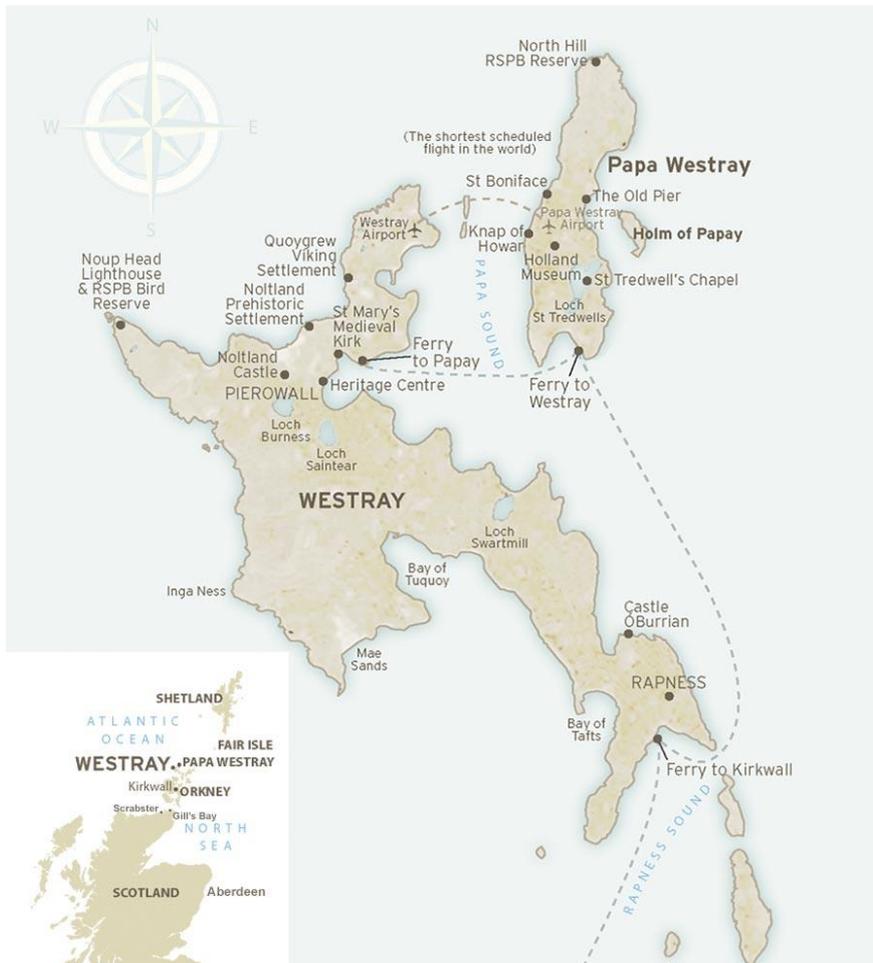


# WESTRAY HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY



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This report provides an analysis of the findings from the housing needs survey carried out in Westray during February 2015.

Westray has a population of 588 residents and a total of 280 households. A public consultation took place on 5 February 2015 followed by a mailing of the survey to all households on the island.

The aim of the survey was to ascertain the needs and the types of housing required by members of the community who are currently in housing need or feel they may need to move within the next five years. It was therefore envisaged that the response rate would only be a small number as we were only seeking the views of those who currently had a housing need or felt they may do within the next five year period.

The main findings from the survey were:

- 6 surveys were returned.
- All respondents indicated that they were currently in employment in Westray.
- 3 out of the 6 respondents are currently privately renting.
- None of the respondents were currently social tenants.
- 2 couples, 2 families and 2 individuals completed the housing needs survey
- 2 out of the 6 respondents are looking to move home within the year.
- 2 out of the 6 respondents indicated that they have applied to Orkney Islands council/ Orkney housing Association to be included on the common housing register. Social housing was not a preferred option for the remaining 4 respondents.
- When asked why they were looking to move, the most common reason given for needing alternative housing was 'want to buy.'
- Buying your own home, Rent to buy and Building your own home were the most common responses to the question 'which option would best suit your housing requirements.'
- The biggest demand was for 2 bedroom properties.
- Of those looking to buy/ build, 2 respondents indicated that they could pay up to 100k for a home. The other two respondents were unsure.
- 3 out of the 6 respondents indicated that they would consider living in any of the 6 defined areas in Westray.
- There have been 7 house sales in Westray in the last 12 months at an average price of £85,499\*.
- There are currently 12 residential properties on the market with an average price of £184,583\*\*.

