

Buckingham

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

October, 2023

Quality information

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List of abbreviations used in the text:

DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG)
HMA	Housing Market Area
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
HRF	Housing Requirement Figure (the total number of homes the NA is expected to plan for, usually supplied by LPAs)
HLIN	Housing Learning and Improvement Network
HRP	Household Reference Person
LA	Local Authority
LHN	Local Housing Need
LHNA	Local Housing Needs Assessment
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Area
MSOA	Middle Layer Super Output Area
NA	Neighbourhood (Plan) Area
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OA	Output Area
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRS	Private Rented Sector
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
VOA	Valuation Office Agency

1. Executive Summary

1. Buckingham is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the recently created Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority. The NA boundary covers the areas administered by the Town Council.
2. The 2021 Census recorded 14,292 individuals in Buckingham, indicating an increase of 2,250 people (19% growth) since the 2011 Census.
3. There has been significant development in Buckingham in recent years. Buckinghamshire Council has provided data showing that 1,492 new homes have been built since 2011, bringing the current total number of dwellings to 6,417. As of July 2023, outstanding commitments (dwellings on sites with planning permission) total 471 homes.
4. This Executive Summary details the conclusions of each chapter of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), addressing each of the themes agreed with the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group at the outset of the research.
5. Data from the 2021 Census is being released throughout 2023. At present, the available data covers population, households, tenure, and dwelling stock characteristics. Some data from the Census 2021 at the localised level, including parishes, will not be available until later in 2023, as well as data comparing numerous variables. As such this HNA will draw on the latest available data from the 2021 Census where possible and will also continue to use other data sets, including 2011 Census, Valuation Office Agency data, and ONS parish projections where necessary to build up evidence at the neighbourhood level.

Conclusions – Quantity of Housing Needed

6. This HNA recommends an overall HNF of 74 dwellings per annum for Buckingham.
7. The Aylesbury Vale Local Plan covers the period up to 2033 but the new Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan will extend 7 years beyond this to 2040. How the annual need figure produced here should be translated into a total target for the new Neighbourhood Plan therefore depends on how the existing target is interpreted and the wider objectives of the community.
8. One option is for Buckingham to consider that it has (or soon will have) met in full its housing growth target for the period to 2033 (the end date of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan), and therefore to multiply the annual housing need of 74 established here by the remaining 7 years in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan period. This would produce a residual need figure of 518 homes for the remaining period 2033-2040. Given how early in the current Local Plan period Buckingham has already nearly exceeded its existing 2,177 target, any additional homes built prior to 2033 could be counted toward the residual 518 need figure.
9. A higher growth option, if this is the desire of the community, would be to consider the existing target to have been fulfilled through the made Neighbourhood Plan and Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, and to begin the new Neighbourhood Plan with a fresh target based on the need figure estimated here. This would involve multiplying the need figure of 74 by

the total number of years in the new Neighbourhood Plan, which is currently envisaged to run to 2040. Assuming a start date of 2024 implies a total need of 1,184 additional homes.

10. Which option to pursue (including the possibility of a middle-ground or further alternatives) is a policy discussion for consideration by the Working Group, Town Council, wider community and Buckinghamshire Council.
11. It should be noted that the housing figure for Buckinghamshire is derived from the Government's standard method and is likely to change annually as ONS publishes new affordability data each year and new household projections approximately every two years. Although housing need figures are not invalidated each year as new data is released, this could impact any indicative housing requirement figure provided by Buckinghamshire for neighbourhood areas in the future (since this would be calculated using new data).
12. That figure has been broken down with the aim of allocating an appropriate share to Buckingham with reference to the strategy for the pattern and scale of new development across the former district as expressed in the latest Local Plan, which takes into account the sustainability and suitability of the former district's various settlements for growth. This process relies on interpretations and assumptions made by AECOM.
13. Buckinghamshire are currently at the early stages of developing a Local Plan for the new Unitary Authority, with the new Local Plan expected to be adopted in 2025. At the time any final Neighbourhood Plan housing requirement figure is provided by Buckinghamshire, it can be considered to supersede the provisional calculation within this study. Consequently, there is a need for the neighbourhood group to continue to engage with the LPA to confirm the final housing figure for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Conclusions- Tenure and Affordability

Current tenure profile

14. Home ownership is the dominant tenure in Buckingham at 66% of all households, though it is slightly less common than the county average (70%). Of the remaining households, a majority live in privately rented accommodation (18%). At 13%, the rate of social renting in Buckingham is slightly above the county average. Over the past decade there have been particular increases in the number of private and social renters, as well as a proportionally significant injection of new shared ownership properties.

Housing costs

15. Home values in the NA have followed a clear upward trajectory despite some year-on-year fluctuations. The current median house price (middle number when arranged from lowest to highest) is £369,000, which is 48% higher than its level in 2013. The lower quartile price (the lowest 25% of prices, used as a good proxy for entry-level housing) stands at £288,000.
16. It is also worth noting that the current median house price in Buckingham is slightly less expensive than the current median for Buckinghamshire as a whole. This is in spite of the unusual fact (for a town, and discussed in the Type and Size section), that the dwelling

mix in the NA includes a higher share of detached homes and fewer flats than wider Buckinghamshire.

17. AECOM has estimated the annual income required to afford various tenures of housing in Buckingham – each of which is explained in detail in Appendix C. These thresholds are compared to incomes to determine which options are the most appropriate for local people going forward. The average household income in the NA area was £52,150 in 2018, and the lower quartile income (per person) for Buckinghamshire was £19,200 in 2022.
18. It was found that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. The median house price would require an annual income around 80% above the current average. Private renting presents a similar affordability challenge, generally only making entry-level properties accessible to average and dual lower earning households. Households made up of a single lower earner cannot afford the given rental thresholds and would need to rely on social and affordable rented options.
19. Subsidised routes to home ownership like First Homes and shared ownership are intended to target people who can afford to rent but not to buy. In Buckingham there is a relatively large gap between the income needed to afford to rent (£34,000) and to buy (£74,000), who may benefit from these products.
20. The discount on First Homes can be set at 30%, 40% or 50% in Neighbourhood Plans. In Buckingham a 30% discount may be marginally affordable to the average earning household, but a 40% discount would expand access to ownership more widely. If seeking to take action on this point in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Working Group advised to discuss this possibility with Buckinghamshire Council, who may be able to supply evidence of development viability that is also relevant to this policy option.
21. Affordable rented housing appears generally affordable to households with two lower earners (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). Single lower earners can afford average social rents and affordable rents but the lowest earners, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling or additional subsidy, may need to live in a room in a shared house using housing benefits.

Students and HMOs

22. The University of Buckingham, a private university with approximately 3,500 students, is located within the NA boundary. The Accommodation Office for the University confirms that there are currently 467 student rooms offered at 13 sites across three campuses. Plans currently exist to offer a further 71 shared rooms at a new site in early 2024, with a capacity for 142 students.
23. This suggests that around 3,000 University students are likely to be accommodated outside of halls of residences. Though some will live at home and others outside of Buckingham altogether, it is reasonable to assume that the majority live in private rented housing in the town. Nationwide data from the Higher Education Statistics Authority suggests that 27% of students live in the private rented sector, which would imply ongoing demand for rented homes from around 950 students in Buckingham.

24. This will include people living alone, in small groups, and in Houses in Multiple Accommodation (HMOs), where multiple unrelated individuals or households share facilities such as kitchens or bathrooms. This means that demand from students is likely to impact the market for both 1-2 bedroom self-contained flats and larger family housing that can be rented out to larger groups. This demand pressure can result in higher rents as well as incentives to convert more family housing to HMOs, with knock-on impacts on the housing needs of other groups.
25. The Buckinghamshire Council register indicates that there are 21 licenced HMOs in Buckingham, which have a total of 115 rooms (implying an average size of 5-6 bedrooms). This is likely to undercount the stock for a number of reasons. Speaking very generally, the current number of HMOs in the NA is likely to be fewer than 100 at present, though still able to accommodate around a third of the University's students as well as some non-student low-income house sharers.
26. Rental listings suggest that rooms in HMOs cost around £670 per month, making them cheaper than self-contained 1-2 bedroom homes. However, the potential rental income from a 4 bedroom HMO may be higher than a 4 bedroom self-contained house, providing an incentives for landlords to convert family housing if demand from students and low income house sharers rises in future.
27. There are a number of policy, licensing and other measures that can be taken to control the number, distribution and standards of HMOs. However, these are generally beyond the power of a Neighbourhood Plan and, if of interest, are a matter for discussion between the Working Group and Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

The need for Affordable Housing

28. AECOM estimate that there is a need for 9 (rounded) new social/affordable rental homes each year to satisfy local need, this equates to 141 new social/affordable rental homes over the neighbourhood plan period (to 2040).
29. This result may be lower than expected given the current backlog of need (in the region of 300 households). This is due to the expected rate of turnover in the substantial existing stock of social housing, which suggests that vacancies will be able to satisfy much of the projected newly arising need as well as some of the backlog.
30. However, Buckingham may be expected to meet some of the wider needs of the town's surrounding rural area and/or that of the wider county as established in the 2016 HEDNA. As such, it may be prudent to maximise the potential delivery of new affordable rented housing to address the current backlog, future-proof the stock in case needs change, and provide homes for households living in the wider area.
31. AECOM estimate a potential demand for 38 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in Buckingham, or 613 in total over the remaining years in the period to 2040. The households eligible for such homes do not necessarily lack their own housing but would prefer to buy rather than rent. They have been included in the national planning definition of those in need of Affordable Housing, but their needs are less acute than those on the waiting list for affordable rented housing.

Affordable Housing policy

32. Affordable Housing is typically provided and made financially viable by Local or Neighbourhood Plan policies that require it to be included at a set proportion of market housing developments. Buckinghamshire's adopted policy on this subject requires 25% of all new housing be affordable, and this is raised to 35% in the made Neighbourhood Plan.
33. AECOM recommends that the tenure mix of Affordable Housing secured in future years gives broadly equal weight to affordable home ownership options (50%) and affordable rented provision (50%). There is an opportunity here to boost levels of affordable home ownership to meet high levels of potential demand in a context where home ownership through the open market is very unaffordable. The trade-off is that this would lower delivery of affordable rented housing, which serves those in the greatest need. In this case, AECOM estimates that the existing stock of affordable rented housing may be sufficient for the community's evolving needs. However, it may be prudent to future-proof the stock through some additional supply in case this situation changes and to contribute to the unmet needs of the wider area.
34. There is no obligation to follow this recommendation or to depart from emerging Local Plan policy if that is more in line with the community's objectives. Further discussion with Buckinghamshire Council about the options and their advice would be beneficial, and could cover issues beyond the scope of this report, such as development viability.

Conclusions- Type and Size

The current housing mix

35. The current dwelling mix in Buckingham is generally weighted in favour of larger and less dense home types. This is somewhat surprising given that the NA is a town with a generally more urban character than the surrounding rural area. This may be due to the impact of Buckinghamshire's larger settlements (e.g. High Wycombe and Aylesbury) on the county average.
36. The most common dwelling type in Buckingham is detached houses (37% compared to the national average of 23%), and there are relatively few flats (13% compared to the national average of 22%). The proportion of bungalows, at nearly 7%, is slightly below the county and national averages (both 9%), which may be reinforcing the high levels of demand observed by the Working Group.
37. Buckingham's size profile more closely tracks that of wider Buckinghamshire, while both areas depart from the national average in their high share of 4+ bedroom homes and low proportions of dwellings with 1-2 bedrooms. Homes with more than 3 bedrooms make up just over 70% of the total in Buckingham.
38. Over the past ten years, despite significant levels of new development, the housing mix has remained relatively similar in the town. The key exceptions to this are relatively high proportional growth (from a low base) in the number of flats, and the large increase in 4+ bedroom homes to become the joint most common size category (with 3 bedroom homes).

The former shift has provided useful diversity in the market, while the latter has exaggerated the existing dominance of larger homes.

