

Our homes

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Meetings of the Development Plan Working Party are being scheduled to take place each month up until April 2022. Each meeting will be introduced to different sections of the emerging draft Stockport Local Plan.
- 1.2 This report details what is currently the fourth topic-based policy chapter of the draft plan, titled "Our homes."
- 1.3 Our communities tell us that access to good-quality, appropriate, safe and affordable housing is important to both current and future generations in Stockport. We know we need to provide a wide variety of different homes for people who want to live in Stockport, whilst also recognising that homes play a central role in our resilience to climate change.
- 1.4 These policies in this chapter will allow the Council to manage development so that it supports or contributes, in particular, to achieving Stockport Local Plan objectives 2 and 6 (see report titled 'Strategic Policies' considered at the Development Plan Working Party meeting on 10th January 2022).

2. OUTLINE OF "OUR HOMES"

- 2.1 The policies in this chapter are intended to:
 - i. Set out how we will optimise our use of brownfield sites in seeking to meet the borough's local housing need whilst also helping to maintain a 5-year deliverable supply of housing, as required by the NPPF. The exact number of new homes we need to deliver is still a work in progress and there is more work to do to identify where these new homes will go. Following the counsel advice received last year, it is proposed that the consultation draft of the plan shared with communities and stakeholders in the Autumn will set out a range of options for dealing with this issue, allowing people to respond in an informed and open manner.
 - ii. Take a sequential approach to identifying and allocating land for new housing, allocating land where it is most suitable for development and making sure we are using land efficiently whilst delivering quality homes. We will focus firstly on our Town and District centres and their immediate surroundings, then on other brownfield land, before looking at greenfield sites in the urban area and the Green Belt.
 - iii. Help to deliver a range of different types of home to meet the different needs of people, from individuals, to families to older people, having regard to the Council's Housing Strategy.
 - iv. Set targets for affordable housing provision on sites across the borough to make sure it meets the genuine need of the people of Stockport.
 - v. Prioritise the delivery of new homes on sites that are suitable for residential development.
 - vi. Identify where and how we will provide for special housing needs, including older persons' accommodation; children's homes; specialist care accommodation;; self/custom-build housing; agricultural dwellings and houses in multiple occupation.

- vii. Protect existing dwellings within the borough from conversion or demolition unless there are exceptional circumstances which would make this acceptable.
 - viii. Seek to ensure that, where it is viable, the delivery of new housing helps support delivery of local infrastructure and services.
 - ix. Link to the emerging housing plan to ensure consistency of approach to housing.
- 2.2 A copy of the working draft chapter "Our homes" is set out as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 As with previously considered sections of the draft Local Plan, elements of some policies relate to matters which are yet to be decided. For now such matters have been left incomplete with place-holder text as appropriate, subject to conclusions being reached following further work now being undertaken and further deliberation by members in due course.

3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Members will recall that the Council meeting on 15th July 2021 considered a report providing an update on the Stockport Local Plan¹. That meeting resolved, amongst other things:
- 1. That the refreshed approach to developing a Local Plan for Stockport, including the principles set out in an appendix to the report be endorsed; and
 - 2. That the approach set out in the report to engaging with communities across Stockport during the Summer to assist in developing a draft Plan be endorsed and supported.
- 3.2 The Local Plan key principles engagement phase, undertaken between July and September 2021 with some continued stakeholder feedback up until the present time, has resulted in engagement and information sharing with over 2,000 residents through presentations, meetings, briefings, workshops, sharing information and an online survey.
- 3.3 This early engagement phase has contributed to our aims by:
- Increasing the understanding of our communities about the Local Plan, why we're doing it, and what it is trying to achieve;
 - Creating opportunities for our communities to input to the Local Plan and provide their views on our key principles through an online survey and through group meetings;
 - Increasing knowledge amongst our communities about future formal public consultation periods and how they will be able to submit their views. The engagement period has resulted in groups, forums and boards expressing that they want to be kept informed and asking for the Local Plan team to revisit them during the consultation phase;
 - Encouraging a broad range of stakeholders and communities with different experiences to input into the engagement period. This has included reaching into underrepresented communities through the Stockport Homes Roadshow, Planning Aid England workshops, and dissemination of information by key networks such as the Cross Sector Forum and
 - Ensuring that all engagement activities are accessible for all and are relevant and proportionate to different groups.

¹ See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?Ild=93437&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI66943>

3.4 Most stakeholders are supportive of the 6 key principles set out (see <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/our-key-principles>) including that, through the Local Plan, the Council will:

- Contribute to the good health and wellbeing of our communities.

4. EVIDENCE

4.1 Stockport Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/housing-strategies-and-documents/housing-needs-assessment>. The Stockport Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2019 provides the latest available evidence to help to shape the future housing and related strategies and policies of the area. It provides detailed recommendations relating to the future need of both market and affordable housing.

4.2 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Available at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment-shlaa>. The SHLAA provides an assessment of land availability by identifying buildings or areas of land that have potential for residential development. The SHLAA also assesses the potential level of housing that can be provided on identified land and determines which sites are likely to be deliverable and/or developable.

4.3 Greater Manchester Children's Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2022. Available at: https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/3849/gmca_childrens_sufficiency_strategy_20-22_final.pdf. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) recognises that providing local placement opportunities for Looked After Children is increasingly becoming a challenge across Greater Manchester. This Strategy outlines many of these challenges and sets out the vision to improve sufficiency of service across the region.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Member are invited to comment and provide feedback on the draft "Our homes" policies.

