



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

E67

Rural Area Working Party 29 July 2013

Evidencing Rural Affordable Housing Need and Rural Housing Need Profiling Pilot – Update

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 Members requested an update on the progress of two pieces of work on rural housing provision, as described in the following reports:
- (a) D257 – Evidencing Rural Affordable Housing Need. On 24 January 2013 the Working Party approved the carrying out of a desk top, Borough-wide assessment of rural affordable housing need using data from the Housing Needs Register. This only includes affordable housing let through Registered Providers.
- (b) D324 – Rural Housing Profiling Pilot. On 13 March 2013 the Working Party agreed that a pilot be taken forward for working with parishes on establishing housing need and identifying both private and public sector housing solutions.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Working Party is asked to note this report and the progress of both the Evidencing Rural Housing Need Assessment and the Rural Housing Profiling Pilot, and the timetable for Stage 2 of the pilot for the outcomes to be reported back to the Working Party in early 2014.

Contact Details

Name

Telephone

E-mail

Portfolio Holder

Councillor Anne Gower

Portfolio Holder for Housing

(01440 706402)

anne.gower@stedsbc.gov.uk

Lead Officer

Simon Phelan

Head of Housing

(01638 719440)

simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk

3. Corporate Priorities

3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan (Working Together for Strong Healthy and Diverse Communities):

- (a) increase the availability of low cost homes;
- (b) improve life opportunities; and
- (c) improve peoples physical and mental health.

4. Update on Evidencing Rural Affordable Housing Need

4.1 This desktop exercise used information from the Housing Needs Register to find evidence of demand and supply for affordable housing in rural parishes. The results, set out in Appendix A, will assist in the Rural Housing Need Profiling Pilot and in targeting future investment in affordable housing.

4.2 Preference

Applicants in housing need were asked to express a preference for where they wanted to live. The evidence in Appendix A, Table 1 suggests that they selected a wide number of places to get the best chance for a property. For example, Wordwell, with a population of around 20, was preferred by 130 people.

4.3 Expressing a preference does not provide evidence for having a local connection. The register application form asks if applicants have a local connection to a particular village and to state what that connection is. For technical reasons, this is not a mandatory question and an answer is not always provided. Therefore follow up work will be required where establishing that a local connection is required to prove a local housing need. The information does, however, provide a good overview of where applicants are looking to live and will allow a focus on the reasons why these particular villages are so popular.

4.4 Lettings

The supply of affordable rural housing over the past five years is shown in Appendix A, Table 2. This gives details of the number of affordable properties let during that time. Only parishes where there have been lettings are shown.

4.5 Bids per property

The demand for properties is evidenced in the number of bids. For example Coney Weston, population around 400, had over 90 bids for the single property which was available during the five year period.

4.6 Strategic position of parishes

To provide a strategic position for each parish in terms of demand and availability, officers have looked at the 'shortfall' between the number of households who wish to live there and the number of lettings, and compared it with the number of bids per property. This is illustrated in Appendix A, Table 4.

5. Update on Rural Housing Need Profiling Project

5.1 Stage One

5.1.1 Villages to be included in the pilot

The pilot parishes represent a mix of village type and distribution within the Borough. All the villages put forward for the pilot have been contacted and Appendix B summarises the stage that discussions about involvement have reached. It is expected that those wishing to take part in the pilot will be confirmed during July.

5.1.2 Profiling Data

The data sources which will be included in the report are currently being identified for each pilot village. Once finalised, this data will be collected for the reports which are to be produced by September 2013.

5.1.3 Case Studies

To help parishes to decide what actions they would like to take, and to identify good practice, a portfolio of case studies is being built on a range of rural projects that have helped to meet locally identified needs. This will be completed by August.

5.1.4 Presentation of profiling data

The case studies and the other documentation will be held electronically and shared with parishes through a SharePoint extranet. This allows access to the large amounts of data and reduces the need for printing.

5.2 Stage two

5.2.1 Working with the Parish Council to understand needs and how best to respond to them

Work with parishes to discuss profiling data and to identify need is scheduled to start in September 2013, with completion expected in December. The report back to the Working Party on the outcomes of the pilot will be in early 2014.

