

EARLS BARTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DETERMINING A HOUSING TARGET



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by James Wilson Associates as part of the work on the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Earls Barton Parish Council. It forms part of a suite of supporting documents which are to be submitted with the plan to the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to set out an overview of how the Neighbourhood Plan Project Group arrived at the housing target for Earls Barton for the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2031. This is of particular importance in the absence of an up-to-date strategic policy covering housing distribution in the adopted development plan.
- 1.3 This report summarises all considerations that were taken into account during the preparation of the plan. It should be read in conjunction with several other documents that also comprise the evidence base of the plan, including:
 - Earls Barton Housing Need Survey October 2012;
 - 'Identifying a Rural Housing Target for the Joint Core Strategy';
 - BCW Rural Housing Target background paper 'Rural Housing Targets for Wellingborough's Principal Villages'; and
 - The outputs of the consultation on the neighbourhood plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 allows local areas through a qualifying body to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. Earls Barton Parish Council undertook to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in January 2012 and a Project Group was established with a majority of community representatives chaired by a Parish Councillor.
- 2.2 The Local Plan or Development Framework for Wellingborough, where Earls Barton resides, consists of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy adopted June 2008 along with saved policies from the Wellingborough Local Plan 1999 (as amended in 2004).
- 2.3 A revised Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) is in the process of being produced and was commenced in 2009 to take account of recommendations and comments made in the Inspector's report. The review has stalled due to a pending decision from the Secretary of State on a major out of town retail application within the area. A Site Specific Plan for Wellingborough, including policies for the rural areas, had been in progress and reached the preferred options stage. However, following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the decision was made

to produce a unified local plan for the area subsuming the adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan within this document.

- 2.4 The existing Core Spatial Strategy's housing figures are considered to be out of date in relation to the revised National Planning Policy Framework as they are based on the targets set out in the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy. In normal circumstances a Neighbourhood Plan would adopt the housing target that had been identified within the higher level plan if a housing allocation policy were being pursued.
- 2.5 While a Neighbourhood Plan must be in '*general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan*' (Para 184 NPPF) there is nothing in the legislation that states, or suggests, that the absence of an up-to-date strategic housing target in a development plan means that a neighbourhood plan should not include a housing policy, or policies. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) now states that Neighbourhood Plans can be produced ahead of a Local Plan provided there is local evidence to support the provision of more than the minimum identified to meet local needs.
- 2.6 In order to progress the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan and not be held back by the delay to the Core Spatial Strategy the Project Group collaborated with the Local Planning Authority to undertake an assessment of local housing need to underpin the housing policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Existing Policy Position

- 3.1 Although, as stated above, the housing policies of the adopted Core Spatial Strategy are deemed to be out of date it is still helpful to understand the existing policy and growth strategy for the North Northamptonshire area. This helps to provide the context and an appreciation of how the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to promote growth within this emerging scenario.
- 3.2 The adopted Core Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver 52,100 dwellings over the plan period 2001-2021 across North Northamptonshire. Policy 10 seeks to focus housing on the three Growth Towns (Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough) with modest growth at the Smaller Towns and Rural Service Centres and limited development in the villages. For Wellingborough the indicative housing requirement identified 11,590 houses to be delivered at Wellingborough through urban extensions and a series of other sites and 1,210 dwellings were allocated to the rural areas.
- 3.3 The level of growth for North Northamptonshire was set through the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (now revoked) which envisaged high levels of development over and above natural increase to provide additional capacity for the South East.