5.2 It is important to note that the draft policies in Appendix 1 are set out purely to enable transparent member deliberation and discussion. No comment is sought at this stage from the public or other interested parties; the time for that will come at the next formal stage of consultation as per the schedule established in the Local Development Scheme (see www.stockport.gov.uk/stockport-local-development-scheme).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See links to documents given within report and associated footnotes.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Richard Wood on 07800617505 or by email to richard.wood@stockport.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – working draft "Our homes" Local Plan chapter

4. Our homes

Our communities tell us that access to good-quality, appropriate, safe and affordable housing is important to both current and future generations in Stockport. We know we need to provide a wide variety of different homes for people who want to live in Stockport, whilst also recognising that homes play a central role in our resilience to climate change.

The policies below will allow the council to manage development so that, in particular, it supports or contributes to achieving Stockport Local Plan Objectives 1 and 8.

Homes 1: Provision and enhancement of recreational facilities and green infrastructure in new residential development

1. A high quality, well-connected and sustainable network of Green Infrastructure is required to support the delivery of residential development.
2. New development will be expected to enhance and help bridge the gaps with the existing Green Infrastructure network, in terms of its quantity, quality, accessibility and functionality. The council will meet increased demand for access to open space and opportunities for physical activity, by tackling deficiencies and under provision. Such measures will include:
 - a) securing additional on-site open space including provision for all ages. New open space should form an integral part of the layout of the development with arrangements for long-term maintenance agreed in advance of occupation;
 - b) the incorporation of wider green infrastructure features including appropriate planting of trees, other soft landscaping, green roofs and walls and installation of habitat features for the benefit of biodiversity; and
 - c) enhancing local food production through the provision of opportunities for growing food in new developments.
3. Developers are required to demonstrate how a development will cater for the open space needs of the new residents. When incorporating Green Infrastructure into new development the standards set out below should be used as a basis for meeting the recommended standards of provision. The Green Infrastructure offer should be tailored to the housing types and number of units being delivered.

Typology	Quantity Standard (Hectares per 1,000 population)	Accessibility Standard
Parks and gardens	1.01	9 minutes walk
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	1.80	9 minutes walk
Amenity green space	0.86	6 minutes walk
Allotments and community gardens	0.25	None ¹

¹ No national guidance is set for accessibility of allotments and catchment areas can vary due to nature and usage; therefore provision is based on demand e.g. waiting lists.

Typology	Quantity Standard (Hectares per 1,000 population)	Accessibility Standard
Provision for children and young people	0.25	Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) - 5 minutes walk Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) – 15 minutes walk ²

4. Where on-site provision is not feasible, a payment will be required for off-site provision to assist in meeting the above standards and according to a set formula. Developer contributions will be invited towards:
 - a) seeking improvements to the quality of existing open spaces, from all developments that create an additional demand for open space; and
 - b) improving access to existing open spaces, particularly in areas of public open space deficiency
5. Supporting recreational facilities and green infrastructure for new residential development should accord with the following principles:
 - a) Open spaces are accessible, safe and in secure locations for all members of the community to use;
 - b) Maximise opportunities to be multi-functional and cater for a range of activities, lifestyles, ages and needs;
 - c) Improve the quality, value and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open spaces across the borough;
 - d) Secure resilience to the impacts of climate change; and
 - e) In meeting the need and demand for sport, developer contributions will be required to enhance existing provision of playing pitches, indoor sports halls and accompanying ancillary facilities, based on the additional demand generated by new development and guided by evidence on whether on-site provision is appropriate to meet demand. The council will have regard to the findings of the latest playing pitch assessment and to Sport England's strategic planning tools to determine:
 - i. an appropriate amount and type of contribution towards off-site provision; or on-site provision, where appropriate to meet demand.
 - ii. The developer will be expected to provide the new pitches and make provision for its management and maintenance.
 - iii. Provision of new sport and recreation facilities will be supported where there is a need, having regard to the priorities identified in the most up-to-date evidence on playing pitches and built leisure facilities, subject to relevant Local Plan policies.

Explanation

Paragraph 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

² A Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) is primarily aimed at junior aged children that can play independently. It will typically have a minimum activity zone of 400 square metres and have at least 5 play opportunities. A Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) is aimed at children of all ages and include dynamic equipment for older children. It will typically have an activity zone of 800 square metres and at least 8 play opportunities.

The unequal impact of COVID-19 on physical activity rates reflected Covid's broader impact on people's lives as wider inequalities were exposed and exacerbated³. The Greater Manchester Strategy highlights that an active life can reduce anxiety, lift mood, reduce stress, promote clearer thinking and a greater sense of calm, increase self-esteem, and reduce the risk of depression. More generally, sport and recreation can be a major contributor to quality of life, and hence access to such opportunities is an important element of social inclusion⁴.

New residential development will add to the current and future demands for recreational participation across the borough. As such, new provision or a contribution to increase capacity of existing sites may be required to accommodate this additional demand. Existing capacity may be increased by enhancing quality, accessibility and maintenance or by securing greater community access.

A key role of the Local Plan is to manage the competing demands from different uses on the land resources in Stockport; the need for new housing, employment, facilities and infrastructure must be accommodated, whilst at the same time protecting the environment and green infrastructure. Essential to this will be ensuring land is used most efficiently and effectively development will therefore need to be undertaken at an appropriate density to meet development needs. As a result, it may be difficult in certain locations to accommodate new open space on site. A pragmatic approach should therefore be taken to ensure the quality and accessibility of the Green Infrastructure network can be maintained and enhanced, ensuring that people have access to excellent facilities, whilst making the most efficient use of land.

The council will have regard to the findings of the latest playing pitch assessment and to Sport England's strategic planning tools to determine:

1. an appropriate amount and type of contribution towards off-site provision; or
2. on-site provision, where appropriate to meet demand. The developer will be expected to provide the new pitches and make provision for its management and maintenance.

Provision of green infrastructure and recreational facilities will be supported having regard to the priorities identified in the most up-to-date evidence subject to relevant Local Plan policies. Where new provision of facilities is required, the developer will be expected to provide them and make provision for the management and maintenance.