Population characteristics

39. The NA population, which is generally younger than the wider county and England, has experienced significant growth in the decade since 2011 in line with the scale of residential development in that time.
40. The only age group that has not expanded is that aged 15-24. This may be a reflection of the timing of the 2021 Census during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many students returned to their family homes. However, this statistic also chimes with the perception of the Working Group that young adults tend to leave Buckingham for employment and lifestyle reasons, returning (or replaced by others) in later age groups to begin or expand their families. The population of 25-44 year olds has accordingly increased, along with significant growth in the number of younger children.
41. Despite this evidence of the retention and attraction of family groups, another clear trend in Buckingham's population statistics is toward ageing, with by far the largest proportional changes seen in the 65-84 and 85+ age groups, even though they remain a relatively small proportion of the total.
42. Applying ONS household projections for Buckinghamshire to the Buckingham population in 2011 suggests that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with the 65+ age group expected to increase by around two-thirds to become approximately 34% of the total, while all other age bands grow at more modest rates or contract. Given the slightly younger population of the NA compared to Buckinghamshire (data for which has been used to derive these projections), it is possible that the rate of ageing will be lower in practice, particularly if Buckingham continues to attract a replacement population of younger families.
43. Buckingham's household composition is similar to that of the wider county, notable for a low proportion of single-person households and a higher share of families with dependent children than the national average.
44. As of the 2011 Census, more than 75% of households in the NA had at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, and 46% had at least two extra bedrooms. This is not surprising given the relatively large skew of the housing stock. Under-occupancy was most common among the three distinct groups: couples with no children, older households and single people. While not uncommon, this might suggest that Buckingham's larger housing is not necessarily being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or by older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.

Future population and size needs

45. It is possible to estimate the size mix of future homes that might best accommodate demographic trends and address imbalances in the existing housing stock. The result of this process suggests that new development should deliver a variety of dwelling sizes with a focus on 3 bedroom homes. Despite being the most common size category at present,

3 bedroom homes offer the versatility to accommodate various household types, including new families and downsizers, a fact reflected in their popularity among all age groups locally.

46. This balanced mix, with a lower share of 4+ bedroom homes than are present in the existing housing stock, could help to achieve three key outcomes: improving affordability, meeting the needs suggested by demographic trends (notably the ageing of older people and continuing to attract younger families), and diversification away from the high proportion of 4+ bedroom homes in the current stock.
47. This recommendation is broadly in line with the evidence for former Vale of Aylesbury presented in the 2016 Buckinghamshire HEDNA Housing Need Study. However, this source could also be used to justify promoting slightly more larger homes and fewer 1 bedroom options if this is desired by the community – for example if flats are not supported throughout the NA for reasons of character.
48. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the NA or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors. The size mix of Affordable Housing also tends to be considered separately from market housing by the Local Planning Authority, and to focus on the smaller units for which the vast majority of those on the waiting list in Buckingham are eligible.

Conclusions- Specialist Housing for Older People

Characteristics of the current older population

49. There are currently estimated to be around 1,157 individuals aged 75 or over in Buckingham, a number that has grown from 809 in 2011 and is projected to rise to 1,770 by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (2040).
50. A clear majority (83%) of Buckinghamshire households aged 55-75 in 2011 (and therefore likely to reach the 75+ bracket by 2040) are owner occupiers and the remainder predominantly rent from a social landlord. This is important because those currently owning will require specialist accommodation for market purchase, being largely ineligible for subsidised housing, while those in private or social rent will need to rely on subsidised rented housing because they are unlikely to have the funds to buy. Rates of disability in Buckingham are also higher among social tenants than owner-occupiers.

Projected demographic change and need for specialist housing

51. The 75+ population of the NA is projected to increase from 8% to 12% of the population between 2021 and 2040. As established in the previous chapter, Buckingham has a slightly younger population than the wider county and may therefore age slower in the coming years than is estimated here.
52. The growth in the older population, which, rather than the total, is the focus of the estimates of need here, should be converted into households because some older people

will be cohabiting in old age. The projected 75+ population growth of 613 is equivalent to roughly 438 households in that age category.

53. The potential need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people can be estimated by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the NA. This can be sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research.
54. Specialist housing is targeted at older people, and they are the focus of this analysis, because disability rates are significantly higher among older age groups. In Buckingham in 2011, the proportion of people with a disability that limits their daily activities a lot was under 2% for those aged below 49 and 5% for those aged 50-64 but jumps to 19% for those aged over 65.
55. The two estimates suggest a range of 154 to 200 specialist accommodation units might be required during the Plan period. The estimates are also broken down by tenure and level of support required. Broadly, 60-75% of the need is for accommodation offered for market purchase. This chimes with the higher propensity of older households to be homeowners. A similar range (60-75%) of the need is found to be for sheltered housing with limited support rather than additional care arrangements. The potential need for care and nursing home beds in Buckingham to 2035 can be roughly estimated at 40 units, a level of demand that could easily be met by the two recent care homes offering 152 bedspaces in total.
56. These estimates are fairly large relative to the overall housing need of the NA. Despite this, it would not be prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families, and others important to maintaining a balanced and vibrant community. The HNA evidence can be used to support specialist housing development but does not make that obligatory. How far to promote this is a choice for the Working Group and wider community.

Accessibility and adaptability

57. Given that there may not be a large volume of additional specialist supply during the Plan period, an alternative or additional avenue to the provision of additional specialist homes is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability required of new development with Buckinghamshire Council. There is a particularly high degree of overlap between the groups served by sheltered specialist housing and adapted mainstream housing, so the unmet need for such homes identified here can be reduced through this avenue.
58. The current adopted Local Plan provides explicit encouragement for development to accommodate specific groups such as older people. Policy H6c sets out that all new development should meet national standards for accessibility and adaptability (Category M4(2)), and 15% of Affordable Housing should be nominated for wheelchair users (Category M4(3)). The evidence gathered here further justifies these requirements. It is unclear whether Neighbourhood Plans can set their own requirements for the application of the national standards of adaptability and accessibility for new housing, and existing requirements in the Local Plan are robust, so discussions with the LPA are advised exceeding or departing from them is a priority here.

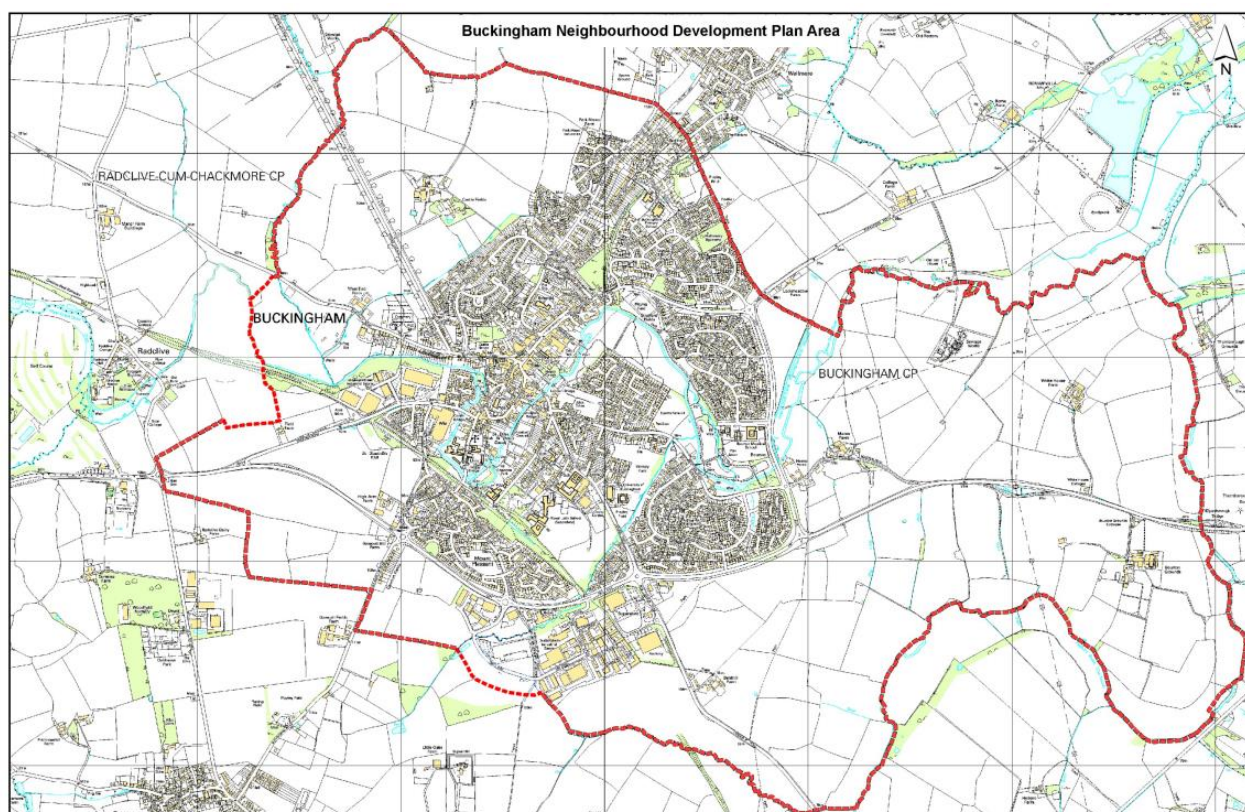
2. Context

Local context

59. Buckingham is a town and Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the unitary authority of Buckinghamshire in the South East of England. A Neighbourhood Plan for the area, covering the period 2011-2031, was adopted in 2015.
60. The Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is currently in the process of reviewing the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The evidence supplied in this report will look ahead to 2040, which is the currently envisaged end date of the new Plan, but where possible will also provide annualised figures which can be extrapolated to a different term if the timescale changes.
61. Buckingham is a town in the north of Buckinghamshire. It is served by the A413, which runs through the centre of the town, and bypassed by the A421.. Buckingham acts as a main service centre for a number of nearby villages. The town has a range of amenities, including hotels, large supermarkets, a university, two senior schools and four primary schools, and a range of other small and medium sized businesses.
62. Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority was created in 2020 through the amalgamation of the former local authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe. Previously Buckingham was part of Aylesbury Vale district.

The NA boundary and key statistics

63. The NA covers the entire civil parish of Buckingham plus a small area in the parish of Gawcott with Lenborough. For Census purposes, the NA is made up, like the rest of England, of statistical units called Output Areas (OAs).
64. It should be noted that a small southwestern area within the designated NA is part of a much larger OA that extends far into the surrounding countryside. Because the small part inside the NA is primarily an industrial estate (with little bearing on population and housing statistics) and is smaller in scale than the large rural area outside of the NA, it has been excluded from the data analysed in this study. a map of the Plan area appears below in Figure 2-1. A breakdown of the specific OAs relevant to Buckingham and a map of the excluded area are provided in Appendix A.

Figure 2-1: Map of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Area

Source: *Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031*¹

65. At the time of the 2021 Census the NA was home to 14,292 residents, formed into 5,914 households and occupying 6,259 dwellings. The 2021 data indicates population growth of around 18.7% since 2011², when the Census counted 12,043 people, 4,741 households and 4,925 dwellings. The average number of people per household is currently 2.4, falling slightly in the last decade (from 2.5) – due largely to ageing and mortality, but potentially also reflective of other patterns such as the provision of smaller homes and delays in childbearing.
66. Comparing the 2011 and 2021 Censuses suggests that the overall housing stock in Buckingham grew by 1,334 in the last decade. Completions data provided by Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority indicate that 1,492 dwellings have been built since 2011. This generally aligns with the Census data, since it is likely that a number of additional homes were built or occupied after Census day. Therefore, the current estimated housing stock in Buckingham is 6,417 (Census 2011 + completions since).

The housing market area context

67. Whilst this HNA focuses on Buckingham NA it is important to keep in mind that neighbourhoods are not self-contained housing market areas. Housing market areas are usually wider than local authority areas and often stretch across a number of districts or

¹ Available at <https://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/BNDP-Made-Version-October-2015.pdf>

² It is worth noting that this figure is an estimate only, based on data which is mostly available at local authority level such as administrative registers of births and deaths, data on moves between local authorities, small-area population estimates and official population projections, and not based on a survey count.

boroughs. This is because housing market areas are inherently linked to the labour market, employment patterns and travel to work areas.

