

# West Lancashire Parish Summary: Aughton

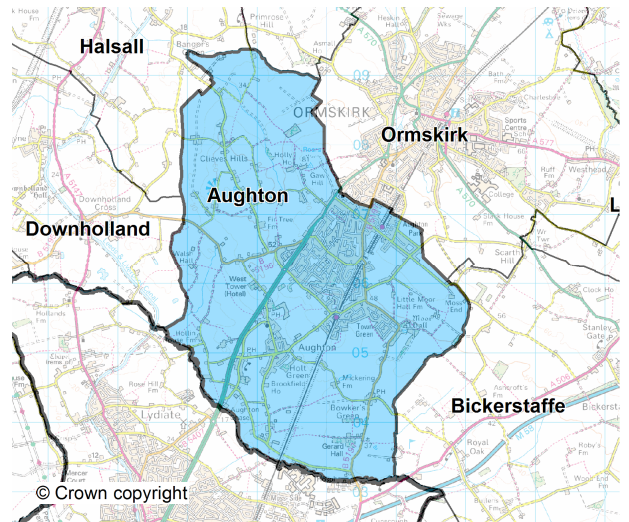
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## Introduction

- 1 The shortage of housing that is affordable to local people, particularly in the rural areas, has long been recognised by West Lancashire Council. This document has been prepared as part of a larger research project and provides a profile of the housing needs in Aughton Parish. It is intended to assist the Parish Council, in association with the Borough, to plan and deliver small schemes of the right type of affordable housing where they are needed. It provides a description of the area (based on information provided by the Parish Council) and contains key statistics, drawn from a variety of sources to provide an idea of current housing and future need in the Parish.
- 2 An important part of the work is the estimation of the need for affordable housing. In both Borough and Parish level analyses, Fordham Research has used Government definitions of what is affordable and measured housing need according to the methods laid down in Government Guidance. The Borough level analysis is used to produce a key planning output: the affordable housing target and the overall number of households in need.
- 3 The purpose of the parish reports is different: to provide an overall impression of the housing situation in each parish. Although the figures are based on a survey of all the dwellings in the parishes, the smaller total response achieved at parish level (corresponding to the smaller total household population) means the parish figures do not have the same robustness as the borough level equivalents. However, we are satisfied that the figures are as precise as the broad method set out in Guidance allows.
- 4 The parish summaries provide 'gross' rather than 'net' figures for housing need – that is to say the number of new affordable dwellings required in each parish each year, but ignoring any supply of affordable houses becoming available. The supply would come from re-lets of existing social rented housing or newly built affordable housing. We do not take supply figures into account at a parish level since supply figures are only available at a Borough level and cannot be reliably estimated for each parish, and they tend to fluctuate from year to year. It is better to use the gross needs figure and local judgement regarding the likely flow of affordable relets.
- 5 The parish summaries provide a succinct background upon which the Parish Council can consider whether and what level of new housing it wishes to see. This applies to both market and affordable housing. Adopted Local Plan Policy DE3 (Affordable Housing Development) provides what are known as 'rural exceptions' criteria. These say that there must be evidence of need in the parish and that the housing should be made available to local people.

## **An introduction to Aughton**

6 The Parish of Aughton in the South of West Lancashire lies along the A59 between Ormskirk and Maghull. It is a well connected agricultural and residential Parish, crossed by both road and railway to Liverpool and Ormskirk. The Parish is made up of five wards which provide some 3,400 dwellings. Although it has a large urban core, Aughton also has acres of Grade 1 agricultural land and a number of small settlements.



7 Aughton is a former winner the Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition with pleasant tree lined roads found across the Parish and two churches of particular architectural interest. It has small shopping areas, a village hall, pubs, hotels, restaurants and function rooms. It also has 36 acres of public open space. Recreational facilities in the Parish include a sports pavilion, a recreation field, a public bowling green, parks, tennis courts and play areas.

8 The population of Aughton was recorded as 987 in 1801 and grew to 3,566 by 1951. It is now between 8,500 and 9,000. Since the 1960s, when a number of large housing developments were undertaken, Aughton has attracted a number of residents who commute to work in the nearby towns or cities of Ormskirk, Southport and Liverpool. Properties include a mixture of detached, semi-detached, bungalows, flats and sheltered accommodation, although recent developments have been mainly detached residences.

9 The resident population contains a broad range of ages with a number of families but also a number of large houses containing single occupants. The majority of houses are under long term occupancy. Migration into and out of the area is dependent on individual household circumstances. The area is particularly appealing for families due to the number of locally available services such as schools, shops and recreation as well as being well connected to centres for employment outside of the Parish. Whilst a significant proportion of the population commute outside of the Parish for work, within Aughton employment is primarily in agriculture, farming and the service industry.