Where recreational needs are to be met on-site, the council will expect this to be maintained through appropriately worded conditions or Section 106 agreements, to ensure the facility is managed to an appropriate standard. If it is judged that needs cannot be met on site, opportunities will be sought to provide enhancement of nearby existing open space, through developer contributions, also secured by legal agreement. The formulaic approach to calculate offsite contributions will be based on the standards provided in the policy and population yield. The formula below will be used.

Provision - No. of persons x £

Maintenance - No. of persons x 8.5(sqm) x £

³ Greater Manchester Moving in Action 2021-2031

⁴ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (October 2017) Our people our place: The Greater Manchester Strategy

Homes 2: Delivering new homes

1. In line with the council's Brownfield First approach, the majority of new housing will be delivered on previously developed land.
2. New housing in Stockport will be a key element to delivering sustainable communities, at every scale of housing development. All new residential development will need to meet the requirements of creating those sustainable communities. These are characterised by:
 - a) A wide choice of housing sizes, types and tenures, informed by the most recent assessment of housing needs, to cater for all incomes and ages;
 - b) Having good access to facilities such as education, shops, leisure, health services and employment opportunities;
 - c) Convenient and suitable options to travel by foot, bicycle and public transport (with particular reference to Infrastructure 9 and Infrastructure 10), with the ability for remote working provided by fast digital connections, thus reducing the need to travel by car;
 - d) High design quality, creating a sense of place;
 - e) Measures to minimise the use of energy, water and non-renewable resources, including the use of green and blue infrastructure;
 - f) Access to public open spaces which provide the opportunity for social activity and recreations; and
 - g) Suitable drainage systems to help minimise the impact of new housing and should also be located outside flood zones 2 and 3a (unless effective mitigation measures can be demonstrated) and 3b.

Explanation

Stockport remains one of the most desirable places to live in Greater Manchester and its population is projected to significantly increase over the plan period. As such, there is a clear need to deliver new homes to keep up with rising demand. Despite this, the available land for housing in Stockport is heavily constrained by existing Green Belt land outside the main urban area. As a result of this the council has adopted a Brownfield First approach which seeks to enable and prioritise delivery on brownfield land within the borough.

The Council is also acutely aware that good quality housing is vital to achieving both economic growth and improving the health and wellbeing of its residents. Therefore, in delivering these new homes, they must contribute to creating sustainable communities. This means that new homes must genuinely reflect the needs of local peoples by providing quality, affordability, choice and independence.

To deliver sustainable communities, there is also a focus of directing residential development to the most appropriate locations. This means that all residents will have access to local transport networks, schools, jobs and other necessary infrastructure.

New residential development should also be free from constraints, support the council's climate strategy and be designed to create a strong sense of place.

Homes 3: New residential communities

[This policy will allocate any land proposed to be allocated for housing development. It will set out the minimum number of dwellings expected to be delivered. It is anticipated that this will be for developments of a minimum of 50 dwellings.]

It will set out criteria for the delivery of any greenfield Green Belt sites in line with a Brownfield First approach.

It will also set out specific criteria in relation to the delivery of affordable housing, housing mix, biodiversity net gain, etc. where that differs from the relevant Local Plan policy. An indication of the requirements is set out below:]

1. All allocated housing sites will be expected to deliver affordable housing as a minimum in accordance with the percentage set out in the table above and in accordance with the definition of affordable housing for Stockport set out in [Appendix x]. *[The level of affordable housing may vary across the allocations depending on any site specific work to be undertaken to justify the inclusion of an allocation. However, the minimum expected delivery on any allocated site will be that as set out in the affordable housing policy.]* The viability of delivering this percentage has been tested as part of the plan-making process and is essential to achievement of the overall strategic affordable housing target set out in Homes 6.
2. The housing to be delivered at each allocated housing site is expected to conform with the type of dwellings set out in the table above, including meeting any specific requirements in terms of numbers of specific dwelling types where specified. The expected percentage of affordable housing should be applied equally to all different types of dwelling provided on the site.
3. Each of these sites will be expected to make provision for the minimum number of custom / self-build plots set out in the table above.
4. Development of each of these sites is required to be preceded by a comprehensive masterplanning exercise approved by the Local Planning Authority, which establishes a clear phasing strategy as part of an integrated approach to infrastructure delivery that supports the scale of the whole development. The required masterplanning exercise should detail how the requirements of all relevant Local Plan policies will be met and could take the form of an outline planning application. Alternatively, the council may prepare a Supplementary Planning Document for a specific site if it is considered to be advantageous in bringing about sustainable development in a timely manner.
5. Alongside or incorporated into the required masterplanning exercise development proposals will be required to be accompanied by:
 - a) a transport assessment, assessing the transport impact of the development and proposing improvements to local transport infrastructure to mitigate against it;
 - b) details of measures to facilitate safe access to and within the site, including enhancements to public transport, direct and high-quality pedestrian and cycle routes in the area (including improvements to existing footpaths or other routes within the site where relevant, connecting to the local area and wider networks) along with details of suitable access for emergency, service and private vehicles;
 - c) details of measures to promote sustainable travel including production of a Travel Plan and appointment of a Travel Coordinator to develop, implement and monitor the Travel Plan;
 - d) details of on-site measures that will exceed the 10% minimum net gain in biodiversity required by Environment 2;
 - e) details of measures to be incorporated into the development that will ensure it meets zero carbon standards as required by all relevant zero carbon policies;
 - f) details of how a range of suitable and publicly accessible open space and green/blue infrastructure will be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, including meeting the requirements of Homes 1;

