Report of the 2014 Crawley Down & Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan Non-Residents Survey

Executive Summary

As part of the preparation of the Crawley Down and Copthorne Neighbourhood Plans, the plan committees have undertaken a survey of non-residents who work in the area. It is considered that the households involved could benefit from a move into the area through reduced travel costs and duration, with an associated benefit to the community of reduced traffic at the peak times.

The survey was conducted anonymously and the analysis is based on 115 completed forms returned from 256 issued. The main conclusions from the analysis are:

- Approximately half the responses indicate that a move is likely in the next 5 years with the need for a bigger home being the main driver.
- Over half the responses indicated that a move into the Parish would be considered.
- The assumed benefits of reduced travel costs and duration of a move into the Parish do not appear to be a significant consideration.
- The Parish is regarded as having traffic problems, being remote, lacking facilities, and suffering from anti-social behaviour.
- The availability of affordable housing in the Parish is seen as a benefit but the low number actually registered for such housing in the survey responses suggest that it is difficult to access.

Introduction

Following the publication of the 2014 Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey report, the Committee preparing the plan were offered an opportunity to extend the survey to a group of non-residents who had the potential to benefit from moving into the area. The non-residents concerned were employees of the Crawley Down Group, which operates a number of vehicle related businesses and is the largest employer in Worth Parish. It was anticipated that employees moving into the area would benefit from reduced home to work travel times and costs, and that there would be an associated environmental benefit arising from a reduction in vehicle journeys.

As far as the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan Committee is aware, this additional study is unique in Neighbourhood Plans to date. The offer came from the Managing Director of the Crawley Down Group at a Stakeholders Meeting on 14th March 2014.

This report should be read in conjunction with the report of the 2014 Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey.

Methodology

As was the case for the main 2014 Housing Survey, the survey was conducted on an anonymous basis. A revised version of the survey form used in the main 2014 Survey was created (Appendix A). The new form retained questions 1 to 4 (which characterise the household circumstances), and questions 7 and 9 (which address propensity to move). These were supplemented by new questions which explored whether the individual responding had relatives in the area, whether the individual was registered with the MSDC Common Housing Register; the type of accommodation the individual would require if they were to move into the area; and the local features that would drive a decision.

The survey was undertaken in June 2014 on a Worth Parish-wide basis, covering the two villages of Crawley Down and Copthorne which are preparing separate Neighbourhood Plans. The survey forms were sent out individually by Crawley Down Group to all their employees who are resident outside the Parish. A pre-paid envelope was provided with the form to enable completed forms to be returned to the Worth Parish Council office. This approach protected the anonymity of the survey responses.

Results

A total of 115 completed survey forms returned; equal to a 45% response. This is significantly higher than the response in the main 2014 Survey (35%).

Question 1. Place of Work

58 (50.4%) of the responses reported that they worked in Crawley Down; 40 (34.8%) work in Copthorne; and 9 (7.8%) in Crawley). There was 1 blank response and 4 responses reported multiple locations.

Question 2. Current Property Ownership

63 (54.8%) of the responses reported that they own their home; 6 (5.2%) part-own their property; 30 (26.1%) rent and 15 (13.0%) live with relatives or friends. There was 1 blank response. These results include 4 responses that the analysis of responses to other questions suggests that the response to this question should have been ‘relatives’ based on other answers (2 stated own / 2 stated rent).

The result for home ownership is significantly less than the equivalent result for both the main 2014 Survey (91.7%) and the 2011 Census (86%).

Question 3. Current Property Size

6 (5.2%) of the responses reported one bedroom; 31 (27.0%) two bedrooms; 47 (40.9%) three bedrooms; 28 (24.3%) four or more bedrooms. There were 3 blank responses.

Question 4. Age Distribution of Household

Age Range	Number	
<16	48	17.4%
16 to 24	48	17.4%
25 to 34	38	13.8%
35 to 54	78	28.3%
55 to 65	43	15.6%
65 to 74	18	6.5%
75 +	3	1.1%

There were 5 blank responses and 7 responses in which indicated that the household had only individuals under the age of 16 years. The latter were considered to be incorrect and have been excluded from the analysis. The number of individuals per household was 2.7.