68. In the case of Buckingham, the NA sits within a housing market area which covers the whole of Buckinghamshire (the former authorities of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe).^[1] This means that when households in this geography move home, the vast majority tend to stay within it. The housing market area also has links to neighbouring areas, including Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire.
69. At the neighbourhood scale it is not possible to be definitive about housing need and demand because neighbourhoods, including Buckingham, are closely linked to other areas. In the case of Buckingham, changes in need or demand in settlements nearby are likely to impact on the neighbourhood. The significant ongoing growth of Milton Keynes is a notable example.
70. In summary, Buckingham functions within a wider strategic area. As well as fostering good working relationships with the local planning authority (Buckinghamshire), it is therefore useful to think about the *role* of the neighbourhood within the wider area. This HNA can provide evidence to understand this role and the specific features of the neighbourhood within this wider context. Neighbourhood Plans can have a significant impact in shaping their neighbourhoods, enhancing the positive role the neighbourhood plays within the wider housing market, or developing policies to change entrenched patterns and improve housing outcomes in the neighbourhood and wider area.

Planning policy context

71. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic local policies.³ In the case of Buckingham, the relevant adopted Local Plan is still the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (2011-2033), adopted in 2021.
72. Buckinghamshire are currently developing a Local Plan for the whole new Unitary Authority, which is scheduled for adoption in 2025.
73. A detailed breakdown of the adopted Local Plan policies relevant to housing need in Buckingham is provided in Appendix B. Here, it is worth summarising the most important points of the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan:
 - Local Plan Policy S2 identifies an overall housing target of 28,600 homes for the district;
 - In the settlement hierarchy and cohesive development section of the Local Plan Buckingham is designated as one of five strategic settlements, which should be the focus of a majority of the district's development;
 - Policy H1 states that 25% of all new dwellings are expected to be delivered as Affordable Housing on sites larger than 11 homes;

^[1] This is established in the Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update 2016.

³ A description of the Basic Conditions of Neighbourhood Planning is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum>

- Policy HP5 (Provide Affordable Housing) of the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan raises the district wide Affordable Housing target to 35% of all housing on developments of more than 25 dwellings in the NA;
- Local Plan Policy H6b provides for sites which will accommodate 414 units of older persons accommodation between 2020-2025 (none allocated in Buckingham).

3. Objectives and approach

Objectives

74. This Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is structured according to a number of themes or topics that were agreed at the outset of the research with the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. These themes are broadly aligned with the kinds of housing policy areas available to neighbourhood plans, and each will form a distinct chapter of this report. The sub-sections below give a brief overview of the objectives of each chapter.

Quantity

75. The objective of this chapter is to understand what quantity of housing overall might be needed in the NA over the Plan period.

76. This question properly falls within the remit of the LPA, to whom the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives responsibility for determining the overall housing need or requirement for any designated NA.

77. Buckingham is provided with a total number of homes to be delivered over the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Period (2011-2033). However, these homes have largely now been delivered, and the new Neighbourhood Plan looks further into the future – to 2040. No new housing figure for Buckingham exists given the early stage of development of the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan.

78. AECOM have therefore agreed to supply an indicative estimate to help the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group understand the potential scale of need in future years. This can be helpful context for the Neighbourhood Plan, particularly when considering the allocation of housing sites.

79. However, the indicative figure provided here will be automatically superseded if and when an LPA-provided figure emerges in future.

Affordability and Affordable Housing

80. Neighbourhood plans may include policies that influence the scale of Affordable Housing provision and the mix of different tenures and products provided through new housing development.

81. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish the existing **tenure** of homes within the NA at present (owner occupied, private rented, social/affordable rented, shared ownership);
- To examine the **affordability** of different tenures by considering house prices, rents, local incomes and earnings; and
- To estimate the scale of **need** for Affordable Housing, including the need for those who cannot afford to rent and those who cannot afford to buy.

82. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is likely that other supporting evidence may be needed, for example on viability. Local Plans typically include policies on Affordable Housing and whilst the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with these strategic policies, there is scope for Neighbourhood Plan policies to adopt some local variety where this is supported by the evidence.

Type and Size

83. It is common for neighbourhood plans to include policies that influence what form new housing should take in terms of type and size. This requires evidence of what local people need.

84. The focus of this chapter is to identify relevant trends and potential gaps in the market that can be used to justify planning policies. It has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish what **mix** of housing exists in the NA at present;
- To describe relevant characteristics of the local **population**; and
- To look to the **future**, considering how the population is likely to evolve and what mix of homes would be most appropriate to build.

85. In addition to the direction of travel revealed by statistics, a variety of reasons sit behind people's housing choices that are less easy to predict, including wealth, accessibility requirements and personal preference. The conclusions and recommendations given here are sufficient for justifying planning policies but are not definitive. It is also appropriate to take into account other factors and evidence if desired.

Specialist Housing for Older People

86. It may be appropriate for neighbourhood plans in areas with aging populations to include policies relating to specialist housing for older persons.

87. This chapter supplements the demographic evidence relating to Type and Size, including the potential demand for downsizing, to consider the quantity and characteristics of need for housing for older people with some form of additional care. Its approach is as follows:

- To review the **current provision** of specialist housing in the NA;
- To estimate the **potential demand** for this form of accommodation with reference to the projected growth in the older population and current rates of mobility limitation; and
- To discuss the potential for meeting this need through adaptations to the mainstream stock and other **additional considerations**.

88. This element of the HNA recognises that the majority of older people will live in the mainstream housing stock and that there is no single way to meet their needs. It may also be inappropriate to focus excessively on the needs of one group or to promote a specialist scheme in a location that lacks adequate services. These issues will be drawn out.

Approach

89. This HNA assesses a range of evidence to ensure its findings are robust for the purposes of developing policy at the neighbourhood plan level. This includes data from the 2021 and 2011 Censuses and a range of other data sources, including:
- ONS population and household projections for future years;
 - ONS population age estimates for parishes (as 2021 Census data does not yet include age profile at small scales);
 - Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data on the current stock of housing;
 - Land Registry data on prices paid for housing within the local market;
 - Rental prices from [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk);
 - Local Authority housing waiting list data; and
 - The Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update (2016).
90. Data from the 2021 Census continues to be released throughout 2023. At present, the available data covers population, households, tenure, and dwelling stock characteristics. Some data at the localised level, including parishes, will not be available until later in 2023, as well as data comparing numerous variables. As such, neighbourhood level HNAs will draw on the latest available data from the 2021 Census where possible and will also continue to use other data sets, including 2011 Census, Valuation Office Agency data, and ONS parish projections to build up evidence at the neighbourhood level.

4. Quantity

Introduction

91. The objective of this chapter is to understand what quantity of housing overall might be needed in the Neighbourhood Area (NA) over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
92. This question properly falls within the remit of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), to whom the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives responsibility for determining the overall housing need or requirement for any designated NA. More background on this point is provided in the Policy Background section below.
93. In the absence of a housing figure provided by the LPA, AECOM can supply an indicative estimate to help neighbourhood planning groups understand the potential scale of need in future years. This can be helpful context for the Neighbourhood Plan, particularly when considering the allocation of housing sites.
94. However, the indicative figure provided by AECOM has a lower status to one provided by an LPA and would be automatically superseded if an LPA-provided figure emerges in future. As well as having a different status to an LPA-provided housing figure, AECOM's indicative figure is more limited in how it can be calculated.
95. It is important to highlight that there is no established method for calculating the overall housing need of small areas. While the NPPF requires LPA's to provide figures for NA's upon request, neither the NPPF nor Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) set out exactly how this should be done. As a result, LPAs take a variety of different approaches.
96. Generally, the methods used are top-down in nature, meaning that they try to determine what share of the Local Authority area's need is attributable to the NA. It is possible to use a bottom-up approach, likely drawing on household survey evidence, but this tends to be less consistent in terms of the data used and risks distorting the wider picture when multiple such estimates are aggregated.
97. AECOM's approach in HNAs is quite limited and simplistic for reasons of consistency and because certain judgements would require a wider scope and/or remain in the remit of the LPA. For example, LPAs can make their own determinations about the suitability of the NA for housing growth, noting for example its infrastructure and environmental constraints, or the role it plays in the local area relative to other locations.
98. For this reason, the number provided here is termed a Housing Need Figure (HNF) rather than sharing the terminology generally used by LPAs, which would speak of a Housing Requirement Figure (HRF). A need figure is a simpler expression of what might be needed, irrespective of the additional objectives, constraints and wider targets that might feed into a more formal requirement or housing target. In short, a HRF can reflect the wider planning strategy in addition to local need.

Policy background

99. The NPPF (paragraph 66) states that 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. 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”.
100. NPPF paragraph 67 states that “Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body”. This indicative figure should (amongst other things) “take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the planning authority.”⁴
101. In calculating this HNF, it should be noted that paragraphs 66 and 67 place specific obligations on strategic or local planning authorities and no other parties (i.e. AECOM is not obliged to follow directly paragraphs 66 and 67). That said, AECOM’s calculation will be of most use as a starting point if it can seek to mirror the NPPF suggested approach as closely as possible, and so this is the reasonable approach that has been taken
102. The PPG⁵ states that “Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area. Assessing housing need is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes need to be planned for. It should be undertaken separately from assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure and preparing policies to address this such as site allocations”.
103. A HNF is a ‘policy-off’ figure. This means that, while it takes account of the factors set out paragraph 67 of the NPPF and dwelling completions over the course of the Plan period, it is an expression of total housing demand unconstrained by the limits of the land available to build on. It is also unconstrained by the impact of policies that either facilitate or obstruct development. A policy-off figure can then be reviewed in light of further evidence including environmental constraints, land availability, relevant Local and Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies, to formulate a ‘policy-on’ HRF.
104. This, again, speaks to the difference between the Housing Need Figure (HNF) calculated here and the Housing Requirement Figure (HRF) that the Neighbourhood Plan may take forward based upon it, or which may be provided by the LPA. The HNA figure represents a blunt expression of need rather than a requirement.
105. The existing policy context for Buckingham’s overall housing need is established in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. This indicates that, as of March 2020, 1,005 dwellings out of the total of 2,177 earmarked for Buckingham were completed and 622 were committed

⁴ NPPF, paragraph 67, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁵ Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2a-001-20190220 at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

on sites with planning permission, leaving 550 dwellings to be delivered through allocations made in the Local Plan.

106. Conversations with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group have indicated that many of the commitments and allocations are currently under construction, and this is backed up by completions data provided by Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority, which indicates that 1,492 dwellings have been completed since 2011 in Buckingham. A further 471 dwellings currently have planning permission or are under construction. This level of supply is sufficient to very nearly satisfy the entirety of Buckingham’s existing target in the early part of the Local Plan period.

Approach

107. The number of new dwellings that might be planned for in the NA for each year of the (whole or extended) Plan period (the Housing Need Figure or HNF) is estimated using a three-step approach that seeks to reflect to the maximum extent the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advice, and the April 2021 Government response to its consultation on ‘Changes to the current planning system’.⁶ This is summarised in the box below:

Step 1: Standard method

The HNF for the Neighbourhood Area should take as its starting point the housing target for the Local Authority area in which it sits. The baseline for our calculation for the NA is therefore a share of the current LPA Local Housing Need (LHN) figure that reflects the share of the district population living in the Plan area.

NPPF requires Local Authorities, and anyone calculating LHN in their place, to use the ‘standard method’ for calculating the minimum number of homes that a local authority should plan for in an area. The standard method is a simple and transparent way of calculating a baseline of need that can be applied consistently across the country using publicly available datasets. It produces a starting point for planning and not the final housing requirement.

The standard method was set out in PPG in February 2019 and has been updated to reflect changes since.⁷ The result changes annually so it is important this is calculated afresh here rather than relying on any standard method results published in the Local Plan.