\* Average price obtained from Zoopla.co.uk

\*\* Numbers of current properties on market obtained from a web search of Zoopla and Rightmove.

## **1.0. Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose of Study**

Westray Development Trust approached Orkney Islands Council, Housing Services for assistance in carrying out a housing needs survey to determine what type, tenure, size and number of houses were required to meet the needs of the community. Both representatives from OIC Housing Services and Orkney Housing Association attended a public consultation on 5 February 2015 to provide an overview of the various potential housing options that people could express their interest in through the housing needs survey.

Westray Development Trust has already overseen many projects including a youth centre, play area, craft association and a community wind turbine which have all contributed to Westray sustaining a vibrant and prosperous community. The trust is now looking to turn their attentions to housing on the island to identify if there are any gaps in the provision of suitable affordable housing.

### **1.2. Methodology**

A three page hard copy of the survey was sent out with an accompanying letter to all households within Westray. The survey and consultation were advertised in The Orcadian, on Radio Orkney and in local shop windows prior to the consultation to raise awareness of the event within Westray.

### **1.3. Data Analysis**

Further background information to the survey demographic area was examined to compare with the data gathered from the survey. Census data (where available) has been incorporated to consider along with the survey responses.

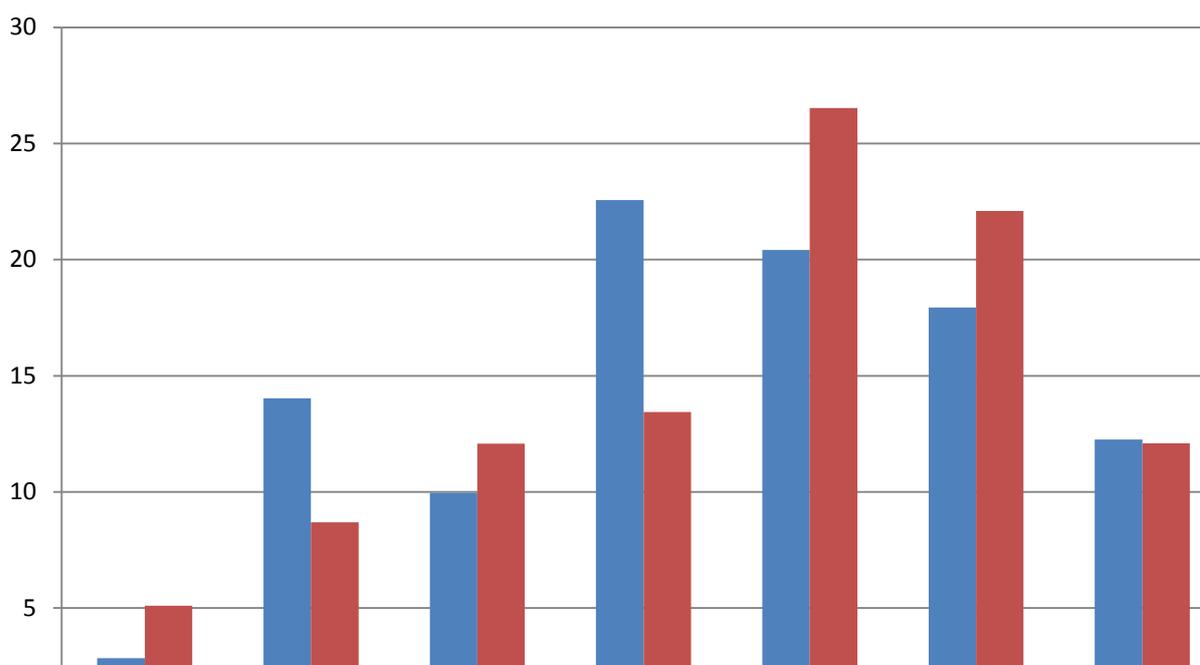
## **2.0. Area Profile**

Westray is located to the North West of the Orkney Mainland. It is the most populated outer island of Orkney. There are six defined areas within Westray, these are Pierowall, North, Dykeside, Skello, Westside and Rapness. Pierowall is the main village on the island where the majority of amenities can be found as well as the only school on the island.

## 2.1. Population<sup>1</sup>

The population of Westray at the 2011 Census was 588. This represents a population growth of 25 (4.4%) since the 2001 Census. The percentage increase is not as high as Orkney as a whole (10.9% increase from 2001-2011). Having said this it is still encouraging to see a small increase over the 10 year period as other outlying areas of Orkney have declining numbers.