Compared to the results of the same question in the main 2014 Survey, the proportion of individuals in the 16 to 24 and 25 to 34 age ranges is significantly increased while whose relating to over 55 years is reduced. This would be expected for a sample of the working population. The analysis of the main 2014 Survey includes a correction for the bias towards the older age of the respondees.

Question 5. Number of years in Current Property

41 (35.6%) of the responses reported living in their current property for 5 years or less; 18 (15.6%) for between 6 and 10 years; and 17 (14.8%) for more than 20 years.

Question 6. Move Expection in the Next 5 Years

44% of responses reported that they expect to move in the next 5 years. This is significantly higher than the equivalent result in the main 2014 Survey, even for the households composed of the younger age ranges. However, the result is in line with the results for households that rent their current property, reflecting the higher propensity of renters to move.

The results for individuals living with relatives or friends (41.2%) was not significantly different to the overall result.

Question 7. Reasons for wanting to Move

There were 94 completed responses to this question, several of which gave more than one reason.

Reason	Number
To a larger property	30
To a smaller property	21
From rented to owned	15
Owned to rented	1
Closer to work	18
Closer to relatives	6
Want village life	17

There were also 12 comments of which 6 cited leaving home for own property without specifying ownership.

Compared to the results of the main 2014 Survey, the balance between moving to a bigger or a smaller property is reversed, although it is not as markedly biased as in the main 2014 Survey (in which more than twice as many wanted to ‘downsize’ as wanted to move to a larger property). This thought to be due to a combination of the different age range and ownership structures of the respondees to the two surveys.

Q8. Relatives in the Village

12 responses reported having relatives in Crawley Down and 8 with relatives in Copthorne. Of these, 3 responses had relatives in both villages.

Q9. Households Registered with MSDC Common Housing Register

Only 7 responses reported that they were registered on the MSDC Common Housing Register (CHR), of whom 5 work in Copthorne. 2 responses reported owning their current homes in Question2.; 3 are currently renting; and 2 currently live with relatives. There was 1 response which has relatives in both villages and another with relatives in Crawley Down only. 3 responses want to move to bigger properties; 1 to a smaller property; and 1 to be nearer to work.

Detailed analysis of such a small number of responses is not valid, but there was evidence of inconsistencies with other survey responses. Home ownership would usually exclude registration with the CHR. The number registered seems small compared to the 50 or so who might qualify; annual household incomes in excess of £60,000 might exclude some, but no information has been collected on this.

Question 10. Whether would consider moving to Crawley Down or Copthorne

Overall 64 (55.6%) responses indicated that they would consider moving to either Crawley Down or Copthorne. Of these, 58 indicated that they would consider moving to Crawley Down and 55 to Copthorne.

The question went on to explore what type of property was wanted. Only 54 of the 64 responding positively to the first part gave an answer to the ownership part and many selected several options suggesting that ownership was not a key criteria. There were 40 responses to owned; 7 to shared; and 13 to rented; indicating that owning the property was the preferred option. Similarly, there were only 41 responses to the final part of the question on property size. There were 2 responses to one-bed; 17 responses to two-bed; 22 responses to three-bed and 9 responses to four-bed.

Question 11. Method and duration of Travel to Work.

Method	Number	
Drive	104	
Cycle	2	(+ 3 occasionally)
Bus	1	
Train to Gatwick then bus run by CDG	2	
Walk	1	

The average distance travelled is 10.9 miles based on the estimated distance provided by 52 responses and the average journey time 21.6 minutes based on the estimated time provided by 84 responses.

Question 12. Features that make Crawley Down and Copthorne desirable places

This question asked for 19 features to be ranked in priority order of making the village an attractive place to live. Only 3 responses provided the full ranking; the majority of responses indicated that features were of equal priority. The analysis has, therefore, been limited to the number of times each feature was given a highest priority in responses.