## **Impressions of future affordable housing requirements from within the Parish**

10 Parish Councils were asked to gauge the opinion of residents on the nature of the housing required in the Parish in the future, particularly focusing on affordable housing. They were asked to consult as many residents as possible and ensure suitable demographic diversity was achieved in order to document the full range of opinions. This section presents the results of this process as submitted by Aughton Parish Council.

***Affordable housing need and type***

- 11 The consultation indicates that the majority of those that participated believe that there is a need for affordable housing in Aughton Parish and that they would be happy to see the development of affordable housing locally. It was felt that shared ownership would be the most suitable tenure for affordable housing locally because it has proven to be effective previously in the Parish.
- 12 The consultation suggested that houses, rather than bungalows and flats, are the affordable property types most suitable for those wishing to set up home for the first-time. The consultation also identified a demand for affordable housing products for older residents to downsize but stay in the community.

***Local Connection***

- 13 The Council requires new Registered Social Landlord (RSL) / Housing Association affordable housing developments to mirror the local connection criteria used by the Council or as updated as part of any review of the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. The applicant must show, and this should be verified, that they meet one of the following conditions:
- Have lived in that area for three out of the past five years.
  - Have family who have lived in that area for at least the last two years, and are moving to either give them support or receive support from them.
  - Need to move to, or stay in, that area to receive the support of local organisations or support facilities, for example, day centres, treatment centres, and you would not be able to continue to go to these facilities if you moved away from the area.
- 14 Every allocation / property sale should ideally go to an applicant with a local connection at both initial and subsequent sales. Rent dwellings follow the same criteria.
- 15 The consultation agreed that where a new affordable housing scheme has been built, the local community should be given the first opportunity to occupy the new housing, followed by anyone with a local connection to the rest of West Lancashire.
- 16 The consultation indicated that in terms of making affordable housing available to local people, local should be defined as anyone with a local connection to a particular settlement contained within the borders of West Lancashire and then anyone that has a local connection to the Borough of West Lancashire.
- 17 When a new scheme is developed there can be circumstances, despite research findings, where take up / interest in a scheme is not as expected. There can be many reasons for this, such as changes in individual circumstances or changes in the economic climate. Clearly it is not in the best interest of the housing provider to keep the houses empty, for practical and economic reasons, so it is normal practice to introduce "cascade" arrangements that allow residents from neighbouring parishes or

wards to take up the housing, before expanding the catchment area to the rest of the Borough. The consultation response agreed that this is a sensible approach in Aughton Parish.

**Target Occupancy Groups**

18 When new affordable housing schemes to buy are developed, the following target groups are given priority consideration. Schemes for rent are usually allocated via nominations to households from the Council waiting list.

- Existing Council / RSL tenants
- Any applicant on the Council Housing Register
- Any applicant in the private rented sector
- First-time buyers
- Key worker
- Any owner-occupier living in overcrowded accommodation
- Applicant who has owned a property previously, but has lost the home through matrimonial divorce proceedings, who has capital available, but is still unable to purchase a home to meet their needs
- Any other person

19 The consultation agreed that this is a sensible approach.

20 When developing affordable housing for sale, the Council always requires that the prospective purchasers must:

- Have a regular income and be a household that that does not have to spend more than 25% of their gross household income on sustaining the total value of the rent and mortgage payment annually, or at a level regarded as good practice, as published by the Housing Corporation or Homes and Communities Agency
- Be able to demonstrate that they could not ordinarily purchase an equivalent property in the same locality to the affordable housing type being considered on the open market, based on their household income and taking account of any other reasonable assets owned by the household
- Be able to demonstrate that their household is able to sustain the required housing costs, when taking into account their other reasonable household expenditure

21 The Parish consultation response did not agree that this was an appropriate approach for the Parish.

**Other issues**

- 22 The Parish consultation stated that the intention to occupy each affordable housing property to its full capacity was appropriate. It was felt that affordable housing should only be developed in Aughton if it will remain as affordable housing in perpetuity. The consultation response said the Council did provide enough information about the types of affordable housing products available, however, noted that there is “*always room for improvement*” in this area.

**Available plots of land**

- 23 The Parish Council was able to identify two sites that would be suitable for the development of affordable housing. The first was an area of derelict houses and outbuildings (Land off Springfield Road/A59) known as the ‘*gateway to Aughton*’. The land has residential, leisure and commercial use. It is situated in the green belt and has several owners, unknown to the Parish Council. The second site was a disused petrol station, currently used as an unauthorised car park, owned by the Spa group, Blackpool. The Parish Council suggested that the site would be suitable for “*courtyard low level flats*”. It was noted in the consultation that building on both sites would not comply with the Local Plan Policy.

