

# **Appendix A: Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Neighbourhood Area Profile**

September 2020

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Kings Langley is a historic village and civil parish in Hertfordshire, set in the attractive Upper Gade Valley and on the southern edge of the Chiltern Hills, approximately 21 miles (34 km) northwest of central London.
- 1.2. The main settlement in the parish is Kings Langley village, which has a population of around 4,900 people. The village is linear in character with the Grand Union Canal, River Gade and west coast mainline railway line running along the valley floor. Kings Langley is well connected to Hemel Hempstead, Watford and London via the A41 and M25. The village benefits from a good amount of open space, such as the Common. The historic core of the village, which contains many listed buildings, is the focus of the busy High Street which provides for most day to day needs. The majority of the village's employment land is located across the borough boundary in Three Rivers District.
- 1.3. Beyond Kings Langley village, the parish is largely rural with the hamlet of Rucklers Lane to the north and scattered farms.
- 1.4. To inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, it is helpful to prepare a detailed profile of the neighbourhood area. This includes statistical information about the local population, economy, housing and health.
- 1.5. The profile helps to inform the development of the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan, which the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to deliver.
- 1.6. Unless otherwise specified, data referred to is taken from the 2011 Census.

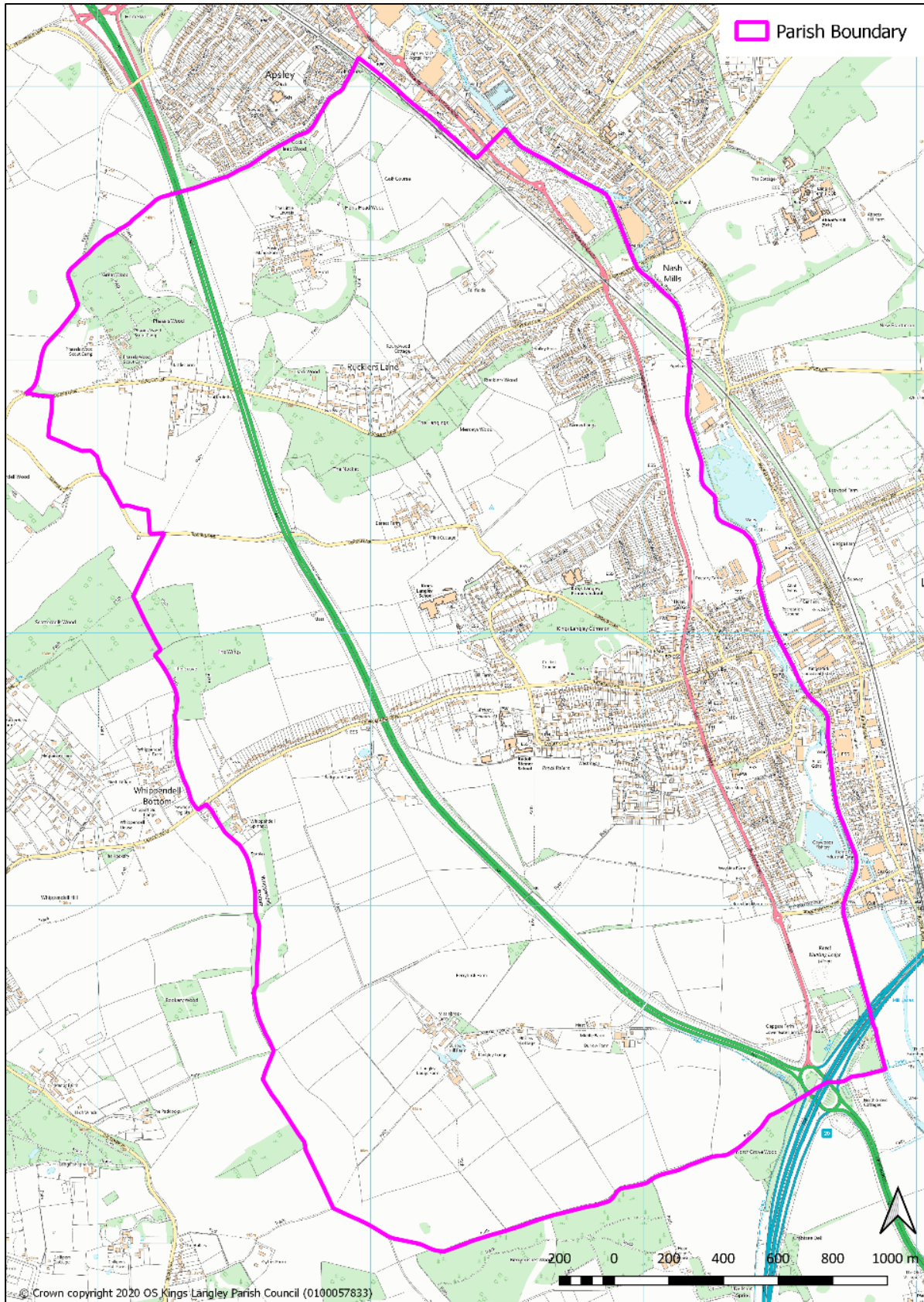


Figure 1.1: Neighbourhood Plan Area

## 2. Challenges facing Kings Langley

### Facts and figures about the parish

2.1. Section 3 of this report contains detailed statistics about the parish. A summary of these as they relate to the Neighbourhood Plan, are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- Compared to the district as a whole, the parish has a **high percentage of older residents, aged 45 and over** and in particular those aged 65+. This age bracket grew considerably between 2001 and 2011.
- There is a **below average number of children and young adults** in the parish, when compared to the district as a whole. Number in both demographic groups dropped between 2001 and 2011.
- There are **high levels of detached and semi-detached homes** in the parish, with few opportunities to rent. Houses are less affordable than in many neighbouring areas, which could be pricing out first time buyers and younger families.
- The parish has **higher than UK average levels of car ownership**, with just 8% of residents having no access to a vehicle. Higher car ownership is not unexpected in more rural areas, however it will be important to ensure that public transport is adequate for those with limited access and that people are encouraged to take shorter, local journeys by means other than motor vehicle.
- There is a **railway station** in the parish and **approximately 15 bus routes** connecting the village to the larger settlements.
- **Unemployment is very low**. There are high numbers of employees, most often commuting out to their place of work, on average within a 10km radius, with some commuting to London. Compared the wider area, there are **high numbers of people working from home**.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: 2011 Census

## Challenges facing Kings Langley

2.2. These aspects contribute to the challenges facing the parish, which broadly continue to fall into three main categories:

### **1. Providing Local Housing**

- Meeting the demands of an ageing population in terms of providing homes that are suited to their needs.
- Providing homes in the parish that are financially accessible to younger people, especially young families and those stepping onto the property ladder for the first time.

### **2. Developing the Local Economy**

- Supporting Kings Langley's existing employment and village centre offer and, where possible, helping to offer new opportunities.