Step 2: LPA planning strategy

The NPPF guidance then states that the initial needs figure for neighbourhood plans should reflect “the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations,”⁸ and “the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.”⁹

This means introducing Local Authority spatial policy, housing targets, and assessments of housing need at different scales to estimate a more locally appropriate proportion of the LHN that should be provided in NA. This will often result in a slightly different figure to that produced in Step 1.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system/outcome/government-response-to-the-local-housing-need-proposals-in-changes-to-the-current-planning-system>.

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

⁸ NPPF, paragraph 65, page 18.

⁹ Ibid.

The goal is to whittle down a share of the LHN that is attributable to the Neighbourhood in a way that is less blunt than using population statistics alone (as in the Step 1 baseline), and that reflects to some degree the suitability of the NA relative to other settlements in the area. The best sources for this are the LPA's settlement hierarchy, any settlement suitability scoring exercise that has been undertaken, or the distribution of allocations.

Step 3: Dwelling completions

Next, any dwellings that have already been completed over the Plan period to the present date should be deducted from the total in order to provide a residual HNF for the remainder of the Plan period that reflects past under- or over-delivery. While it is appropriate to consider existing commitments (i.e. dwellings with planning permission, but not yet completed) at this point, they should not be deducted from the total until they are completed.

108. Employing this methodology, the HNF for Buckingham is calculated below.

Standard method (Step 1)

109. Firstly, the Local Housing Need (LHN) for the Local Authority area is calculated using the standard method outlined in PPG. This can then be pro-rated to the NA according to population statistics to give a baseline estimate of its needs.

110. The Buckinghamshire LHN figure, using the standard method, is calculated as follows:¹⁰

111. **Stage one** is to set the baseline, by calculating the projected average annual household growth in Buckinghamshire over a 10-year period, beginning with the current year, using the 2014-based ONS household projections:

- According to Buckinghamshire's 2014-based household projection, total household growth will be 20,439 households between 2023 and 2033. This equates to an annual average of 2,044 dwellings.

112. **Stage two** is to adjust this annual average using the most recent ONS median workplace-based affordability ratios,¹¹ which provide the ratio of house prices to earnings in various geographies. For each 1% increase in the ratio above 4, projected household growth should be increased by a quarter of a percent:

- Buckinghamshire's 2022 median affordability ratio is 11.66. Using the formula outlined in PPG to calculate the adjustment factor¹² results in an uplifted annual need figure of 3,023 dwellings (rounded).

113. **Stage three** is to apply a cap which may limit the magnitude of the Stage Two increase. How this is calculated depends on the current status of relevant strategic policies for housing. There are two options depending on whether those policies were adopted within the last five years or are older:

¹⁰ Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

¹¹ Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

¹² Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

- Option 1: where the relevant strategic policies were adopted within the last five years (at the point of making the calculation), the LHN is capped at 40% above the average annual housing requirement figure set out in the existing policies. This also applies where the relevant strategic policies have been reviewed by the authority within the 5-year period and have been found not to require updating.
- Option 2: where the relevant strategic policies for housing were adopted more than 5 years ago (at the point of making the calculation), the LHN is capped at 40% above whichever is the higher of:
 - a) the annual average projected household growth for the area over the 10-year period identified in Stage One above; or
 - b) The average annual housing requirement figure set out in the most recently adopted strategic policies (if a figure exists).
- It is not possible to follow the normal process for Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority. Due to its recent formation, there is no adopted Local Plan. It is also not appropriate to combine the figures presented in the most recent Local Plans for the former authorities because of the age of some of the plans and the lack of alignment in their timeframes. For reference, the targets contained within the plans that form Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority are as follows:
 - Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (adopted 2021) identifies an overall housing target of 28,600 homes across the plan period (2011-2033);
 - Chiltern Core Strategy (adopted 2011) seeks to deliver 2,900 new homes across its plan period (2006-2026);
 - South Bucks Core Strategy (adopted 2011) indicates the district should deliver 2,698 new homes across its plan period (2006-2026);
 - Wycombe District Local Plan (adopted 2019) identifies a targeted of 10,925 new homes across its plan period (2013-2033).
- As such, the cap should be set using Option 2 (a): the annual household growth for Buckinghamshire as set out in stage one. Applying the 40% cap to the annual growth figure of 2,044 equates to 2,862 dwellings (rounded), which is lower than the uncapped figure derived from the adjustment for affordability (3,023 dwellings). Therefore, the cap applies, and the capped figure of 2,862 dwellings should be carried forward.

114. Having derived Buckinghamshire's LHN, we now calculate Buckingham's baseline share of that target, by determining what proportion of Buckinghamshire's population currently reside in Buckingham and applying that percentage to Buckinghamshire's LHN.

115. According to the latest 2021 Census, there were 14,292 people living in Buckingham, or 2.6% of the 553,078 people living in Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority. Applying this percentage to Buckinghamshire's LHN figure of 2,862 gives a baseline indicative HNF for Buckingham of 74 dwellings per annum (rounded).

LPA planning strategy (Step 2)

116. As stated in NPPF guidance, it is important to acknowledge the relevant policies in the most recently available¹³ development plan document for the LPA. The policies reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. This requires producing a HNF for the Neighbourhood Area that takes into account the Local Authority's spatial strategy, and therefore may differ from the baseline HNF calculated above, which is based solely on population statistics rather than the relative suitability of settlements.
117. For Buckingham, the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 remains the relevant document given the absence of any published settlement hierarchy for the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
118. To attribute a more appropriate figure than the baseline number presented above to Buckingham, the 'Settlement Hierarchy and Cohesive Development' section in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan is the relevant starting point. This sets out six categories for different settlements in Aylesbury Vale, in terms of their suitability and sustainability for future development, which are as follows (in descending order of suitability):
- Strategic Settlements (including Buckingham);
 - North East Aylesbury Vale;
 - Larger Villages;
 - Medium Villages;
 - Smaller Villages; and
 - Other Settlements.
119. Although the settlement hierarchy itself does not quantify what share of the district's growth is appropriate for each settlement or category in the hierarchy, Policy S2 includes a spatial distribution table which indicates that Buckingham should deliver 2,177 of the overall target of 28,600 new homes – which equates to 7.6%.
120. This provides a sense of what proportion of the district's growth was attributable to Buckingham when the distribution of development was last considered by the (former) Local Planning Authority.
121. This is not, however, a pure expression of the relative need or suitability of Buckingham for growth because the housing numbers presented are equally influenced by historic delivery rates and the availability of development sites both in Buckingham and elsewhere across the local authority area. In particular, it should be noted that a significant proportion of the total new development in the district is associated with the expansion of Aylesbury Garden Town, to the order of 16,000 new homes – which represents close to 60% of the former district's entire housing growth. It is not yet possible to determine whether

¹³ This is the exact word used in the NPPF, i.e. not necessarily 'adopted'. In the case of Buckingham, the most recently 'available' planning strategy is Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (adopted, 2021), which also happens to be the most recently 'adopted' planning strategy.

Aylesbury Garden Town will continue to take such a large share of development in future, nor what the knock-on effect will be on the growth expectations of Buckingham.

122. The share of 7.6% of former Vale of Aylesbury's housing growth, implied in the adopted Local Plan, is therefore an imperfect basis for establishing Buckingham's future need. However, in the absence of any more concrete and quantifiable evidence of where the town sits within the strategy for the pattern and scale of development across Buckinghamshire, it provides a relevant alternative way of estimating Buckingham's need to that based purely on population statistics (the figure of 74 dwellings per annum reached at the end of Step 1 above).
123. The population of the Vale of Aylesbury was 34.5% of the total across Buckinghamshire at the time of the 2011 Census¹⁴. In turn, as noted above, Buckingham was earmarked for 7.6% of the growth of the former district at the time of the adopted Local Plan. On this basis, the share of Buckinghamshire's overall housing growth attributable to Buckingham is 2.6%. Applying this percentage to Buckinghamshire's current LHN of 2,862 (as established in Step 1 above) produces a figure of 74 dwellings per annum (rounded).
124. It is interesting to note that the result of this exercise is exactly the same as that produced when relying solely on population statistics. Both methods suggest that 2.6% of Buckinghamshire's growth is attributable to Buckingham, and thus that the annual housing need of the NA is therefore 74 dwellings per year.

Past dwelling completions (Step 3)

125. The next step is to subtract any net completions of new dwellings that have occurred since the beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan period. However, in this case, the new Neighbourhood Plan is likely to begin in the future, i.e. in 2024 at the earliest. As such, there are no past completions to deduct.
126. It is also relevant to consider how far dwelling commitments (homes on sites with planning permission or that are under construction) will go to meet the future need. However, the 471 committed dwellings tallied by Buckinghamshire Council in 2023 are considered to count toward the achievement of Buckingham's existing target in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, and as such should not be discounted from the need figure calculated here.

Final Housing Need Figure

127. Based on the evidence above, this HNA recommends an overall HNF of 74 dwellings per annum for Buckingham. This figure has been arrived at using two methods which produce the same result.
128. The Aylesbury Vale Local Plan covers the period up to 2033 but the new Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan will extend 7 years beyond this to 2040. How the annual need figure produced here should be translated into a total target for the new Neighbourhood Plan therefore depends on how the existing target is interpreted and the wider objectives of the

¹⁴ 2011 Census data is required in this case as the 2021 Census presents the population of Buckinghamshire and does not disaggregate the data based on the four former districts.

community.

129. One option is for Buckingham to consider that it has (or soon will have) met in full its housing growth target for the period to 2033 (the end date of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan), and therefore to multiply the annual housing need of 74 established here by the remaining 7 years in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan period. This would produce a residual need figure of 518 homes for the remaining period 2033-2040. Given how early in the current Local Plan period Buckingham has already nearly exceeded its existing 2,177 target, any additional homes built prior to 2033 could be counted toward the residual 518 need figure.
130. A higher growth option, if this is the desire of the community, would be to consider the existing target to have been fulfilled through the made Neighbourhood Plan and Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, and to begin the new Neighbourhood Plan with a fresh target based on the need figure estimated here. This would involve multiplying the need figure of 74 by the total number of years in the new Neighbourhood Plan, which is currently envisaged to run to 2040. Assuming a start date of 2024 implies a total need of 1,184 additional homes.
131. Which option to pursue (including the possibility of a middle-ground or further alternatives) is a policy discussion for consideration by the Working Group, Town Council, wider community and Buckinghamshire Council.
132. It should be noted that the housing figure for Buckinghamshire is derived from the Government's standard method and is likely to change annually as ONS publishes new affordability data each year and new household projections approximately every two years. Although housing need figures are not invalidated each year as new data is released, this could impact any indicative housing requirement figure provided by Buckinghamshire for neighbourhood areas in the future (since this would be calculated using new data).
133. That figure has been broken down with the aim of allocating an appropriate share to Buckingham with reference to the strategy for the pattern and scale of new development across the former district as expressed in the latest Local Plan, which takes into account the sustainability and suitability of the former district's various settlements for growth. This process relies on interpretations and assumptions made by AECOM.
134. Buckinghamshire are currently at the early stages of developing a Local Plan for the new Unitary Authority, with the new Local Plan expected to be adopted in 2025. At the time any final Neighbourhood Plan housing requirement figure is provided by Buckinghamshire, it can be considered to supersede the provisional calculation within this study. Consequently, there is a need for the neighbourhood group to continue to engage with the LPA to confirm the final housing figure for the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Affordability and Affordable Housing

Introduction

135. Neighbourhood plans may include policies that influence the scale of Affordable Housing provision and the mix of different tenures and products provided through new housing development.

136. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish the existing **tenure** of homes within the NA at present (owner occupied, private rented, social/affordable rented, shared ownership);
- To examine the **affordability** of different tenures by considering house prices, rents, local incomes and earnings; and
- To estimate the scale of **need** for Affordable Housing, including the need for those who cannot afford to rent and those who cannot afford to buy.

137. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is likely that other supporting evidence may be needed, for example on viability. Local Plans typically include policies on Affordable Housing and whilst the Neighbourhood Plan must conform with these policies, there is scope for Neighbourhood Plan policies to adopt some local variety where this is supported by the evidence.

Definitions

138. This section uses a range of technical terms which are useful to define at the outset:

- **Tenure** refers to the way a household occupies their home. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of tenure: market housing (such as homes available to purchase outright or rent from a private landlord) and Affordable Housing (including subsidised products like social rent and shared ownership).
- **Affordability** refers to the relationship between the cost of housing to buy or rent and the incomes and earnings of households.
- The definition of **Affordable Housing** is set out in the NPPF 2021 (Annex 2) as 'Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market...' We refer to Affordable Housing, with capital letters, to denote the specific tenures that are classified as affordable in the current NPPF (Annex 2). A relatively less expensive home for market sale may be affordable but it is not a form of Affordable Housing.
- A range of affordable home ownership opportunities are included in the Government's definition of Affordable Housing, to meet the needs of those aspiring

to own a home. As part of this, the Government has introduced a new product called First Homes, although this is not yet reflected in Annex 2 of the NPPF.¹⁵

- **First Homes** is a new product and expected to be an important part of the strategy for improving access to home ownership. Its key features are explained in greater detail in Appendix C.

Current tenure profile

139. The current tenure profile is a key feature of the Neighbourhood Area (NA). Patterns of home ownership, private renting and affordable/social renting reflect demographic characteristics including age (with older households more likely to own their own homes), and patterns of income and wealth which influence whether households can afford to rent or buy and whether they need subsidy to access housing.

140. Table 5-1 presents data on tenure in Buckingham compared with Buckinghamshire and England from the 2021 Census. It shows that home ownership is the dominant tenure in Buckingham (66%), though it is a slightly less common than the county average. There is, however, a higher proportion of private renters in Buckingham than the Buckinghamshire average. The rate of social renting is similar to the county though lower than the national average.

Table 5-1: Tenure (households) in various geographies, 2021

Tenure	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire	England
Owned	66.3%	70.0%	61.3%
Shared ownership	2.5%	1.3%	1.0%
Social rented	13.2%	13.0%	17.1%
Private rented	18.1%	15.8%	20.6%

Sources: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

141. It is also worth considering how the tenure mix has changed in the last ten years, through comparison with the 2011 Census (see Table 5-2). The table shows that there has been a roughly 50% increase in the proportion of both social and private renting. Growth in the private rented sector can indicate deepening affordability issues in the NA, as segments of the population who may typically be seeking to buy their home are forced to rent due to rising house prices. It may also be that some of the large number of new properties built in recent years were purpose-built rented homes. There has been a modest supply of affordable rented housing in the last decade, as well as a proportionally significant increase in the number of shared ownership properties. Despite starting at a low base in 2011, the addition of more than 100 new shared ownership properties represents a notable shift in the availability of such options.

¹⁵ The shape that the new First Homes product will take is set out in a Ministerial Statement issued in May 2021, available here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>. The relevant update to PPG is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#contents>.

Table 5-2: Tenure change (households) in Buckingham, 2011-2021

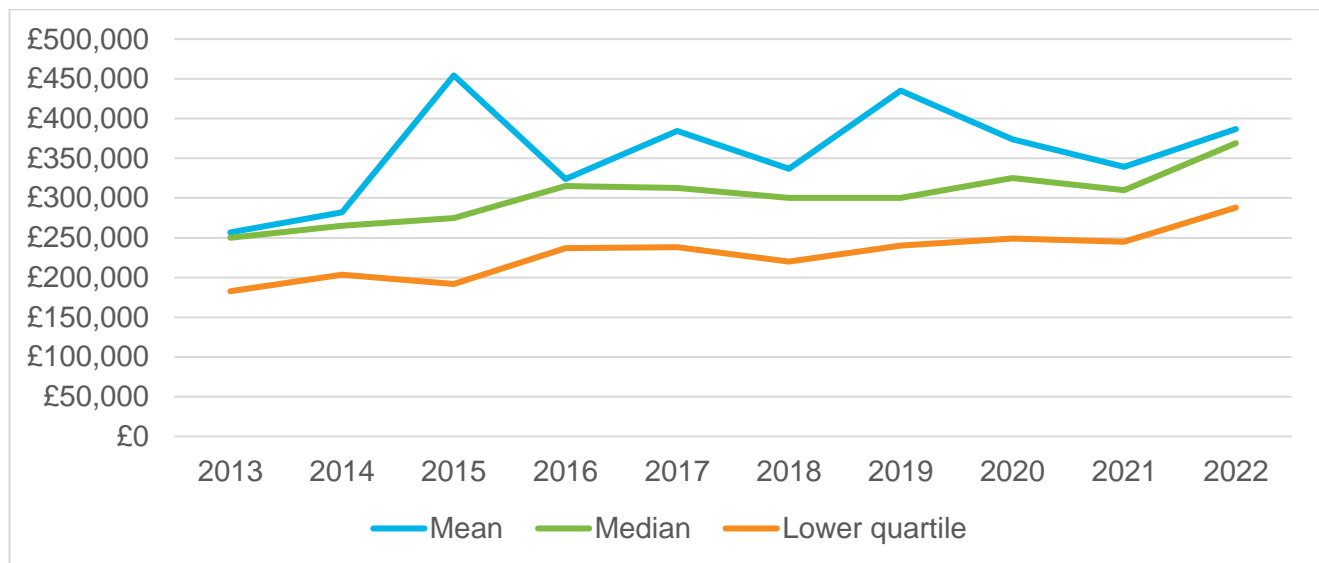
Tenure	2011	2021	% change
Owned	3,435	3,912	13.9%
Shared ownership	34	145	326.5%
Social rented	521	778	49.3%
Private rented	711	1,069	50.4%

Sources: Census 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

Affordability

House prices

142. House prices provide an indication of the level of demand for homes within an area. The relationship between house prices and incomes determines whether housing is affordable to local households and, to a large extent, what tenure, type and size of home they occupy. Changes in affordability over time can indicate pressures in the housing market. As such, it is useful for the evidence base for plans to examine trends in prices and consider what this reveals about the local housing market.
143. Figure 5-1 looks at the average and lower quartile house prices in Buckingham based on sales price data published by the Land Registry. It shows that median house prices, which represent the middle number when the data is sorted from smallest to largest, have experienced relatively steady upward growth, despite some year-on-year fluctuations.
144. The current median house price in Buckingham is £369,000, which is 48% higher than the median price in 2013. The current mean, which represents the average of all house prices, is slightly higher than the median at £387,000, and 51% higher than the same category in 2013. Because the mean reflects every transaction in the sample there is potential for outlying data to skew the overall result (usually higher than the median). This can be seen in Figure 5-1, where there are a few spikes in the mean, particularly in 2015 and 2019.
145. The current lower quartile (LQ) price, which is the middle figure of the lowest 50% of sales and acts as a good representation of entry-level housing is £288,000 and is 58% higher than the 2013 LQ figure.
146. House prices in Buckingham appear to be slightly cheaper than the county as a whole, where the 2022 median house price stands at £450,000. This is in spite of the unusual fact (for a town, and discussed in the Type and Size section), that the dwelling mix in the NA includes a higher share of detached homes and fewer flats than Buckinghamshire as a whole – a factor that would suggest that more high-value property types feature in the NA transactions data and should have the effect of raising average prices.

Figure 5-1: House prices by quartile in Buckingham, 2013-2022


Source: Land Registry PPD

147. Table 5-3 breaks down house prices by type, presenting the median within each type. It shows that there is little variation in the growth rates of different dwelling types, but that there are significant price differences between detached homes, semi-detached or terraced houses, and flats.

Table 5-3: Median house prices by type in Buckingham, 2013-2022

Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Growth
Detached	£303K	£359K	£390K	£418K	£418K	£410K	£431K	£455K	£445K	£490K	61.9%
Semi-detached	£215K	£220K	£255K	£285K	£286K	£289K	£289K	£310K	£300K	£350K	62.8%
Terraced	£190K	£218K	£226K	£250K	£273K	£260K	£260K	£260K	£270K	£316K	66.3%
Flats	£125K	£140K	£153K	£195K	£170K	£195K	£191K	£158K	£170K	£195K	56.0%
All Types	£250K	£265K	£275K	£315K	£313K	£300K	£300K	£325K	£310K	£370K	47.6%

Source: Land Registry PPD

Income

148. Household incomes determine the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market, and consequently the level of need for affordable housing products. Two sources of data are used to examine household incomes in the NA.

149. The first source is ONS's estimates of incomes in small areas. This is locally specific but limited to the overall average income (i.e. it does not provide the average income of lower earners). The average total household income locally was £52,150¹⁶ in 2018 (the most recent year for this dataset). Detail about the area to which this data applies is provided in Appendix A.

150. The second source is ONS's annual estimates of UK employee earnings. This provides lower quartile average earnings (i.e. the income of the lowest 25% of earners). However, it is only available at the Local Authority level. It also relates to individual earnings. While this is an accurate representation of household incomes where there is only one earner,

¹⁶ It should be noted this figure is an average of two MSOA areas which cover Buckingham, details of which can be found in Appendix A

it does not represent household income where there are two or more people earning. Buckinghamshire's gross individual lower quartile annual earnings were £19,200 in 2022. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £38,400.

151. It is immediately clear from this data that there is a large gap between the spending power of average earning households and those earning the lowest 25% of incomes, particularly where the household in question has one earner only.

Affordability Thresholds

152. To gain a clearer understanding of local affordability, it is useful to understand what levels of income are required to afford different tenures. This is done using 'affordability thresholds': the estimated amount of annual income required to cover the cost of rent or a mortgage given local housing prices.
153. AECOM has determined thresholds for the income required in Buckingham to buy a home in the open market (average and entry-level prices), and the income required to afford private rent and the range of Affordable Housing tenures as set out in the NPPF. These calculations are detailed and discussed in more detail in Appendix C.
154. The key assumptions made in assessing the affordability of different tenures are explained alongside the calculations, but it is worth noting here that we have assumed that the maximum percentage of household income that should be spent on rent is 30% and that mortgage financing will be offered at a maximum of 3.5 times household income. These are standard assumptions across housing needs assessments at neighbourhood and local authority scale although different approaches are sometimes taken and a case can be made for alternatives. This is discussed in more detail at the start of Appendix C.
155. Table 5-4 summarises the estimated cost of each tenure, the annual income required to support these costs within the NA, and whether local incomes are sufficient. The income required column assumes the household already has access to a deposit (which we have assumed to be 10% of the value to be purchased) but does not reflect the possibility that households may already hold equity from an existing property. Although these factors may be crucial to whether housing will be affordable, they are highly dependent on individual circumstances that cannot be anticipated here.

Table 5-4: Affordability thresholds in Buckingham (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £52,150	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £19,200	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £38,400
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£332,096	-	£94,884	No	No	No
Estimated NA New Build Entry-Level House Price	£267,839		£76,525	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£259,200	-	£74,057	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£418,498	-	£119,571	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£16,440	£54,800	No	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£10,200	£34,000	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£187,487	-	£53,568	Marginal	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£160,703	-	£45,915	Yes	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£133,919	-	£38,263	Yes	No	Yes
Shared Ownership (50%)	£133,919	£3,720	£50,663	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£66,960	£5,580	£37,731	Yes	No	Yes
Shared Ownership (10%)	£26,784	£6,696	£29,972	Yes	No	Yes
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£7,904	£26,320	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£5,564	£18,528	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

156. Before considering each tenure category in turn, it is important to stress that these affordability thresholds have been calculated to give an indication of the costs of various tenures to inform Neighbourhood Plan policy choices. These figures rely on existing data and assumptions, and it is not possible to estimate every possible permutation. The income figures also disguise a large degree of variation. For simplicity the analysis below speaks in terms of tenure products being 'affordable' or 'not affordable' for different groups, but individual circumstances and the location, condition and other factors of specific properties in each category have a large impact. These conclusions should therefore be interpreted flexibly.

