

Affordable Rural Housing - Housing Needs Survey

January 4th 2024

Introduction

In December 2023 I attended on behalf of the PC, a session titled **Delivering the Housing that your Rural Community Needs** organised by Community First Oxfordshire. The issue being discussed was.

In Oxfordshire's rural communities, the market for housing has become divorced from local people and their incomes and serves primarily second and holiday homeowners and retirees, who have far more to spend on housing than local workers. Those unable to access homeownership, and with a shrinking stock of social housing in rural areas, have to turn to the private rented sector, where costs are high and tenancies insecure. With more intense competition for these homes, young people and families are priced out of rural communities entirely – forced to move away from friends, families, and jobs. Many rural communities struggle to fill vacancies and many communities struggle to maintain services such as local schools, pubs and shops. Lack of affordable homes threatens the social fabric of rural life.

The session covered a lot of options to address these issues, but all started with an exercise to understand the housing needs of the community. This is primarily achieved through a local housing needs survey.

Next step

Community First Oxfordshire have agreed, pending agreement of the PC, to both carry out and fund a Local Housing Needs Survey for the parish. This would mean that the PC does not get involved in reviewing any specific responses only the overall findings.

The PC would be involved in.

- providing feedback to the draft survey,
- helping with delivering to homes,
- promoting the survey,
- reviewing the results of the survey and agreeing next steps.

Request

I believe it is important that the PC seeks to understand the housing needs of the whole community so that we can take informed decisions on what actions we should be taking or supporting as we move forward. I ask for the agreement of the council to move forward with this survey.

Andrew Hutchings
4th January 2024