Feature	Number of time Top Priority
House prices	49
'Value for money' of houses	29
Availability of affordable housing	22
Within walking distance of work	9
Within cycling distance of work	9
Local schools and nurseries/playgroups	7
Local Health Services	12
Range of local shops	11
Local pub(s) and restaurants	8
Local Clubs and Associations	5
Local sports facilities	3
Children's play areas	7
Facilities for teenagers	3
Local parks and other green spaces	14
Easy access to the countryside	16
Easy access to transport network	7
Bus services	9
Low crime rate	20
'Neat appearance' (no litter/graffiti)	18

It is surprising that proximity to work is not seen as a high priority more often. The low numbers for schools, playgroups and facilities for teenagers is also surprising.

Question 13. Features that make Crawley Down and Copthorne undesirable places

Responses to this question were in the form of a free-format comment. About 50 comments were received. Traffic problems was the most common comment. Other comments were fairly equally split between house prices, remoteness, lack of facilities/services and anti-social behaviour.. House prices are therefore seen as both a benefit (Question 12.) and a barrier (Question 13.) as is crime/anti-social behaviour.

Discussion

The main points to emerge from the analysis of the survey responses are summarised as:

- The survey demographic is different to the main 2014 Survey with a different age distribution and a greater proportion of households that rent their homes
- The expectation of a move in the next 5 years is significantly higher than the main 2014 Survey. The main driver for a move is the need for a larger property which complements the desire to downsize seen in the main 2014 Survey as larger homes would become available.

- Very few of the responses reported having any relatives in the Parish and only a handful are registered with MSDC on the Common Housing Register.
- Over half the responses consider the Parish to be a possible location to live in. The features that make the villages attractive are house prices, the availability of social housing, low crime, and their neat appearance. However, paradoxically high house prices are also seen as a barrier and the villages have a reputation (externally at least) as suffering anti-social behaviour.
- Traffic is seen as a significant problem in the Parish and a barrier to moving there, which is rather ironic as nearly all the responses travel into the area by car each day.

Overall, it does not appear that the reductions in home to work travelling costs and time that would result from a move into the Parish is a significant consideration. There is some evidence that the responses recognise that these cost savings would be balanced by increased costs in travelling to supermarkets and other facilities/services not available in the Parish which is regarded as ‘remote’.

The availability of affordable (social) housing in the Parish is viewed as attractive, but only a very small proportion of responses are registered with the MSDC Common Housing Register. This is considered surprising given the large proportion of responses that rent their current home and that working in the Parish is one of the criteria for a ‘local connection’. This suggests that households are unable to meet the other criteria for registration and implies that a group who would benefit both the Parish and personally from a move into rented accommodation in the Parish is being denied access to that accommodation . It may be relevant that the Survey was conducted after changes to the Register in May 2014 which resulted in a substantial decrease in overall numbers (Figure 1 – updated from Figure 3 in the main 2014 Survey report). Figure 1 shows that this significant decrease has been sustained and supports an argument that the criteria for registration, especially for Rural Exception developments, should be relaxed for those with a local connection, as opposed to just being given priority as at present.

Summary

As part of the preparation of the Crawley Down and Copthorne Neighbourhood Plans, the plan committees have undertaken a survey of non-residents who work in the area. It is considered that the households involved could benefit from a move into the area through reduced travel costs and duration, with an associated benefit to the community of reduced traffic at the peak times.

The survey was conducted anonymously and the analysis is based on 115 completed forms returned from 256 issued. The main conclusions from the analysis are:

- Approximately half the responses indicate that a move is likely in the next 5 years with the need for a bigger home being the main driver.
- Over half the responses indicated that a move into the Parish would be considered.
- The assumed benefits of reduced travel costs and duration of a move into the Parish do not appear to be a significant consideration.
- The Parish is regarded as having traffic problems, being remote, lacking facilities, and suffering from anti-social behaviour.

- The availability of affordable housing in the Parish is seen as a benefit but the low number actually registered for such housing in the survey responses suggest that it is difficult to access.