5.3 Stage three

5.3.1 Where parishes have identified a need and have agreed actions to address the need, this work will continue beyond the life of the pilot.

6. Community impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)*

6.1 General

This pilot will allow the Council to identify local housing need and work with the local communities to respond to that need and identify a range of potential solutions.

6.2 Diversity

It is intended that the pilot will extend the range of possible affordable housing solutions, which will potentially be more inclusive to all members of the community.

6.3 Sustainability

This would need to be a consideration for any housing solutions identified and would need to be looked at that stage as part of any planning application.

7. Consultation			
7.1 The Working Party has been consulted regarding the pilot, Parish Councils agreeing to take part in the pilot would be fully consulted as would be the communities they represent.			
8. Resource implications <i>(including asset management implications)</i>			
8.1 The pilot requires substantial officer resource. If additional resource is necessary to avoid a detrimental impact on other areas of work, it will be funded from the £10,000 already approved.			
8.2 Expenditure to date is £1,000 with commitments of £3,000, leaving £6,000 uncommitted.			
9. Risk Assessment <i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>			
Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
Funding for future affordable housing in rural locations will continue to be limited, significantly reducing ability to provide new affordable homes, to meet demand.	High	Continue to develop affordable housing, including in partnership with Registered Providers Work with the community to identify alternative solutions to meeting housing need.	Medium Medium
10. Legal or policy implications			
10.1 The Council has, as part of its strategic housing function, to ensure there is sufficient affordable housing in the Borough to meet the needs of its residents.			

Wards affected	Rural Wards	Portfolio Holder	Housing
Background Papers	None	Subject Area	Housing

Evidencing Rural Affordable Housing Need

Evidencing Rural Housing Need – St Edmundsbury

This report looks at rural housing need in St Edmundsbury based on data from the Housing Needs Register from June 2013.

Areas wanted

As of 20 June 2013, there were 791 households on the sub-region housing register expressing a preference to live somewhere in St Edmundsbury. Most of these (677) were already living in the Borough and Forest Heath was the second most common district of residence.

The order of preference for area wanted is shown below. Fornham All Saints was the most popular parish, with 240 applicants expressing a desire to live in this area, and Wordwell is the least popular parish with 130 applicants giving this as an area they wanted to live in.

Preferred areas of households on need register, by number of bedrooms required and whether or not interested in shared ownership (20 June 2013)

Table 1

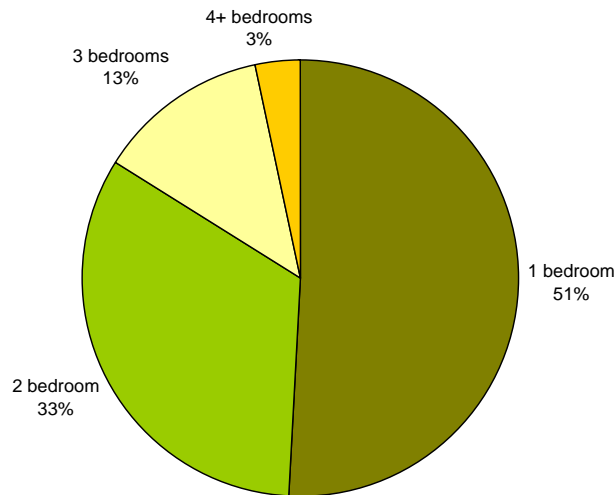
	Households specifying as area wanted	Interested in shared ownership	Number of bedrooms required (LHA need)			
			1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
Bury St Edmunds	532	70	266	179	65	22
Haverhill	344	45	156	132	40	16
Fornham All Saints	240	35	113	85	35	7
Fornham St Martin	235	35	112	82	33	8
Fornham St Genevieve	213	31	102	75	30	6
Horringer	204	32	108	61	27	8
Westley	197	29	95	63	32	7
Great Barton	192	29	95	64	26	7
Kedington	191	28	92	64	25	10
Clare	189	24	98	60	23	8
Barrow	188	27	93	61	26	8
Ixworth	186	31	96	59	24	7
Risby	184	30	88	67	23	6
Nowton	181	25	89	58	26	8
Rushbrooke with Rougham	172	24	81	56	28	7
Ickworth	170	29	83	57	23	7
Little Wratting	170	23	86	54	21	9
Chedburgh	169	27	89	53	22	5
Wickhambrook	169	26	88	48	25	8
Stoke by Clare	169	21	87	55	21	6
Great Thurlow	166	23	83	53	22	8
Culford	165	26	84	59	19	3
Chevington	164	27	86	53	19	6

