

PRESS RELEASE

Penrith's Housing Needs

Penrith Town Council secured a grant from the Community Housing Fund to enable it to commission a Housing Needs Survey in the Parish of Penrith. This was undertaken on behalf of the Town Council by the Housing Department of Eden District Council, to better inform the Neighbourhood Plan and to establish whether the requirements of all residents are being met by the current available housing options.

Postal questionnaires were sent in May 2018 to a random sample of households (3,654) across all wards in the parish and residents were given 6 weeks to respond using pre-paid envelopes.

A total of 26% of the surveys were returned. The responses show that the biggest requirement is for two and three bedroom houses, confirming comments received during the initial public consultation that informed the Neighbourhood Plan, i.e. that homes for young people, the elderly, singles, the disabled and small families were required.

The responses suggest a relatively high level of under-occupation. For example single people or couples living in houses with three or more bedrooms. One respondent states "The town has a considerable number of older residents who arguably would eventually move down to a bungalow but developers seem to ignore this type of property probably because it's not financially viable or at least less profitable than a conventional house."

This comment may be an indicator that additional properties for older households are required in the Parish so that mature residents are able to downsize to a smaller home. Many more comments were received on subjects ranging from affordability to the ability of current infrastructure to cope with an increase in the population.

Penrith is a key service centre offering employment and services such as healthcare. If residents, particularly young people and young families, are forced to move away because they are dissatisfied with their present accommodation and suitable alternatives are not available, there is the potential for economy and social infrastructure of the community to be damaged.

The Survey can be found on the Town Council website at <https://www.penrithtowncouncil.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan/neighbourhood-plan-documentation/background-information/>

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