- Ensuring that tourism activity is sustainable.

### **3. Preserving Local Character**

- Safeguarding the rural, tranquil character, biodiversity and green spaces of the parish.
- Protecting the individual identity of Kings Langley, ensuring that encroachment on neighbouring settlements is minimised by maintaining the current inter-settlement gap.
- Conserving Kings Langley's built heritage feature, providing opportunities for greater appreciation of it and reflecting this character in any future developments.
- Improving accessibility to services in and near the parish – through the provision of footpaths, cycle ways, bridleways and improved public transport - in order to help reduce over-reliance on car use.
- Providing more opportunities for leisure and recreation in the parish.
- Ensuring that the infrastructure can cope with existing demand and also future demand.
- Seeking to mitigate climate change.

2.3. The following sections expand on these challenges.

## Local Housing

2.4. A Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken for Kings Langley parish by Urban Vision and its findings and the challenges they bring, are very clear. The following is taken from their conclusions:

### Housing quantity:

2.5. The Local Plan is not at stage whereby numeric requirements for settlements can be made. The Issues and Options paper published in 2017 states that the annual local housing need figure for the Borough is between 1,000 to 1,100 new dwellings per annum. Urban Vision's provisional calculation indicates a local housing need figure of 1,022.

2.6. The updated local housing needs figure represents an increase on the Core Strategy annual figure of 592 or 5,920 over a 10-year period. Kings Langley's proportionate share of the increase would be 206 new dwellings over the ten year cycle, not including the 110 dwellings already allocated through the previous Core Strategy, and an additional 371 dwellings over the Plan period.

### Housing Type, Size and Mix

#### 2.7. Tenure:

- The proportion of owner occupation is slightly higher than the wider geographies and a higher proportion of owner-occupied dwellings were mortgage free in Kings Langley. This may relate to the slightly higher age profile of the parish.
- 14.2% of the stock is affordable (social) rented housing, which is proportionally below the rate for the Borough, but comparable with the region.
- The private rental sector, including living rent free, has risen from 7.5% to 11.1% from 2001 to 2011. The private rental sector has grown significantly across all geographies and this sector has, in all probability, increased further since 2011.

#### 2.8. House type:

- Detached and semi-detached dwellings are the most common form of house type in the Parish at 67.5% combined. This is higher than the surrounding geographies.
- The Parish has a lower proportion of terraced housing than surrounding geographies, which potentially limits the opportunities for entry level buyers. Kings Langley does however have a supply of flats/ apartments/ maisonettes as 18% of its housing offer. This is relatively in line with comparable geographies.

#### 2.9. House size:

- Kings Langley has a lower proportion (9.7%) of one-bedroom dwellings compared to surrounding geographies.

- Conversely, the Parish has a higher proportion of larger 4+ bedroom dwellings than surrounding geographies.

#### 2.10. Population - Age structure and age cohort:

- The mean and median population ages of the Parish are 41.7 and 43 years of age respectively. This is higher than the comparable geographies whose mean and median population ages sit around the 40 year mark. The largest age cohort within the Parish is the 45-65 age cohort. This makes up 30.0% of the Parish's population, which is proportionally higher than the comparable geographies. The second largest cohort is the 25 to 44 age group at 22.7% of total population, which is lower than the proportion within the Borough as a whole, but slightly higher than comparable geographies.
- The older age cohorts (65-84, 85+) are proportionally higher than comparable geographies.

