

Housing Topic Paper

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

National policy – December 2023

- 1.1.1. In December 2023 the government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including that the overall aim of local authorities, in the context of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, “should be to meet as much of an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.” (paragraph 60)
- 1.1.2. The NPPF, in the following paragraph, goes on to say that “To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance and that the outcome of that is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area” (paragraph 61).
- 1.1.3. Paragraph 145 of the revised NPPF states that

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through nonstrategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.”

This means local authorities may choose to (but are not required to) review and alter Green Belt boundaries in the event that they consider that they cannot meet housing need during the plan-making process, where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.

- 1.1.4. The government’s ambition is to continue “significantly boosting the supply of homes”¹, with a national target of 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s². The UK government published the White Paper “Fixing our Broken Housing Market”³ in 2017, where the overriding aim was to see more homes built. In 2020 the planning White Paper “Planning for the Future”⁴ was published which set out a “once in a generation” reform of England’s planning system, [although the changes proposed have not yet been implemented and there is uncertainty as to the form and content of future legislation]. Planning for the Future confirmed the government’s continuing aims to build more new homes by speeding up the plan making process and reducing the time spent in making decisions.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) para 60

² See <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7671/>

³ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

- 1.1.5. Subsequent to those documents and most recently, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) became law in 2023⁵. Whilst much of the supporting secondary legislation has yet to be delivered, this Act has three main objectives:
- To put in place the legal frameworks for setting the Government’s levelling up missions, placing an obligation on the Government to report on their progress each year;
 - To devolve power, and to enable it to be done so more efficiently, giving local leaders the powers, they need to regenerate their communities; and
 - To give local communities more tools to bring about regeneration including through a planning system that places beauty, infrastructure, democracy, the environment and neighbourhoods at its heart.
- 1.1.6. The Act seeks to encourage local authorities to adopt local plans in order to create certainty and to ensure that housing targets are set, both of which are likely to increase the rate of housing delivery.
- 1.1.7. The way in which housing need is addressed is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework⁶ (NPPF) and planning practice guidance (PPG).
- 1.1.8. Paragraph 11(a) of the NPPF states that:
- “all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects”*
- 1.1.9. Paragraph 11(b) of the NPPF states that our plan should contain strategic policies that, as a minimum, provide for our objectively assessed needs for housing unless:
- “i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area[footnote 7]; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*
- 1.1.10. Footnote 7 as referred to above, and as relevant to Stockport, states *“The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 187) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space [...]; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 72); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.”*
- 1.1.11. Paragraph 35 sets out that Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:
- “a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;”*

⁵ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55>

⁶ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

1.1.12. Paragraph 61 describes the objectively assessed need in the following way:

“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area (see paragraph 67 below). There may be exceptional circumstances, including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area [footnote 25] which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need; in which case the alternative approach should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for [footnote 26].”

1.1.13. Paragraph 67 further confirms the approach:

“Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. The requirement may be higher than the identified housing need if, for example, it includes provision for neighbouring areas, or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations...”

1.1.14. The detailed method for working out this local housing need (LHN) is described in PPG⁷, and the locally specific calculations for Stockport following the use of this method are set out later in this document. For Stockport, the standard method results in a figure of 1,097 homes per year, or 18,649 homes over the plan period of 2024 to 2041. We recognise there have been concerns raised with following this method, and in particular some of the population projections which the method considers,⁸ however the NPPF and PPG make it clear that this is the starting point for establishing the housing requirement for our local area.

1.1.15. As set out in paragraph 61 of the NPPF, the standard method must be used unless “exceptional circumstances” justify another approach. It is important to note that there are very few examples of plans being successfully promoted on the basis of alternative approaches, and no robust basis has been established for Stockport to seek to take an approach which differs from the standard method.

1.1.16. The government requires us to demonstrate that there is enough land available that can be built on over the coming years to provide us with a deliverable 5 year housing land supply⁹. In

⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

⁸ Please see ‘Standard method to calculate local housing need’ later in this document, which explains the methodology and the impact of using different household projections.

⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery>

Stockport, we do not have that level of supply and have not done so for some time¹⁰. In plan-making, strategic policies should identify a 5 year housing land supply from the intended date of adoption of the plan. For decision-making purposes, we need to be able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply when dealing with applications and appeals. The lack of a demonstrable housing supply is likely to mean that younger adults are living with their parents for longer as they are unable to purchase or rent their own property and the number of “concealed households” increases. Through the work done in our Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (see further below for more information), we know that there is a significant need for affordable housing and adaptable accommodation across the borough. In addition to meeting such needs, the provision of additional new build homes allows opportunity to deliver energy efficient homes that are also suitable for the changing needs of people over their lifetimes, whilst also meeting government aims.

Local Context

- 1.1.17. As is set out in more detail below, it is only possible to deliver the amount of housing stipulated by the government’s Local Housing Need methodology by using significant tracts of land which are protected because of their value as Green Belt. To ensure that we reach a reasonable and justified conclusion on the Local Plan’s approach to housing we have had to look at a range of possible approaches which each apply a different balance of competing priorities. This has included looking at an approach which would meet the stipulated Local Housing Need in full, as well as approaches which would have a less significant impact on the Green Belt.
- 1.1.18. Doing this has been informed by the government’s methodology for calculating Local Housing Need as well as evidence commissioned from independent experts on the value of the Green Belt in Stockport¹¹, with particular reference to the five purposes of such land, as set out in paragraph 143 of the NPPF. These purposes are:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 1.1.19. This evidence was first compiled in 2016 and has been updated more recently to ensure that it reflects any relevant changes that have subsequently occurred. It will be further updated before the council reaches final decisions on the version of the Local Plan that it intends submitting to ensure that our proposed approach remains a reasonable balance of relevant competing factors.
- 1.1.20. The provision of new homes is vital to the future of Stockport as a place where people can live and work. Where we deliver those homes, the type of homes that are provided, and the associated provision of open space and other green infrastructure, is as important as the number of homes that are delivered. Such provision, alongside other services and land uses, is vital to delivering sustainable development across the borough. The objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹². Through the planning system we need to deliver sustainable development by supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities,

¹⁰ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/5-year-housing-supply>

¹¹ Available at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/environment-and-heritage>

¹² Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly

whilst protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, and building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.

- 1.1.21. Stockport is a borough of contrasts in terms of its physical geography and socio-economic factors, with affluent areas and pockets of deprivation. Although much of our borough is urban in character, there are areas with varied and valuable landscapes and rural characteristics. A significant part of the borough (46.5%) is covered by land which has value as Green Belt because of its importance in preventing urban sprawl by being kept open. Whilst some parts of Stockport have good access to green spaces within the urban area there are significant parts which do not.
- 1.1.22. Located between the Peak District, the Cheshire Plain and Manchester, Stockport is seen as one of the most desirable places to live in Greater Manchester, and is part of the Greater Manchester Housing Market Area. The borough of Stockport is comprised of the main town centre in central Stockport, with a network of district centres radiating out from this urban core. The district centres of Bramhall, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme, Edgeley, Hazel Grove, Marple, Reddish and Romiley provide facilities and amenities for the surrounding residential areas, and there are a number of smaller neighbourhoods spread across the area, each with their own distinct identities. Recognising the differing needs across the borough, we are aiming to provide the right homes in the right places for Stockport residents.
- 1.1.23. This document sets out the scale of housing need stipulated by the government's standard Local Housing Need methodology. We should take this figure as an advisory starting-point for establishing the Local Plan's housing requirement target. This document also details how the council has sought to ensure that the best possible use is made of potential housing development sites on urban, brownfield land and considers what impacts might occur if there was to be a shortfall between the supply of land and the advisory Local Housing Need figure. This Housing Topic Paper is part of supporting information relating to the new Local Plan on which the council is consulting.
- 1.1.24. We have worked hard to identify more development opportunities on brownfield (previously developed) land and to ensure that that land is used as effectively as possible in terms of both the number of homes it can deliver and the sustainability of the new communities that are created. The impacts of future development on our ability to manage urban sprawl and our ability to meet the greenspace needs of our communities are key factors we have had to look at.
- 1.1.25. We have had to consider not just where new homes should be provided but also how we can ensure they are the right sizes and types of homes to meet people's varying needs. The delivery of housing via higher density development can help to deliver those numbers and limit the loss of green space. However, this raises new challenges around how we deliver neighbourhoods and environments in which people are able to live healthy lives.
- 1.1.26. Approximately 1 in 4 people who live in Stockport are 60 or over which is a higher proportion than in most other places in the UK. An "Ageing Well Strategy"¹³ has been developed to help make Stockport age-friendly (as defined by the World Health Organisation) and make it a place where people are supported to remain active, retaining their independence, a sense of purpose and wellbeing as they grow older. Stockport's ageing population means that there is a need for suitable homes to support people who need varying levels of specialist provision, whether that is adapted homes or residential or extra-care housing. The provision of suitable market housing for those who wish to move to smaller properties to suit their needs would have the benefit of freeing up larger properties for families who need them.
- 1.1.27. We are aiming to connect more of our residents to economic opportunities and ensure that all of our residents can contribute to, and benefit from, the growth and success we achieve. This

¹³ See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=131801>

means investing in the infrastructure of our borough, both physically and socially, to provide the right buildings and spaces in the right locations in order to provide joined-up services for our communities. This also means we need to think about providing more homes closer to existing jobs and areas with the best public transport access.