- g) details of how the development will realise a quality new place, having regard to the quality and suitability of design (in a local context), creating a visually attractive development which establishes a strong sense of place by means of architecture, layout, landscaping and materials, in accordance with the requirements of Environment 17 and 18;
 - h) an assessment describing the significance of any heritage assets affected within or in proximity to the site, including any contribution made by their setting, and details of how the development will respond positively to that significance, in accordance with the requirements of Environment 22;
 - i) details of suitable and appropriate drainage measures, to be delivered through sustainable drainage systems, in accordance with the requirements of Infrastructure 5;
 - j) details of contributions to be made to the provision of education, health and other social/community infrastructure, in accordance with the requirements of Communities 1, Communities 2, Communities 3 and Communities 6;
 - k) construction management plans - covering concerns over impacts during construction, including transport/traffic impacts; and
 - l) details setting out how other relevant requirements of the Local Plan will be met.
6. *[Should the Plan propose to allocate an existing Green Belt land for housing, the following will be required:]*
- a) be designed to minimise any adverse impacts on the remaining Green Belt, including the use of landscaping and carefully designed buffer zones that will manage the transition, and create strong defensible boundaries between the site and the adjacent Green Belt;
 - b) incorporate boundary treatments which reflect local characteristics and include, wherever suitable, the retention of existing and planting of new mature native hedgerows and trees; and
 - c) contribute to the special landscape qualities and key sensitivities of their locality in line with Environment 6. Development should restore positive landscape characteristics and features that reinforce scenic quality and distinctiveness.

Explanation

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has identified a supply for housing over the plan period. A number of sites of significant size have been identified and the purpose of this policy to protect those sites for housing use. Given the scale of the plan's housing target it is vital that the sites identified deliver at least the housing capacity identified. Allocating these sites helps to ensure that the right type of development is brought forward in an appropriate time-frame. It also allows specific benefits of developments to be realised and for impacts of development to be suitably mitigated.

[When final sites are agreed, additional information may need to include short section on each one here.]

Homes 4: Protecting the future supply of housing

1. To support the delivery of new homes, the council will prioritise residential development on brownfield land within the borough, where appropriate. To achieve this the council will:
 - a) Require wholly residential development, or the inclusion of a significant element of residential development, for non-designated sites; and
 - b) Require the incorporation of an element of residential development for sites within designated centres, where appropriate.

2. Proposals that depart from the above criteria will need to demonstrate that it would be technically infeasible or financially not viable to deliver residential development on the site.
3. There may be instances where residential development could be acceptable on other designated sites outside of the designated centres. In these instances, the council will apply the requirements of this policy on a site-by-site basis.

Explanation

There is a clear requirement to boost the supply of new homes. As part of the presumption of favour of sustainable development, Paragraph 11b of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that policies should meet housing objectively assessed needs as a minimum.

It is intended that the majority of the council's housing target will be provided on sites identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). However, it is acknowledged that there are unallocated sites that have the potential to come forward for residential development in accordance with Local Plan policies.

The council recognises that there is increasing pressure to release Greenfield and Green Belt land. To alleviate this pressure, the council has committed to building the majority of new homes on brownfield land as outlined in Strategic Policy 1: Spatial Strategy. It is expected that any unplanned land to come forward during the plan period is likely to be brownfield land. As such, it is important that these sites are prioritised for residential development.

The National Planning Policy Framework also highlights the importance of making effective use of land as well as ensuring that appropriate densities are achieved. It is therefore the intention of this policy that opportunities to increase density are fully considered in order to boost the supply of new homes.

Historically within Stockport, there have been sites suitable for residential development, which have been lost to other uses. Whilst there is a need to ensure the relevant jobs and infrastructure are also provided to support the delivery of more housing, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that housing is considered on those sites not allocated for another purpose.

Furthermore, housing in Stockport has often been delivered on much smaller sites and is forecast to continue to do so in the supporting evidence to the plan. Therefore, where land becomes available in the urban area and does not conflict with all relevant protective policies, it has the capacity to add to the supply of housing. Cumulatively, small, unallocated sites will help to deliver against Stockport's housing target. Any sites coming forward in this way will need to comply with all relevant housing policies and other relevant policies of this plan to be considered acceptable and suitable development.

The council recognises that a range of uses will be encouraged within the designated centres to support their role in the heart of their communities. Therefore, this policy applies flexibility to developments in those areas.

There may also be opportunities to include residential development on sites designated for other land uses through the Local Plan. In these instances, we will analyse the suitability of including residential development on a site by site basis when they become available. This level of flexibility ensures that the Local Plan is reflective of market changes.

Where proposals do not meet the criteria set out within this Policy, the onus will be on the developer to provide a robust justification for this.

Homes 5: Housing mix

1. Residential development should provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to create sufficient choice of housing stock. This will deliver housing to meet the varying needs of current and future residents.
2. In Stockport the priorities are for:
 - a) Affordable homes: 2 and 3 bedroom properties are the highest priority for homes at both Social Rent and Shared Ownership;
 - b) Housing for older people: level access and age-friendly design. This is not restricted to a particular house type and innovative design is encouraged in delivering housing for older people; and
 - c) Market homes (sale and rent): 3 bedroom properties are the highest priority, homes with 2 or 4 or more bedrooms are a medium priority.
3. The council will expect to see a range of housing types on larger schemes which have the ability to deliver a variety of housing.
4. The council will have regard to the following criteria in assessing the mix of housing schemes:
 - a. Local Housing Needs Assessment;
 - b. The ability of the site to accommodate a mix of housing - full consideration will need to be given to the site and its context;
 - c. Density requirements as set in Environment 17; and
 - d. Where the density falls below those set in Environment 17, the applicant will be expected to provide supporting information justifying the density proposed.

Explanation

It will be important that a range of housing is delivered to meet the needs of Stockport residents providing variety in terms of tenure, price, type and size. This will include new forming households, first time buyers, families with children, disabled and older people.