**Information from the household survey**

- 24 This section describes the Parish using results from the household survey collected as part of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment across the whole of the Borough. Overall 658 responses to the survey were obtained within the Parish representing 20% of households in the Parish. This is a good rate of return and enables robust figures to be produced for the Parish.

**Current stock of affordable housing**

- 25 The Parish currently contains a total of 123 units of Council-owned social rented housing. The types of housing available are summarised in the table below.

Table 1 Council-owned social rented housing in Aughton Parish					
<i>Client Group</i>	<i>No. of dwellings</i>	<i>Dwelling type</i>	<i>No. of dwellings</i>	<i>Dwelling size</i>	<i>No. of dwellings</i>
General Needs	58	House	38	1 bedroom	64
Category 1	52	Flat/Maisonette	67	2 bedroom	21
Category 2	0	Bungalow	18	3 bedroom	37
Group Scheme	12			4+ bedroom	1
Warden*	1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

Source: West Lancashire Council (2010)

- 26 The Parish also contains a total of 9 units of RSL-owned social rented or intermediate housing. The types of housing available are summarised in the table below.

Table 2 RSL-owned social rented and intermediate housing in Aughton Parish

Tenure	No. of dwellings	Client Group	No. of dwellings	Dwelling type	No. of dwellings	Dwelling size	No. of dwellings
Social rented	6	General needs	3	House	3	1 bedroom	6
Shared ownership	3	Sheltered	6	Flat/Maisonette	0	2 bedroom	1
		Supported	0	Bungalow	6	3 bedroom	2
						4+ bedroom	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: West Lancashire Council (2010)

### Household profile

- 27 The table below shows key statistics for Aughton Parish compared to equivalent figures for West Lancashire as a whole. The proportion of social rented households at 2.4% is lower than the Borough-wide figure and the Parish also contains a lower proportion of owners with a mortgage. Aughton Parish contains a similar private rented sector than the Borough as a whole. In contrast, there is a notably higher level of owner-occupiers with no mortgage in Aughton compared to West Lancashire Borough.
- 28 The majority of homes in Aughton are detached, making up 70% of the housing stock compared to 44.8% across the Borough. Aughton Parish contains a larger proportion of pensioner households than West Lancashire as a whole. The proportion of households in unsuitable housing is half that of average for the whole Borough. The rate of overcrowding is also lower.
- 29 Households in Aughton Parish are slightly less likely to contain an employed person than West Lancashire as a whole, however, households are more likely to contain a key worker. Households in the Parish are less likely than average to contain a member with support needs.

Table 3 Key statistics: Aughton Parish

	Aughton	West Lancashire		Aughton	West Lancashire
<b>Tenure</b>			<b>Total number of households</b>	<b>3,357</b>	<b>46,650</b>
Owner-occ'd (no mortgage)	57.7%	41.8%	Average household size	2.54	2.39
Owner-occ'd (with mortgage)	31.7%	35.0%	Average number of cars/vans	1.48	1.29
Social rented	2.4%	15.1%	Households in unsuitable housing	3.7%	7.4%
Private rented	8.2%	8.1%			
<b>Household type</b>			Households containing an employed person	59.7%	60.8%
Single pensioner	19.2%	16.4%	Older person only households	36.4%	27.9%
2+ pensioners	17.2%	11.5%	Households containing a person with support needs	13.3%	19.5%
Single non-pensioner	7.4%	12.5%	Households containing a key worker	37.6%	22.9%
2+ adults, no children	35.9%	32.6%	Proportion of households moving in the next 2 years (no. of households moving)	9.9% (332)	15.8% (7,383)
Lone parent	1.3%	7.9%	Number of households forming in the next 2 years (household formation rate)	921 (13.7%)	6,272 (6.7%)
2+ adults, 1 child	5.9%	8.0%			
2+ adults, 2+ children	13.1%	11.1%			
<b>Accommodation type</b>					
Detached	70.0%	44.8%			
Semi-detached / Terraced	28.2%	50.1%			
Flat / Maisonette	1.7%	5.1%			
<b>Overcrowding</b>					
Overcrowded	0.4%	1.8%	Average number of bedrooms per dwelling	3.33	2.97
Under-occupied	56.9%	42.4%			

Source: West Lancashire household survey, Fordham Research (2009)

- 30 The table also indicates that almost 9.9% of households in Aughton Parish intend to move home in the next two years, which compares with 15.8% of all households in West Lancashire. The rate of household formation at 13.7% is notably higher than the Borough average of 6.7%.