#### 2.11. Population rates of change by age cohort 2001 to 2011:

- The following age cohorts have increased from 2001 to 2011 in Kings Langley – 16-24, 45-64, 65-84 & 85+. The increase in numbers within the older cohorts should be noted. The largest age cohort in 2001 (25-44) decreased by 250 persons over the period and sits at 1,185 persons in 2011. The largest cohort in 2011 is the 45-64 cohort at 1,548 persons which saw an increase of 248 persons over the period. This, in all likelihood, indicates the natural ageing of the population over the period.

#### 2.12. Population projections (ONS) by age cohort at local authority geography:

- The 85 and over age cohort at the local authority level is projected to have increased by 63.61% by 2031 and 130.81% by 2041 from the date of the Census 2011. Similarly, the 75 to 84 age cohort at the local authority level is projected to have increased by 44.67% by 2031 and 79.09% by 2041.
- The 65-74 age cohort is also projected to increase at local authority level over the period but at a slightly slower rate (63.64% by 2041). The projected growth within the other younger cohorts is markedly less significant.
- Given the current age profile of the Parish, these population projections will have a significant impact on the age profile of the Parish in future years.

#### 2.13. Household composition

- The household composition in the Parish is not significantly different to surrounding geographies. Unsurprisingly, given the higher average age of population in Kings Langley compared to surrounding geographies, there are proportionally more one person and one family households aged 65 or over.

#### 2.14. Household occupancy rates

- The average household size in Kings Langley is slightly higher than comparable geographies at 2.43 occupants per household.
- Given the factors outlined, it is perhaps not surprising that Kings Langley experiences significant under-occupation of dwellings, more so than comparable geographies.
- 44.0% of properties in Kings Langley are under-occupied by 2 or more bedrooms.



**The key message to draw from this section is the over-supply of larger dwellings, which is leading to high levels of under-occupation. The relative lack of smaller dwellings both restricts access to smaller, younger families, but also limits the downsizing options for more elderly residents who may wish to move to smaller, more manageable properties. It is therefore key that any strategic housing allocation is supportive in policy terms of these local housing needs.**

#### 2.15. Affordability

- Median workplace and resident annual earnings stood at £32,914 and £30,723 respectively within the Borough. Median workplace earnings dipped from 2008 at £30,000 p/a to a low point in 2015 and have risen since to the current figure.
- House price increases have significantly outstripped earnings. The average price of a property in Dacorum stood at £400,431 in 2019 according to the most recent Land Registry house price index.
- The affordability of housing is a key issue for new forming households and households looking to move to a larger property. The price paid information we have seems to indicate that there is a price premium for property in Kings Langley, which makes affordability a greater issue for the Parish.
- The median and lower quartile affordability ratios stood at 12.28 and 13.48 respectively in 2018.

**So, Kings Langley and the Borough are high value areas in terms of property prices and yet average incomes are not significantly higher than the national averages. Hence affordable housing has an important role in meeting the housing needs of many residents and workers.**

2.16. Urban Vision's analysis suggests that fewer emerging households will be able to access Affordable Housing for Sale products. The affordable housing need model for neighbourhood areas indicates that there is a shortfall of Affordable Housing for Sale of some 204 dwellings over the plan period. The model also indicates that the additional need for Affordable Housing for Rent is 103 dwellings, as the majority of the rental need is contained within the existing provision. This is a combined affordable housing need of 307 dwellings over the Plan period. The current allocation for Kings Langley under the Core Strategy is 110 dwellings.

#### **In a nutshell...**

- Kings Langley will be required to provide more houses
- We have relatively more big properties and fewer small ones than the surrounding area.
- These properties are relatively under occupied
- Our population is older than surrounding areas and getting older still, but can't easily down-size within the parish
- House price increases have outstripped earnings increases

**So, the young can't afford to move in and the old can't find smaller properties to down size into, so the village continues to get older and stuck in big houses. There is a clear and growing need for affordable housing in order to maintain the viability of the village.**

## The Local Economy

- 2.17. After the Coronavirus crisis passes we anticipate that the balance of priorities will shift from housing and towards rebuilding the local economy, but keeping these two crucial needs in balance will be one of the greatest challenges we face for the Parish.
- 2.18. In a post Coronavirus environment it is clear that Kings Langley will suffer from many of the problems faced by the wider UK economy. Dacorum Borough Council has always made clear that it is committed to local business development. The Enterprise and Investment Team Action Plan 2017-20 is published on the DBC website and opens with this statement:
- "With the pressure for housing growth coming to Dacorum, we face many challenges over the next few years in maintaining a balanced local economy."*
- 2.19. After Coronavirus these challenges will be greater still: How to support Kings Langley's existing employment and village centre offer and, where possible, helping to offer new opportunities.
- 2.20. The Parish Plan survey undertaken in January 2019 included a section for businesses. There were 16 business responses which reported employment for 72 f/t and p/t jobs. Of the 72 employees, 50 % lived in KL and further 25% lived in Dacorum Borough, demonstrating the importance of maintaining local employment opportunities for residents.
- 2.21. With more home working anticipated post Coronavirus, access to high speed broadband will be increasingly important. Although obviously a wider challenge, this is something the Parish must play some part in addressing locally.
- 2.22. The Transport section of the Parish Plan survey showed that KL is not so much a commuter town as previously believed. There were a substantial number of people who travel to local employment areas in both Watford and Hemel Hempstead. Local employment opportunities are therefore vital for KL residents and the local economy.
- 2.23. The importance of the High Street to both the local economy, and local character, cannot be overstated – and was emphasised in both the Parish Plan Survey and the subsequent Special Places Survey. It provides a substantial number of local jobs and is the heart of social and retail activities in the village. One key challenge we anticipate will be how to retain a wide choice of local shops and cafes as the economy recovers. Equally, the Environment section of the survey showed that growing food locally was a priority for many residents who supported local initiatives like the Local Market and the Wayside Farm Shop. And these too, may be threatened by the Coronavirus crisis.
- 2.24. Another key challenge for the local economy will be how to support DBC Economic Development policy by promoting an enterprising and prosperous local Tourism sector. There are opportunities for KL to assist DBC, for example, by promoting established hotels like Shendish Manor. It can further support local tourism by developing the Kings Langley Heritage Trail project, incorporating The Priory, the Old Palace, All Saints Church etc. The rich history of Kings Langley has much to offer but has yet to be developed.