The Council's latest Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) recommends that particular focus needs to be made on enabling the quality and mix of housing that needs to be delivered, ensuring that new development takes account of the particular needs across housing market areas within Stockport. The HNA also recommends that the housing and support needs of older people are met going forward.

The overall market dwelling mix by dwelling size is outlined within the HNA and is summarised in Table XX. In terms of market dwelling type, the HNA recommends an overall need for approximately 66% houses and 32% level access (flats, bungalows etc).

Table XX: Overall annual market dwelling mix based on range of housing need 2019-2037

Dwelling Size (bedrooms)	Mix
1	14%
2	22%
3	44%
4	20%

In terms of affordable housing mix, the overall mix outlined in the HNA is summarised in Table XX. The overall affordable housing mix by type is approximately 55% houses and 45% level access.

Table XX: Annual affordable housing need by township and number of bedrooms, 2018/19 to 2022/23

Dwelling Size (bedrooms)	Mix
1	24%
2	38%
3	27%
4	8%
5+	3%

While the above tables outline the recommended overall mix, it is important to recognise that there are significant differences between the needs of different townships throughout the borough. The HNA provides a detailed assessment of these needs and therefore developers should have regard to this evidence base. This information will be used to inform negotiations between the Council and developers to determine the appropriate mix of housing.

Notwithstanding the above, the council acknowledges that the needs of the borough may change over time and therefore it is important that new developments have regard to the most up-to-date assessment of housing need.

Homes 6: Affordable housing

1. To address the significant affordable housing need in Stockport all major housing development (10+ units) will be expected to deliver affordable housing on site.
2. Development proposals will be expected to deliver at least the following proportions of affordable housing and these should be reflected in the cost of land:
 - a) 15% in the Town Centre Living Area (as shown on [Map X]) and identified Neighbourhood Renewal Priority Areas;
 - b) 25% in the inner urban areas of the borough such as the Edgeley, Cheadle Heath, Heaviley, Little Moor, Offerton, Bredbury and Reddish;
 - c) 30% in areas with above average property prices⁵; and
 - d) 40% in areas with the highest property prices, such as Bramhall / Cheadle Hulme (south) / Woodford.
3. To help achieve an overall strategic target of 50%, affordable housing will be sought on all council owned sites to be developed for housing, regardless of size. Outside the Town Centre Living Area, at least 40% of dwellings on council sites should be affordable. Within the Town Centre Living Area, at least 15% of dwelling should be affordable.
4. At least 50% of the dwellings should be affordable housing within any residential development on urban open space or Green Belt sites.
5. XX% of affordable housing should be delivered as First Homes⁶ in accordance with government guidance, for as long as that guidance remains in place. Thereafter, the Town Centre and inner urban areas 25% should be delivered as social rent, with the remainder delivered as shared ownership. In other areas the split of the remaining requirement after First Homes should be split 50/50 between shared ownership and social rent.

⁵ Areas with above average property prices will be illustrated on a map and will be reviewed annually.

⁶ First Homes is a government recognised affordable housing product and is their preferred discounted for sale product. The government has set out that minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Despite this, we do not see First Homes as a product that will deliver homes to meet affordable housing need in Stockport.

6. The council may seek to negotiate with the developer to revise the mix of affordable dwellings (for instance to secure additional larger dwellings). Where such negotiations impact on the number of affordable dwellings secured, the level of developer subsidy should be unchanged.
7. In addition to general needs housing, development proposals for housing of a specialist nature, such as housing for the elderly including extra care, supported housing and age restricted housing, will be expected to deliver affordable housing in accordance with this policy in order to assist in meeting the affordable housing needs of all members of the community.
8. On larger housing schemes, details of affordable housing should be provided for each phase of the development, including the number and type of affordable dwellings to be provided. Affordable housing should be fully integrated within the proposed development.
9. In exceptional circumstances, a reduced level of on-site provision or help to deliver off-site housing, usually via a financial contribution, will be considered. The onus will be on the developer to provide the relevant information to support 'exceptional circumstances'. Any additional costs to the council associated with assessing the supporting information shall be borne by the applicant. The affordable housing requirements are not an abnormal cost and should be factored in to the land values of the site in question.
10. Where off-site provision is to be made, the council expects that the financial cost to the scheme should exceed that of on-site provision.

Explanation

The average house price in Stockport has consistently been the second highest in Greater Manchester with median house prices increasing by 72% over the last 10 years. As a result of this, the ratio of median house prices to median incomes in 2021 was 10:1⁷. The borough also has significantly high private rent prices when compared with social rents.

The Council's HNA was published in 2019 and identifies a total of 11,265 existing households in housing need which represents 9% of all households across Stockport. The assessment also found that there is a net annual affordable housing shortfall of 549 dwellings which accounts for around 50% of the Local Housing Need. Given this, it is recognised that there is significant need in Stockport, and therefore delivering affordable housing is a key strategic objective for this Plan.

It is also important to note that this need varies significantly across different areas within the borough. As indicated above, the HNA found that an average of 9% of households are in housing need across the borough. Brinnington has the highest proportion of households in need with almost one in five (19.2%), in need. The township of Bredbury, Lower Brinnington, Woodley (West) and the township of Town Centre and Hillgate also have notably higher proportions of households in need with 14.1% and 12.8% respectively.

As indicated above, Stockport has a strong housing market and the average house prices have consistently been increasing over recent years. Despite this, house prices across the borough vary significantly. It is important that this is considered when delivering affordable housing across the borough.

To deliver affordable housing that meets the needs of the local community, the proportion of affordable housing sought varies across the borough to take account of need, property prices and local context. New development should contribute to the creation of more mixed, balanced

⁷ House price to workplace-based earnings ratio, March 2022. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

communities by providing affordable housing in areas with high property prices and by increasing owner occupation in areas of predominantly social rented housing.