- 1.1.28. Stockport Council has put the redevelopment of the Town Centre West area at the heart of its ambition to reshape the residential offer in Stockport. To drive this forward, the Mayoral Development Corporation was established in September 2019. Town Centre West provides the opportunity to significantly improve housing choice; harnessing one of the best-connected locations in Greater Manchester to deliver new homes that will take pressure off the Green Belt and reduce the reliance on cars within the town centre and across the borough. Town Centre West provides a way to deliver new homes in a highly sustainable way, and will be the “*newest, greenest and coolest affordable urban neighbourhood.*” Development in this area and the wider town centre means that more school capacity will be required. In the first instance, this is likely to require the expansion of existing schools, although the scale of the development will require new educational provision to be created.
- 1.1.29. Work is already under way to look at the wider town centre area, with a particular focus on Town Centre East. Acknowledging the need for the same requirement to deliver homes which have the necessary supporting infrastructure as referred to above, it is envisaged that a strategic regeneration framework will be developed over the next year.
- 1.1.30. Our up-to-date Local Plan will provide a positive vision for the future and provide a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. In preparing our Local Plan, paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that strategic policies should look ahead for 15 years from the date of their adoption, it is our intention that our plan will be adopted by 2026 resulting in a plan end date of 2041.
- 1.1.31. In recent years the council has been working hard to bring forward an up-to-date plan that ensures the best possible outcomes for our communities, that delivers affordable housing, responds to our unmet housing need and aligns with the government’s ambition to increase the number of homes being delivered.
- 1.1.32. We have engaged with the public, local councillors, businesses, developers, landowners and site promoters to seek suggestions from them on land that they think might be suitable for building new homes on by undertaking multiple “call for sites” exercises in 2017, 2020 and 2021, in line with best practice. This has given plenty of opportunity for people to tell us about the locations of possible sites across the whole borough of Stockport.
- 1.1.33. We have undertaken detailed and thorough work looking at the sites submitted through the call for sites activities and have included the findings and conclusions in our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA¹⁴), which has been updated several times since 2016. A summary of the findings of the most recent SHLAA is set out in this document.
- 1.1.34. Monitoring of developments for the period between the start of April 2023 and the end of March 2024 has taken place to ensure the Regulation 18 version of the plan has regard to the most up-to-date housing supply position. This has been coupled with the sites and allowances identified in the SHLAA to show that we currently have a baseline supply of sites totalling 15,761 homes. The SHLAA is a robust piece of evidence, with a clear methodology, explaining the background to our supply of housing sites. Work has already commenced to update the SHLAA so that it can inform the final version of the plan alongside the feedback from consultation on the Regulation 18 version.

¹⁴ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment-shlaa>

- 1.1.35. The council has adopted a 'Brownfield First' approach¹⁵ which seeks to identify all brownfield land (also known as previously developed land) across the borough that has potential for redevelopment. We are working proactively with landowners and funding partners to unblock site delivery where sites have stalled. The brownfield first approach was developed in response to the increasing pressure to release greenfield and Green Belt land for new housing development in Stockport, to ensure an efficient and sustainable use of land. To aid that approach Stockport has successfully bid for money through the Brownfield Land Fund, to support delivery of housing on sites where that has previously been difficult. Our Core Strategy (2011) set targets for residential development on previously developed land which we have delivered against in the majority of years since then, thus demonstrating our success in the pursuit of this approach.
- 1.1.36. However, the work undertaken locally has shown us that we do not have enough brownfield land within Stockport to meet the advisory Local Housing Need figure stipulated by the government's methodology. To address this challenge, we worked with other authorities in Greater Manchester (GM), to try and identify an approach whereby other authorities within the same strategic housing market area could identify land which would meet our housing needs.
- 1.1.37. Between 2014 and late 2020, Stockport worked with the other GM authorities on a joint plan called the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). Whilst the joint plan looked to redistribute part of Stockport's Local Housing Need to other districts, we were still left with a significant need that could only be met by building on land which was protected for its value as Green Belt. In December 2020 the council decided to not proceed with the joint plan because it considered that alternative approaches causing less harm needed to be more fully explored from a Stockport-specific perspective.
- 1.1.38. The other remaining nine authorities have subsequently adopted a document known as "Places for Everyone"¹⁶ which addresses their development needs but not Stockport's. Nevertheless, Stockport continues to be identified within the same housing market area and works with GM on strategic cross-boundary issues. Under the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate (DtC) process we have routinely asked neighbouring and other relevant authorities (both within and outside Greater Manchester) whether they are able to take any of our need, in order to help relieve pressure on land in Stockport. To date, no authority has identified capacity to do so. However, DtC meetings will continue as the plan progresses and the council will monitor this position with those other authorities during that time.

1.2. Setting our housing requirement

- 1.2.1. As noted, the Local Housing Need figure arrived at using the government's methodology is an advisory starting-point for establishing the area's housing requirement. The mechanism for this is set out in a later section. However, the result of the standard method is that the annual need is **1,097** dwellings per year which equates to a total of **18,649** over the plan period of 2024-2041.
- 1.2.2. Once the advisory Local Housing Need figure has been calculated, the next stage is to establish what the housing requirement should be over the plan period, in line with paragraph 67 of the NPPF. For example, some authorities may, in line with paragraph 11(b) of the NPPF, set a requirement that is higher than their need, due to the fact they are delivering the housing needs from neighbouring areas whilst others may set a lower requirement due to the application of policies in the NPPF which restrict development.
- 1.2.3. When thinking about the provision of new homes and our housing requirement, we must weigh up many factors to ensure the delivery of a sustainable plan. For example, building new homes

¹⁵ See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=60391>

¹⁶ See <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/places-for-everyone/>

can have impacts on issues such as flood zones, Green Belt, heritage, pollution and the natural environment. The information provided later in this document sets out how the council has tried to optimise the number of urban, brownfield sites for housing development and to increase densities on those sites where it is appropriate. The possibility of utilising urban open space has also formed part of that assessment of possible housing sites. However, there are very few areas of open space in the borough which are surplus to requirements, due to factors including their size, quality and value to local communities and users.

- 1.2.4. Some of the factors mentioned above may limit the number of new homes that can be delivered in the borough over the period of this Local Plan or may limit how many homes can be delivered in different parts of the borough. More specifically, the land that is designated as Green Belt within Stockport land is of particular importance. It is considered to represent a constraint to our ability to meet the housing needs to be addressed within the Local Plan.
- 1.2.5. These multiple factors, together with the government's standard method for calculating the advisory Local Housing Need starting point, must be taken together to then inform our overall housing requirement. It is this housing requirement which is the number that will be presented within the Local Plan, and that is examined by an independent planning inspector before the Local Plan can be formally adopted by the council. The inspector will closely examine the housing requirement as part of the 'tests of soundness' of the plan and is able to recommend changes to the plan which the council will have to consider very carefully. Therefore, any version of the plan which the council submits for examination will need to be supported by appropriate and strong evidence.
- 1.2.6. In seeking to achieve sustainable development over the period of the new plan and provide the right homes in the right places, three different potential approaches to proactively tackle the delivery of new homes across our borough have been explored. These approaches represent a reasonable range of potential alternatives upon which to base the Local Plan's strategic policies and the more detailed housing related development management policies which seek to deliver them. These different possible approaches seek to balance the competing priorities of meeting our housing needs with factors such as the focus on town centre regeneration, the potential urban sprawl impacts of removing the Green Belt designation from some land, sustainable travel and wider transport impacts, the provision of infrastructure, etc.
- 1.2.7. The approaches we have looked at range from meeting all the identified housing need, to meeting around 95% of the housing need with a reduced impact on the Green Belt, down to meeting around 85% of the housing need without using any land in the Green Belt.