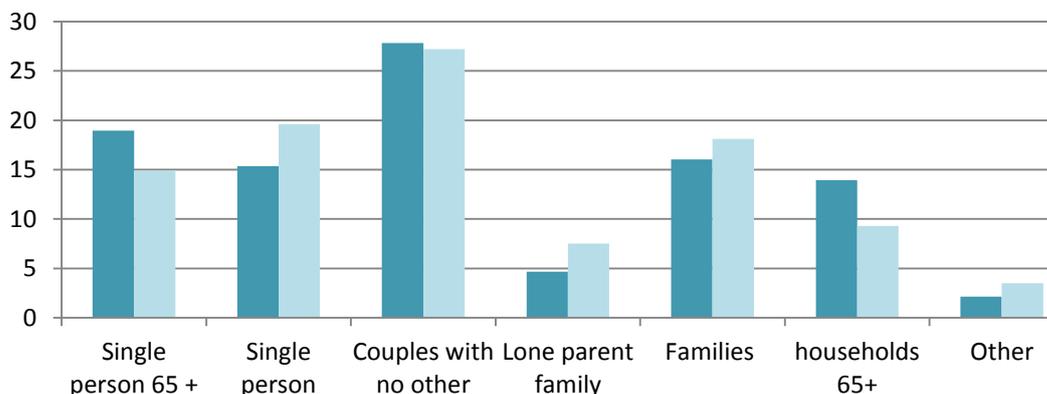
Most of the growth in the Westray population has been in the 45-59 age range which has seen an increase of 41 people. The 60 – 74 age group have seen an increase of 29 people. It's very encouraging to see an increase in the 16-29 category as this would indicate that young people are choosing to stay on the island and there will therefore be more emerging households on the island. Population growth of 0-4 year olds has almost doubled over the period from 16 in 2001 to 30 young children in 2011. However, in children aged 5-15 there has been a decline from 79 to 51. This perhaps ties in with the significant decline in those aged within the 30-44 bracket from 2001 to 2011.



<sup>1</sup> Scotland's census 2001 & 2011 – Westray data (5x output zones)

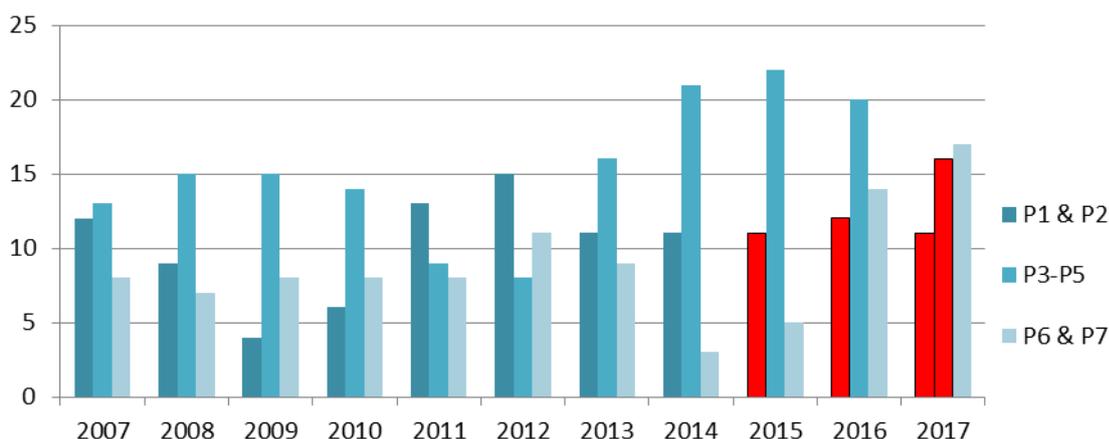
## 2.2. Households<sup>2</sup>

The 2011 census recorded a total of 280 households in Westray. Single person households make up 34% of the total and 2 person households account for almost 28% of the total number of households. The percentage of small households within Westray is almost equal to census figures of Orkney as a whole (61.7%)



## 2.3. Education<sup>3</sup>

There is one school on the island called Westray Junior High. Children from Primary 1 to 7 attend this school. The school also provides secondary education from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year. However, pupils can opt to attend Kirkwall Grammar School from 1<sup>st</sup> year and use the Hostel accommodation through the week. The current primary school attendance is approximately 38 and birth rates over recent years would indicate that this is set to increase to approximately 44 by 2016/17.



The columns highlighted in red are future predictions based on birth rates obtained from NHS Orkney.

