



EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (ECLT) LIMITED

Secretary: Tom Low 01453 823425 / 07974 369680

Analysis of ECLT Response to 2019 Housing Need Survey (HNS)

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) conducted an HNS during the summer of 2019, five years from the last Eastington Parish HNS of 2013/14.

This report has been prepared in order to:

- (i) underpin the work to be carried out by ECLT's Architect for the proposed second development in Alkerton ("Project Two") and
- (ii) to facilitate discussions with Stroud District Council's Housing Strategy and Development Control officers.

1. Overview of HNS

The HNS reported on three types of tenure: market purchase, affordable home ownership and affordable rent.

The requirement for market housing over the next 5 years is 31 units, an average of 6 per annum. The annual turn-over-rate in the parish (prior to Great Oldbury) was 26 in 2017/18. Therefore, there is no need for ECLT to plan to build any market homes around Alkerton over the next 5 years.

Affordable home ownership can cover a variety of tenures such as self-build and low-cost home ownership and affordable shared ownership. ECLT has decided to offer the shared ownership as an extra tenure in Project Two, alongside the affordable rent model being provided by ECLT at Puddleworth Close.

GRCC reported the gross requirement for Affordable Housing to be 54 households, which can be summarised as:

	Affordable Shared Ownership	Affordable Rent		
Large houses (3 plus beds)	4	3		
Smaller Houses (1 or 2 beds)	12	35		
Total by tenure	16	38	=	54

2. Net requirement as viewed by ECLT

2.1 Non-local respondents

Detailed examination of respondents indicates 4 people whose Local Connection (as defined in the Puddleworth Close s106) is not expressed, reducing the local apparent need to 50.

	Affordable Shared Ownership		Affordable Rent	
Large houses (3 plus beds)	4	4	3	3
Smaller Houses (1 or 2 beds)	12	11	35	32
Total by tenure	16	15	38	35 = 50

2.2 Building in hand 2019-2020

ECLT are in the process of building 23 homes for Affordable Rent at Puddleworth Close, reducing the overall expressed need from 50 to 27. Specifically, it reduces the Affordable Rent need to 12.

	Affordable Shared Ownership		Affordable Rent	
Large houses (3 plus beds)	4		3	
Smaller Houses (1 or 2 beds)	11		32	
Total by tenure	15		35	= 50
Less ECLT Puddleworth Close	15		12	= 27

2.3. Dubious ambitions

Examination of individual responses reveals a number of suspect “ambitions”. For example, an 18-30-year-old requiring a 3-bed house on shared ownership. Whilst it is less easy to prove whether these ambitions are realistic, it introduces a healthy scepticism.

3. ECLT reaction

The Board has taken the view that a Feasibility Study be carried out for 25 to 30 units. The proportion of Shared Ownership homes is to be decided subsequent to the results of the Feasibility Study but it is proposed that there be more homes for Affordable Rent (AR) than for Shared Ownership (SO).

It is recognised that respondents whose ambition to have an SO home is not realistic, are nonetheless in need of an AR home. Mix of say, 12 SO to 16 AR might be realistic.

ECLT Board need to learn more about the mechanics of SO and any proposed substantive changes to this type of tenure (post-election) before they can support even 12 SO.

In designing an initial layout for up to 30 units for the Feasibility Stage, ECLT believes that generic housing types can be used and that they be “tenure-blind” until detailed design stage.

4. Mix of Housing Types

GRCC and ECLT have looked closely at the expressed “wants” of respondents and in 7 cases downgraded these “wants” to their true entitlement under Homeseeker Plus rules (e.g. a household with one child is not entitled to a 3-bed house, only a 2-bed house).

For SO, applicants can pay for an extra room, providing they meet the affordability tests.