Green Belt

- 1.2.8. As noted in the opening section to this topic paper, paragraph 145 of the NPPF means that local authorities are not required to review and alter Green Belt boundaries even in the event that they consider that they cannot meet housing need. To justify changing the boundaries of the Green Belt, so as to enable development, it would be necessary to demonstrate the existence of exceptional circumstances. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF states:

"Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:

a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;

b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density

standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and

c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”

- 1.2.9. A Green Belt Assessment¹⁷ has been undertaken for the borough and this has helped to inform which sites have been identified below, alongside an assessment of other benefits and harm which the respective sites might include. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

- 1.2.10. Therefore, the Green Belt sites identified have also been chosen due to their location, in particular where they are located on the edge of the existing urban area, to make best use of access to existing facilities, infrastructure and transport, and to offer benefits for existing communities through their development.
- 1.2.11. In a scenario in which a local planning authority concluded that, on balance, removing land from the Green Belt was necessary, ‘exceptional circumstances’ would need to be demonstrated.¹⁸ To do this in a way that meets the tests of soundness, NPPF paragraph 35 stipulates that plans must be justified, by providing an appropriate strategy, taking into account reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence. In addition to the scale of development, the council would need to consider the impact and benefits of different locations.
- 1.2.12. Developing a plan which is justified also means that a council needs to ensure that, amongst other things, the proposed scale of housing and employment development are compatible. The council will need to show that the housing development enabled by the plan is adequate to facilitate any growth in population required to meet the borough’s economic aspirations; similarly, the economic aspirations should not be so constrained as to result in there being a surplus in housing provision. It is therefore important that this paper is considered alongside the Employment Topic Paper.
- 1.2.13. In looking at reasonable alternative approaches that include making changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt, the council has used a site selection methodology which seeks to address matters in a sequential manner. This is briefly set out below.

Site selection methodology

- 1.2.14. The council’s starting point is all sites which have been submitted to the council via numerous ‘call for sites’ exercises, sites proposed by landowners/developers at other times, sites on which

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/environment-and-heritage>

¹⁸ Paragraphs 144 and 145 of the NPPF:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a11af7e8f5ec000f1f8c46/NPPF_December_2023.pdf

relevant planning applications may have been made in the past and any sites in the council's ownership. These sites have then been through a filtering process to include the following:

- Brownfield sites;
- Sites promoted with a willing landowner or those in the ownership of the council;
- Sites greater than 1Ha in size [1Ha being used as a proxy for a min. of 50 homes]; and
- Sites without constraints that cannot reasonably be mitigated, e.g. SSSI, flood zone 3b.

1.2.15. The second stage of selection was intended to help identify sites which contribute to the overall strategic objective of delivering sustainable development that is well located to existing communities and which delivers benefits for new and existing residents. This used the following criteria:

- Sites with a boundary within 800m of a Town, District or Large Local Centre;
- Sites with a minimum GMAL (Greater Manchester Accessibility Level) score of 4; and
- Sites which would have a direct significant impact on delivering regeneration benefits.

1.2.16. The third, more detailed stage looked at other factors that could affect development of a site. These may result in the site being deemed undevelopable, might significantly impact the scale of development possible or might require significant mitigation measures. These were:

- Performance against purposes of Green Belt
- Compatibility with existing neighbouring uses
- Potential community benefits
- Heritage impacts
- Ecological impacts
- TPOs
- Existing Air Quality
- Area of minerals search
- Transport impacts/improvements

Sites in the Green Belt looked at as part of potential reasonable alternative approaches:

1.2.17. The three-stage site selection methodology identified the following sites (and estimated capacity) as having the potential to contribute towards future housing land supply with the least detriment of all those looked at:

- Former Offerton High School (c.185)
- Sandown Road (300)
- Gravel Bank Road (175)
- Heald Green West (750)
- Brindale Road (50)
- Former Woodford Aerodrome (range 500-1,200)
- Heald Green East (500)
- High Lane (range 300-500)
- Hyde Bank Meadows (250)
- Norbury Hall (135)
- Jackson's Lane (500-650)
- Land off Hall Moss Lane (400)
- Offerton Sand and Gravel (150)

- 1.2.18. Further work was then undertaken to understand the infrastructure that would need to be delivered to support development of these potential sites. Work was also undertaken to understand the extent to which they would likely be financially viable, including the extent to which they would be able to deliver or contribute towards the provision of supporting infrastructure.
- 1.2.19. All of these sites, if allocated for development, would be subject to policies setting out the following specific requirements:
- Affordable housing
 - Older persons accommodation / All Age Living
 - Contributions to schools / health / community facilities and open space improvements
 - Mitigation of transport impacts of new development – but also opportunity to improve current situation
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Open space provision
 - Focus on potential benefits and links to existing neighbourhoods
- 1.2.20. However, the potential benefits that might arise from the development of these sites, including their potential contribution towards meeting future housing needs, must be balanced against the potential harm that their development would likely cause. The council has concluded that in overall terms the negative impacts of developing these sites outweigh the benefits that might accrue from doing so. The main challenges and opportunities relating to these sites are explored and explained in greater detail below.

2. Potential approaches

2.1. Overview

- 2.1.1. As set out above, the council has concluded that the harm that would arise as a consequence of changing the boundaries of the Green Belt so as to enable housing development is not outweighed by its potential benefits. In reaching that conclusion the council has explored three different possible approaches taking a broad range of factors into consideration. These are set out below, starting with the approach which the council has now set out in the regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, and which forms the basis for its strategic housing policies.
- 2.1.2. Common to all approaches is the main supply figure for housing which is 15,761 homes. Of this total, approximately 90% of homes are on brownfield sites. This is the existing housing land supply for the plan period identified in our "Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment" (SHLAA). This number includes brownfield (previously developed) and greenfield (not previously developed) sites which already have planning permission and sites which we think could be suitable and may become available for housing development during the plan period. This figure may change as the plan progresses through its preparatory stages, not least because an update of the SHLAA is underway and will be completed in time to inform the regulation 19 version that is scheduled to be published for consultation in March/April 2025. A summary of the **Error! Reference source not found.** is provided below. Within this common baseline supply figure, we have included a total gross figure of 8,000 homes to be delivered in Stockport town centre which is inclusive of an estimated 4,000 new homes within the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) area. It also represents an increase on previous estimates of town centre delivery due to the growing confidence in the residential market in Stockport town centre, exemplified by schemes such as the Interchange, Weir Mill, Royal George Village and the Mailbox.
- 2.1.3. In addition, within the baseline supply figure which includes permissioned sites, an additional allowance across all of the district centres totalling 770 units has been made due to an expectation on increased delivery in those locations at higher-than-average densities. The Stockport Character and Urban Density Study, published alongside the regulation 18 version of the Local Plan, explores the potential of these areas (amongst others) and seeks to demonstrate how increased densities might be achieved. Specifically, those centres are:
- Bramhall
 - Cheadle
 - Cheadle Hulme
 - Edgeley
 - Hazel Grove
 - Marple
 - Reddish (Houldsworth Square), and
 - Romiley.
- 2.1.4. There are two significant schemes in the Stockport Green Belt that already have planning permission for housing and are currently under construction. These sites are located at the (previously developed) former Woodford Aerodrome site, which is being brought forward by Redrow Homes, and at land off Wilmslow Road in Heald Green which is being brought forward by Bloor Homes. Whilst both of these sites are identified as having the potential to deliver a greater number of new homes should the boundaries of the Green Belt be changed, no additional units beyond those already permissioned have been included within the identified housing supply figure set out above.
- 2.1.5. The housing allocations in the plan which form part of the identified housing baseline supply are identified in policy HOM 2 of the consultation local plan. The numbers and locations for those sites are set out in more detail in that policy and on the Policies Map.

2.2. Consultation

- 2.2.1. The regulation 18 version of the Local Plan sets out an approach which seeks to optimise the delivery of new housing in the most sustainable locations without changing the boundaries of the Green Belt. This is a direct response to the conclusion that the harm that would arise as a consequence of changing the boundaries of the Green Belt so as to enable housing development is not outweighed by its potential benefits. However, at this stage the council is open to receiving comments on the possible impacts of this approach, and therefore alternative possible approaches for the delivery of new homes have been considered. All feedback received during the consultation will be reviewed, alongside any relevant evidence, before progressing the plan any further.

2.3. Proposed approach

What does it involve?

- A target of 15,761 new homes, which is 85% of the government's advisory starting-point for establishing the area's housing requirement calculated using the standard methodology.
- Around 90% of the housing supply would be provided on brownfield sites.
- The overall total of 8,000 homes in the town centre would be achieved by sensitively increasing the density of development, including a greater number of taller buildings.
- Within the baseline supply figure, an additional allowance across all of the district centres totalling 770 units has been made due to an expectation of increased delivery in those locations through sensitive increases in density.
- No changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt would need to be made to enable new housing to be developed.

What are the main opportunities and challenges for this approach?