### **Financial situation of households in Aughton Parish**

- 31 The table below presents the financial situation of households in the Parish. The table indicates that households in Aughton Parish record a median income<sup>1</sup> over 50% higher than the Borough-wide level and a median savings level notably above the figure for West Lancashire. The median equity of owner-occupiers is £248,904 in Aughton Parish compared to £135,263 across West Lancashire.

<sup>1</sup> The median is an alternative way of calculating the average. It is the middle value of the distribution when the distribution is sorted in ascending or descending order.

Table 4 Financial profile for households in Aughton Parish

	<i>Aughton</i>	<i>West Lancashire</i>
Median household income	£35,849	£20,398
Median savings	£13,993	£1,958
Median equity of owner-occupiers	£248,904	£135,263

Source: West Lancashire household survey, Fordham Research (2009)

- 32 Using information on the financial situation of households alongside the cost of market accommodation in the Borough (presented in the main report) it is possible to examine the ability of households to afford housing in West Lancashire. Overall some 6.3% of households in Aughton Parish would be unable to afford market accommodation of a suitable size in West Lancashire if they were to move home now. This compares with 26.2% of all households in the Borough.

#### ***Extent of housing need in Aughton Parish***

- 33 The table below shows the extent of housing need in the Parish following the CLG housing needs assessment model set out in the Practice Guidance. The table shows that there are an estimated 25 households in need of affordable housing each year within Aughton Parish, which constitutes 2.3% of the total household need in the Borough. Households in Aughton Parish are less likely to be in housing need than all households in West Lancashire (0.7% of households compared to 2.3% across the Borough).

Table 5 Gross need (per annum) in Aughton

<i>Area</i>	<i>No. of h'holds in need (gross)</i>	<i>Total no. of households</i>	<i>% of h'holds in need</i>	<i>As a % of all h'holds in need</i>
Aughton	25	3,357	0.7%	2.3%
West Lancashire	1,081	46,101	2.3%	100.0%

Source: West Lancashire household survey, Fordham Research (2009)

- 34 Of the 25 households in need in Aughton Parish each year, one is a household of two or more adults with no children, 13 are older person households and 11 are households containing children. The gross need for housing in Aughton is therefore for 25 units per annum. This does not take into account future supply, which cannot be accurately estimated for the Parish.



- 35 Further analysis shows that within the gross need figure, 12% is need for intermediate housing<sup>2</sup> with the remaining 88% being social rented. Finally, the calculation can be split by bedroom size, showing that 24% of the need is for one bedroom units, 44% two bedroom, 20% three bedroom and 16% for four bedroom units. Comparing these figures with the current stock of social rented housing (Tables 1 and 2) suggests that there may be a slight shortage of four bedroom units and a surplus of one bedroom units in the future.
- 36 It should be borne in mind that the requirement for one bedroom units produced by the CLG model is likely to be overstated since it does not take into account long term requirements of households, but only their current situation (e.g. space for children, or space for a carer). In addition, the model does not include the possibility of single person households being required to live in HMOs, as will tend to occur for some households if need is met through Local Housing Allowance in the private rented sector. For these reasons, we would not recommend building this size of accommodation in significant quantity.
- 37 The analysis here is solely of the need arising in Aughton Parish. In practice it may be necessary for the Council to redistribute affordable housing requirements between parishes and wards across West Lancashire in order to provide sufficient housing across the wider area. This is primarily because there are some areas where there is need for housing, but little or no locally available or suitable land.

#### ***Difficulty of obtaining housing in Aughton Parish***

- 38 Respondents were asked to indicate whether a member of their family had recently (in the last five years) had to move out of the Parish to find a suitable home. Overall some 138 households in Aughton Parish indicated that this had occurred. This represents 4.1% of households in the Parish, which is slightly lower than the figure for households across West Lancashire of 4.6%.

## **Conclusions**

- 39 Both the qualitative information submitted within the consultation response and the quantitative assessment of affordable housing need conducted as part of the household survey across the Borough indicate a requirement for affordable homes in Aughton Parish. When calculated using the guidance for assigning need, the requirement is for about 25 affordable houses per year (some of which can be met from turnover, and some from new supply). It is clear that a range of affordable accommodation is required to meet this housing need including properties for young families and properties suitable for older people.
- 40 Supporting the acquisition of affordable accommodation for Aughton Parish residents in need is a priority for the Parish Council and should be facilitated as much as possible by the Borough Council.

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<sup>2</sup> Intermediate housing is affordable accommodation other than traditional social rent and includes products such as shared ownership, shared equity and intermediate rent.'