- 3.4 As part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was produced by Fordhams Research in 2007. A revised SHMA for the emerging Core Strategy was completed by Housing Vision for the Joint Planning Unit in 2012. However, these strategic assessments do not provide a localised view of housing need for individual settlements. They aim to provide a picture of housing need at the District level.
- 3.5 In relation to the existing Core Strategy, as of April 2013, 951 housing completions had occurred within the Wellingborough rural area and a further 181 commitments were in place leaving 71 dwellings to be allocated through the Site Specific/Local Plan across the Wellingborough rural area. At the time of the Site Specific Plan Preferred Options consultation in 2010, regarding the allocation of sites for the rural area, it was considered that around 20 houses from this remaining allocation should be accommodated within Earls Barton.
- 3.6 While the delivery of housing within the rural area has been running ahead of target¹ the level of urban delivery in Wellingborough has been less than half of what it should be. Partly this is due to the planning and phasing of major urban extensions and also in part due to the recession. The outcome of these difficulties in delivering major housing sites at Wellingborough has been to place pressure on village locations with sites that use existing infrastructure.
- 3.7 Due to the emerging nature of the Core Spatial Strategy, and the recognition that housing targets within the existing Core Strategy were out of date, the Borough Council of Wellingborough sought to work closely with both the Project Group and the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit to objectively identify an appropriate and proportionate housing target for Earls Barton. The approach taken in identifying a target for the parish is set out in the BCW Rural Target Background Paper 'Rural Housing Targets for Wellingborough's Principal Villages'.

4. Identifying a Rural Housing Target for the Joint Core Strategy

- 4.1 The Borough Council's analysis attached at **Appendix 1** sets out a series of 6 options or scenarios for identifying a rural housing target for Wellingborough's principal villages. It states that following an advisory meeting with a PINS Inspector it was recommended that the emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS) should reconsider including rural housing targets in the JCS to provide strategic guidance for site specific/ neighbourhood plans. However, as yet, this guidance or evidence has not emerged.
- 4.2 The work was based upon the emerging housing targets for North Northamptonshire and Wellingborough as a whole expressed at the time as the minimum requirement and the strategic opportunity for growth. Since then, following a further

¹ North Northamptonshire Authorities Monitoring Report – 1st April 2012 – 31st March 2013 , February 2014

recommendation from PINS the notion of one housing target requirement has replaced the previous approach. The Borough Council in turn sought to assess 6 scenarios that would help provide indicative figures for housing growth in the principal villages. These scenarios were a) the application of the urban focus in the existing CSS to emerging figures with the division of the rural allocation equally between the principal villages; b) a pro-rata split on the basis of population distribution; c) a Strategic Housing Market Assessment split on the basis of population distribution; d) the SHMA figure allocated on the basis of principal villages to absorb own proportion of natural change plus backlog; e) the extrapolation of the most recent housing needs surveys over the plan period assuming it is valid for 5 years (see **Appendix 2** setting out the methodology) and f) continuation of past completion trends.

- 4.3 The outputs of this analysis were then considered on balance, alongside other location-specific constraints, to provide a consolidated and proportionate baseline figure for each of the principal villages. A summary of the final analysis is included within the 'Rural Housing Targets for Wellingborough's Principal Villages' background paper, which also comprises part of the evidence base of the neighbourhood plan and is expected to inform the emerging Joint Core Strategy. At this stage a consolidated housing target of 250 dwellings for Earls Barton was identified as being proportionate and sustainable in the context of the village.

5. Additional community consultation

- 5.1 During the course of the neighbourhood plan process, the community and the Parish Council have been engaged in various ways to seek endorsement for an appropriate development target in Earls Barton.
- 5.2 A workshop was held on 30th January 2013 hosted by the Borough Council with all of the Neighbourhood Plan areas being present, representing the principal villages within the Borough, apart from Finedon. Consideration was given to the various approaches outlined above and each Neighbourhood Plan area was requested to inform the Council which it would support so that this could be fed into the analysis by the Joint Planning Unit of its emerging rural housing targets.
- 5.3 On reflection the Earls Barton Project Group considered that a modified version of scenario E was the only supportable approach for a number of reasons. Primarily this is the most objectively assessed method of calculating local housing needs, however, a reduced allocation in the region of 170 dwellings was suggested given the existing commitments from consented planning applications. It could also be argued that this approach does not take account of the contribution of other rural settlements to the housing targets or factor in the policy presumption to focus additional demand on the principal urban areas. This would support a lower minimum housing target for the village.