- 2.3.1. The significantly increased number of homes proposed for Stockport Town Centre and our district centres will support our ongoing strategy focussing on town centre regeneration, creating new housing in accessible locations with the infrastructure and amenities needed to support growing communities. This approach protects against the harm that would arise through the enabling of large-scale development on land that is currently protected for its value as Green Belt.
- 2.3.2. The additional focus on development in the urban area means that delivery of necessary green infrastructure to support new housing will be a challenge and access to green spaces will be important. The policies focussed on the town centre will help to achieve that and to create liveable spaces and a sustainable community in the town centre area.
- 2.3.3. Access to retail services and public transport links will be a significant benefit to both new and existing town centre residents but also to those commercial uses which are already located in the centre and will provide an additional market to both make it more attractive to other commercial uses and to support public transport.
- 2.3.4. There will be a pressure to deliver social infrastructure such as schools and medical services. The council is already working with partners to seek ways to deliver these uses alongside residential development rather than seeking to retrofit these uses into those areas. This challenge, however, also provides an opportunity to improve provision of services to existing residents living alongside new development or in neighbouring areas.
- 2.3.5. Whilst the approach results in no changes being made to the boundaries of the Green Belt to enable housing development, there will be a challenge to provide sufficient affordable and adaptable houses. To date the council has shown an ability to deliver affordable housing in the

town centre and policies in the plan will require development to deliver housing which meets these particular needs.

Transport

- 2.3.6. The different approaches which the council has looked at, and other variations on those approaches, have all been subject to in-depth transport modelling to give an understanding of their likely transport impacts. Full details of this work are provided in the transport note which has looked at combined housing and employment scenarios¹⁹. Where differences exist in terms of the impacts from each of the three approaches, they are only marginal in terms of CO₂ emissions, journey times and average speeds. In terms of the modelling work there is no strong reason why one approach should be preferred over another.
- 2.3.7. However, in some of the key findings, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions²⁰ from roads are predicted to fall by 47.3% up to 2041 compared to base year conditions. The fall in CO₂ emissions from road travel is mainly due to the transition to electric vehicles, and the fact that more accessible development would be focused on town and district centres. However, compared to base year conditions, this approach is predicted to result in an increase of 21% in the total distance travelled on all roads across the borough in the evening peak with a corresponding increase of 35% in travel time, while average speeds are predicted to reduce by circa 3mph (from 22mph to 19mph). In relation to the other approaches, this has the least negative impacts on transport and travel across the borough.

Education

- 2.3.8. Compared to other approaches, this approach would provide the lowest opportunity to seek developer contributions towards the expansion of existing schools. There would be a need for new primary and secondary education provision to serve the town centre. By realising a lower increase in population, however, this approach would also result in a lower pressure on school capacity than the other approaches looked at.

Health

- 2.3.9. Compared to other approaches, this approach would provide the lowest opportunity to secure developer contributions towards expansion of existing health facilities, or the rationalisation of the existing health care estate and development of modern efficient facilities. Detailed work to understand the need for health facilities in the town centre is underway with policies proposed in the plan to support the delivery of the necessary provision. By realising a lower increase in population, however, this approach would also result in lower pressures on existing health care facilities than the other approaches looked at.

Would changes be required to the boundaries of the Green Belt?

- 2.3.10. This approach would not require any changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt so as to enable the delivery of housing development.

¹⁹ Available at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/transport-and-infrastructure>

²⁰ "Carbon dioxide equivalent" or "CO₂e" is a term for describing different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any quantity and type of greenhouse gas, CO₂e signifies the amount of CO₂ which would have the equivalent global warming impact.

2.4. First Alternative Approach

What does it involve?

- A target of 17,746 homes, which is 95% of the government's advisory starting-point for establishing the area's housing requirement calculated using the standard methodology.
- The baseline supply of housing, which is primarily within the existing urban area would provide 15,761 homes, of which approximately 90% are on brownfield sites.
- The gross total of 8,000 homes in the town centre would be achieved by sensitively increasing the density of development, including a greater number of taller buildings.
- In addition to those sites in district centres already permissioned or identified in the SHLAA, an additional 770 new homes would need to be provided through sensitive increases in density.
- Changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt would be required, releasing 4 parcels of land to enable the development of 1,985 homes.

What are the main opportunities and challenges for this approach?

- 2.4.1. The significantly increased number of homes proposed for Stockport Town Centre and our district centres would support our ongoing strategy focussing on town centre regeneration, creating new housing in accessible locations with the infrastructure and amenities needed to support growing communities. However, the additional focus on development in the urban area means that delivery of necessary green infrastructure to support new housing would be a challenge. Also, the provision of supporting social infrastructure would be critical to the success of this approach. The council has set out in its Council Plan the ambitions to deliver the support needed to
- 2.4.2. Development of sites in the Green Belt (which are also primarily greenfield sites) will allow a greater number of affordable and adaptable houses to be built and provide greater opportunities to create district heat networks. However, all of the possible parcels of land included within the approach perform important functions against one or more of the purposes of Green Belt and therefore harm would arise as a consequence of making changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt.
- 2.4.3. The mixed approach of developing high numbers of homes on urban brownfield land and some on Green Belt land would allow us the opportunity to balance the risks of non-delivery on brownfield land due to contamination etc, against the potential speedier delivery provided by greenfield sites. In addition, the different sizes and types of sites will appeal to a greater number of house builders who operate in different segments of the market, thus reducing the reliance on a smaller number of firms to deliver our new homes.
- 2.4.4. There is a risk, however, that including an element of development on land that would need to be removed from the Green Belt might detract from, and potentially divert resources from, the critically important focus on urban regeneration and making optimal use of our available brownfield land.

Transport

- 2.4.5. Compared to base year conditions, this approach is predicted to result in an increase of 22% in the total distance travelled on all roads across the borough in the evening peak with a corresponding increase of 38% in travel time, while average speeds are predicted to reduce by circa 3mph (from 22mph to 19mph). Average speeds in the inter-peak are predicted to be 23mph.

- 2.4.6. Compared to base year conditions, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from road transport are predicted to fall by 46.6% up to 2041, with traffic on the strategic road network contributing to 24.7% of the total CO₂e emissions.

Education

- 2.4.7. This approach would provide the second highest opportunity to seek developer contributions towards the expansion of existing schools. It is unlikely that the possible development allocations would be large enough to require on-site provision of a new primary or secondary school. However, this approach would result in increased pressure on primary schools, particularly around Heald Green, and it would add considerable pressure on secondary schools in the east and south of the borough. There would be a need for new primary and secondary education provision to serve the town centre.
- 2.4.8. By realising a higher increase in population, however, this approach would also result in greater pressures on school capacity than the proposed approach set out above. Conversely it would result in reduced pressures in comparison to the second alternative approach set out below.

Health

- 2.4.9. Compared to other approaches, this approach would provide the second highest opportunity to secure developer contributions towards expansion of existing health facilities, or the rationalisation of the existing health care estate and development of modern efficient facilities. It is unlikely that any of the possible allocations would be large enough to require new standalone primary care health facilities. Detailed work to understand the need for health facilities in the town centre is underway.

Would changes be required to the boundaries of the Green Belt?

- 2.4.10. This approach would require changes to be made to the boundaries of the Green Belt so as to enable the delivery of housing development.
- 2.4.11. Achieving this approach's housing target would require land capable of delivering 1,985 homes in addition to the 15,761 homes in our existing housing land supply. The site selection methodology set out in section 1.2 indicates that delivering these additional homes on the following sites would have the least detriment
- Heald Green East (in addition to consented scheme) (800 homes)
 - Former Woodford Aerodrome (in addition to consented scheme) (750)
 - Hyde Bank Meadows, Romiley (250)
 - Former Offerton High School (185)
- 2.4.12. For this approach, the number of homes indicated at the potential Former Woodford Aerodrome site is lower than in the second alternative approach outlined below.

2.5. Second alternative approach

What does it involve?

- A target of 19,671 homes delivering 105% of the government's advisory starting-point for establishing the area's housing requirement calculated using the standard methodology. This target includes a 5% buffer added to the LHN figure of 18,649, to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.
- The baseline supply of housing within the existing urban area would provide 15,761 homes, of which approximately 90% are on brownfield sites.

- The gross total of 8,000 homes in the town centre would be achieved by sensitively increasing the density of development, including a greater number of taller buildings.
- In addition to those sites in district centres already permissioned or identified in the SHLAA, an additional 770 new homes would need to be provided through sensitive increases in density.
- Changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt would be required, releasing 9 parcels of land to enable the development of 3,910 homes.

What are the main opportunities and challenges for this approach?