Market housing for purchase and rent

157. Thinking about housing for purchase on the open market, it appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 80% higher than the current average.

158. Private renting is similarly unaffordable to average earners and households with two lower earners, who cannot afford the average rental property but may be able to afford a 1-2 bedroom option. Affordability is improved if households are able or willing to dedicate a larger proportion of their incomes to rental costs, although this has

repercussions for other quality of life aspects and cannot be assumed to suit all individuals' circumstances.

Affordable home ownership

159. There is a relatively large group of households in Buckingham who may be able to afford to rent privately but cannot afford home ownership. They are typically earning between around £34,000 per year (at which point entry-level rents become affordable) and £74,000 (at which point entry-level market sale homes become affordable). This 'can rent, can't buy' cohort may benefit from the range of affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership.
160. First Homes are to be offered at a discount of at least 30% on equivalent market prices (i.e. new build, entry-level properties). Local authorities and neighbourhood plan qualifying bodies will have discretion to increase the discount on First Homes to 40% or 50% where there is evidence to suggest this is appropriate.
161. This report has estimated the income required to afford First Homes and tested the implications of 30%, 40% and 50% discount levels. First Homes would need to be offered at a discount of at least 40% to be affordable to average earning households. However, discounts of 30% would be marginally affordable to average earning households.
162. It is important to note that this evidence based on affordability does not provide a complete picture: evidence about the financial viability of development is also relevant. The question is whether demanding higher discount levels on First Homes will create a financial burden on developers that leads them to argue either that the discount level is not feasible or that the total amount of Affordable Housing may need to be decreased. This could effectively sacrifice the provision of affordable rented housing to provide a more attractive First Homes product. The issue of development viability is a specialist matter involving analysis of land values and build costs that is outside the scope of this assessment. If the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group intend to set a higher First Homes discount level than that set at Unitary Authority level, further discussions with the LPA are advised. (The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan pre-dated the introduction of First Homes, and the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan is at an early stage of development, so LPA policy expectations in this area may not be settled as yet.)
163. Shared ownership appears to be more affordable than First Homes but is broadly accessible to the same groups. Government has recently announced that the minimum equity share for shared ownership will fall to 10% of the property value.¹⁷ If this is delivered in the NA, it will make shared ownership easier to access for more people. However, while the income threshold for a 10% equity shared ownership home is lower, this product may not necessarily be more attractive than the alternatives (such as shared ownership at higher equity shares and First Homes) for those who can afford them.
164. Rent to Buy provides households with the option to rent at a discount whilst saving for a deposit to buy their property within a set period (usually within 7 years). The income

¹⁷ The previous minimum equity share was 25%. This change took effect from 28 June 2021 and transitional arrangements are in place for planning policy documents that are prepared during the implementation timeframe. Changes are also introduced to make the process of staircasing to full ownership more gradual with lower minimum increments of 1%. The ministerial statement confirming and detailing the changes is available here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>.

required to access Rent to Buy is assumed to be the same as that required to afford market rents. However, affordability to local households would depend on how rents are set. If Rent to Buy is offered at a discount to *entry-level* rents, this would expand this route to home ownership quite significantly, including dual LQ earners. However, discounts on *average* rents would make Rent to Buy affordability, in terms of the household income required, comparable to First Homes and Shared Ownership. However, for some households, the availability of a deposit rather than income level per se is the key barrier to accessing home ownership. Rent to Buy may therefore offer a useful product to meet the needs of some households.

165. These three affordable home ownership products need to be considered in relation to what they offer occupants in the long term beyond simply being affordable to access or not:

- First Homes allow for a greater ownership stake in the property, enabling occupiers to benefit from price appreciation over time. Monthly outgoings are also limited to mortgage costs alone, which tend to be cheaper than renting.
- Shared ownership at high equity shares performs a similar function to First Homes, but there are additional costs associated with the rented portion.
- Shared ownership at low equity shares can usually be accessed by lower earning households (than First Homes) and requires a smaller deposit. However, this is a potentially less attractive route to eventual ownership because monthly outgoings remain high. The occupant has to pay a significant monthly rent as well as service charges and other costs, so it can be harder for them to save funds to buy out a greater share in the property over time.
- Rent to Buy requires no deposit, thereby benefitting those with sufficient incomes but low savings. It is more attractive than renting but results in a much slower accumulation of the funds that can provide an eventual route to ownership than the other tenures discussed above.

Affordable rented housing

166. Affordable rents set out in the table above are substantially below market rents. Whilst affordable rents can be set at up to 80% of market rents, in many locations Registered Providers (housing associations) set them to ensure that they are affordable to those claiming housing benefit, i.e. at or below Local Housing Allowance levels. This means that they are in practice below 80% of market levels. This appears to be the case in Buckingham

167. Affordable rented housing is generally affordable to households with two lower earners depending on their household size (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). However, households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered except for socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling of the appropriate size, require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.

168. The evidence in this chapter suggests that the affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Buckingham as the only option for a large segment of those in the greatest need. Social rents are cheaper and would therefore leave households on lower earnings better off and better able to afford their other living costs, such as food and fuel etc. Where households are supported by housing benefit the difference in the cost of affordable and social rents may be irrelevant as the level of housing benefit flexes according to the rent. This means that households supported by housing benefit may be no better off in social rented accommodation because they receive a lower rate of housing benefit to cover their rent.

Students and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

169. The University of Buckingham, a private university with approximately 3,500 students, is located within the NA boundary. The 2021 Census indicates that there were 734 students living in Buckingham, constituting 6.4% of the NA population. This is likely to be a significant undercount owing to the varied ways that students may (or may not) respond to the Census, as well as the fact that the 2021 Census was taken at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, when many students had returned home.
170. The Accommodation Office for the University confirms that there are currently 467 student rooms offered at 13 sites across three campuses. Plans currently exist to offer a further 71 rooms at a new site in early 2024, with a capacity for 142 students.
171. This suggests that around 3,000 University students are likely to be accommodated outside of halls of residences. It is worth noting that, given the nature of courses offered by the University of Buckingham, a significant number of the students counted above are undertaking distance learning courses and therefore do not require housing in the town. Applying nationwide rates provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to the University of Buckingham statistics suggests that of the 3,430 students, 2,145 could be based within Buckingham with the remaining 1,285 being UK-based distance learners. Applying the further breakdown in the HESA data suggests that in 2021/22 470 students lived in their parental home, 765 in their own residence (the split between owner occupiers and private renters is not known), 525 in provider accommodation and 295 in other rental accommodation. Moreover, there are further 620 whose living status is unknown.
172. The HESA also holds data suggesting that the percentage of full-time higher education students living in the private rented sector in the 2021/22 academic year is 27%, having declined slightly from 29% in 2019/20 and above 30% in 2015/16.¹⁸ This is consistently the largest accommodation category, followed by the parental home at 20%, own residence at 19% and halls of residence at 16%. This final statistic holds true for Buckingham, where around 13% of the current student population lives in halls of residence, rising to 17% when the new accommodation becomes available.
173. If 27% of University of Buckingham students live in the private rented sector, this implies ongoing demand for rented accommodation from around 950 students. This will include

¹⁸ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/chart-4>

people living alone, in small groups, and in Houses in Multiple Accommodation (HMOs), where multiple unrelated individuals or households share facilities such as kitchens or bathrooms.

174. This distinction is important because demand from students is likely to impact the market for both 1-2 bedroom self-contained flats and larger family housing that can be rented out to larger groups. This demand pressure can result in higher rents as well as incentives to convert more family housing to HMOs, with knock-on impacts on the housing needs of other groups. High concentrations of HMOs in particular are also associated with other impacts on local communities, such as pressures on parking and refuse collection and, in some cases, anti-social behaviour.

HMOs: Number and Affordability

175. It is not possible to accurately determine what proportion of the University's privately renting students live in HMOs or other forms of private rented accommodation nor, therefore, the total number of dwellings occupied by students. Despite the limited availability of data, it is worth considering Buckingham's HMO stock in more detail.
176. The 2021 Census only captures the quantity of HMOs at a local authority level, where they are categorised as either 'small HMOs' which have 3 or 4 unrelated tenants and 'large HMOs' which have 5+ unrelated tenants. The former would be an unlicensed HMO and the latter (normally) licensed. The 2021 Census shows that across Buckinghamshire there were 564 HMOs (0.24% of all dwellings, compared to a national average of 0.7%). Of these, 441 were small HMOs and 123 were large HMOs. In AECOM's experience, the Census tends to significantly undercount HMOs.
177. The register of HMOs held by Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority indicates that there are 21 licenced HMOs in Buckingham itself, which have a total of 115 rooms (implying an average size of 5-6 bedrooms). This is again likely to be an undercount because only licensed HMOs are included: those with fewer than 5 occupants do not require a license, some properties will not have the appropriate license, and others may not be captured on the latest register.
178. The current number of HMOs in the NA is likely to be fewer than 100 at present, able to accommodate around a third of the University's students as well as some non-student low-income house sharers. This would imply fairly large demand for smaller private rented housing from the remaining student population.
179. In July, 2023, there were a total of 25 rooms in shared accommodation available for rent from Spareroom.com with an average monthly rent of £668. Rightmove.com provides a similar result of £670 derived from 8 rooms listed on the site in July 2023. Renting a room in a HMO would therefore require an income of roughly £26,800, which is approximately 80% of the income needed to afford entry-level market rents given above (£34,000). This suggests that there is a clear financial incentive to occupy a room in a HMO rather than a self-contained property, but not necessarily to such an extent that only HMOs are likely to be affordable to students. It is interesting to observe that the 2024 pricing of purpose-built student accommodation in Buckingham ranges from

£140-235 per week (or £560-940 per month, which is broadly comparable to the costs of a room in a HMO).

180. The financial capacity of students will vary greatly depending on personal circumstances, but it is clear that students in the private rented market will be competing with lower income households – including both individuals looking for rooms in shared housing and households seeking entry-level self-contained accommodation.
181. It is also worth noting the potential financial incentive for landlords to convert larger rented homes to HMOs. Multiplying the average HMO room rent by four rooms suggests that a 4 bedroom house could generate £2,672 in rent per month as a HMO. This is higher than the current median 4+ bedroom rental value of £2,145 in Buckingham according to [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk). As such, if demand from students rises in future, some of the few larger homes available on the rental market (or, indeed, in owner occupation) may be converted to HMOs.
182. While a potential risk depending on the supply of similar sized properties through future development, there are also advantages to HMOs, which provide a flexible role within the private rented sector and, in addition to students, meet the needs of lower income people who are ineligible for affordable rented housing and other vulnerable groups.
183. There are a number of policy, licensing and other measures that can be taken to control the number, distribution and standards of HMOs. However, these are generally beyond the power of a Neighbourhood Plan and, if of interest, are a matter for discussion between the Working Group and Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

Estimates of the need for Affordable Housing

184. This section seeks to quantify the long-term potential need for Affordable Housing, which should be considered separately for affordable rented housing and affordable routes to ownership. The appropriate approach is taken based on the evidence available at Local Authority and NA scale.