The resulting totals are believed to be realistic:

	Affordable SO	Aff. Rent	ECLT Building	Nett AR	SO + Nett AR
Large houses (3 plus beds)	4	3	3	0	4
2-bed houses	7	10	11	-1	6
2-bed bungalows	1	-	-	-	1
1-bed bungalows	1	9	5	4	5
1-bed flats	2	13	4	9	11
(Check total)	(15)	(35)	(23)	(12)	(27)

5. Practical proposal for Feasibility Stage

5.1 Flats

Flats are best regarded as maisonettes, constructed as two -up, two-down sets of four. The footprint and appearance of four such maisonettes is almost inter-changeable with a pair of semi-detached 2-bed homes.

To round-up the requirement for flats to 12 units would lend flexibility in later design stages.

5.2 2-bed homes

Within a development of 30 units, it seems inconceivable that only 6, 2-bed units be required.

Advice will be sought from SDC Housing Strategists but to increase the initial plan from 6 to 8 would not seem unreasonable.

Referring to footprint comments in 5.1 above, should later understanding of demand indicate less flats and more 2-bed homes, there might be little impact on the overall layout.

6. Scope for flexibility

ECLT currently has two dimensions of uncertainty in (i) the proportion of SO units to AR units and (ii) the mix of housing types. These can be overcome by starting with the most generalised layout, then considering additional evidence at later stages, to focus down, step by step, to the best-balanced solution.

6.1 Proportion of SO units to AR units

By using tenure-blind house types, this dimension is ignored for technical Feasibility.

ECLT (in collaboration with any housing association partner) will continue to develop its understanding of the process of managing SO units before detailed design takes place. Levels of comfort or otherwise would be influenced by an understanding of the availability of knowledgeable mortgage lenders and estate agents.

A significant evidence point will occur, after Feasibility, in evaluating Housing Association (HA) partners. ECLT will be guided by their experience and indeed will be taking the technical Feasibility to another level by deploying financial feasibility models available to the HAs.

Trustees are very aware that few CLT schemes have been developed with over twelve SO units in one location. The perpetual ownership of the land poses a unique legal challenge and the insistence on prioritising Local Connection may pose a practical problem down the years.

A fail-safe device will be sought in the Section 106 Agreement, allowing SO units to be bought-back by the HA or indeed ECLT, where sales within Local Connection criteria prove difficult. Such units could be reverted from SO to AR tenure.

6.2 Mix of house types

Taking the table at (4) above and the comments at (5.1) and (5.2) above, Feasibility will be carried out with a mix of:

3-bed houses	4
2-bed houses	8
2-bed bungalow	1
1-bed bungalows	5
1-bed flats	12

This mix will be carried forward through Pre-App and initial designs, to be reviewed in Autumn 2020 after the 23 homes at Puddleworth Close have been allocated. This will give an excellent reality check, one year on from the HNS analysis.

The homes will each be advertised on Homeseeker Plus for three consecutive weeks, to allow the maximum response. Bidders will be listed by house type and a comparison could be made between supply and demand i.e. to see which house types are over-subscribed.

6.3 Final design for Planning Application Submission

ECLT, together with the Architect and the HA Partner, will evaluate the information from (6.1), (6.2) and technical matters arising from Acoustic, Ground Stability and Drainage studies around August/September 2020 to arrive at a final site design.

Public consultation and discussions with Parish Council and SDC Planners throughout 2020 will be incorporated on a progressive basis.

Fine tuning the details (e.g. re-running acoustic models) is something of an iterative process but the Planning Application submission could be envisaged around New Year 2020/21.

7. Summary

ECLT wish to meet the expressed needs for affordable housing reported in the 2019 HNS. How the overall development of 25 to 30 houses is divided up between mix of house types and between Shared Ownership and Affordable Rent will be approached flexibly:

- Immediately - this report will be discussed with SDC Housing Strategy, then ECLT Board
- Feasibility Stage - house types are proposed as per 6.2 above but will be tenure-blind.
- Partnering with HA - the practical proportion of Shared Ownership units will be firmed-up
- After Puddleworth Close homes allocated – House types finalised based on proven demand
- Section 106 - to contain ability for Shared Ownership units to revert to Affordable Rent in the event of a difficult sales environment in the future.

Tom Low

December 2019