- 2.5.1. The significantly increased number of homes proposed for Stockport Town Centre and our district centres would support our ongoing strategy focussing on town centre regeneration, creating new housing in accessible locations with the infrastructure and amenities needed to support growing communities. However, the additional focus on development in the urban area means that delivery of necessary green infrastructure to support new housing would be a challenge. Also, the provision of supporting social infrastructure would be critical to the success of this approach.
- 2.5.2. Development of sites in the Green Belt (which are also primarily greenfield sites) will allow a greater number of affordable and adaptable houses to be built and provide greater opportunities to create district heat networks. This approach, however, would not be without harm arising as a consequence of making changes to the boundaries of the Green Belt. All of the possible parcels of land included within this approach perform important functions against one or more of the purposes of Green Belt. Furthermore, this approach would likely result in a greater amount of embodied carbon in the homes and roads constructed.
- 2.5.3. The mixed approach of developing high numbers of homes on brownfield land and high numbers on Green Belt land would allow us the best opportunity to balance the risks of non-delivery on urban brownfield land due to constraints such as contamination, etc. against the potential speedier delivery provided by greenfield sites. In addition, the different sizes and types of sites will appeal to a greater number of house builders who operate in different segments of the market, thus reducing the reliance on a relatively small number of firms to deliver our new homes.
- 2.5.4. There is a risk, however, that including a significant element of development on land that would need to be removed from the Green Belt might detract from, and potentially divert resources from, the critically important focus on urban regeneration and making optimal use of our available brownfield land.

Transport

- 2.5.5. Compared to base year conditions, this approach is predicted to result in an increase of 22% in the total distance travelled on all roads across the borough in the evening peak with a corresponding increase of 39% in travel time, while average speeds are predicted to reduce by circa 3mph (from 22mph to 19mph). Average speeds in the inter-peak are predicted to be 23mph.
- 2.5.6. Compared to base year conditions, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from road transport are predicted to fall by 46.2% from 2022 to 2041, with traffic on the strategic road network contributing to 24.3% of the total CO₂e emissions.

Education

- 2.5.7. This approach would result in significant pressure on primary schools around Heald Green and would add considerable pressure on secondary schools in the east and south of the borough. However, compared to other approaches, this approach would provide the greatest opportunity

to seek developer contributions towards the expansion of existing schools. It is unlikely that the possible development allocations would be large enough to require on-site provision of a new primary or secondary school. There would be a need for new primary and secondary education provision to serve the town centre.

2.5.8. By realising a higher increase in population, however, this approach would also result in greater pressures on school capacity than either of the alternative approaches set out above.

Health

2.5.9. Compared to other approaches, this approach would provide the greatest opportunity to secure developer contributions towards expansion of existing facilities, or the rationalisation of the existing health care estate and develop modern efficient facilities. It is unlikely that any of the possible development allocations would be large enough to require new standalone primary care health facilities. Detailed work to understand the need for health facilities in the town centre is underway.

Would changes be required to the boundaries of the Green Belt?

2.5.10. This approach would require changes to be made to the boundaries of the Green Belt so as to enable the delivery of housing development.

2.5.11. Achieving this approach's housing target would require land capable of delivering 3,910 homes in addition to the 15,761 homes in our existing housing land supply. The site selection methodology set out in Section 1.2 indicates that delivering these additional homes on the following sites would have the least detriment:

- Former Woodford Aerodrome (in addition to consented scheme) (900 homes)
- Heald Green East (in addition to consented scheme) (800)
- Sandown Road, Hazel Grove (300)
- High Lane (500)
- Offerton Sand & Gravel (150)
- Former Offerton High School (185)
- Gravel Bank Road, Woodley (175)
- Hyde Bank Meadows, Romiley (250)
- Jackson's Lane, Hazel Grove (650)

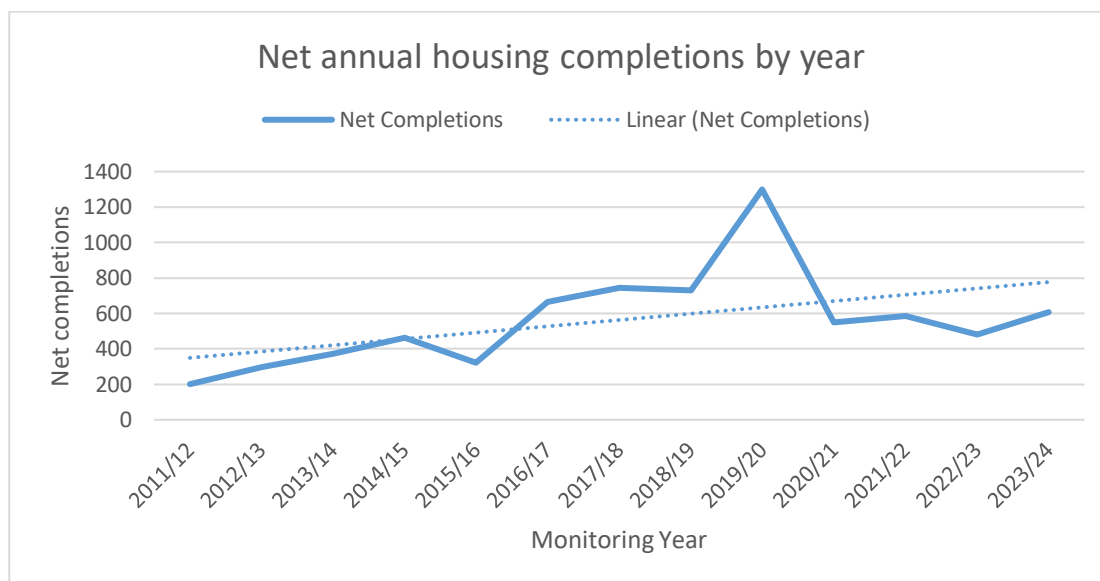
2.6. Summary of approaches in numbers

	Baseline Supply	Green Belt	TOTAL	Percentage of Local Housing Need
Preferred Approach	15,761	0	15,761	85%
First Alternative	15,761	1,985	17,746	95%
Second Alternative	15,761	3,910	19,671	105%

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1.1. The following sections provide a high-level summary of relevant information that will help aid in understanding the approaches the council has looked at in reaching its preferred approach.
- 3.1.2. Stockport's adopted Core Strategy sets an average housing target of 480 dwellings net additional dwellings per year from 2011-2026. Our housing monitoring data as shown in *Figure 1 Net annual housing completions* indicates that delivery against that target has been mixed, with completions failing to achieve the target over a number of years, which reflects the effects of the global recession from 2008, however over since 2017 completions have significantly surpassed the Core Strategy target.

Figure 1 Net annual housing completions



3.2. Standard method to calculate local housing need

- 3.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out how we should plan for new homes in our town. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states:

“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area (see paragraph 67 below). There may be exceptional circumstances, including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area [footnote 25] which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need; in which case the alternative approach should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for [footnote 26].”

- 3.2.2. The guidance that describes how we should calculate the local housing need figure is described in planning practice guidance²¹. This sets out that we should use 2014-based household projections from the Office of National Statistics. We have followed this guidance to calculate the figure for local housing need. Using the standard method to calculate the local housing need Stockport results in a figure of 1,097 homes per year, or 18,649 homes over the plan period of 2024 to 2041.

²¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

Step 1 - Setting the baseline

3.2.3. Using the ONS data from 2014 household figure - Table 406:

- 133,172 households in 2024
- 141,668 households in 2034

3.2.4. There is a total of 8,496 new households over the 10-year period, equivalent to an average household growth of 849.6 per year.

Step 2 - An adjustment to take account of affordability

3.2.5. The affordability ratio to be applied is produced by the Office for National Statistics and for these purposes is the ratio of median house prices to median incomes. The most recently published information (March 2024) was 8.66²² for Stockport.

3.2.6. As that median workplace-based affordability ratio is above 4 an adjustment is made using the below calculation

$$\text{Adjustment factor} = \left(\frac{\text{Local affordability ratio} - 4}{4} \right) \times 0.25 + 1 = 1.29125$$

3.2.7. The minimum annual local housing need figure = 1.29125 x 849.6 = 1,097 (rounded to the nearest full figure).

Step 3 - Capping the level of any increase

- The average annual housing requirement figure in the existing relevant policies is 480 a year
- Average annual household growth over 10 years is 850 (as per step 1)
- The minimum annual local housing need figure is 1,097 (as per step 2)
- The cap is set at 40% above the higher of the most recent average annual housing requirement figure or household growth:
- Cap = 850 + (40% of 850) = 850 + 260 = 1,110

3.2.8. The capped figure is greater than the minimum annual local housing need figure and therefore does not need to be applied. The minimum figure advised by the standard method remains, therefore, at 1,097 new homes per year.

Local Housing Need – the advisory starting-point for establishing the Local Plan’s housing requirement

3.2.9. Paragraph 22 of the NPPF sets out that a plan’s strategic policies should look ahead over a 15 year period from adoption. The Local Plan is scheduled to be adopted in 2026 and will run until 2041. Our overall Local Housing Need for the 17-year period up to 2041 from the current year is **18,649** new homes (rounded to the nearest whole number).