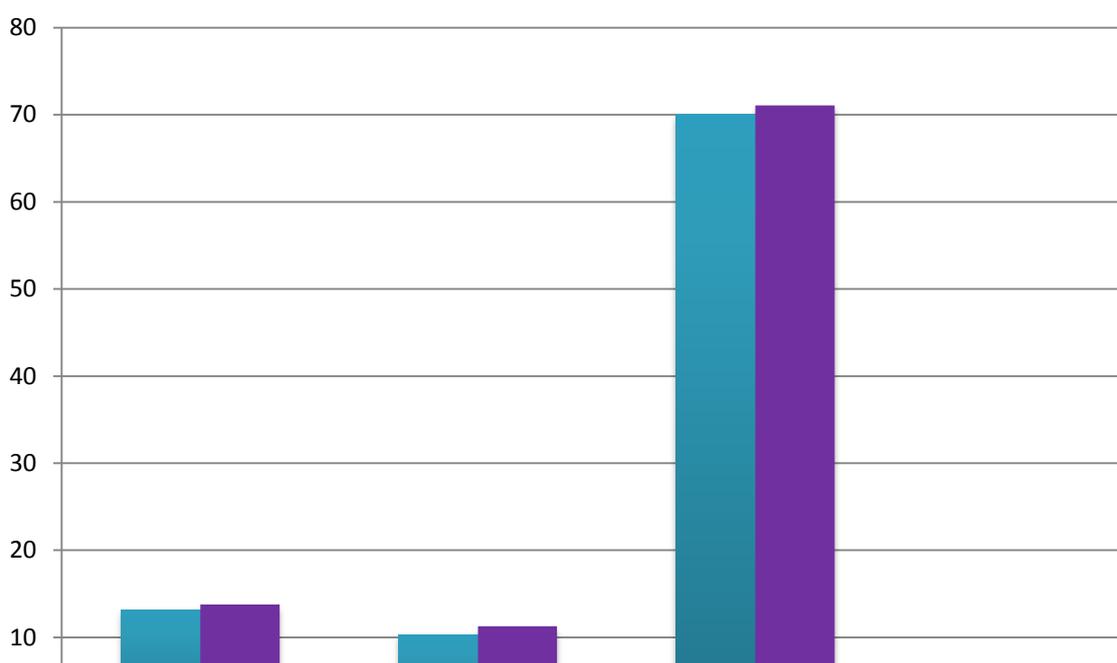
<sup>2</sup> Scotland's Census 2011 – Orkney Local Authority area and Westray data (5 x output zones)

<sup>3</sup> OIC Education Department School roll figures

## 2.4. Employment<sup>4</sup>

Based on the 2011 Census information, approximately 74% of the total population is of working age (16 to 64). Of the 436 people within this age bracket almost 73% are economically active. According to CACI data, the average mean household income for Westray is just under £26,000. The majority of economically active people are self-employed with the main source of income on the island being from agriculture and fishing.

## 3.0. Westray Housing



### 3.1. Housing Tenure<sup>5</sup>

Most people in Westray own their homes. All tenure types are relatively comparative with Orkney as a whole. The only tenure type that appears to be different than Orkney is 'Living Rent free'. Possible reasons for this could be due to more people having tied tenancies through their employment such as farm workers or perhaps people still living within their family home that are unable to find suitable accommodation to set up home for themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> CACI data by postcode

<sup>5</sup> Scotland's Census 2011 – Orkney Local Authority area and Westray data (5 x output zones)

### **3.2. Social Housing**

There are currently 25 council and 8 Orkney Housing Association properties in Westray. There is no shared ownership or new supply shared equity properties in Westray or in any of the other outer islands of Orkney at present. As at 5 June 2015 there were 9 applicants on Orkney Islands Council's waiting list who had Westray as a first choice area. 4 of those applicants had a priority award to be rehoused. Westray tends to have one of the highest demands for social housing amongst the outer islands. As at 5 June 2015 Sanday had 5 applicants with Sanday as their first choice area and only one of them had a priority to be rehoused. There are currently 3 applicants on the waiting list for Stronsay with no applicants having a priority award to be rehoused.

### **3.3. Private Renting**

According to the 2011 census data, 10.3% of the Westray population were private renters. There are approximately 20 properties registered on the Landlord Registration database for Westray. As with many privately rented properties in Orkney, private renters are often only offered Short-Assured tenancies as Landlords like to be able to take advantage of the summer tourist season as this generates more income than what leasing to a long term tenant does.

### **3.4. Owner Occupation**

70% of households in Westray are home owners which is comparative to the whole of the Orkney Islands Council area (71%). The proportion of owner occupation varies across Westray with Pierowall village and the surrounding area having the lowest number of owner occupied properties (30.4%). A lot of the tenure type in this area is made up of social housing (47.8%).