- 5.4 Just prior to this analysis of potential housing targets consultation results from the Vision, Objectives and Strategic Options survey leaflet confirmed that the most supported option, by the community, was for a medium level of growth (up to 250 dwellings) located to the north of the village. The view of the community therefore was that Earls Barton could accommodate significant development, over and above those projected through the previous Development Framework, but its preferred location needed to take account of existing neighbourhoods.
- 5.5 The most robust and supportable approach set out in the Rural Housing Target report by the Borough Council in the opinion of the Project Group remained scenario E as a starting point. However, other factors have also influenced the ultimate number of dwellings that is being supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Neighbourhood Plan and Community Benefits

- 6.1 The production of the Neighbourhood Plan has not solely been about providing housing allocations and making provision for affordable housing for local residents. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that communities should seek to objectively identify and then meet the development needs of their area. This involves not just the development of a strategy to deliver the appropriate level of housing but also to meet the recreational, business and amenity needs of the community. The plan has therefore also considered what community benefits can be provided for the village if a level of growth is accommodated over and above what the minimum requirement might be.
- 6.2 The Parish Council has for many years been working towards the achievement of enhanced sports and leisure facilities for the village. Prior to the Neighbourhood Plan the Parish Council had obtained a change of use consent for land around the Grange where limited sports provision was already available through a leasehold arrangement. In order to progress the investment in both the village football and cricket teams a freehold position is required with significantly more land provided. The route to achieve this development had moved towards compulsory purchase of the land as the landowners were not predisposed to sell the land, however, given the financial position of all the stakeholders the likelihood of achieving this outcome was very limited.
- 6.3 At the Strategic Options consultation stage of the plan the Neighbourhood Plan Project Group considered the opportunities for delivering other community uses as part of a larger comprehensively planned development. Specifically the issue of sports and leisure facilities and a new community centre were identified for potential developments to the north and south of the village. During the 'call for sites' exercise and discussions with landowners and developers this aspiration of the Parish Council was made clear.

- 6.4 On analysing the results from the consultation it was clear that the preferred direction of growth was to the North of the village and that a medium level of growth above what was being identified as the minimum requirement would be acceptable.
- 6.5 In undertaking further discussions with the landowners at the Grange it became apparent that a land transfer for sports and leisure pitches could be achieved alongside a development which could provide for the housing needs of the village over the plan period. In order to make the scheme viable and to plan a comprehensive mixed use development the total allocation of housing at the 'Grange' site needed to increase to 280 houses.
- 6.6 In order to achieve the wider policy objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan the Project Group decided that **a minimum target of 280 houses**, most appropriately to be delivered on the 'Grange' site would help meet the development needs of the plan area. Taking account of completions and current planning consents it also considered that 397 houses should be the level of development for the plan period. Although this level is higher than that supported by the Project Group through the analysis of rural housing targets by the Borough Council, it is recognised that the Neighbourhood Plan must adopt a pro-growth stance whilst directing development to the most suitable and sustainable location where wider benefits can be delivered.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Without the provision of an up to date housing target for Earls Barton within the existing Core Spatial Strategy or an emerging target for Principal Villages as recommended by PINS, the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan has sought to identify a robust methodology to determine a housing target for the plan period.
- 7.2 Working collaboratively with the Borough Council and North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit the Project Group has undertaken a local housing needs assessment and based their analysis of a minimum housing allocation on this. This is considered to be the best method to provide the objectively assessed needs of local residents in the circumstances.
- 7.3 Additional factors, including the community's response to the level of growth that would be acceptable and the desire to deliver wider community benefits through the plan, have influenced the ultimate allocation of the main development site and the overall minimum number of dwellings for the plan.

Appendix 1

Identifying a Rural Housing Target for the Joint Core Strategy

Consultation took place on an emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS) from Aug – Oct 2012. The consultation was useful in obtaining feedback from stakeholders while the plan is at an informal stage and there is flexibility to make changes and identifying areas of the plan which can be refined, and where further work and change is needed.

Alongside consultation on the emerging JCS, the JPU had the benefit of an advisory meeting with a Senior Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on the 18th October 2012. The Inspector stressed that his advice was based on a limited review of material provided and should not be treated as prescriptive or necessarily resulting in a sound and/or legally compliant plan. Nevertheless the views expressed provided a valuable insight into the way that PINS is addressing issues in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), imminent revocation of Regional Strategies and the localism agenda.