Great Wrattling	163	22	82	52	20	9
Withersfield	163	22	84	51	19	9
Little Thurlow	162	22	83	50	21	8
Stanton	161	24	82	54	21	4
Cavendish	161	23	86	52	17	6
Hundon	161	21	83	50	20	8
Pakenham	158	24	78	54	20	6
West Stow	156	21	79	53	19	5
Ingham	154	24	81	52	18	3
Whepstead	154	21	76	50	24	4
Great Whelnetham	154	21	75	52	24	3
Bradfield St George	153	22	77	49	22	5
Stradishall	153	21	78	48	21	6
Hengrave	152	21	79	50	20	3
Little Whelnetham	151	21	75	48	24	4
Bradfield Combust	150	21	78	49	19	4
Wixoe	148	18	80	47	16	5
Hopton	147	24	73	50	20	4
Brockley	147	21	77	47	19	4
Rede	147	21	78	47	19	3
Barnardiston	147	20	76	48	19	4
Flempton	146	22	75	50	15	6
Little Livermere	146	22	76	49	17	4
Depden	146	20	77	46	18	5
Honington	145	23	78	47	16	4
Bardwell	145	22	73	51	17	4
Cowlinge	145	19	78	45	18	4
Little Bradley	145	17	77	44	18	6
The Saxhams	144	22	72	48	19	5
Barningham	144	22	72	51	17	4
Bradfield St Clare	144	21	73	48	20	3
Hawstead	144	21	75	48	18	3
Troston	144	20	72	50	19	3
Hawkedon	143	21	75	45	18	5
Barnham	143	21	76	47	16	4
Ampton	143	20	75	46	18	4
Timworth	143	20	76	45	19	3
Great Bradley	143	19	75	43	18	7
Lackford	143	19	75	48	17	3
Hargrave	142	23	71	46	20	5
Coney Weston	142	21	72	50	16	4
Great Livermere	141	22	73	48	16	4
Hepworth	140	22	71	47	18	4
Denham	140	22	72	48	16	4
Euston	139	20	73	47	15	4
Market Weston	139	19	71	47	18	3
Ixworth Thorpe	139	19	74	46	16	3
Ousden	137	21	72	44	17	4
Knettishall	136	20	70	45	17	4
Stansfield	135	22	71	41	20	3
Lidgate	135	19	73	42	15	5
Poslingford	135	19	71	43	17	4

Fakenham Magna	135	18	70	47	15	3
Denston	134	20	70	42	19	3
Sapiston	134	20	71	45	15	3
Thelnetham	133	19	70	45	15	3
Wordwell	130	18	69	44	14	3

Locata, downloaded June 2013

Number of bedrooms required by households on the needs register



Locata, downloaded June 2013

The graph above shows the typical split of requirement for properties by size. Just over half the households require a 1 bedroom home. The split is approximately similar in all parishes. 13% of households expressing an interest in living in St Edmundsbury said they were interested in Shared Ownership.

