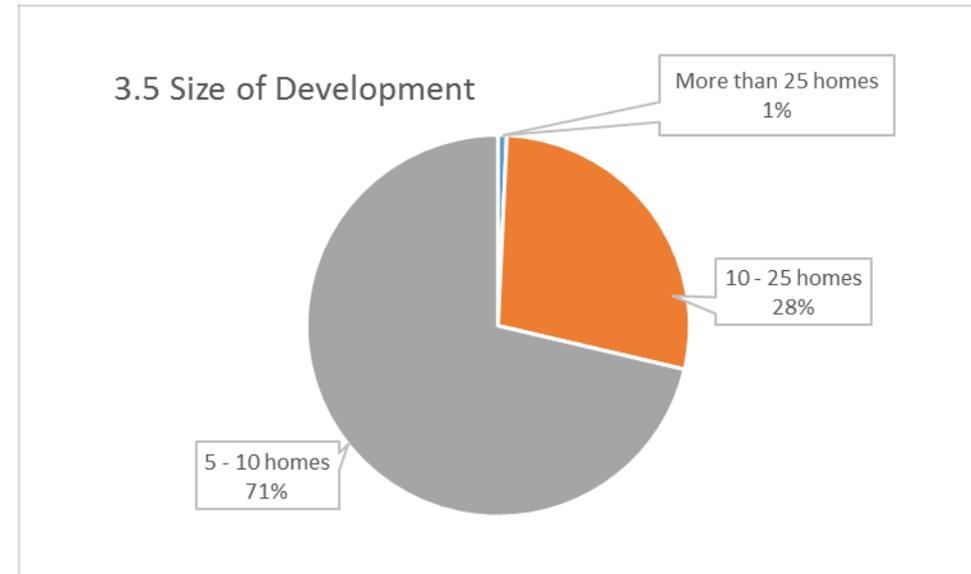
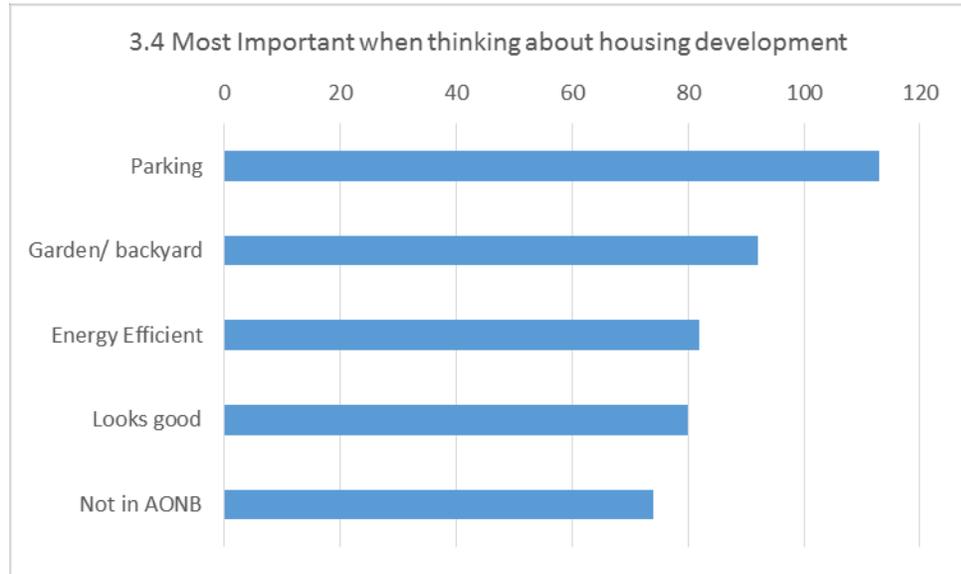
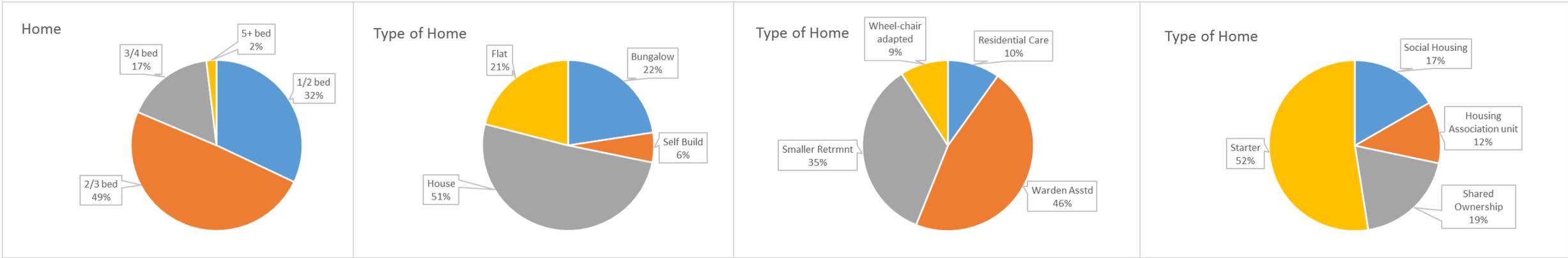
## 3.1 How would you like the Parish discribed in 15 yrs (Top 5)



## 3.2 Thinking about **your** next move, what type of home would you want to move into if you were to stay in the Parish?



### 3.3 Thinking about the needs of others in the Parish, what types of homes do you think are most needed?



## Matters for Decision

In order to move forward with the Neighbourhood Plan working Group Councillors are asked to resolve the following proposals:

1. That representatives from the Working Group should seek a meeting with Rother District Council and the two District Councillors to update and share information.
2. That Burwash PC (via the NP Working Group) should join the Rother NP Forum.