- 2.25. Outcomes from the epidemic are, of course, impossible to predict. However, it is anticipated that, with many working from home and some businesses failing, there may be a loss of some business premises for continued use for business purposes in the parish. This, in turn, could harm the prospects for the local economy further. This suggests a number of challenges and opportunities:
1. To develop the use of the library as a mini-hub for local businesses to access information supplied by DBC and to meet other local business people.
  2. To actively promote and encourage all residents to support local businesses and their local economy, and to visit more often the High Street for shopping and recreation.
  3. To re-prioritise the retention of existing business premises for continued use for business purposes. Recognising any future loss of premises will diminish the local economy and local job opportunities. The need to avoid situations where future development denies employment opportunities i.e. Rectory Farm where 8 businesses were relocated/lost from the site.
  4. To identify those buildings as Assets to Community Value as a result of their acknowledged importance to the life and enjoyment of the village community, e.g. The Rose & Crown, Shendish Manor, many of the High St shops, The Old Palace etc.
  5. To actively encourage residents to run their businesses from home, and be encouraged to build extensions, convert outbuildings or develop free-standing buildings in their gardens from which businesses can be operated.
  6. To support the creation of new business space and premises provided the locations are suitable for such purposes.

## Local Character

- 2.26. Maintaining the unique local character of Kings Langley in the face of the pressures above – to provide adequate and appropriate local housing and to protect the local economy – is arguably the most difficult challenge of all facing the parish.
- 2.27. Change is inherently disruptive; our goal in this Neighbourhood Plan, is to manage the changes that are necessary and desirable for the sustainability of the village over the next decades so that the character of the village remains, so far as possible, intact and safeguarded.

### 3. Detailed Statistics and trend data

3.1. The following paragraphs set out the detailed statistics and trend data for the neighbourhood area.

#### Population

3.2. The 2011 Census recorded that the usual population of the parish was 5,214 persons, living in 2,190 household spaces. The population of Dacorum district as a whole is 144,847, therefore the parish of Kings Langley represents approximately 3% of the overall population of the district.

3.3. Figure 2.1 below shows the age breakdown of the population in 2011. The figures reveal that the proportion of older residents (aged 65 upwards) is higher than the district average and accounts for approximately one fifth of the population of the parish.

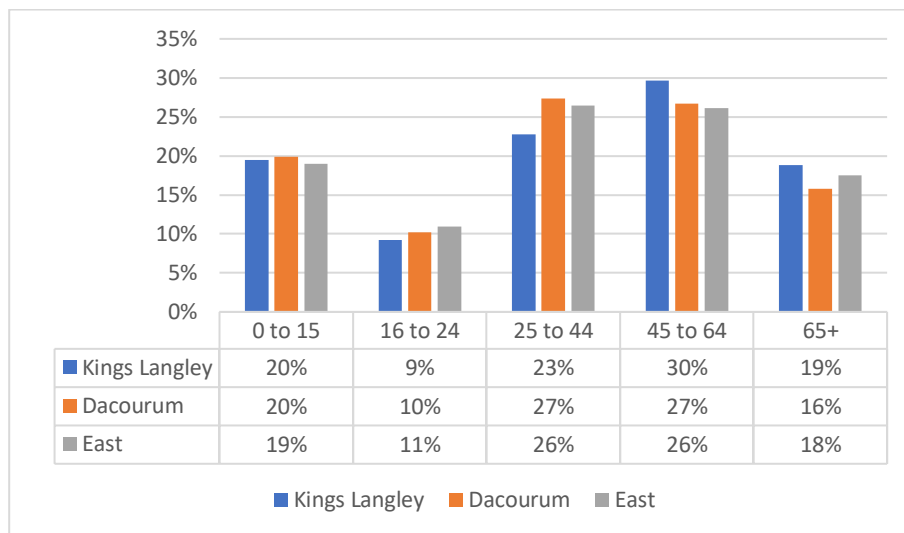


Figure 2.1: Age profile of Kings Langley residents, 2011

3.4. It's interesting to consider how the population is evolving and Figure 2.2 reveals the change in age profile of the population between 2001 and 2011.