### **3.5. Second Homes<sup>6</sup>**

According to the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, 11% of homes within the output data zone that Westray is included in were second homes (the output data zone includes Eday and Papa Westray). This is more than double the rate to the whole of Orkney (5%). The percentage has been increasing since 2007 (7%). With properties being bought with the purpose of being a second home on the island it reduces the choice and availability for people living locally to purchase a property for themselves. This is a problem in many rural locations throughout Scotland.

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<sup>6</sup> Scottish Neighbourhood statistics 2007 - 2013 – Output datazone search

## **4.0. Westray Housing Market<sup>7</sup>**

### **4.1. House Sales 2013/14**

There have been 7 house sales in Westray in the last 12 months at an average price of £85,499. Currently, there are 12 residential properties on the market for sale with an average asking price of £184,583. Most of the properties for sale are large properties, with some that are currently run as B&Bs or Guest Houses.

### **4.2. House Plots**

There are currently 6 plots on the market for sale averaging £26,500. This total includes a few derelict properties. Although plot prices within Westray are very reasonably priced compared to areas of Mainland Orkney many of the plots for sale have been on the market for a considerable length of time. One reason for this could be that it has become more difficult to access a self-build mortgage. The removal of the Rural Home Ownership Grant scheme has had a big impact on self building in Westray as well as Orkney as a whole.

## **5.0. Housing Needs Survey**

A public consultation took place on 5 February 2015 where Housing Needs surveys were handed out to people who felt they were in housing need or would be within the next five years. Advertisements were also placed in the local shops, in The Orcadian and an announcement was made on Radio Orkney. Following the consultation, The Westray Development Trust sent out the survey to all households on the island and members of the trust also approached individuals they knew who may be in housing need. The survey only needed to be completed by people who felt they were either currently in housing need or felt that they may be within the next five years. We received 6 responses to the survey.

### **5.1. Households**

From the surveys returned there was an even split of two families, two 2 person households and two single-person households. None of the responses were from people of retiring age. The two families who indicated they were in housing need had 6 children in total aged between 0 and 15.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.zoopla.com](http://www.zoopla.com) & [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

## 5.2. Tenure

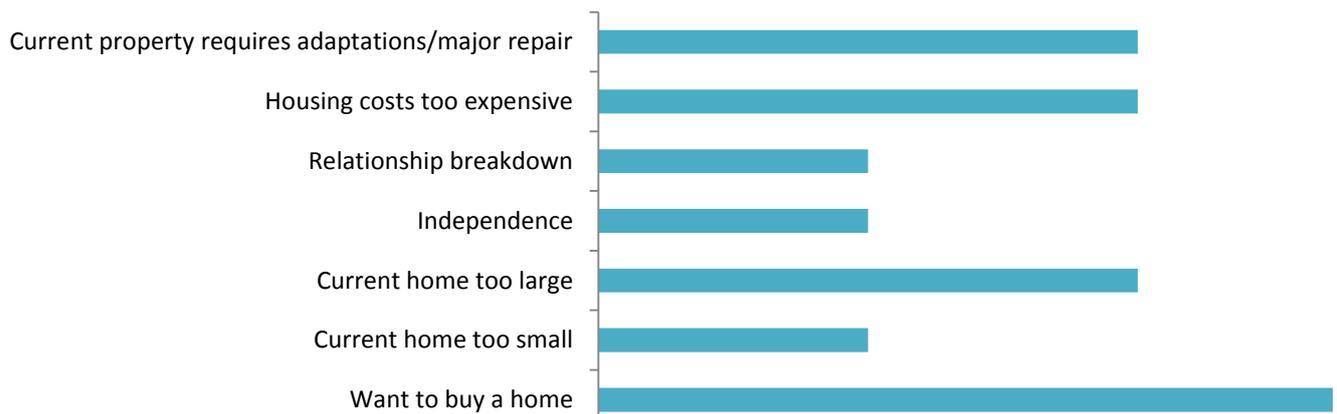
Most households that responded to the survey were in rented accommodation (67%), compared to 10% of Westray households that are privately renting. The remaining two respondents were living with parents and an owner occupier.

## 5.3. Housing Need

Two out of the six respondents indicated that they were registered on the Common Housing Register (CHR) and that they considered social housing as a suitable option for them. No-one currently living in social housing completed the survey.