One of the particular policy areas highlighted where further consideration and work is required to justify or refine the approaches proposed in the emerging JCS is

- Reconsidering the implications of identifying “Principal Villages” and whether it is necessary to include rural housing targets in the JCS to provide strategic guidance for site specific/neighbourhood plans (Policies 10 and 29)

Identification of a rural housing target would provide greater strategic direction to the spatial distribution of development and provide greater clarity for Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared without waiting for the districts to produce local plans.

CSS Review - Emerging Targets

The JPC Committee of 31st Jan 2013 (Item 5) considered the possibility of revised housing targets. These are as follows:

	Minimum Requirement	Strategic Opportunity
N/Northants	30430	40500
Wellingborough (19%)	5782	7700

These have **not** been formally agreed and are subject to change, but are used for the purpose of this paper.

Setting targets for villages - Options

Scenario A

Assumption: Retain urban oriented focus in adopted Core Spatial Strategy (CSS)

Adopted CSS distribution: Rural - 1210 (9.45%)
Urban - 11590 (90.55%)

	Minimum Requirement	Strategic opportunity
Rural	546	728
Urban	5236	6972
*Divide rural target by 4 principal villages	137	182

*Hypothetical – only gives a working figure

Issues:

- the rural-urban split is arbitrary, not evidenced based and unlikely to be supported

Scenario B

Assumption: split on basis of population distribution

Census 2011		
Area	Population	%
Borough	75 356	100
Town	49 087	65
Rural	26 269	35

	Minimum Requirement	Strategic opportunity
Borough	5782	7700
Rural	2024	2695
Urban	3758	5005
*Divide rural target by 4 villages	506	674

*Hypothetical – only gives a working figure

Issues:

- because there is a large proportion of the population living in the rural area this gives very high figures for the rural area. This would be contrary to the JCS vision of urban oriented growth focused on the growth towns.

Scenario C

Assumption: Identify a figure based on need for the rural area from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (<http://www.nnipu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1261>) split on the basis of population distribution. SHMA natural change with backlog relates most closely to 'local need'.

Natural Change with Backlog from SHMA for the Borough	5256	
Rural	1840	35%
Urban	3416	65%

It could be argued that the rural figure of 1840 should be used for both the minimum requirement and strategic opportunity figures as the town is the focus for growth beyond natural change and not the villages.

	Minimum Requirement	%	Strategic opportunity	%
Borough	5782		7700	
Rural	1840	32%	1840	24%
Urban	3942	68%	5860	76%
*Divide by 4	460		460	

* Hypothetical – only gives a working figure

Issues:

- because there is a large proportion of the population living in the rural area this gives high figures for the rural area. This would be contrary to the JCS vision of urban oriented growth focused on the growth towns.
- A method needs to be established to distribute this figure across the rural settlements. Divided equally between the principal villages would be 460 dwellings each. Divided by proportionate size of the village based on dwellings in the parish would be Earls Barton 534 (29%), Wollaston 350 (19%), Irchester 488 (26.5%) and Finedon 469 (25.5%).

Scenario D

Assumption: apportionment of the SHMA figure, allocation on the basis of principal villages to absorb own proportion of natural change plus backlog based on Council Tax registrations January 2013.

Village	No. Dwellings in Parish	No. Dwellings in Borough	%	Natural Change + backlog SHMA	Dwellings	% increase in dws
Earls Barton	2435	34376	7.08	5256	372	15
Wollaston	1569	34376	4.56	5256	240	15
Irchester	2214	34376	6.44	5256	339	15
Finedon	2126	34376	6.18	5256	325	15
Total					1276	

Issues:

- Need to decide whether a figure should be calculated for the remainder of the rural area e.g. based on an assumption of past windfalls or whether this figure becomes the total for the rural area. Housing delivery in the remaining villages would be through windfalls and exceptions policy.

Scenario E

Assumption: extrapolate most recent housing needs surveys over the plan period. Assume most recent survey is valid for 5 years

Village	5 yrs	10 yrs	15 yrs	20 yrs	% increase
Earls Barton (2012)	64	128	192	256	10.5
Wollaston (2012)	39	78	117	156	10
Irchester (Draft 2013)	38	76	114	152	6.9
Finedon (2010)	14	28	43	56	2.6
				620	

Issues:

- This assumes needs will follow existing trends
- Finedon survey is due to be updated shortly
- Whilst market housing was included in the survey it relates principally to affordable needs.