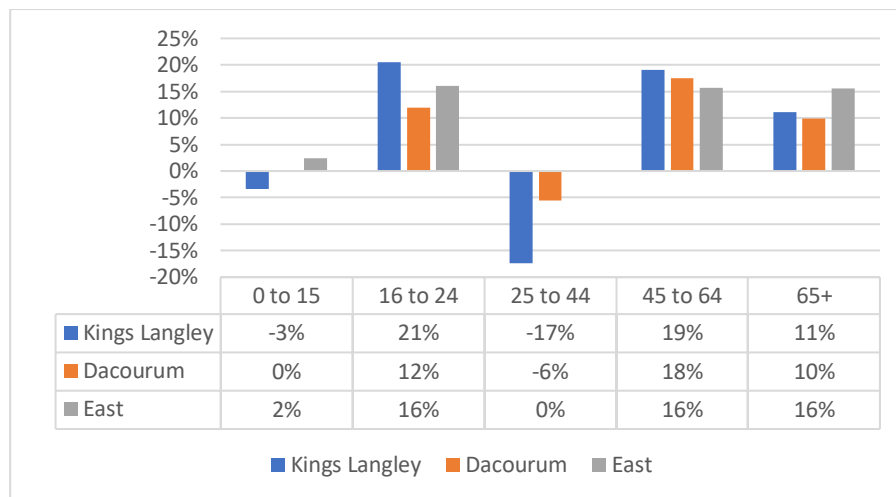


Figure 2.2: Change in age profile of Kings Langley residents, 2001 to 2011

- 3.5. The chart reveals that the number of young people and young families in the area decreased quite dramatically over the course of the decade. In contrast, the number of those approaching retirement grew significantly, as did the numbers of older families, suggesting that the aging trend is set to continue as these enter the next age group bracket. The parish falls well within the commuter belt, yet benefits from an attractive rural setting. This combination is likely to push up house prices, which is likely to be behind the lack of younger people moving to the area, who find it unaffordable. The state of housing in the parish is explored in the section below.

## Housing

- 3.6. There have not been any notable largescale developments in the parish in recent years and it would appear that families living in the area remain so, with few new, younger couples and families moving in. It is interesting to consider the impact that house prices has on this.
- 3.7. The majority of sales in Kings Langley during the last year (February 2019 to February 2020) were flats, selling for an average price of £251,469. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £495,863, with detached properties fetching £775,585.
- 3.8. Kings Langley, with an overall average price of £450,917, was similar in terms of sold prices to nearby Abbots Langley (£430,764), but was more expensive than Apsley (£409,943) and cheaper than Chipperfield (£831,853).
- 3.9. Overall sold prices in Kings Langley over the last year were 13% down on the previous year and 16% down on the 2017 level of £539,854. Figure 2.3 offers a comparison of average house prices at the time of print.

Settlement	Average house price	Properties sold
Kings Langley	£450,917	160
Abbots Langley	£430,764	106
Apsley	£409,943	277

Chipperfield	£831,853	16
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Figure 2.3 – Average House prices, February 2019-2020 Source: [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

3.10. There were 2,190 household spaces in the parish in 2011 and Figure 2.4 breaks these down by type. The majority of homes are detached, which mirrors the findings on the house prices. Council tax bands are likely to be higher too, therefore, suggesting that affordability is a potential issue in Kings Langley.

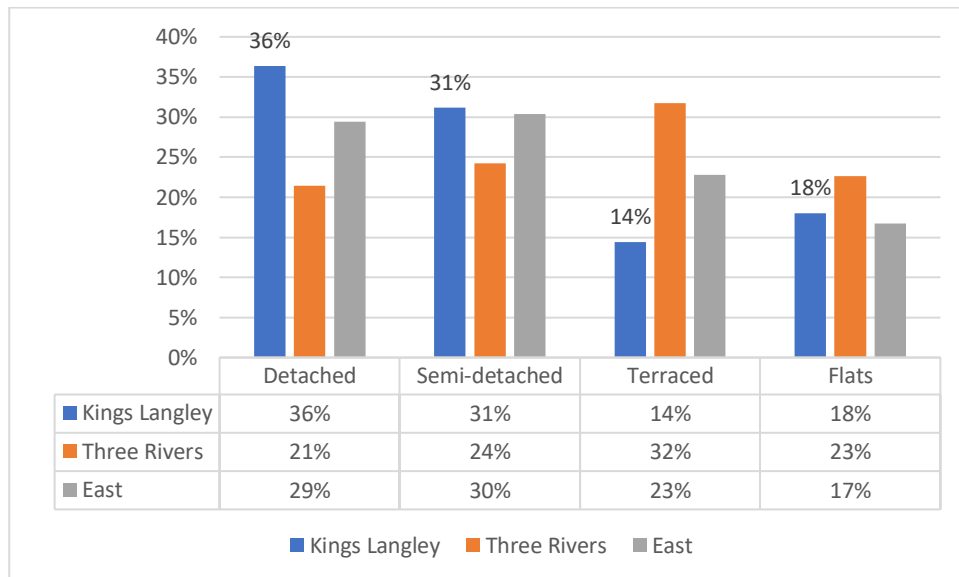


Figure 2.3 – Type of housing in the Area

3.11. The tenure of housing is illustrated in Figure 2.4, revealing that the Area predominantly comprises homes that are owned by their occupants, either outright or with a mortgage. The number of social rented housing available is extremely low, although private rented property availability is more in line with the borough area. This adds further weight to the argument that the parish does not offer many opportunities for those requiring the rental or lower rungs of the purchasing property ladder.