Acknowledgements

The Plan Committees wish to thank Crawley Down Group for suggesting and facilitating this survey.

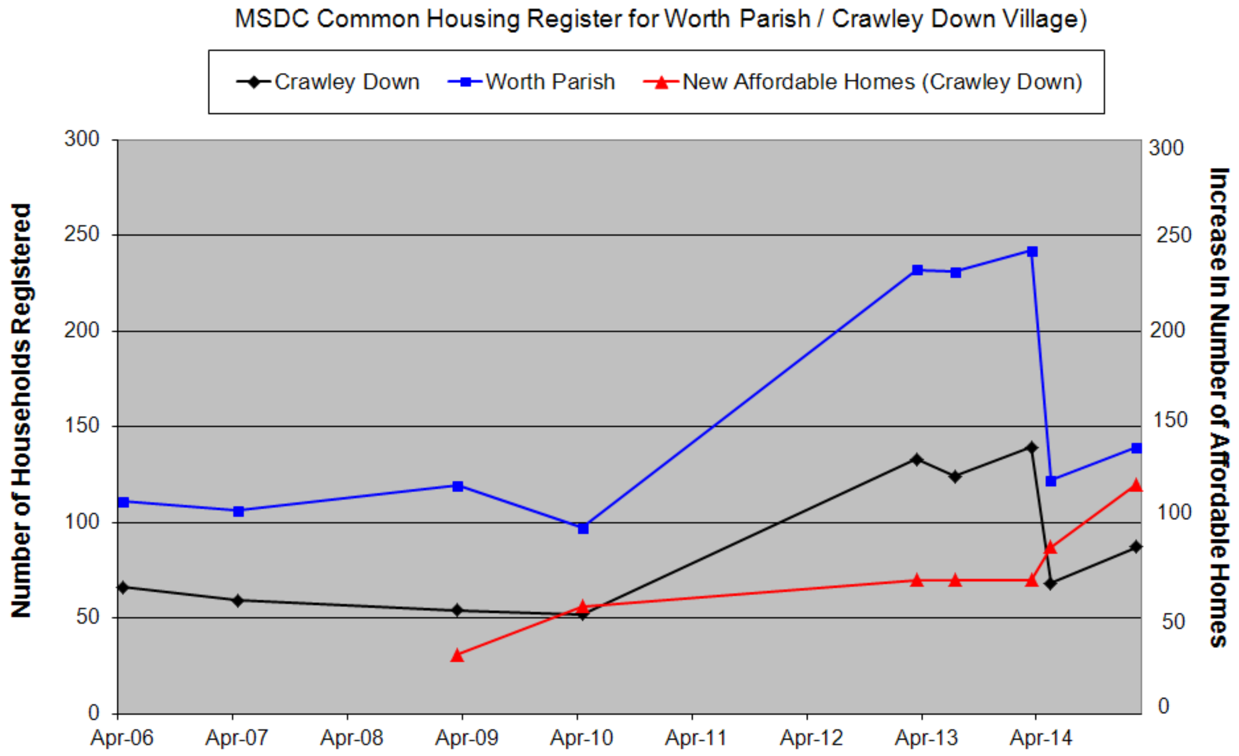

Figure 1. Households registered with the MSDC Common Housing Register for Crawley Down and Worth Parish 2006 to 2015. Also shown on the same scale in the increase in the number of affordable homes in Crawley Down in the same period[1]

[1] The significant changes in the registered numbers seen in this figure require explanation as the Register is often used as a significant driver of planning policy. The numbers of households registered in both Crawley Down and the Parish is relatively constant from 2006 to 2010 and then increases substantially between 2010 and 2013. It widely accepted that the reason for this increase was due to the construction of new social housing in Crawley Down. The numbers then drop in May 2014, back to the previous level, due to changes in the criteria for registration and a requirement for households to to re-register if they have not bid for housing in the past 12 months. There is a small rise in the latest figures for February 2015, but the figures remain half of those seen at the peak. When the numbers registered are analysed by priority band, then it is seen that the growth between 2010 and 2013 and the decline in 2014 was almost entirely within the lowest priority band . This supports the view that it it is not valid to use the Common Housing Register to justify housing policies. In this context it is also relevant that a significant proportion of the households registered in the three higher priority bands are already housed in social housing.