Scenario F

Assumption: continuation of past completion trends

Housing Completions by Parish 2001 - 2012

Village	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08*	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Row Total
Bozeat	3	2	17	2	2	17	11	8	7	4	21	94
Earls Barton	19	16	3	30	21	10	6	4	4	7	2	122
Easton Maudit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ecton	4	0	-1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Finedon	6	0	30	14	32	38	39	5	31	8	3	206
Great Doddington	17	3	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	5	32
Great Harrowden	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Grendon	1	2	0	1	10	0	1	3	0	0	0	18
Hardwick	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	7
Irchester	9	2	3	2	8	19	1	20	7	2	0	73
Isham	0	1	2	1	-1	2	3	3	1	1	0	13
Little Harrowden	7	5	0	3	10	1	1	0	8	0	0	35
Little Irchester	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	25	0	0	29
Mears Ashby	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	11
Orlbury	8	2	1	0	2	20	1	1	1	3	0	39
Strixton	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sywell	3	6	0	3	0	0	0	1	-1	11	1	24
Wilby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wollaston	36	49	36	22	18	2	8	5	4	7	17	204
Villages Total	116	90	92	83	103	112	87	56	88	45	51	917
Wellingborough Town Total	190	85	188	332	242	280	393	239	63	65	71	2,148
Borough Total	306	175	280	415	345	392	474	295	151	110	122	3,065

Village	Completions 2001- 2012	% of total rural	Average pa	2011 - 2031	% growth of the village from dwellings at Jan 2013
Earls Barton	122	13%	11	220	9%
Finedon	206	22%	19	380	18%
Irchester	73	7.9%	7	140	6%
Wollaston	204	22%	19	380	23%
Total				1120	

Issues:

- The average figure for the whole period is considered more representative of long term trends compared to using the 'peak' or 'slump' average.
- This assumes a continuation of past trends. Several sites involved factory conversions and these options are no longer available.
- Irchester has historically taken a low amount of growth and Wollaston and Finedon a large amount of growth. Continuation of past trends would see significant proportionate expansion at Wollaston.
- Finedon figure includes 68 affordable dwellings. Discounting affordable housing, the average would be 13, giving a total of 250 between 2011-31.

Other Issues for Consideration:

An important consideration when analysing the above options is the availability and deliverability of opportunity sites in the Borough. In respect of the 4 principal villages, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides the evidence as shown in the table below.

Village	Category 1 capacity	Category 2 capacity	Category 3 capacity	Total 1 +2	Total 1 + 2 + 3
Earls Barton	65	430	3039	495	3534
Finedon	17	954	476	971	1447
Irchester	0	695	1835	695	2530
Wollaston	13	115	1219	128	1347
Total	95	2194	6569	2289	8858

All the sites and their respective SHLAA categories are shown on the attached plans.

Issues:

- The SHLAA shows that a vast amount of sites are potentially available. Category 1 & 2 are assessed as the least constrained and most deliverable, but category 3 sites could also be developed if constraints can be overcome. The SHLAA does not however indicate which sites should be allocated for development.
- The sites were also assessed by the Borough Council in the Wellingborough Rural Housing Allocation Methodology and Site Selection (2010) Background Paper. (https://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/download/1949/wellingborough_rural_housing_allocation_methodology_and_site_selection) This assessment assessed very few sites as having severe constraints where development would be undeliverable.