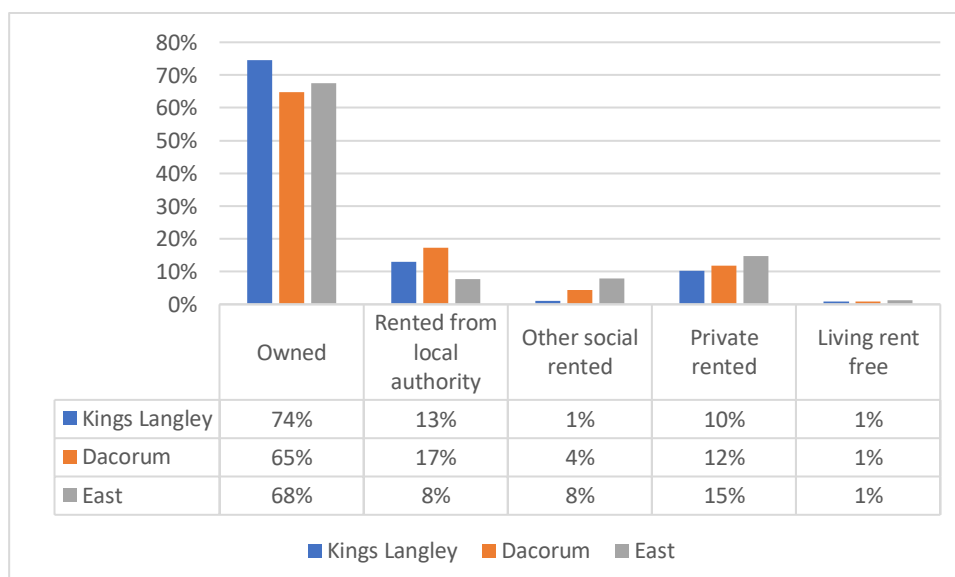


Figure 2.4: Tenure of housing

## Work and skills

- 3.12. Of the total number of residents in the Area, 74% are classified as economically active. The remaining 26% are economically inactive and 57% of these are retired. The remainder include 16% who are full time students and 16% who are looking after a family member full time.
- 3.13. Figure 2.5 illustrates the breakdown of how people are employed. Whilst the majority of those who are economically active work as an employee, there is a significant number of people who are self-employed (22% compared to 16% across the borough area). Self-employed people can often be more likely to work from home, therefore highlighting the need to ensure that the facilities and infrastructure – e.g. broadband and mobile connectivity and speed – is in place.

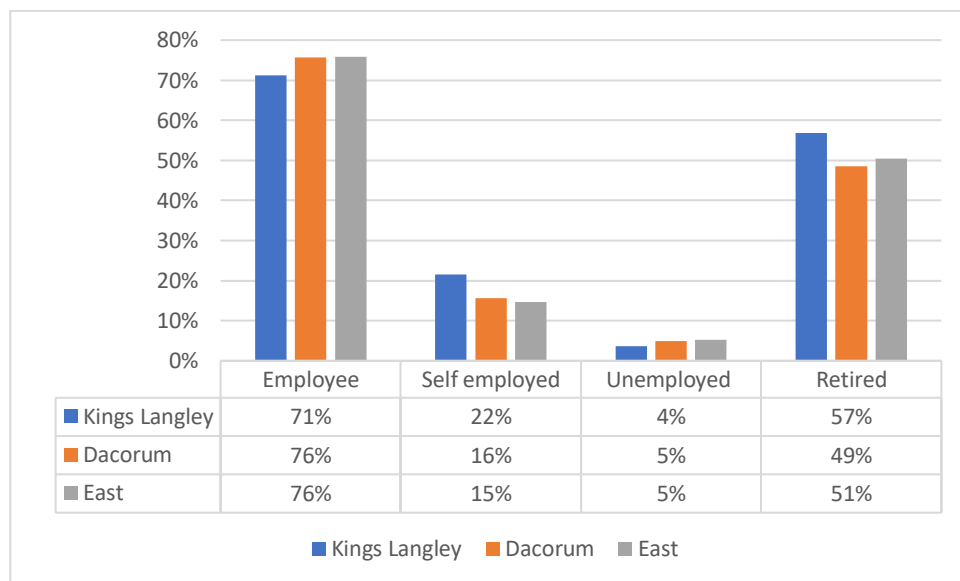


Figure 2.5: Economic activity (Retired is shown as a percentage of non-economically active)

- 3.14. Understanding how people reach their place of work is helpful when considering the potential impact that commuting has on the local transport infrastructure. Figure 2.6 suggests that of those residents in employment, 66% are commuting by car to their place of work. This is perhaps unsurprising in a rural area, where the main source of employment is likely to be in the nearby major towns and cities. Between 10% and 16% of people working from home, which is higher than across the borough and district, perhaps unsurprisingly given the number of self-employed people.