Lettings made

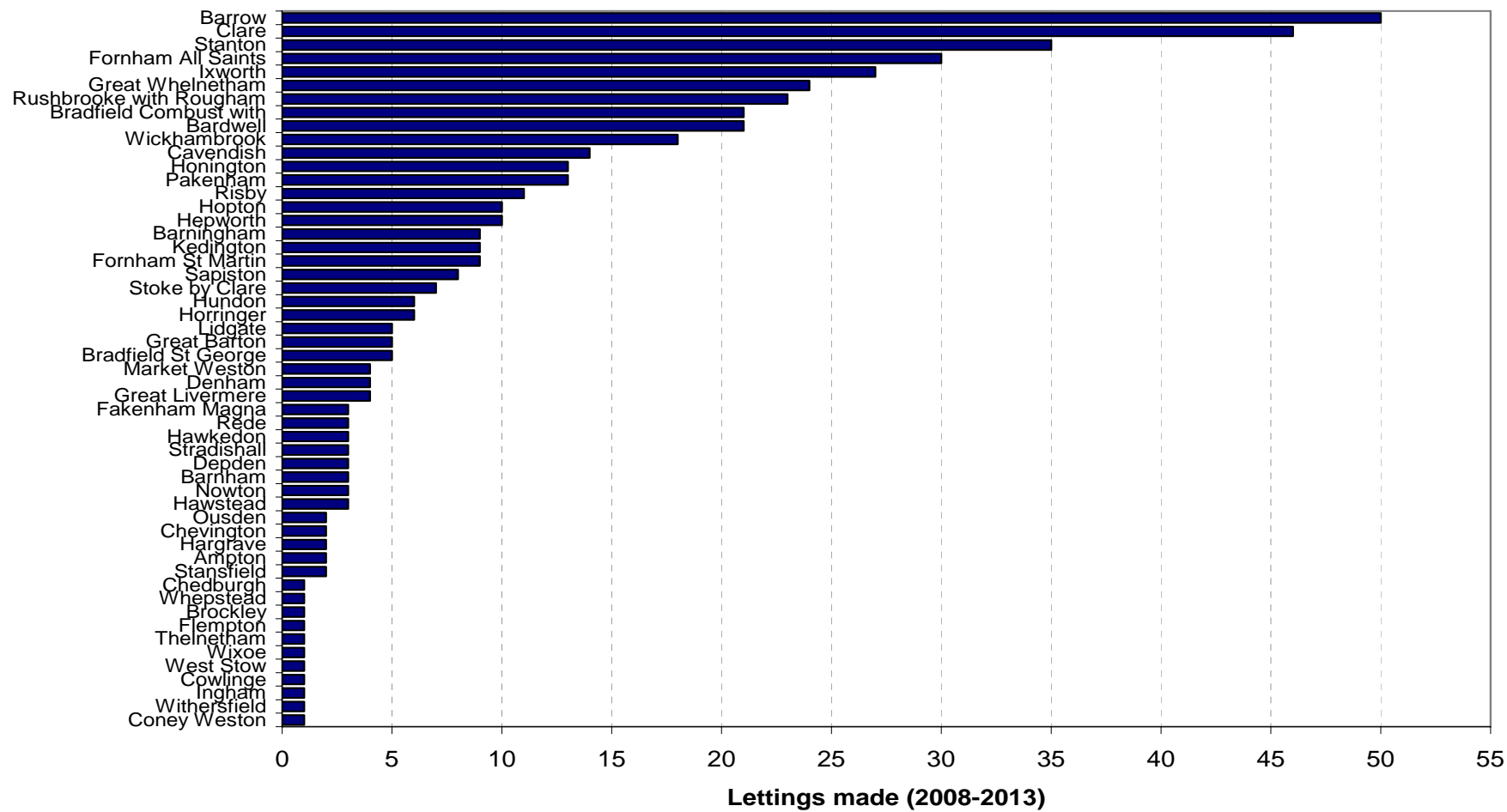
Between March 2008 and March 2013, there were 2,203 properties let in St Edmundsbury of which more than a thousand were of properties in Bury St Edmunds and more than 600 were in Haverhill. There were 492 properties let in rural areas of the district. The number of lettings per year by area are shown in the graph in Table 2 below.

On average, in the rural parishes of the district there is 1 property let per year. For this reason, the graph at Table 2 looks at five years' of lettings.

For 78 rural parishes in the district, in nearly a third (25) no properties were let in the 5 year period covered. These are not shown in graph, but are highlighted in pale yellow in Table 4, Shortfall and Bids. Three of these (Fornham St Genevieve, Westley and Little Wratting) were among the most popular areas wanted.

Four of the 16 most popular areas showed more than 5 lettings per year (Ixworth, Fornham All Saints, Clare and Barrow). Between them, lettings in these areas made up 31% of the total properties let in rural areas of the district. In the 5 year period covered, there were no lettings recorded in Fornham St Genevieve, Westley and Little Wratting (also in the first fifth of the list by popularity).

