



Housing Needs Survey and Assessment

Troy Planning + Design for:
Langham Parish Council

Combined Summary Report
November 2025

LANGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
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Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents a summary of the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and Housing Needs Survey (HNS) prepared on behalf of Langham Parish Council by Troy Planning + Design. The Parish boundary is shown in Figure 1.
- 1.2 The reports are set in the context of the new Local Plan being prepared by Colchester City Council. The Preferred Options version of this, published in February 2025, included two allocations for new housing development in the Parish which, between them, would accommodate 910 new homes. The studies have been prepared to understand what the actual need for new homes is in the Parish.
- 1.3 The HNA is very much a data-driven report, utilising data from the Census and other information sources to review demographic and housing patterns, and making use of the Government's Standard Method to estimate the need for new homes in the Parish. The HNS takes a different approach, seeking to understand the actual needs of residents and how this might translate into a need for new homes in the Parish. This summary report draws the findings of both together.

Existing housing stock

- 1.4 The HNA finds that the stock of homes in the Parish is dominated by larger detached properties. It notes that the stock of this house type has increased over the last ten years but, at the same time, the overall population has declined slightly. This points towards under-occupation, i.e.: a large proportion of the households in Langham have more bedrooms in their home than are necessarily needed based on the size of the household.
- 1.5 This is reinforced in the HNS, which shows that the majority of respondents to the survey live in detached homes, and that 60% of these have four or more bedrooms. At the same time, it shows that the average household size, of those responding to the survey, is around two people per home.
- 1.6 Many people have lived in their home for a long time, and a large proportion of homes are owned outright (i.e.: without a mortgage). There is only a small proportion of more affordable tenure types in the Parish.



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 Langham Parish boundary

Figure 1: Langham Parish boundary – the study area for the HNA and HNS

Quantifying housing need

- 1.7 The HNA makes use of the Government's Standard housing Method to calculate what is referred to as the minimum housing need for the area. Depending on the dataset used this results in the need for around eight new homes per year. It reflects a 0.8% growth in the existing housing stock and application of an affordability factor (both of which are detailed in the HNA). The minimum need equates to around 0.6% of the total housing need for Colchester as a whole.
- 1.8 The HNA suggests that, in reality, the minimum need figure for Langham might be lower than application of the Standard method would suggest. This is because the population has not been growing and thus application of a 0.8% growth factor may overinflate local needs. This is reflected in the HNS, which indicates that based on responses to the survey, there is potentially a need for around four new homes in the Parish on an annual basis. This applies a pro-rata approach based on the response rate to the survey – 34% of households in Langham submitted a survey response of which 22 said they were looking to move and fourteen said they would be looking to move to a new home in Langham.
- 1.9 If a mid-point between the two were to be taken (i.e.: six homes per year) to allow for the need of existing residents and to consider wider growth, this would still be far below the quantum of new homes within the allocations directed to Langham in the February 2025 Preferred Options version of the Colchester Local Plan. The allocations would result in delivery, on average, of 61 homes per year in Langham. It is clear that the scale of growth proposed in the emerging Local Plan does not reflect the actual level of need in Langham. It should also be noted that unimplemented housing allocations referred to in the current adopted Local Plan under Policy SS9, amount to approximately 57 homes, which would be capable of accommodating much of the actual level of housing need.

Demographic change

- 1.10 The HNA indicates that Langham has an older than average population. Making use of population models in the Colchester wide Local Housing Needs Assessment, it shows that the population will continue to age, with continued growth in the over 65 and over 75 age groups. It suggests that specialist care may be needed to cater for this growing age cohort, but that Planning Practice Guidance advises that such homes are best located in places that benefit from good access to services and facilities. This might mean that locations in Colchester other than Langham are more suitable for such homes. It also suggests that homes should be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, so that future housing needs can be met without the need for extensive provision of specialist housing. The breakdown of the housing stock indicates that bungalows are strongly represented in Langham, and

that this is likely to remain a popular housing choice for older residents who may be looking to downsize.

- 1.11 These findings are reinforced by the findings of the HNS. This indicated that many people in Langham live in large homes, often being bigger than are necessarily needed for the size of the household occupying them, and that some of the households looking to move at some point in the future might be interested in downsizing. These respondents said that their current house was too big and too expensive to maintain, and that they would be looking for a smaller property, potentially including bungalows. Some also expressed a preference for sheltered or retirement housing, although those identifying this as their preferred housing type was far smaller than the modelling in the HNA would suggest. This is perhaps because the modelling in the HNA is based on a population growth scenario, reflecting change that has taken place across Colchester as a whole. However, in Langham, the population has remained relatively stable across the last few Census returns, and thus the need for age-appropriate housing may not be as significant as the HNA suggests. This is not to say that the needs of the older generation should not be considered: they most certainly should, but that the overall quantum of housing indicated in the modelled approach is not necessarily appropriate for Langham.

Housing size and type

- 1.12 The HNA and HNS both explore what housing sizes and types might be most appropriately provided in Langham in the future. Both studies identify that the current housing stock is skewed towards larger detached homes, and that provision of smaller one, two and three bed homes is limited.
- 1.13 The HNA indicates that development of smaller one and two bed properties may be appropriate, helping to diversify the stock of housing, address under-occupancy and support downsizing options for older residents. However, it does also note that those living in larger homes may not necessarily wish to downsize: this may be because they are comfortable living in their home, that they may find the process of moving difficult, or that they need a larger home to accommodate visitors.
- 1.14 The HNS reports on the expressed preference for those people who indicated that they are looking to move home. This makes clear that the preference is for two bed homes.