In terms of affordable housing mix, the current Housing Needs Assessment (2019) suggests that an overall affordable dwelling mix of 54.5% houses and 45.5% level access accommodation (including flats and bungalows) would meet the needs of the borough. Notwithstanding this, the mix of affordable housing provided should be based upon the findings of the most up-to-date evidence.

The Council recognises that the number of households with specialist housing requirements are going to increase during the lifetime of the plan. Therefore, it is important that the provision of specialist and supported housing for older people, people with a disability and other vulnerable groups are also accounted for in the delivery of affordable housing.

In terms of affordable housing tenure, First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations (i.e. S106 agreements). First homes must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value and be sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria. Further information is included within the Council's First Homes Interim Policy Statement which is due to be superseded by a wider Affordable Housing SPD. The remaining affordable housing units on development sites will be expected to be shared ownership and social rent.

The delivery of on-site affordable housing contributions is crucial to meeting our identified need and the creation of mixed, sustainable communities particularly in high value areas. The provision of affordable housing off-site cannot necessarily meet those needs in the same way. As such, the financial contribution of off-site provision should exceed that of on-site provision and will only ever be accepted in 'exceptional circumstances'.

Homes 7: Build to rent

1. The Council will only support built to rent proposals where the following criteria are met:
 - a) Demonstrate that whole development is under unified ownership and management;
 - b) Remain as build to rent under a covenant for at least 15 years with a clawback mechanism in place should the covenant be broken;
 - c) Usually offer longer tenancy agreements of 3 years or more, with tenants having the option to terminate at one month's notice, after the first six months, without a break fee being payable;
 - d) Operators must offer rent certainty for the period of the tenancy, the basis of which should be made clear to the tenant before a tenancy agreement is signed, including any annual increases which should always be formula-linked;
 - e) Provide on-site management, including a daily presence which should ensure prompt resolution of any issues or complaints that may arise;
 - f) Be designed to deliver space and amenity standards in accordance with part 4 of Policy Environment 18; and
 - g) Provide a mix of unit sizes and types informed by the findings of the most up-to-date assessment of housing needs.
2. Schemes above the Council's affordable housing size thresholds must provide the proportions set out in Parts 3 and 4 of Policy Homes 4. These dwellings will be:
 - a) At a range of genuinely affordable rents that is reflective of incomes to meet affordable housing need in Stockport;
 - b) Maintained as affordable private rent in perpetuity;

- c) Designed to be tenure blind and distributed throughout the wider development; and
- d) Occupied by eligible tenants, having regard to; local household income levels and local rent levels, housing need and links to the local area as agreed between the council and operator.

Explanation

Build to rent schemes are purpose built dwellings for rent and are defined as such in the National Planning Policy Framework. The build to rent sector has grown significantly over recent years and Stockport has received an increase in the number of applications being submitted for these types of developments.

Build to rent schemes can be beneficial in accelerating the delivery of new homes as well as increasing the range of housing choice in the borough. It is acknowledged that build to rent schemes normally comprise apartments, despite this, it is important that a mix of unit sizes are provided which reflect the council's most recent assessment of housing needs.

Further to this, build to rent schemes will also be expected to provide appropriate levels of affordable housing. This affordable housing will be provided in the form of affordable rent with discounts calculated using local incomes. The Affordable Housing SPD, once adopted, will provide more detail in respect of these matters.

Homes 8: Housing for older people and specialist accommodation

1. Housing developments designed for the needs of older people must meet the accessible and adaptable standards as set out in Environment 18. Housing provision specifically targeted at older people within new residential developments will be strongly encouraged.
2. In addition, the range of specialist accommodation, often targeted at older people will be supported where it:
 - a) Delivers homes that meet the optional standard in Building Regulations Part M4(3) for wheelchair user housing;
 - b) Is well-integrated with the wider neighbourhood;
 - c) Offers easy access to community facilities, local services, and public transport;
 - d) Meets parking standards across a range of users;
 - e) Is designed to reflect relevant best practice; and
 - f) Provides a range tenures.
3. The provision of affordable housing in line with Homes 6 will be required where the provision is for units that provide accommodation whereby occupants could reasonably support themselves.

Explanation

The projections for Stockport indicate an increased ageing of the population over time. Consequently, a range of housing options will be required to meet the needs of older people. Those needs will vary but critical to delivering places that people will want to live is creating homes that allow them to live independent lives and retain control over their accommodation and services. The requirements of the policy seek to deliver housing which will meet the range of needs for older people's residential accommodation.

For much of the housing that will be suited for older people there is no reason why this should separate from other forms of residential provision. Its inclusion within wider housing developments

is an important part of created sustainable mixed communities and for this reason the policy encourages such development.

Specialist accommodation is not limited to that for older people but can include care homes, extra care housing and sheltered housing. Such schemes should be able to demonstrate need and how it is that they are contributing to the delivery of council strategies and priorities. This may involve the remodelling of existing older persons' accommodation to meet changing needs.

Affordable housing is required to meet the needs of those who are otherwise unable to afford open market homes. The affordable requirements of older people tend to be different to those who are seeking to purchase their first home and the method of delivery will be set out in a supporting Supplementary Planning Document. Developments considered to require affordable housing will be those where units contain the minimum of the following: Bedroom; Kitchen and associated dining area; Bathroom.

Homes 10: Children's residential care and semi-independent supported living for young people

1. The development of children's residential care homes and semi-independent supported living accommodation for young people will be permitted, provided that the proposal:
 - a) Provides a demonstration of local need;
 - b) Is supported by a management plan for the operation of the premises;
 - c) Does not result in more than two of these types of dwellings adjoining;
 - d) Does not result in a single dwelling having this type of dwelling on both sides;
 - e) Will be compatible with the residential character of the locality;
 - f) Respects residential amenities;
 - g) Is close to community facilities; and
 - h) Is in a location that is easily accessible by public transport.