Total lettings made (2008-2013) Table 2



Locata

Bids per property

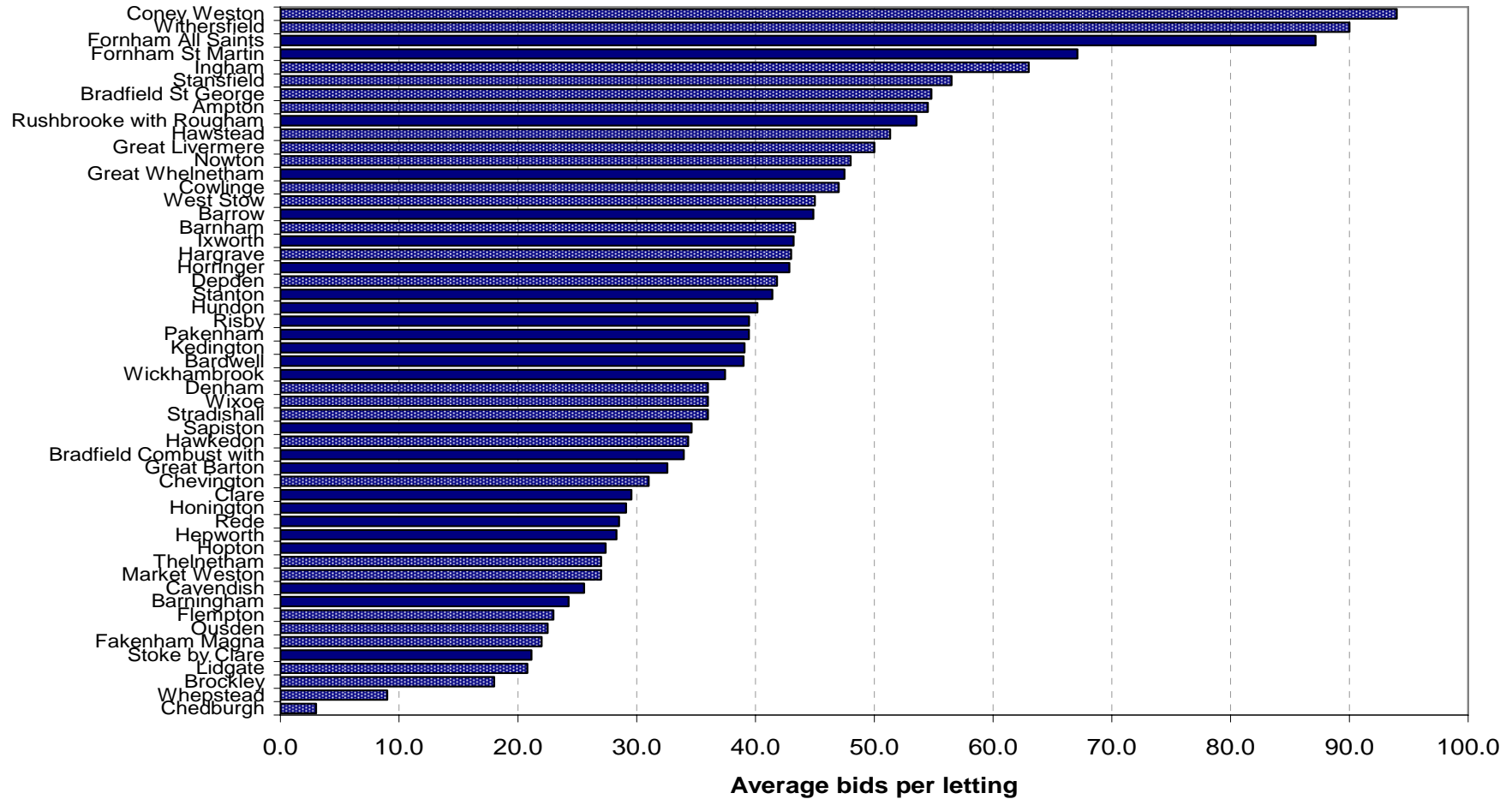
The Cambridge Sub-region operates a choice based lettings policy where most social properties available for let are advertised in a fortnightly free sheet and online.