3.2.10. It should be noted that the guidance clearly states that the 2014-projections should be used, and the council is proceeding on this basis. However, it may be noted that at the time of writing, more recent household population projections are available from the ONS which are based on figures from 2018. Over the period covered by the Local Plan, these projections indicate annual

²² Table 5c:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian/current/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearnings.xlsx>

household growth of around 627 units of. Allowing for rounding and following the same standard calculation as above, to take into account the affordability ratio, results in a figure of 809 homes per year, or 13,757 homes over the plan period of 2024 to 2041. Adding on 5% to these figures to ensure choice and competition in the market for land would result in a need for 14,446 new homes over the plan period. The council will keep this figure under review if the government publishes updated guidance in relation to the standard method.

3.3. Stockport Land Supply Position

The 2021 Stockport Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment²³.

- 3.3.1. The 2021 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) methodology and findings has been prepared with a base date of 31 March 2021 using information available during the study period of summer and early autumn 2021. Since the SHLAA was published, permissions have been granted on some sites and on a limited number of sites it is now clear that housing development is unlikely to come forward during the plan period. Those changes are not reflected in the published SHLAA. An update of the SHLAA is underway and will be completed in time to inform the regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. The information set out below relates to the published SHLAA dated 2021.
- 3.3.2. The key objectives of the SHLAA were:
- To assess land availability by identifying buildings or areas of land (including previously developed land and greenfield land) that have development potential for housing;
 - To assess the potential level of housing that can be provided on identified land;
 - To identify constraints that might make a particular site unavailable and/or unviable for development; and
 - To assess which sites are likely to be deliverable and which are likely to be developable.
- 3.3.3. Overall, the SHLAA work identified a baseline total supply housing land for 13,149 new homes. The sites that contribute to our overall supply are available to view on our websiteThe information is saved as open data which can be downloaded in both CSV and GIS format and can be viewed as an interactive map.
- 3.3.4. A SHLAA is meant to be strategic in its nature, therefore sites below the physical size threshold of 0.15ha have not been subject to a strategic assessment of their potential housing capacity. Instead, an allowance for future completions on small sites is included within the overall assessment of future supply, and this is based on actual completions on sites delivering less than 5 units. Therefore, in addition to the sites and broad locations that were assessed through the SHLAA, a small sites allowance of 70 units per annum was included in our supply of available land, and a rail station allowance of 500 dwellings was also added to the supply. The rail station allowance was added to the supply based on on-going work to assess of potential housing capacity at some rail stations in the borough.
- 3.3.5. The council continues to work in partnership with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to bring forward Greater Manchester's first ever Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) which covers the Stockport Town Centre West area. Covering 130 acres of brownfield land in the heart of Stockport, the MDC will help accelerate the transformation of this area in the west of the town centre, creating a new urban village. The MDC area will provide an estimated 4,000 new homes. Capacity analysis of parcels of land within the MDC area was undertaken to inform these figures.

²³ <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment-shlaa>

3.3.6. The MDC is located within Stockport Town Centre; the wider town centre has been treated as a broad location of search for residential development. An overall allowance in the SHLAA of 6,000 dwellings was made within the broad location of search, delivering units throughout the plan period; this is inclusive of 4,000 units within the MDC area. Current schemes and planning permissions within this area were accounted for to ensure that units were not double counted within the overall land supply figures. As a result of this, a net allowance of 4,792 units corresponded to an area wide total of 6,000 units for the town centre, and this is reflected in the numbers reproduced in the tables below.

3.3.7. At the time the 2021 SHLAA was produced, around 300 sites benefited from planning permission, with an outstanding net capacity of 3,313 dwellings; this included sites below the threshold of 0.15 hectares with planning permission at the baseline date of the study. Only one of these sites will continue to deliver sites beyond the first 5 years, and this is the site of the former Woodford Aerodrome, which has planning permission for 920 units, of which 532 units were still to be delivered at the time the 2021 SHLAA was produced.

Supply		Number of dwellings
Deliverable 1-5 years 2021/22- 2025/26	Sites with planning permission	3,181
	Small sites allowance (nil in first 5yrs)	0
	SHLAA Sites	0
	Town centre allowance	466
	Sub total	3,647
Developable 6-10 years 2026/27- 2030/31	Sites with planning permission	132
	Small sites allowance (70 x 5yrs)	350
	SHLAA Sites	1,834
	Town centre allowance	3,025
	Sub total	5,341
Developable 11-15 years 2031/32- 2035/36	Sites with planning permission	0
	Small sites allowance (70 x 5yrs)	350
	SHLAA Sites	1,672
	Town centre allowance	1,050
	Sub total	3,072
Developable 16+ years 2036/37 >	Sites with planning permission	0
	Small sites allowance (70 x 3yrs)	210
	SHLAA Sites	128
	Town centre allowance	251
	Sub total	589
Rail Stations allowance		500
OVERALL TOTAL		13,149

Composition of land supply	Number of homes
Sites with planning permission	3,313
SHLAA sites	3,634
Town centre allowance ²⁴ (net)	4,792
Rail stations allowance	500
Small Sites allowance (70 x 13 years)	910
OVERALL TOTAL	13,149

²⁴ Please see paragraphs above that explain the relationship between the allowance of 6,000 new homes across the town centre, and the net allowance

Updated position

- 3.3.8. As noted above, the situation at a small number of sites in the SHLAA has changed which affects the supply. Whilst a full review of the SHLAA is underway, for the purposes of this (regulation 18 consultation) version of the plan, the council has updated its figures not only to update the current state of permissioned supply, but also to reflect that the capacity of some SHLAA sites may have changed or they are clearly no longer likely to come forward for housing in the plan period. In addition, further work has been undertaken in relation to the town centre which indicates that the capacity of the town centre living area has increased from 6,000 (gross) to 8,000. Taken away from that overall figure are completions since 2021 and extant permissions in the town centre living area, which total 1,236 units.
- 3.3.9. A further additional allowance has been applied across all of the district centres in anticipation of increased delivery in those centres, totalling 770 units.
- 3.3.10. A further change to the figures in the tables above relates the sites with planning permission. The most recent figure is derived from the housing monitoring undertaken for the year ending March 31st 2024. This shows that there are 3,209 units in the permissioned supply.
- 3.3.11. As a result of those changes, the total supply figure comprising permissions, SHLAA sites and the associated allowances identified above is 15,761

3.4. Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- 3.4.1. The Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was produced by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2019 and was updated in April 2021²⁵. The purpose of the SHMA is to present a clear, evidenced picture of the housing market in Greater Manchester (GM). It shows how the housing market is changing and provides an assessment of the future needs for both market and affordable housing, also analysing the housing needs of different groups within the population over the next 20 years.
- 3.4.2. The SHMA defines GM as a single Housing Market Area. This conclusion is based on the high levels of self-containment within the conurbation (81%), meaning a high proportion of households who move into a home in GM already live there. Furthermore, the majority of people who live in GM also work in the conurbation. As such, the SHMA concludes that due to the complex functioning of housing and labour markets within GM means there is no simple way of subdividing the conurbation into identifiable HMAs or functional economic areas.
- 3.4.3. The SHMA provides a detailed assessment of the characteristics of the housing market area. Those key characteristics (with a specific focus on Stockport) are set out below:
- In terms of the housing market, the SHMA notes that for both buying and renting, Trafford and Stockport's averages are significantly higher than the GM average. In Stockport the average price for all properties in 2020 was £239,302, while the GM average was £180,786. This is still lower than average for England and Wales which was £249,286 for the same year.
 - The rental market shows a similar picture for the 2019/2020 with the median month rents reported as £700 in Stockport, £625 for GM and £725 in England. Stockport, Trafford and Manchester had the highest values. In 2019 Stockport had the highest residential land value of £2,400,000 per hectare. However, this had decreased by 9.6% from April 2017 when it was reported at £2,655,000.

²⁵ <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/GMCAFiles/PFE/Supporting%20documents/06%20Places%20for%20Homes/06.01.02%20Greater%20Manchester%20Strategic%20Housing%20Market%20Assessment.pdf>

- The outer areas of the conurbation, including Stockport see higher levels of owner-occupation. Further to this, the SHMA notes that Stockport Town Centre has lower levels of private renting than owner-occupation, which is contrary to the trends seen across the rest of the combined authority.
- The SHMA notes that Greater Manchester has relatively low average household incomes that mean many residents find meeting housing costs a challenge. In Stockport, the SHMA identifies that the purchase price for lower quartile value homes would be around 8.5 times the lower quartile income.
- For renting, across GM there appears to be an issue with affordability, where even the lower quartile rents are above 30% of the lowest earning household incomes.
- In terms of affordable housing, Stockport has the smallest percentage of social dwellings in the conurbation at 13.4%. A high proportion of the social housing stock in Stockport is local authority owned. In terms of affordable housing need, the figure arrived at in the SHMA for GM is 5,214 households with 809 households required in Stockport.
- In terms of the housing needs of particular groups, the SHMA reports that in GM there will be 33.1% more people aged 65 and over living alone by 2040. Stockport already has a significant proportion (20%) of the population being 65, with the majority of this population living alone without additional care. However, by 2040 this is forecasted to change with the highest proportion of the population living in a care home and a significant increase in the number of people living with dementia. Stockport is projected to have the highest number of property shortfalls in Housing for Older People (without care) by 2035 at 2,015. This shortfall includes more properties for sale rather than rent.
- In terms of supported housing in more general terms, the SHMA reports that Stockport appears to show low levels of this tenure, however this may be due to the fact that Stockport Council own social housing stock and their own units may not have been taken into account in the figures as the SHMA was not able to break down overall housing stock figure to take account of support housing.