Explanation

It is recognised that the council have a special responsibility to ensure that children in care and young people in supported accommodation have the support and opportunities that should be available to all. Part of this is providing suitable accommodation for these housing needs.

A children's residential care home falls within Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) and provides full time care for the residents. Supported living is also an important resource for young people and can provide housing for those transitioning from residential care who may still require support. Supported housing for young people can also be for those who are at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or suffering from mental health or other potentially complex issues. The council also recognises that there is also demand for housing for those with additional needs transitioning from the family home or other housing.

The GMCA Children's Placement Sufficiency Strategy reports that Stockport's share of the total GM residential care demand is only 7%, but nearly a quarter of the GM's residential care supply is based here. This means that Stockport regularly host placements from other GM areas. It is highly preferable for children in residential care to stay within their local area to maintain connections to family, friends, and other support services. Given this, it is important that applications for these types of accommodation provide a demonstration of local need.

Further to this, such accommodation should be properly located, preferably close to local amenities. They should also be close to public transport facilities to reflect the increased intensity of activity

which it may generate and, in particular circumstances, the specific requirements of the expected occupants. Siting must also respect the residential amenity of the wider area. It is essential that the location of these types of accommodation are carefully considered to avoid overconcentration of these premises which would effectively change the character of established residential areas.

Homes 11: Houses in multiple occupation

1. The council will support the conversion of dwellings to houses in multiple occupation, provided that the proposal:
 - a) Does not result in more than two houses in multiple occupation adjoining;
 - b) Does not result in a single dwelling having a house in multiple occupation on both sides;
 - c) Does not create such a concentration of houses in multiple occupation in a particular area or intensity of occupation of the property concerned that the character of the area or community stability is adversely affected;
 - d) Complies with guidance set out in the council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Recommended Standards; and
 - e) Includes parking within the curtilage at a rate of 0.5 space per letting.

Explanation

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property occupied by 3 or more unrelated people of 2 or more households. A household can be a single person or several members of the same family. This includes bedsits, hostels, self-contained flats, and shared houses. A small HMO is a dwelling accommodating three to six unrelated persons. Conversions of existing dwellings (Use Class C3) to small HMOs (Use Class C4) is classed as permitted development and planning permission is currently not required. A large HMO is a dwelling with six or more people, and they fall within the Sui Generis Use Class. Changes for use from C3 to Sui Generis do require planning permission.

Given the above, this policy will only apply to schemes where planning permission is required or areas where permitted development rights have been withdrawn through an Article 4 Direction. Note that parts 1.a-c of this policy refers to all existing HMOs within the area, regardless of whether they have been delivered through the permitted development or planning permission route.

The council acknowledges that HMOs are a valuable source of cheaper accommodation and can help to meet the housing need of local residents. However, policies are required to minimise the potential detrimental effects and to ensure a high standard of amenity for residents, neighbouring properties, and the area in general.

While the concentration of houses in multiple occupation is acceptable up to a point it is possible the cumulative effect of concentration could adversely affect the residential area. Often those who reside in HMOs do so for a short period of time. This can lead to a high turnover of people who have limited interaction with the local community which can negatively impact community stability and cohesion.

Further to the above, the location of car parking through hard paving associated with this type of use can be unsightly. Good landscaping can reduce the damaging effects of this and enhance the appearance of the dwelling and, therefore, the residential area.

Homes 12: Self-build and custom build homes

1. On sites of 50 or more dwellings, the council will seek the provision of a minimum of 5% of the plots to be made available as serviced plots suitable for self and/or custom build, and will be controlled by the following means:
 - a) The provision must take account of local housing need informed by the findings of the most recent assessment of housing needs;
 - b) Development that would result in more than 5 self/custom build units on a single site a will be expected to provide a Design Code as part of the planning application process;
 - c) Where plots have been made available and marketed for sale to self/custom builders for a period of at least 12 months, and have not sold, the plot can return to the developer to be developed;
 - d) Plots that have been purchased by a self and custom builder must complete the unit(s) within 3 years of the purchase; and
 - e) Developments containing only apartments are not exempt from the requirements above and provision of space the creation of custom build apartments should be made at the same equivalent requirement.
2. The inclusion of self/custom build homes on smaller sites will also be supported where appropriate and will be expected to conform with the principles set out in this policy.

Explanation

The council recognises that self and custom build housing can help to deliver more diverse housing in the borough while also contributing to meeting the need for additional housing. The policy encompasses range of different types of housing delivery which all fit within the definition of self and custom build. Self-build projects refer to developments where individuals or associations purchase land and build their own house or houses on a serviced plot. Custom building is similar to self-build, but some aspects of the process will be facilitated by the developer. This policy also applies to community-led housing and co-housing, both of which are driven by a group of people wishing to meet their own housing needs.

The council is required to keep self-build register which is a list of people and groups who are interested in building their own homes in Stockport. This register has shown that there is demand for self-build plots within the local area. Give the established demand, this policy seeks to proactively increase the provision available through requiring the delivery of plots on larger sites. Notwithstanding this, the policy also recognises that smaller sites can be an effective way of meeting demand when they become available.

A key attraction of self and custom build developments is the ability for people to create their own bespoke dwellings that will meet their specific needs. Despite this, applications for self-build developments should still be reflective of local housing need. Developments will also be expected to comply with all other relevant policies in this plan.