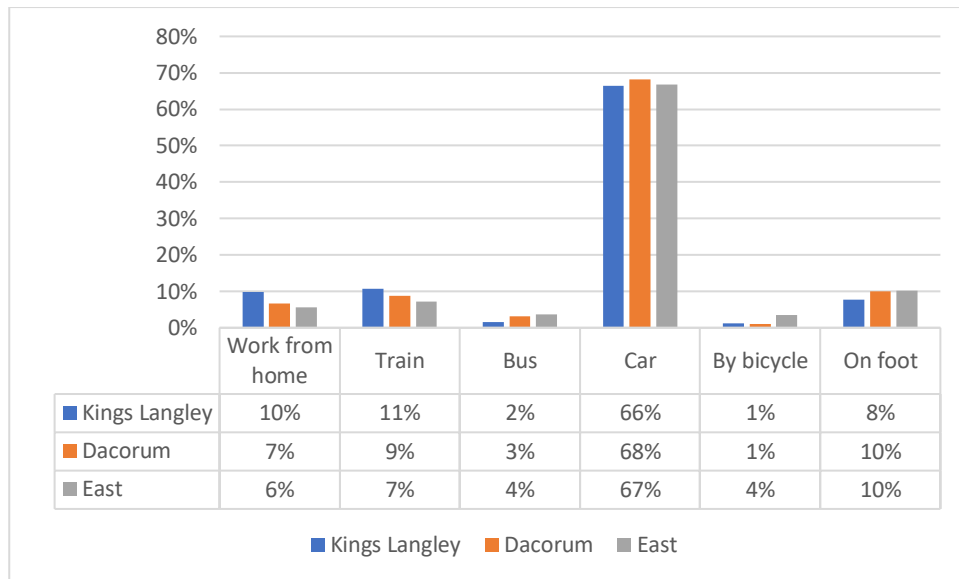


Figure 2.6: Mode of transport to work

3.15. Figure 2.7 indicates how far they are travelling to reach their place of work. Of those commuting to work, the majority are travelling between 5km and 10km, which would include nearby settlements such as Hemel Hempstead, Luton, Watford and St Albans. London is also well within reach for those commuting out, either by train or by car.

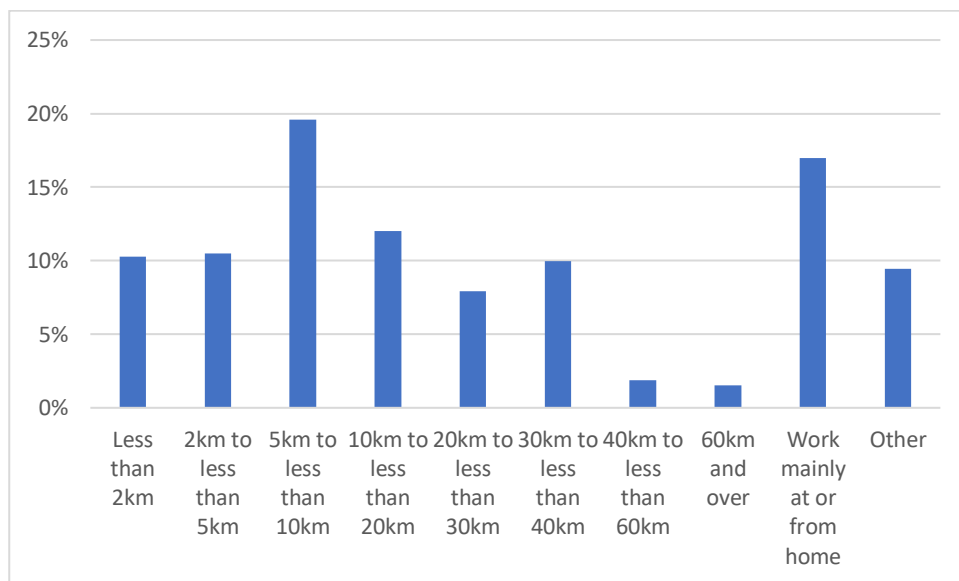


Figure 2.7: Distance travelled to place of work

3.16. 8% of those living in the parish have no access to a car (Figure 2.8), implying that car usage is high. There is a need to consider how to encourage shorter journeys to take place by other means.