AECOM Estimates

185. AECOM estimates that there will be relatively modest long-term need for affordable rented homes in Buckingham. Specifically, our model estimates an annual shortfall of 8.8 affordable rented homes per annum, amounting to around 141 over the remaining years in the Neighbourhood Plan period (to 2040). The estimate and assumptions used are detailed in Appendix D and summarised in Table 5-5 below. This estimate is largely for social/affordable rent as it relates to households who live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to access market rents.
186. This result is chiefly a response to the current backlog of need, which is in the region of 298 households according to Buckinghamshire Council figures. It should also be noted that this backlog represents the needs of a slightly wider area than the town, including all applicants in the MK18 and MK17 postcode areas. This is because Buckingham is designated as a strategic settlement within the wider district and serves the needs of its hinterland in terms of Affordable Housing.¹⁹
187. The need figure of 8.8 new dwellings per annum is fairly low relative to the size of the Buckingham population. The main reason for this is that the model reflects the ability of the existing social rented housing stock to meet a proportion of longer-term needs through turnover: of the affordable rented accommodation existing currently, it can be expected that some will come vacant in any given year as their current occupants move to a new location, pass away or cease to be eligible as their circumstances change. Because of the substantial size of the existing stock, this is able to satisfy the projected newly arising need as well as some of the backlog, which is effectively spread out over the 10-year period to produce an annualized figure. The model assumes that 3% of the socially rented housing stock in Buckingham is being re-let year on year. In AECOM's experience (and in the absence of concrete historical figures) suggest that this is a fair and conservative assumption. However, for the sake of comparison the model has been re-run for a hypothetical scenario in which only 2% of the existing stock turns over each year. In this scenario, Buckingham would have a need for 16.6 social/affordable rental homes per annum.
188. It is also important to emphasise that whether or not localised needs can be satisfied through the existing stock, new affordable rented housing may still be required to provide homes for households in acute need living in the wider area. Another reason to continue to maximise supply is the fact that one unit of

¹⁹ When the current need for social/affordable housing for Buckingham alone is considered (129 households in need), the model produces a surplus figure of 3.5 dwellings per annum, suggesting Buckingham (when considered in isolation) has a sufficient social housing stock to meet the needs of its population.

Affordable Housing does not necessarily service one household worth of need, since the unit might have 2 bedrooms while the applicant household might require 4 bedrooms, may be located in an inappropriate location, or be otherwise unsuitable.

189. It is therefore considered appropriate for Buckingham to encourage the delivery of affordable rented housing in future years to meet the needs of the local population, future-proof the stock in case needs rise of vacancies are lower than expected, and to serve the wider area. The NA's wider strategic role in the delivery of Affordable Housing may be a further matter for discussion with Buckinghamshire Council.

Table 5-5: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for rent in Buckingham

Component of need or supply in the AECOM estimate	Per annum
Current need	18.6
Newly arising need	13.5
Supply	23.3
Net shortfall	8.8

Source: AECOM model summary of estimates. Full estimate included in Appendix D

190. Turning to affordable home ownership tenures, AECOM estimate potential demand for 38.3 such dwellings per annum in Buckingham over the period to 2040, or 613 in total over that period. The estimate and assumptions used is detailed in Appendix D and summarised in Table 5-6 below.
191. It is important to keep in mind that the households identified in this estimate are, by and large, adequately housed in the private rented sector, Affordable Housing, or living in other circumstances. They do not necessarily lack their own housing but would prefer to buy rather than rent. Because the private rented sector in Buckingham is large there is a potentially vast market for affordable home ownership if most renters would prefer to own if given the opportunity. Such households have been included in the national planning definition of those in need of Affordable Housing, but their needs are less acute than those on the waiting list for affordable rented housing, considered above.

Table 5-6: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for sale in Buckingham

Component of need or supply in the AECOM estimate	Per annum
Current need	36.6
Newly arising need	8.9
Supply	7.3
Net shortfall	38.3

Source: AECOM model summary of estimates. Full estimate included in Appendix D

Evidence in the HEDNA

192. A HEDNA was undertaken for Buckinghamshire in 2016. This study estimates the need for affordable housing across the county based on analysis of the former Councils' housing waiting lists and analysis of other data sets in line with Planning Practice Guidance at the time.
193. The HEDNA identifies a total need for 9,434 additional homes across Buckinghamshire over the period 2013-33. This is broken down to the four former local authority areas, with a total need over the same period of 4,130 identified for the Vale of Aylesbury. As 6.9% of the population of the former district resided in the Buckingham NA at the time of the 2011 Census, this implies that the NA's share of this need would be roughly 285 units in total, or 14 per year.
194. However, pro-rating district-level estimates of affordable housing need presents problems in practice, particularly given the age of the HEDNA in this case and the creation of the Unitary Authority in the period since. In particular, the HEDNA figure largely represents the need for social/affordable rent as it relates to households who live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to access market rents. A small proportion of these households may be able to afford shared ownership because in some cases it is more affordable than market rents, especially when available at a share of 25%. However, the HEDNA does not provide separate estimates for rented and ownership tenures within affordable housing, as is now conventional.
195. Given these limitations, the need figure derived from the HEDNA should be accorded less weight than the NA-specific estimates provided here. That said, it does highlight the fact that Buckinghamshire has a large volume of need for affordable homes, a reasonable share of which Buckingham may be expected to meet. This provides some justification for aspiring to deliver affordable rented housing within the new Neighbourhood Plan period despite the fact that an annual surplus of this tenure is identified for the NA itself.

Affordable Housing policies in Neighbourhood Plans

196. This section outlines a common Neighbourhood Plan policy level around the tenure mix of affordable housing, provides a recommendation and summarises relevant considerations.

Application of Local Plan policies

197. Former Vale of Aylesbury's adopted policy on this subject requires 25% of all new housing to be affordable, and the made Neighbourhood Plan for Buckingham raises this to 35%. It is not known precisely what percentage of the new housing built in Buckingham in recent years was delivered as Affordable Housing and thus whether this target tends to be met on development sites in the NA.
198. While the 35% target has not be tested specifically here on the grounds of need or viability, it remains appropriate in AECOM's view given the potentially large

scale of need, the broader strategic role Buckingham plays in the county context, and the affordability challenges faced by local households established in the previous section.

199. How the Affordable Housing that comes forward through mainstream development sites should be broken down into specific tenures – such as the balance between rented tenures and routes to home ownership – is not specified in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan.

Affordable Housing at Neighbourhood level

200. The HNA can provide localised evidence on this point, which may be used to support future Neighbourhood Plan policies defining the appropriate Affordable Housing tenure mix. This section suggests an Affordable Housing tenure mix that might be suitable for Buckingham on the basis of identified housing need and a range of other considerations detailed in Appendix D. The relevant factors for Buckingham can be summarised as follows:

- AECOM's estimates suggest a robust potential demand for affordable home ownership and limited need for further affordable rented homes because turnover in the current stock appears able to satisfy newly arising need. This points toward a strong emphasis on ownership options;
 - There is nevertheless a not insignificant current backlog of need for affordable rented housing (298 households) as well as persistent outstanding need across Buckinghamshire as a whole, to which the NA might reasonably be expected to contribute. There may also be unmet needs in the rural villages nearby that may be more appropriate to meet in the town.
 - There are 471 homes currently with planning permission and an option for the new Neighbourhood Plan to take forward an annual target of 74 new homes over an appropriate period. If 35% of all new homes are required to be delivered as Affordable Housing, this would represent a fairly large increase in provision, though not high enough to meet in full the potential demand for affordable home ownership identified here. When supply is limited, there is cause to consider what should be prioritised, and it is often prudent to ensure the most acute needs (for affordable rented housing) are protected as a priority, even where these are expected to be limited over the long-term.
 - The affordability analysis earlier in this chapter established that affordable rented housing is the only option for lower earners and that affordable home ownership products would meaningfully widen access to home ownership to average earning local people. This suggests both should feature in the tenure mix.
201. On balance, AECOM suggests that there is an opportunity here to boost levels of affordable home ownership to meet high levels of potential demand in a context where home ownership through the open market is very unaffordable. The trade-off is that this would lower delivery of affordable rented housing,

which serves those in the greatest need. In this case, AECOM estimates that the existing stock of affordable rented housing may be sufficient for the community's evolving needs. However, it may be prudent to future-proof the stock through some additional supply in case this situation changes and to contribute to the unmet needs of the wider area.

202. As such, both affordable rent and affordable home ownership should feature in the Affordable Housing tenure mix. AECOM's interpretation of the evidence suggests that a broadly even split of 50% rented options and 50% routes to ownership could be appropriate. Table 5-6 sets out one proposed option, and breaks down the headline split between rented and ownership tenures with reference to the affordability analysis earlier in the chapter. This suggested that First Homes are accessible at a 30% or 40% discount, shared ownership is also potentially valuable at lower equity shares, and that rent to buy appears less affordable given the fairly high equivalent market rents.
203. Where the Working Group wish to develop policy that deviates from evolving Local Plan policy – either by differing from the headline split between renting and ownership or by specifying a greater level of detail around sub-tenures, it is important that they liaise with Buckinghamshire Council to determine what additional evidence (notably about development viability) may be needed, and to ensure that departures from the local policy context have their support.

Table 5-7: Indicative tenure split (Affordable Housing)

Tenure	Indicative mix	Considerations and uncertainties
Routes to home ownership, of which	50%	
First Homes	25%	Product untested so uncertainties around viability, developer, lenders and buyer appetite etc.
Shared ownership	15-25%	Recently confirmed changes to the model to allow purchases of 10% share – impact on viability unknown. RPs business plans currently reliant on shared ownership model. Impact of displacement by First Homes unknown.
Rent to Buy	0-10%	Emerging product with popularity and effectiveness as yet unknown. Impact of displacement by First Homes unknown.
Affordable Housing for rent, of which	50%	
Social rent	To be set by Registered Providers	Uncertain how much funding available to support this tenure in local area. Uncertain whether RPs willing to own/manage stock in this area.
Affordable rent	To be set by Registered Providers	Uncertain whether RPs willing to own/manage stock in this area.

Source: AECOM calculations

Conclusions- Tenure and Affordability

Current tenure profile

204. Home ownership is the dominant tenure in Buckingham at 66% of all households, though it is slightly less common than the county average (70%). Of the remaining households, a majority live in privately rented accommodation (18%). At 13%, the rate of social renting in Buckingham is slightly above the county average. Over the past decade there have been particular increases in the number of private and social renters, as well as a proportionally significant injection of new shared ownership properties.

Housing costs

205. Home values in the NA have followed a clear upward trajectory despite some year-on-year fluctuations. The current median house price (middle number when arranged from lowest to highest) is £369,000, which is 48% higher than its level in 2013. The lower quartile price (the lowest 25% of prices, used as a good proxy for entry-level housing) stands at £288,000.

206. It is also worth noting that the current median house price in Buckingham is slightly less expensive than the current median for Buckinghamshire as a whole. This is in spite of the unusual fact (for a town, and discussed in the Type and Size section), that the dwelling mix in the NA includes a higher share of detached homes and fewer flats than wider Buckinghamshire.
207. AECOM has estimated the annual income required to afford various tenures of housing in Buckingham – each of which is explained in detail in Appendix C. These thresholds are compared to incomes to determine which options are the most appropriate for local people going forward. The average household income in the NA area was £52,150 in 2018, and the lower quartile income (per person) for Buckinghamshire was £19,200 in 2022.
208. It was found that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. The median house price would require an annual income around 80% above the current average. Private renting presents a similar affordability challenge, generally only making entry-level properties accessible to average and dual lower earning households. Households made up of a single lower earner cannot afford the given rental thresholds and would need to rely on social and affordable rented options.
209. Subsidised routes to home ownership like First Homes and shared ownership are intended to target people who can afford to rent but not to buy. In Buckingham there is a relatively large gap between the income needed to afford to rent (£34,000) and to buy (£74,000), who may benefit from these products.
210. The discount on First Homes can be set at 30%, 40% or 50% in Neighbourhood Plans. In Buckingham a 30% discount may be marginally affordable to the average earning household, but a 40% discount would expand access to ownership more widely. If seeking to take action on this point in the Neighbourhood Plan, the Working Group advised to discuss this possibility with Buckinghamshire Council, who may be able to supply evidence of development viability that is also relevant to this policy option.
211. Affordable rented housing appears generally affordable to households with two lower earners (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). Single lower earners can afford average social rents and affordable rents but the lowest earners, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling or additional subsidy, may need to live in a room in a shared house using housing benefits.