Homes 13: Protection of existing housing

1. In determining planning applications which would involve loss of land allocated for residential purposes, existing dwellings or in an existing residential use, whether by change of use or demolition, the council will have regard to the balance of the following factors:
 - a) The restricted housing land supply in Stockport;
 - b) Whether the change of use or redevelopment is for some form of community facility;

- c) Whether the development is small-scale and is a source of employment or service for the local residential community;
 - d) The extent to which the existing dwelling(s) suffer from adverse environmental conditions; and
 - e) Whether the loss of dwellings would be justified to facilitate regeneration (including the achievement of mixed housing types) or the environmental improvement of an area, for example within Policy Guidance Areas, Employment Areas, or the Green Belt.
2. The loss of dwellings or residential land to other uses will not be permitted unless a justification can be shown taking into account the above factors.
 3. Unless specifically approved to be operated as serviced apartments, short-term letting of any dwellings will not be permitted where this would result in them not being available for use as a primary residence. Conditions may be applied to approvals for residential schemes in order to prevent short-term letting of dwellings.

Explanation

The retention of existing dwellings is particularly important in view of the demand for housing which exists in Stockport. Retaining existing dwellings (or ensuring where redevelopment occurs that the new use is also residential in nature) will help to ensure that residential properties remain available for that purposes and reduce the need to seek dwellings from other land sources, such as employment, open space, or Green Belt.

There are, however, particular circumstances in which changes of use (or redevelopment of housing sites) will be acceptable. This is most likely to be where the change of use is sought for some form of community facility especially small-scale uses such as a doctor's surgery. Such provision can take pressure off existing facilities and provide a specific benefit to the residents in the immediate neighbourhood.

There are locations where dwellings suffer from serious adverse environmental conditions, in particular housing fronting, or in close proximity to, those parts of the strategic highway network which suffer from significant congestion, noise and/or poor air quality for a considerable part of the day, and where scope for the alleviation of these conditions is limited. Subject to other planning considerations, favourable consideration will be given to change of use to other uses which are less affected by such adverse environmental conditions. In addition, there may be cases where the loss of dwellings would be justified to enable the proper planning of an area. This could be, for example, redevelopment to more appropriate uses within particular Policy Guidance or Employment Areas or proposals that enhance the openness of the Green Belt.

The continuous use of housing for short-term letting is a potential factor in the reduction of the supply of homes, leading to both unavailability of long-term accommodation and an increase in housing prices. Furthermore, the different nature of activity which can occur with short-term lets risks damaging the amenity for other occupiers, detracting from the attractiveness of residential areas.

Homes 14: Agricultural dwellings

1. Planning permission will only be granted for new permanent dwellings in the Green Belt to support agriculture and forestry, where the following criteria can be met:
 - a) There is clearly established functional need for the dwelling that cannot be met through other means;
 - b) This need relates to a full-time worker directly employed by the business;

- c) The unit and the agricultural or forestry activity concerned is well established and it can be demonstrated that the activity is profitable, is currently financially sound and is economically sustainable;
 - d) Evidence is provided to demonstrate that the need cannot be met through alternative accommodation options, including:
 - i. Within an existing dwelling on the unit;
 - ii. Through re-using, extending, or adapting an existing building on the unit;
 - iii. Other existing accommodation in the local area; and
 - iv. The conversion, extension, or replacement of existing buildings in the surrounding locality.
 - e) The dwelling is of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement and relates well to the existing setting.
2. Where it cannot be demonstrated that the activity is well-established (in line with 1c above), it may be possible to justify a temporary dwelling, for a period to be determined on a case-by-case basis, to allow it to establish its long-term profitability. In such cases, proposals will be granted subject to the other criteria set out in the policy. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that there is a firm intention to develop the enterprise and that the activity has been planned on a sound financial basis.
3. The removal of agricultural occupancy restrictions will only be permitted where:
- a) It is evidenced that the dwelling is genuinely surplus to the current and foreseeable future needs of the unit concerned;
 - b) There is no evidence of a long-term need for the dwelling within the locality from people who would comply with the occupancy condition; and
 - c) Comprehensive evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the dwelling has been actively marketed as an agricultural holding, at a market price that reflects the occupancy condition and confirmation that no reasonable interest has been identified.

Explanation

The council acknowledges that there may be instances where it is necessary for new dwellings to be provided in the Green Belt to meet the needs of rural workers. Despite this, it is also important that Green Belt principles are not undermined through unnecessary built development. Therefore, any proposal for agricultural dwellings will be required to meet the relevant criteria set out in this policy.

When determining these types of applications, a functional test will be required to assess whether there is an essential need for a worker to live on site. This should demonstrate that it is essential for workers to provide care at short notice or to deal with emergencies that could otherwise cause the loss of products. Further to this, new permanent dwellings will only be permitted to support well-established rural enterprises. To determine this, a financial test will be required to allow the council to assess the viability of the enterprise.

While it is recognised that a large proportion of the borough is in the Green Belt, most rural enterprises are reasonably accessible to the existing urban area. Given this, applicants will also need to demonstrate that there is a need for an on-site presence, that could not be made by alternative accommodation in the local area.

The policy also allows consideration to be given to rural enterprises which are not yet well established. These may be new rural enterprises or where there is some uncertainty over the financial basis of the enterprise. In these instances, proposals will still be expected to provide evidence to meet both the financial and functional tests and the other criteria set out in the policy.

To ensure that new dwellings permitted through this policy remain available to meet the need outlined in the permission, conditions or legal agreements may be attached to any permission with

the intent of removing permitted development rights and to control its occupancy for the purpose demonstrated through the planning application. Permitted development rights will also be removed to limit the size of the dwelling and cause unnecessary harm to the Green Belt.

Occupancy restrictions will only be removed where applicants have clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a demand for the property to be used in connection with the permitted need. If occupancy restrictions are removed, the dwelling will need to show how it is fully compliant with the remaining housing policies in this chapter.