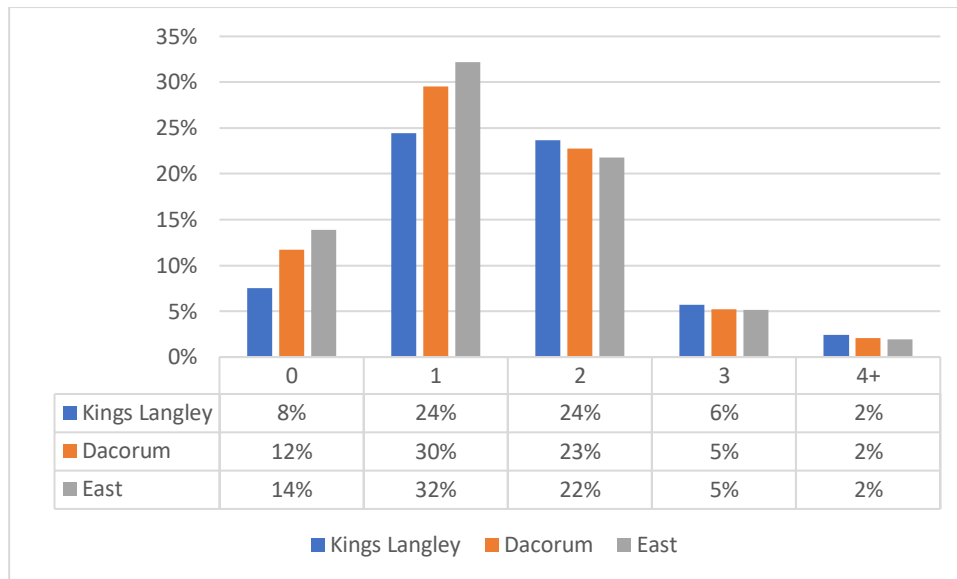


Figure 2.8: Number of cars per household

3.17. Figure 2.9 shows the qualifications of the local residents aged 16 years and over. Kings Langley has a well-qualified local population, reflected in the low levels of unemployment.

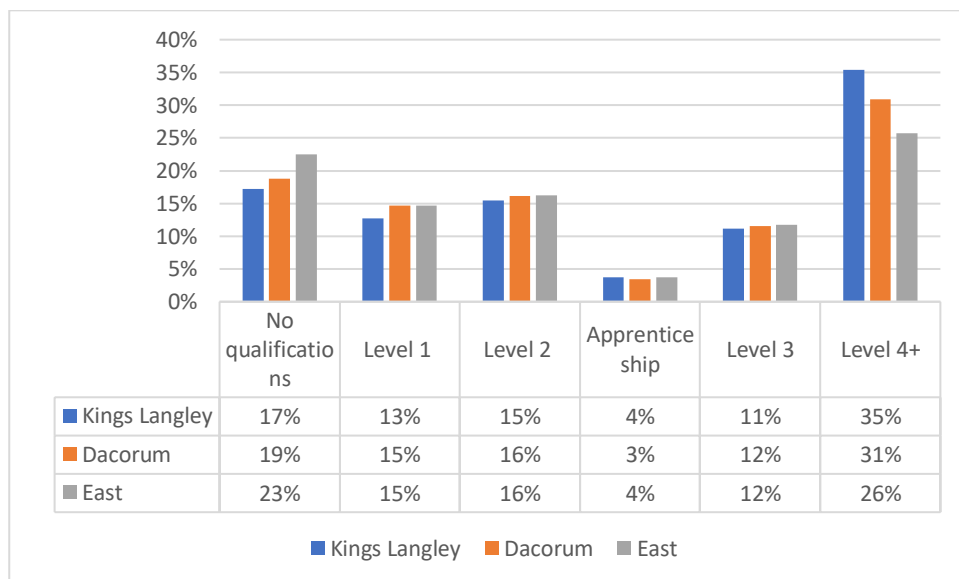


Figure 2.9: Highest level of qualifications

## Health

3.18. Residents in the Area enjoy a good level of health overall, mirroring the borough as a whole, as illustrated in Figure 2.10.

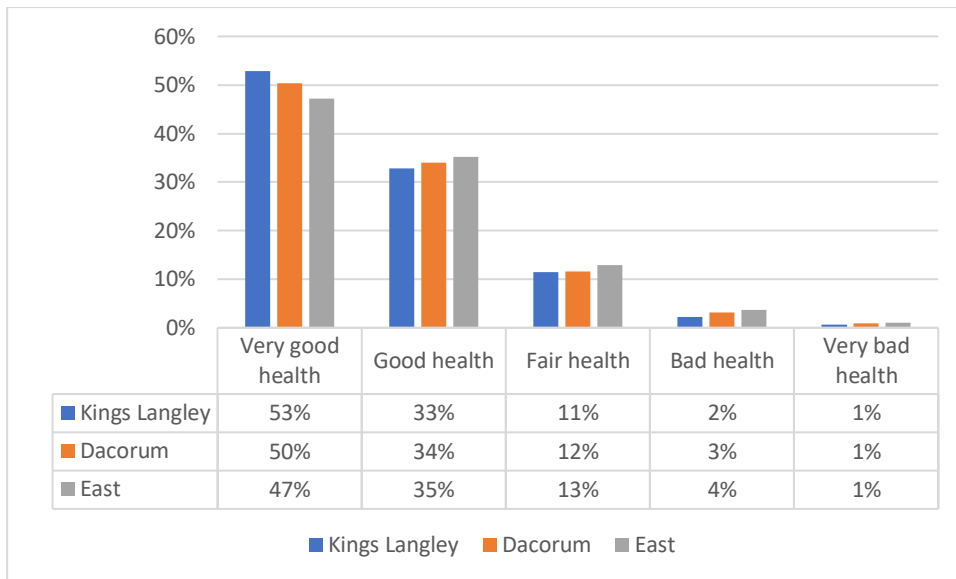


Figure 2.10: Level of health