



Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Housing Needs Survey: Free-form comments

This is a summary of open-ended comments made in response to questions in the survey. There were **467 forms returned in total**.

It is not easy to summarise the hundreds of comments made in a quantitative way. They ranged from very brief comments to short essays, but we'll try to give a flavour because the comments add a lot to the fixed-format questions.

Q19a – If someone in your household wishes to move but cannot, which of any of the following reasons are preventing this. Responses stating 'other' (non-listed) reasons included:

- Buying in a nearby village because no houses in Blewbury are affordable and suitable
- Need an affordable bungalow in Blewbury due to illness
- Lack of suitable downsizing options
- Family housing in Blewbury not affordable on average income

Q26 – Please write your thoughts on your responses together with any other comments on housing needs in Blewbury now and in the future.

There were **258 responses to this question**. The main themes were:

- Affordability – to upsize/downsize, and for young people and families/young returners to the village
- Concerns about village infrastructure
- No large developments
- Modest developments of 2–3 bedrooms in small clusters, sympathetic to the scale and character of the village, and opposition to larger new-builds
- Mixed developments
- No further development at all
- Infill versus non-infill? – balance of views, but favouring non-infill
- Blewbury returners versus non Blewburyians? – balance of views
- Mixed demographic
- Elderly/nursing care

Q30 – Please write in any additional ideas, suggestions or concerns you want to raise.

There were **220 responses to this question**.

A very significant proportion of residents are concerned about the **village infrastructure**. Sewerage and drainage are very frequently mentioned, as well as public transport, proximity to school (primary and pre-school), shopping and medical facilities. Other utilities (water, internet) and poorly maintained roads were also mentioned by some as being of concern.

Many are worried that any **large-scale development** (such as the proposal for land west of Woodway Road) would overwhelm the already stretched infrastructure, and question the wisdom of locating development in an area with poor infrastructure.

A notable portion, approximately 10–15%, said explicitly that they are **opposed to any further development at all** in the village.

There is nearly universal and strongly expressed **opposition to any development to the south of the A417**, and many mentioned the proposal for land west of Woodway Road in

particular (there was just one comment in support of this proposal). The scale and location are broadly considered to be completely inappropriate.

Limited support for **infill development** was expressed, but often with the caveats that (a) any particular site must be appropriate as existing green spaces within the village are highly valued, and (b) cramming too many houses into small plots is unacceptable (several comments mentioned the Dallas site on Westbrook Street as an example).

Where expressed, support for housing tends to favour **small-scale sites on the edge of the village**. Some suggest explicitly that housing should be spread over **several** smaller sites rather than one big site. The strongest support for such development is to the north. Some residents, but fewer, consider that development to the west could be appropriate. Relatively few mention east of the village as being suitable.

The need for **affordable housing** is mentioned very frequently, both on its own and in a variety of contexts.

Many comments favour **smaller houses** rather than large ones. Some mention the need for these to be well designed, with adequate storage space and parking areas.

Support for new housing is often in the context of people with a **local connection**, though there is also opposition to this requirement.

Housing suitable for the **elderly** (some of it sheltered) is desired.

A significant minority mention that **new development should be well considered** and relate well to the existing character of the village. For example, relatively low density, more traditional materials, less hardstanding. Development should not have an 'urban' feel. Bridus Mead and Grahame Close are mentioned as positive examples of the types of development that would be appropriate.

The **landscape character** of the village is considered to be of very high importance – particularly the relationship to the downs and Blewburton Hill.

There is concern about **garage/shop** – the poor range of goods and whether it will stay open.

Increasing traffic, especially if there are large developments, is a concern. On-street parking is also a problem in some places.

The **sense of community** within Blewbury is highly valued, and many are very protective of this. Therefore, it is important for any new developments to be integrated into the village so that they form part of the wider community.