Affordability

- 1.15 The HNA finds that average house prices in Langham are high in comparison with the rest of Colchester, that transactions are primarily associated with larger

detached homes (which is reflective of the stock of homes in the Parish), and that the price gap between Langham and the rest of Colchester is growing.

- 1.16 The HNA reviews the average cost of properties against median incomes and finds that homes are unaffordable for those on average incomes. However, it recognises that many households will have equity – in the value of the current home for example – that can be used to afford a new home, but that young adults looking to set up their first home in Langham could face affordability challenges. This is reinforced in the HNS.
- 1.17 The HNS reviews existing tenures, gross household incomes and access to savings. It finds that older households, with substantial equity, incomes and savings, are well-positioned to relocate, particularly where this might involve downsizing to a smaller (and potentially cheaper) property. However, the HNS also finds that there are a number of young adults in Langham who are looking to move away from the family home and who would like to remain living in the Parish. Many expressed a desire for open market housing to purchase. However responses to the survey indicate this group has lower wages and savings, and based on average house prices set out in the HNA, would face considerable challenges purchasing a home: they would likely need financial help or need to explore alternative tenure types. Furthermore, the limited stock of affordable housing tenures in the Parish may further hinder the ability for younger households, with lower financial capacity, to access housing.

Relationship with the emerging Local Plan

- 1.18 The housing need for Langham, calculated using the Governments Standard Method, is just 0.6% of the total for Colchester. The annualised rate of delivery assumed by the HNA and HNS (between four and eight homes) is well below that represented by the housing allocations in Langham.
- 1.19 Alongside the emerging Local Plan a Colchester-wide Local Housing Need Assessment (CLHNA) has been undertaken. This looks at the balance of housing, in terms of type and size, that should be provided in the future. It recommends that 30% of all new market homes should comprise one or two bedrooms, and that 65% of all affordable routes to home ownership should comprise one and two bedrooms. In Langham, and as found in the HNS, more than 50% of all respondents indicating they would like to move home, and remain living in the Parish, expressed a preference for smaller one or two bedroom homes. The mix of new homes delivered in Langham in the Future should thus be revised, with a greater proportion of smaller homes provided.
- 1.20 The emerging Local Plan also established thresholds for the delivery of affordable homes. In rural areas, it says that on schemes of five homes or more, 30% of the homes should be affordable. Whilst this may go some way to meeting the needs of

younger households in Langham, delivery is not guaranteed, and alternative delivery approaches might need to be investigating. The Parish may support the delivery of rural exception sites and housing schemes delivered by Community Land Trusts, and where housing is to remain affordable in perpetuity. However, delivery of housing via a Community Land Trust is not without challenge, as access to land and finance is required before schemes can come forward.

Key findings

1.21 The key findings arising from the HNA and HNS are:

There is a mismatch between proposed growth and actual need

1.22 The Colchester Local Plan proposes 910 new homes in Langham, averaging 61 per year, while the HNA and HNS suggest a more realistic need of 4–8 homes annually. This level of need could in part be met by the unimplemented housing allocations (approximately 57 housing units) contained in the adopted Local Plan under Policy SS9.

A dominance of large detached homes

1.23 Langham’s housing stock is heavily skewed towards large detached homes, with significant under-occupation of these as well as limited availability of smaller properties.

Ageing population and potential for downsizing

1.24 The population is ageing, with many older residents expressing interest in downsizing to smaller homes, including bungalows. However, the overall quantum and need for specialist housing may be overstated.

Affordability challenges for young adults

1.25 High house prices and limited affordable housing tenures make it difficult for younger residents to remain in the Parish, despite a strong desire to do so.

Preference for smaller homes

1.26 Both data and survey responses indicate a strong preference for two bedroom homes, especially among those looking to move within the Parish.

Limited affordable housing provision

1.27 The current stock of affordable housing is low, and while the Local Plan includes a 30% affordable housing requirement for rural schemes, delivery is uncertain.

Recommendations

1.28 The recommendations arising from the HNA and HNS are summarised as:

Reassess housing allocations in the Local Plan

1.29 The Parish should make representations to Colchester City Council that seek a revision of the proposed housing allocations to better reflect Langham's actual housing need and demographic trends.

Promote smaller homes in future development

1.30 Insofar as new development is delivered in Langham, the Local Plan, and the Parish, should encourage the delivery of two bedroom homes to support downsizing, improve affordability, and meet expressed local preferences.

Support affordable housing delivery mechanisms

1.31 The Parish could explore delivery of rural exception sites and Community Land Trusts to deliver affordable housing that remains affordable in perpetuity. This may need access to finance and land.

Design for flexibility and age appropriateness

1.32 New homes should be designed to be adaptable to meet the needs of an ageing population without relying solely on specialist housing models.

Monitor and respond to local housing demand

1.33 The Parish should continue to gather local data and feedback to inform future planning decisions and ensure alignment with community needs.

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