In addition to the land supply issues, the preferred option must be balanced against other considerations to ensure a sustainable approach is taken. These include:

- Local Issues
- Local surveys
- Capacity of services or facilities
- Policy considerations

Further work is required to quantify these issues but the following can be identified:

Village	Issue
Earls Barton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared. 3 options have been consulted on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Option 1 dispersed 50 -105 dwellings ➢ Option 2 Northern 150 - 250 dwellings ➢ Option 3 Southern 200 - 400 dwellings Initial results favour option 2, then 1. A figure above 250 dwellings would therefore not be supported locally. • Growth should be constrained to ensure that there remains rural separation between Wellingborough and Northampton. • The Parish Council has previously supported the need for improved sports and recreation facilities to the north of the village – a planning application has been approved, but delivery has not been secured. • Lack of parking in the centre of the village has been identified as a key concern.
Finedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a history of past mining in the vicinity and this may have an impact on the deliverability or viability of development. • Growth to the south west should be constrained to ensure that there remains rural separation between Wellingborough and Finedon. • The Parish Council have expressed concern about the amount of flats recently developed in the village.
Irchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared • The Parish Council and Sports Association have previously expressed a desire for improved sports facilities within the village. • There has been significant opposition to development south of the village through the Site Specific Plan and to an application for development north of the village (currently the subject of an appeal).
Wollaston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared • Sites around the village are being promoted by the Duchy of Lancaster.

Summary & Conclusion

The table below summarises all the options

Village	A*	B*	C*	D	E	F
Earls Barton	182	674	460	372	256	220
Finedon	182	674	460	325	56	380
Irchester	182	674	460	339	152	140
Wollaston	182	674	460	240	156	380
Total	728	2695	1840	1276	620	1120

* based on strategic opportunity figure and spread evenly across the 4 principal villages

Scenario A is not evidence based and therefore should be discounted, but is useful for comparison purposes. Scenarios B & C would not fit the strategy of urban oriented growth and should therefore also be discounted. Scenarios D and E give the best indication of local needs using local evidence. Scenario F shows past trends, but may not be representative of future land availability.

The final figure should be a locally evidenced figure based on an assessment of apportioned need and factoring in local information and constraints, alongside the overall strategy of the plan. It should also take account of local aspirations.

Suggested figure for consultation?

Village	2011- 2031
Earls Barton	?
Finedon	?
Irchester	?
Wollaston	?
Total	?

The final figures would be from a base date of 2011 and therefore existing commitments can be taken from this figure for the purpose of identifying how much land should be allocated in Neighbourhood Plans or Local Plans.

Village	Net Commitments April 2012
Earls Barton	30
Finedon	47
Irchester	9
Wollaston	11
Total	97

The above figures do not take account of the Compton Way appeal in Earls Barton for 65 dwellings. As an example only, if the final target for Earls Barton was 250 the amount to be provided in the Neighbourhood Plan on new sites would be 155 dwellings (250 – 30 – 65).

Housing Needs Survey

In order to input into the process set out at Section 4.0 above the Borough Council of Wellingborough undertook an updated Housing Needs Survey in October 2012. The survey sought to define not just the level of housing need for Earls Barton but also the types of unit required, the Project Group worked closely with the Borough Council's Housing Team to provide an updated survey of housing need within the village.

The survey was compiled in accordance with the Borough's normal methodology for producing housing needs assessments. A 5 year rolling programme for surveys exists for the Borough's rural areas and Earls Barton was brought forward due to the requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan. A questionnaire was delivered to every household within the village and further copies could be requested for additional households. The survey was conducted in August/September 2012 with a response rate of 32.8%. The results indicate that a housing need of 64 dwellings is required for the village which consisted of 43 social rented units, 9 shared ownership and 12 open market dwellings. The majority of demand in terms of house sizes was for 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

As a Housing Needs assessment is a snap shot of need at a single point in time, the Audit Commission and National Housing Federation recommend that they should be carried out on a 5 year basis, therefore it is reasonable to extrapolate this figure to provide a requirement over the lifetime of the plan. This would create a requirement for 256 new dwellings within the village to 2031, albeit the balance to be struck between affordable homes and, for example, small first-time-buyer market units may need to be addressed on an application by application basis to ensure that schemes both meet broad needs and remain viable.

As part of work on the rural housing requirement for Wellingborough and to support other Neighbourhood Plan areas the Borough Council further revised their programme of Housing Needs Surveys and undertook them at other 'Principal Villages' where plans were in progress.

An analysis of housing requirements was then undertaken considering different methodologies of how to determine the level of housing to be accommodated within each Neighbourhood Plan area. The completed Housing Needs Survey comprises part of the evidence base of the neighbourhood plan.