The graph in Table 3 shows the average number of bids per property for each parish. Where no properties were let or advertised and there is no information on bidding behaviour, the areas are not included.

On average, the number of bids per property for rural parishes in St Edmundsbury is 39.7. Shaded bars show where data is based on 5 or fewer lettings in the period covered. In these cases there may be factors other than location influencing bidding behaviour. For example, the calculated average for Coney Weston is based on one house being let. The number of bids per property for houses is considerably higher than for other types of property. Given that it is the 55th most popular area wanted, property type may have been more of a factor than location for the high number of bids.

The average number of bids for properties let in Bury St Edmunds was 56.2 and for Haverhill was 48.3.

Average number of bids per advertised property by parish (2008/9-2012/13) Table 3



Locata

Shortfall and bids

The graph in Table 4 below shows the gap between the number of households who wish to live in an area and the number of lettings (the shortfall), and the number of bids per property. On average there were 39.7 bids per property across the rural areas of St Edmundsbury. Areas with a higher than average number of bids are shown in dark purple and areas with a lower than average number of bids per property are shown in lighter purple. The areas highlighted in beige show areas where there were no lettings in the period covered and therefore no data about bidding behaviour.

Shortfall and bids Table 4

Withersfield	Coney Weston	Stansfield
Fornham All Saints	Bradfield St George	Ampton
Fornham St Martin	Rushbrooke with Rougham	Great Whelnetham
Ingham	Hawstead	Barrow
Nowton	Great Livermere	Stanton
West Stow	Cowlinge	Bardwell
Ixworth	Barnham	Denham
Horringer	Hargrave	Sapiston
Hundon	Depden	Hawkedon
Risby	Pakenham	Bradfield Combust w. Stanningfield
Kedington	Stradishall	Clare
Wickhambrook	Wixoe	Honington
Great Barton	Rede	Hepworth
Chevington	Cavendish	Hopton
Stoke by Clare	Flempton	Market Weston
Whepstead	Brockley	Thelnetham
Chedburgh	Hengrave	Barningham
Fornham St Genevieve	Bardnardiston	Ousden
Westley	Great Bradley	Fakenham Magna
Little Wratting	Little Bradley	Lidgate
Ickworth	Lackford	Euston
Great Thurlow	Little Livermere	Ixworth Thorpe
Little Thurlow	Troston	Knettishall
Great Wratting	The Saxhams	Denston
Culford	Bradfield St Clare	Poslingford
Little Whelnetham	Timworth	Wordwell

← Greatest shortfall between area wanted and properties let Smallest shortfall between area wanted and properties let →

Average bids per property		
No properties let (no bids)	Below average bids	Above average bids

The pale yellow areas in Column 1 show a large number of people expressing an interest in living in this area, but no properties becoming available. The dark purple areas in the same column show a large number of people expressing an interest and insufficient lettings available to meet this demand; when properties do become available the number of bids per property is high compared to the average number of bids across all rural areas of St Edmundsbury (i.e. there is a lot of interest in properties when they become available). The areas in this column highlighted in light purple show a large difference between area wanted and bids, but when properties do become available, a below average number of bids.

Villages identified to take part in the Rural Housing Need Profiling Pilot

		Status	Next step
Ixworth	Key Services Centre	Confirmed wish to be part of the pilot	Firm up arrangements to attend meeting in September
Wickhambrook.	Local Service Centre	Parish Council have agreed in principle to be part of the pilot	Firm up arrangements to attend meeting in September
Hopton	Local Service Centre	Have been progressing housing needs survey, clear need identified for affordable housing, currently looking for potential site	Parish council to be given option to be part of pilot
Great and Little Thurlow	Local Service Centre	Confirmed wish to be part of the pilot	Firm up arrangements to attend meeting in September
Chevington	Infill	'Councillors were generally receptive to the idea of engaging with the project.'	Firm up next steps with Parish
Coney Weston	Infill	Confirmed wish to be part of the pilot	Firm up arrangements to attend meeting in September
Hawstead	Countryside	Confirmed wish to be in pilot	Firm up arrangements to attend meeting in September
Risby (not identified as part of the pilot previously)		Housing needs survey complete, meeting arranged to discuss profiling, meeting postponed	Firm up next steps with Parish