3.4.4. Overall, the SHMA recognises that the housing market area is hugely diverse, and factors vary greatly across GM, between districts and down to neighbourhood and street level. The evidence suggests that the housing market in Stockport is performing well, residents earn higher than average incomes and are more economically active than the average levels in GM. However, when analysing the data at a local level it becomes apparent that there is significant variance within the borough. Therefore, it is important that the policies within the Local Plan acknowledge these imbalances and provides mechanisms to overcome these challenges.

3.5. Housing Needs Assessment

3.5.1. In 2019, we commissioned consultants to prepare a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). This provides the latest available evidence to help shape the future housing strategies and policies of our area. The HNA incorporates:

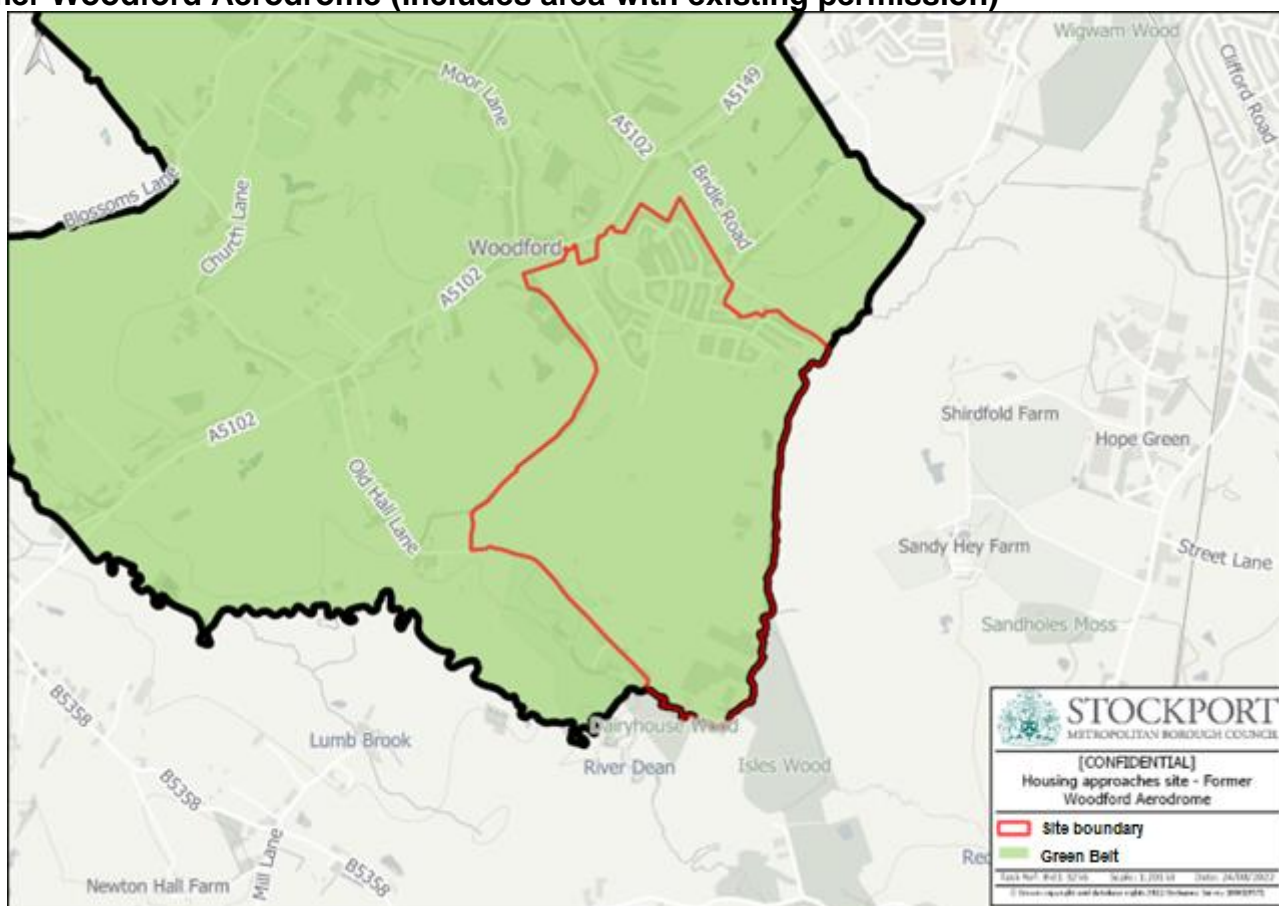
- extensive review, analysis and modelling of existing (secondary) data;
- a comprehensive household survey (2,320 responses were received representing a 15.5% response rate); and
- an online survey of stakeholders.

3.5.2. The HNA identifies a total of 11,265 existing households in housing need, which represents 9% of all households across Stockport. It is also important to note that this need varies significantly across different areas within 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.

- 3.5.3. The HNA found that there is a net annual affordable housing shortfall of 549 dwellings. In terms of affordable housing mix, the HNA suggests that an overall affordable dwelling mix of 55% houses and 45% level access accommodation (including flats and bungalows) would meet the needs of the borough.
- 3.5.4. The HNA found that there continues to be a particular need for supported and specialist accommodation, improving choices for older people in the borough and those with physical disabilities is also increasingly important.
- 3.5.5. The findings from the study provide a robust and defensible evidence base for policy development. Due to the findings set out in the HNA, delivering a range of affordable housing is therefore a key strategic objective for the Local Plan. An update to the HNA is currently underway and is expected to be completed in time to inform the next stage of the Stockport Local Plan.

3.6. Site Plans

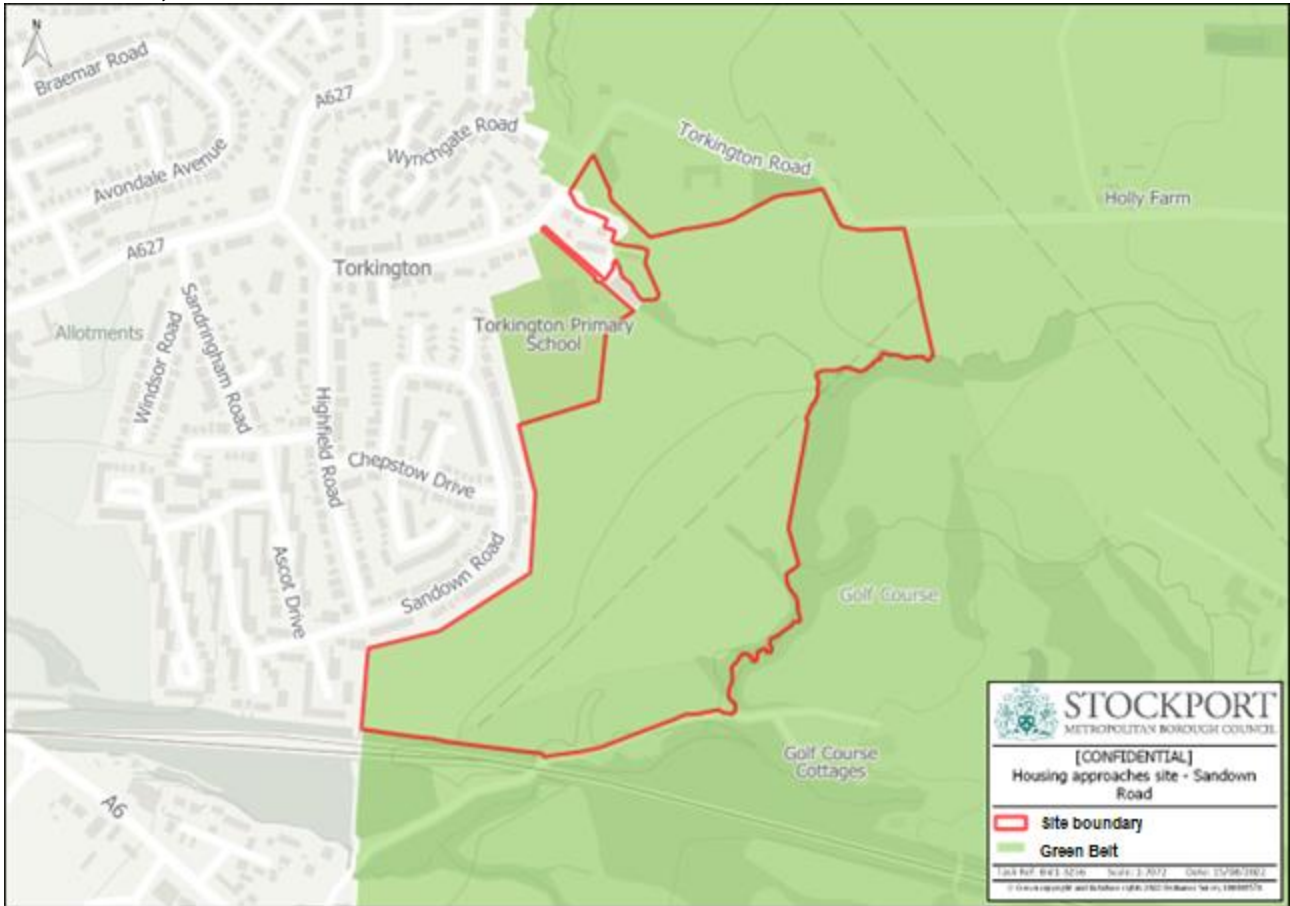
Former Woodford Aerodrome (includes area with existing permission)