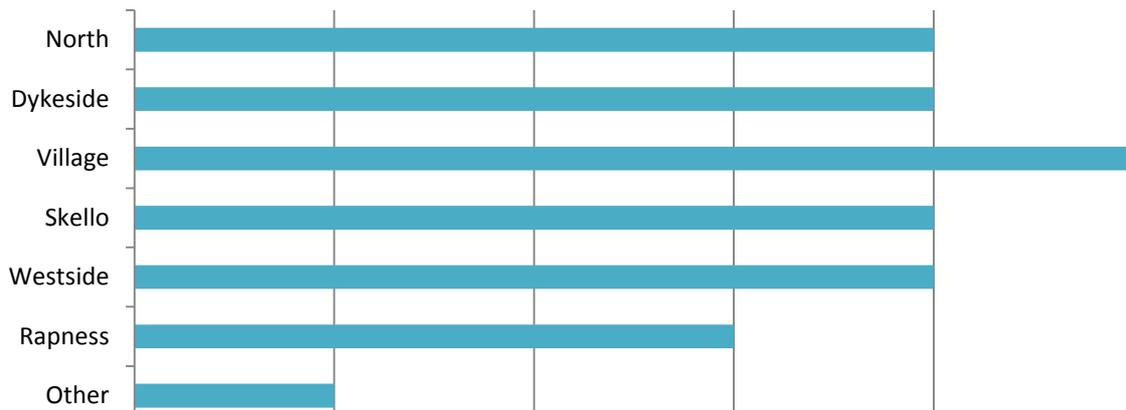
Two out of the six respondents indicated that they had family members who would return to Westray if there were suitable housing and employment for them.

### Why the need for alternative housing?



The survey asked respondents to state why they needed alternative housing. 50% of respondents indicated it was because they wanted to buy their own home. Other respondents indicated that their housing costs were too high (33%) and/ or the size of their home was an issue (33%).

## Preferred Locations

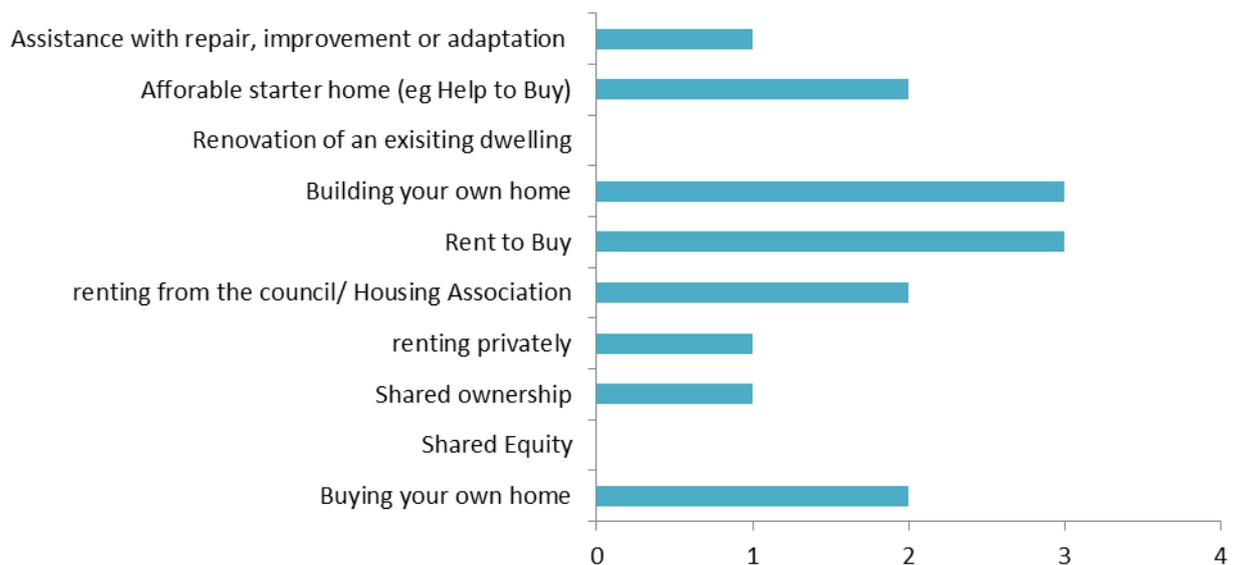


The survey asked about which area(s) people in housing need would consider living in. Six area choices were provided which were North, Dykeside, Village, Skello, Westside and Rapness. Three out of the six respondents were willing to consider any of the areas. The remaining respondents chose 2-3 of the options.