Crawley Down & Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey
Non-Residents Survey

Worth Parish Council is preparing Neighbourhood Plans for Crawley Down and Copthorne that will shape the future of the villages for the next 20 years. A housing survey of residents has recently been completed and the results published on the Neighbourhood Plan websites (www.crawleydownplan.org.uk & www.copthorneplan.org.uk). These show a need for more 1 and 2 bed properties, while 3 and 4 bed properties will become available as a result of households wanting to downsize. The results also show that the demand is for ownership rather than rent, and for affordable properties for young adults who want to remain in the villages.

The survey is being extended to non-residents who might benefit from moving into the area. As one of the main local business and employers in the area, Crawley Down Group has agreed to pass copies of this survey to their employees who live outside Crawley Down and Copthorne. Completion is voluntary, but your views will help understand what makes the villages an attractive location and plan the right mix of housing in the villages. CDG will not be involved in the analysis.

This is an anonymous survey, please do not give any information on the form or the return envelope that could identify you, Please return the completed form by MONDAY 23rd June.

1. Where do you work? Crawley Down ❑ Copthorne ❑ Crawley ❑ other ❑
(Please tick ✓ one box)

2. Do you currently own ❑ part own ❑ rent ❑ or live with relatives / friends? ❑

3. How many bedrooms does your home have?
One ❑ Two ❑ Three ❑ Four or more ❑ 4

4. Please indicate the number of children and adults who live in your home:

Age Range (years)	under 16	16 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75 and above
Number of people							

5. How many years have you lived in your home?

6. Do you currently expect to move home within the next 5 years ? Yes ❑ No ❑

7. What could be a reason for your wanting to move? (Please tick all that apply ✓)

Need a bigger property	❑	Want a smaller property	❑
Move from rented to owned	❑	Move from owned to rented	❑
Move closer to place of work	❑	Attracted by village life, schools, etc.	❑
Move closer to relatives	❑	Other (please state in the box below):	

8. Do you have any close relatives living in Crawley Down Yes ❑ No ❑
or Copthorne Yes ❑ No ❑

9. Are you registered with the MSDC Common Housing Register? Yes ❑ No ❑

10. a. Would you consider moving to a property in Crawley Down? Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Would you consider moving to a property in Copthorne? Yes ❑ No ❑

c. If Yes to either 8a. or b.; What type of accommodation do you want?

owned ❑ shared ownership ❑ rented ❑ not known ❑

One bedroom ❑ Two beds ❑ Three beds ❑ Four or more ❑ not known ❑

11. How do you currently travel to work ? (please give approximate time taken /distance)

12. Which of the following features would make Crawley Down or Copthorne a desirable place to live? Please tick all that apply and rank in order of importance using 1 as the most important.

		Importance
House prices	❑	……….
'Value for money' of houses	❑	……….
Availability of affordable housing	❑	……….
Within walking distance of work	❑	……….
Within cycling distance of work	❑	……….
Local schools and nurseries/playgroups	❑	……….
Local Health Services	❑	……….
Range of local shops	❑	……….
Local pub(s) and restaurants	❑	……….
Local Clubs and Associations	❑	……….
Local sports facilities	❑	……….
Children's play areas	❑	……….
Facilities for teenagers	❑	……….
Local parks and other green spaces	❑	……….
Easy access to the countryside	❑	……….
Easy access to transport network	❑	……….
Bus services	❑	……….
Low crime rate	❑	……….
'Neat appearance' (no litter/graffiti)	❑	……….
Other : ………………………………………..		……….

13. What features make Crawley Down or Copthorne an undesirable place to live?

Thank you for completing this form – please post it in the envelope provided