Heald Green East (includes area with existing permission)



Sandown Road, Hazel Grove



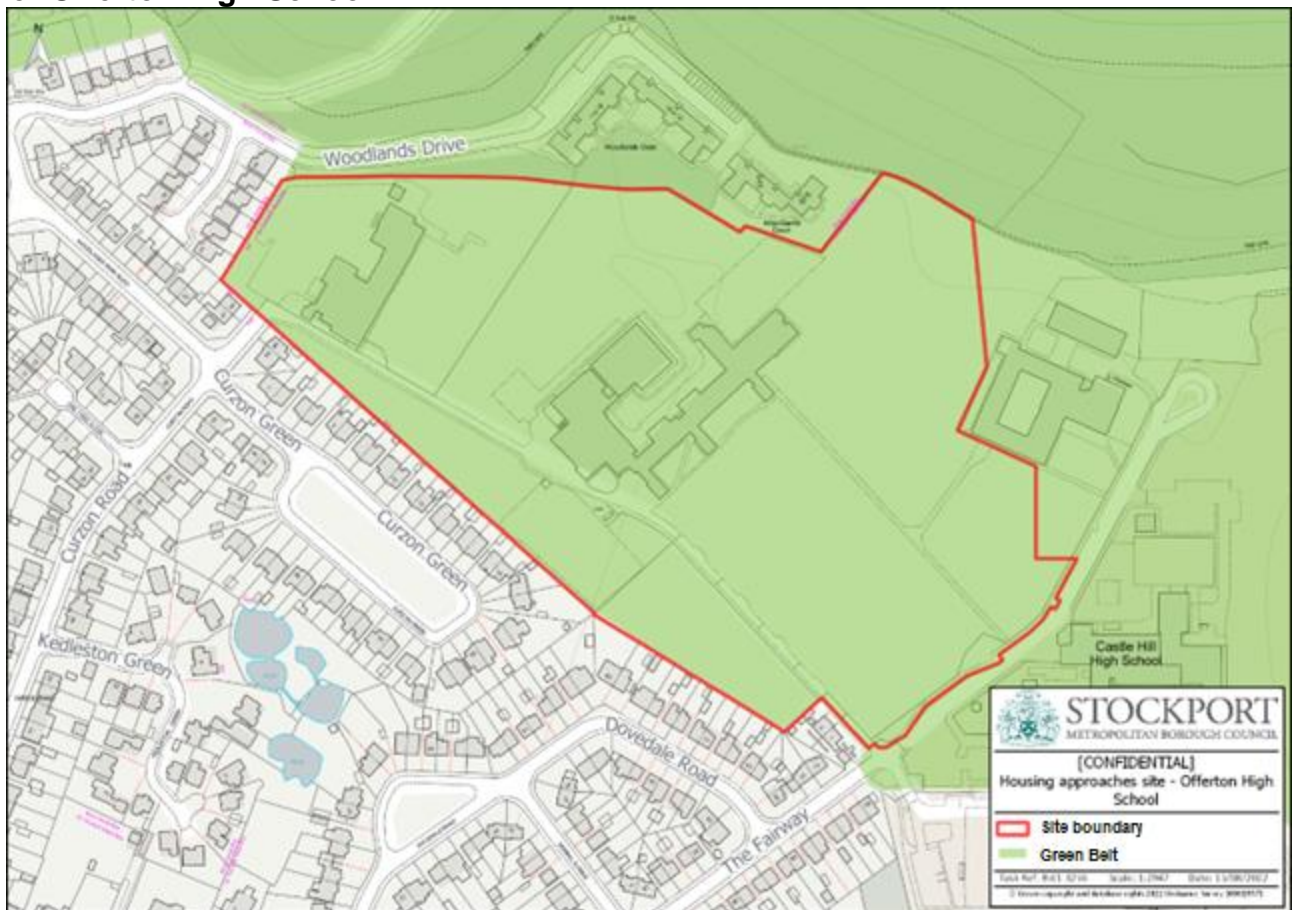
High Lane



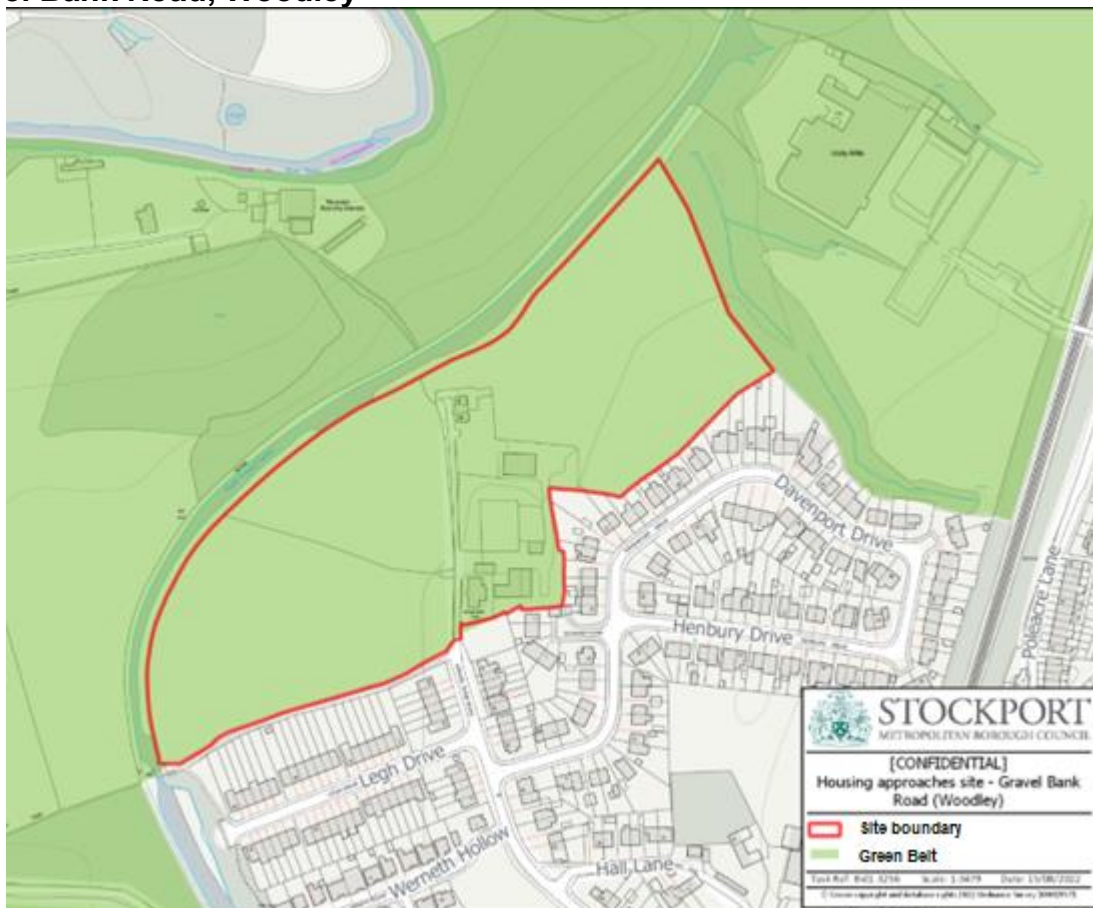
Offerton Sand and Gravel



Former Offerton High School



Gravel Bank Road, Woodley



Hyde Bank Meadows, Romiley



Jackson's Lane, Hazel Grove