## Preferred Tenure

Home ownership was favoured by 50% of respondents. Only one respondent indicated that Shared Ownership would be a consideration for them and no-one indicated that they would be interested in shared equity, however, two respondents did indicate that an affordable starter home (eg Help to Buy) was something they would consider.

During the public consultation several housing options were discussed with some relatively new forms being mentioned such as Rent to Buy. 3 out of the 6 respondents indicated that this was an option that would suit their housing requirements.



## Preferred Tenure cont..

Of those who selected building/ buying a home and Shared ownership options, 2 respondents indicated that a home of up to £100,000 would be affordable to them. The other two respondents ticked that they were unsure of how much they would be able to afford. Based on current house prices on the island there is very little on the market which is below 100k. The only homes that are under this value are single dwelling properties or derelict properties.

When asked if they would be in support of a community led housing development, all six respondents answered yes to this question.

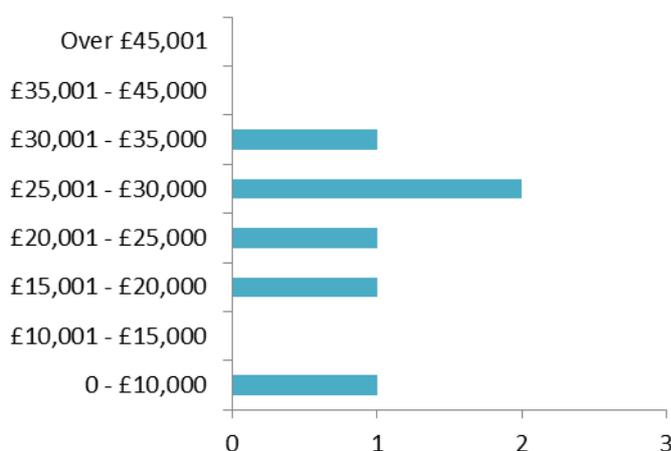
## 5.4. Special Requirements

None of the respondents indicated that they had any special requirements or that any adaptations would need to be made to any future home. This is further supported by the fact that no-one indicated that they had a need to move for medical/ health reasons.

## 5.5. Employment

All respondents are currently in employment with 50% of responses indicating that 2 people within the household are currently employed.

### Approximate annual household income (including salaries, pensions, benefits etc.)



## 6.0. Local Initiatives and Developments

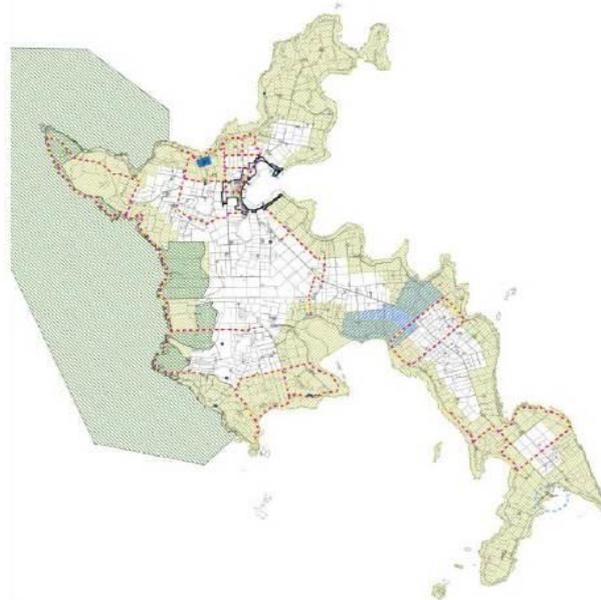
### 6.1. Orkney Islands Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

Orkney Islands Council does not currently regard Westray as a priority for additional social housing. The latest SHIP was published in November 2014 and does indicate that there is a need for Isles housing from year 2 – 5 of the plan. The islands that are likely to receive new social housing units are not defined within the SHIP. From year 2 (16/17) to year 5 (19/20) a total of 12 houses are included within the isles housing provision.

The SHIP is an aspirational programme and as a result the financial resources required for the projects included in the SHIP outweigh the estimated funding levels that will be forthcoming from the Scottish Government. However, should the funding become available all of the projects outlined in the SHIP should be able to be delivered.

### 6.2. Local Development Plan

The most recent local development plan information can be found on the Orkney Islands council website.<sup>8</sup>



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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/O/Orkney-Local-Development-Plan.htm>

The Local Development Plan states that within the non-linked islands of Orkney that a more flexible approach to smaller scale development is established. This will allow single house developments to be considered on merit on a case by case basis throughout the islands. However, in order to support local centres, proposals for more than a single house development are focused on the Isles' settlements. Proposals for larger scale developments will also have to demonstrate that they take into account the wider Isles' communities through master planning.

## **7.0. Summary and Conclusions**

### **7.1. Housing Need**

The housing needs survey has shown that there is a demand for housing in Westray. More than half of those in housing need said that they were not registered with Orkney Islands Council or Orkney Housing Association. Most of those in housing need are currently renting (privately and from family 67%). Their needs arise from a variety of reasons such as size of their current accommodation (too big/too small), heating costs are too expensive and also respondents who would like to own their own home. A number of respondents indicated a particular desire to building their own home, this included both the families with young children. One respondent also indicated that a member of their family had left Westray due to lack of suitable housing.

All six respondents were in support of a future housing development being community led. Given previous success stories with other developments in Westray, there is a great deal of confidence within the community that the Development Trust would be able to assist and succeed in being the first community in Orkney to undertake a community led housing project.

### **6.2. Type of Housing Required**

Through the findings from the survey, speaking to individuals and also feedback from members of the Westray Development Trust, it is clear that the Westray community feel that they have an adequate number of social housing units on the island. Home ownership appears to be of the highest demand. Respondents expressed an interest in home ownership options that had an element of financial assistance attached to them such as Rent to Buy (50%), an affordable starter home (33%) and shared ownership (17%), however no-one expressed an interest in shared equity. Building a home was favoured by 3 out of the six applicants with two of those three applicants also indicating that buying a home was also an option. Most of the respondents were unsure of what they were able to afford. Only two respondents indicated what would be affordable and they both answered £100,000 to this question. Due to higher build costs in remote locations it would be extremely difficult to buy a plot and build a home for £100,000 or less without some financial assistance coming from elsewhere to support the project.

### **7.3 Self Build Development and Support**

The Housing Needs Survey and public meeting on Westray have shown that the primary housing type in demand in Westray is self-build. Orkney has a long history of self-build and Westray already has a strong building industry and this provides the opportunity for households to develop their own properties. However, it is understood that self-build can be an expensive option and access to finance is not always straight forward.

As mentioned previously, there are several plots/ derelict properties available in Westray and a number of these have been available for quite some time. The Development Trust may want to look into why these sites have not sold, as it may be that potential buyers have been unable to locate finance to undertake development or would require some kind of support to be able to afford to develop.

Some of those in housing need would perhaps be able to afford to build their own home if they could access land at low cost (or free), self-build grants or both. The Westray Development Trust may wish to consider applying to the Scottish Land Fund, which assists in putting land into community ownership, for funding to purchase land for low cost self build plots. Other communities that have made plots available for low cost sale are the West Harris Trust and Ulva Ferry on Mull. The Scottish Government have set plans to aim for one million acres of land to be transferred into community ownership by 2020.

Another consideration for the Westray Development Trust could be to become a Rural Housing Body. This would enable the Trust to apply a Rural Housing Burden to any plot owned and being sold at a lower than market value cost. This would help to ensure that any future sale of property remained affordable and out of reach of people wishing to purchase it for the purposes of holiday lets or 2<sup>nd</sup> homes.

There are a number of different projects under development nationally that may help ease the restrictions on finance for self-builders and the Council is exploring whether these may be of benefit to communities in Orkney. If any of the potential options being explored prove viable and gain Council support for roll out in Orkney discussions will be held with interested groups and the scheme(s) will be publicised.

### **7.4 Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE)**

The Scottish Government provides Orkney with funding for the OMSE scheme that allows households to purchase a share of a property on the open market with the Scottish Government taking on the remaining stake. It is possible that OMSE would be a good option for some households that would like to purchase a property on the open market, but do not have the capital to purchase the entire property outright. OMSE would give the households access to the property and ownership of at least 60%.

From the results of the survey, there did not appear to be much appetite for this option. However, there has been an increase in funding provision in Orkney for this option and it may be worthwhile for the Westray Development Trust, OIC and OHAL to look at ways of raising awareness and understanding of how this scheme works.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

Orkney Islands Council, Westray Development Trust and Orkney Housing Association Limited would like to thank everyone who took the time to attend the public meeting and those who completed the housing needs survey.

Although there was not a large numerical response it is clear that Westray is generally well positioned in terms of social rented housing provision, but that some local households, many of them younger people looking for their first home, would benefit from some assistance towards the development of self-build properties or off the shelf purchase in the private market.

The Council will continue to investigate the potential for assistance with self build projects and finance, as well as any other schemes that may be launched nationally. We will continue to work alongside The Westray Development Trust offering support and advice on any future housing related issues or developments..