Students and HMOs

212. The University of Buckingham, a private university with approximately 3,500 students, is located within the NA boundary. The Accommodation Office for the University confirms that there are currently 467 student rooms offered at 13 sites across three campuses. Plans currently exist to offer a further 71 shared rooms at a new site in early 2024, with a capacity for 142 students.
213. This suggests that around 3,000 University students are likely to be accommodated outside of halls of residences. Though some will live at home and

others outside of Buckingham altogether, it is reasonable to assume that the majority live in private rented housing in the town. Nationwide data from the Higher Education Statistics Authority suggests that 27% of students live in the private rented sector, which would imply ongoing demand for rented homes from around 950 students in Buckingham.

214. This will include people living alone, in small groups, and in Houses in Multiple Accommodation (HMOs), where multiple unrelated individuals or households share facilities such as kitchens or bathrooms. This means that demand from students is likely to impact the market for both 1-2 bedroom self-contained flats and larger family housing that can be rented out to larger groups. This demand pressure can result in higher rents as well as incentives to convert more family housing to HMOs, with knock-on impacts on the housing needs of other groups.
215. The Buckinghamshire Council register indicates that there are 21 licenced HMOs in Buckingham, which have a total of 115 rooms (implying an average size of 5-6 bedrooms). This is likely to undercount the stock for a number of reasons. Speaking very generally, the current number of HMOs in the NA is likely to be fewer than 100 at present, though still able to accommodate around a third of the University's students as well as some non-student low-income house sharers.
216. Rental listings suggest that rooms in HMOs cost around £670 per month, making them cheaper than self-contained 1-2 bedroom homes. However, the potential rental income from a 4 bedroom HMO may be higher than a 4 bedroom self-contained house, providing an incentives for landlords to convert family housing if demand from students and low income house sharers rises in future.
217. There are a number of policy, licensing and other measures that can be taken to control the number, distribution and standards of HMOs. However, these are generally beyond the power of a Neighbourhood Plan and, if of interest, are a matter for discussion between the Working Group and Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority.

The need for Affordable Housing

218. AECOM estimate that there is a need for 9 (rounded) new social/affordable rental homes each year to satisfy local need, this equates to 141 new social/affordable rental homes over the neighbourhood plan period (to 2040).
219. This result may be lower than expected given the current backlog of need (in the region of 300 households). This is due to the expected rate of turnover in the substantial existing stock of social housing, which suggests that vacancies will be able to satisfy much of the projected newly arising need as well as some of the backlog.
220. However, Buckingham may be expected to meet some of the wider needs of the town's surrounding rural area and/or that of the wider county as established in the 2016 HEDNA. As such, it may be prudent to maximise the potential delivery of new affordable rented housing to address the current backlog, future-proof the stock in case needs change, and provide homes for households living in the wider area.

221. AECOM estimate a potential demand for 38 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in Buckingham, or 613 in total over the remaining years in the period to 2040. The households eligible for such homes do not necessarily lack their own housing but would prefer to buy rather than rent. They have been included in the national planning definition of those in need of Affordable Housing, but their needs are less acute than those on the waiting list for affordable rented housing.

Affordable Housing policy

222. Affordable Housing is typically provided and made financially viable by Local or Neighbourhood Plan policies that require it to be included at a set proportion of market housing developments. Buckinghamshire's adopted policy on this subject requires 25% of all new housing be affordable, and this is raised to 35% in the made Neighbourhood Plan.

223. AECOM recommends that the tenure mix of Affordable Housing secured in future years gives broadly equal weight to affordable home ownership options (50%) and affordable rented provision (50%). There is an opportunity here to boost levels of affordable home ownership to meet high levels of potential demand in a context where home ownership through the open market is very unaffordable. The trade-off is that this would lower delivery of affordable rented housing, which serves those in the greatest need. In this case, AECOM estimates that the existing stock of affordable rented housing may be sufficient for the community's evolving needs. However, it may be prudent to future-proof the stock through some additional supply in case this situation changes and to contribute to the unmet needs of the wider area.

224. There is no obligation to follow this recommendation or to depart from emerging Local Plan policy if that is more in line with the community's objectives. Further discussion with Buckinghamshire Council about the options and their advice would be beneficial, and could cover issues beyond the scope of this report, such as development viability.

225. Table 5-8 summarises Buckingham's position with regards to the expected delivery of Affordable Housing, and how this might ideally be apportioned among sub-categories of tenure to meet local needs over the Plan period. This exercise simply applies the housing requirement figure for the area to the Local Plan policy expectation, and shows the quantities of affordable housing for rent and sale that would be delivered if the tenure mix proposed in this HNA were to be rigidly enforced. In this sense it is hypothetical, and the outcomes in practice may differ, either as a result of measures taken in the neighbourhood plan (e.g. if the group plans for more housing (and therefore more affordable housing) than the local plan, or if the group decides to influence the tenure mix in other ways), or as a result of site-specific constraints.

Table 5-8: Estimated annual delivery of Affordable Housing in Buckingham

	Step in Estimation	Expected delivery
A	Annual housing need figure (calculated in Quantity chapter)	74
B	Affordable housing quota (%) in made Neighbourhood Plan	35%
C	Potential total Affordable Housing in NA (A x B)	26
D	Rented % (e.g. social/ affordable rented)	50%
E	Rented number (C x D)	13
F	Affordable home ownership % (e.g. First Homes, Rent to Buy)	50%
G	Affordable home ownership number (C x F)	13

Source: AECOM estimate based on LPA's affordable housing policies, AECOM's indicative tenure mix

6. Type and Size

Introduction

226. It is common for neighbourhood plans to include policies that influence what form new housing should take in terms of type and size. This requires evidence of what local people need.
227. This can be done using statistics to identify relevant trends and potential gaps in the market. That is the focus of this chapter of the HNA. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies either on its own or in combination with survey results expressing the specific wants and concerns of local residents. It will also build up a picture of the population and existing range of homes that may provide useful context for the neighbourhood plan.
228. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:
- To establish what **mix** of housing exists in the NA at present;
 - To describe characteristics of the local **population** that are relevant to housing need; and
 - To look to the **future**, considering how the population is likely to evolve and what mix of homes would be most appropriate to build.
229. It is important to keep in mind that housing need is not an exact science. To get from a set of facts about the population to an ideal mix of homes requires making assumptions. For example, there are clear patterns about what size of home families tend to live in at different stages of life. However, a variety of other reasons sit behind people's housing choices that are less easy to predict, including wealth, accessibility requirements and personal preference. Some trends can also change rapidly over time, such as the increasing preference for home working.
230. The conclusions and recommendations given here are therefore not definitive. Rather, they are what the statistics suggest future needs will look like based on current trends. This is sufficient for justifying planning policies, but it is also appropriate to take into account other factors and evidence if desired.

Definitions

- **Dwelling type:** whether a home is detached, semi-detached, terraced, a flat, bungalow or other type. Which a household chooses to occupy tends to be more about wealth and preference than a specific need.
- **Dwelling size:** how many rooms or bedrooms a home contains. While this could also mean floor area or number of storeys, the number of bedrooms is most reliably recorded in housing statistics. Bedroom numbers are also closely linked to family size and life stage.
- **Household:** a unit of people who live together, commonly a family, couple or single person. Not all dwellings contain a household, including properties that

are vacant and second homes, so the number of dwellings and the number of households in an area is usually different.

- **Household composition:** the specific combination of adults and children who form a household. The Census offers a number of categories, for example distinguishing between families with children who are dependent or non-dependent (i.e. adults). 'Other' households in the Census include house-sharers, groups of students, and multi-family households.
- **Household life stage:** the age of the lead member of a household – usually the oldest adult, or what used to be called the 'head of household'. Life stage is correlated with dwelling size as well as wealth.
- **Housing mix:** the range of home sizes and types in an area.
- **Over- and under-occupancy:** the degree to which the size and composition of a household lines up with the number of bedrooms in their home. If there are more bedrooms than the household would be expected to need, the home is considered under-occupied, and vice versa.

The current housing mix

231. This section establishes the current housing mix of Buckingham, highlighting recent changes to it and comparing it to wider averages.

232. There are currently estimated to be 6,437 dwellings in Buckingham. This reflects the additional 1,492 homes built since the 2011 Census, when the total was recorded as 4,925. The nature of the completions data provided by Buckinghamshire Council does not allow for the type and size mix of these additional homes to be reflected in the analysis to follow, which is primarily based on the 2021 Census.

Dwelling type

233. Table 6-1 below shows the breakdown of different types of housing available in Buckingham. The most prevalent housing type is detached dwellings (37%) followed by semi-detached dwellings (28%), terraces (22%) and flats (13%).

234. Table 6-1 also presents figures from 2011, to give an understanding of how the housing stock has changed over the last decade. Despite considerable development in the past ten years, the proportional mix of housing does not appear to have changed significantly. The dominant category of detached homes saw the greatest actual growth but flats, the least common category, saw the greatest proportional growth from a low base. So while new development has generally followed existing patterns, some additional diversity has been created through the supply of additional flats.

235. These findings corroborate the completions data provided by Buckinghamshire Council, which show that recent development has been driven by large mixed sites, as well as the perception of the Working Group that flats above shops have featured strongly in windfall permissions in recent years.

Table 6-1: Accommodation type, Buckingham, 2011-2021

Type	2011	%	2021	%
Detached	1,834	37.1%	2,197	37.1%
Semi-detached	1,420	28.7%	1,648	27.9%
Terrace	1,167	23.6%	1,296	21.9%
Flat	529	10.7%	768	13.0%
Total	4,945	100%	5,914	100%

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, VOA 2021, AECOM Calculations

236. Table 6-2 compares the NA mix to wider benchmarks. It shows Buckingham has a slightly less balanced housing profile than the wider unitary authority and country – with a higher proportion of detached homes and a lower proportion of flats. This is somewhat surprising given that the NA is a town with a generally more urban character than the surrounding rural area. This may be due to the impact of Buckinghamshire’s larger settlements (e.g. High Wycombe and Aylesbury) on the county average.

237. Census data does not disaggregate bungalows as their own housing type. However, VOA can be used to give an estimate of the proportion of bungalows. The data shows that bungalows make up 6.6% of the overall housing stock in Buckingham, which is lower than averages seen across Buckinghamshire (8.8%) and nationally (9.2%). The relative scarcity of bungalows may contribute to the perception shared by the Working Group that they are in particularly high demand at present.

Table 6-2: Accommodation type, various geographies, 2021

Type	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire	England
Detached	37.1%	34.3%	22.9%
Semi-detached	27.9%	30.2%	31.5%
Terrace	21.9%	17.8%	23.0%
Flat	13.0%	17.2%	22.2%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

Dwelling size

238. Table 6-3 below presents the current housing mix in terms of size. It shows that the current stock is skewed toward mid-sized and larger dwellings: homes with more than 3 bedrooms make up just over 70% of the total.

239. The table also presents figures from 2011 to show how the housing stock has changed over the last 10 years. Again, despite quite considerable development since 2011, few significant changes to the proportional size profile can be seen. That said, the number of 4+ bedroom homes has increased most significantly, almost reaching parity with the number of 3 bedroom homes.

Table 6-3: Dwelling size (bedrooms), Buckingham, 2011-2021

Number of bedrooms	2011	%	2021	%
1	382	8.1%	513	8.7%
2	990	20.9%	1,253	21.2%
3	1,726	36.4%	2,081	35.2%
4+	1,613	34.0%	2,060	34.9%
Total	4,714	100%	5,907	100%

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

240. Again, it is useful to look at the percentage breakdown of dwelling sizes in comparison with the wider district and country. Table 6-4 shows that Buckingham's size profile closely tracks that of wider Buckinghamshire, while both areas depart from the national average in their high share of 4+ bedroom homes and low proportions of dwellings with 1-2 bedrooms.

Table 6-4: Dwelling size (bedrooms), various geographies, 2021

Number of bedrooms	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire	England
1	8.7%	9.5%	11.6%
2	21.2%	22.3%	27.3%
3	35.2%	36.1%	40.0%
4+	34.9%	32.0%	21.1%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

Population characteristics

241. This section examines key characteristics of the local population that have a bearing on what housing might be needed in future years. Where available, recent data is used. However, for some information, notably the age profile of households (as opposed to individuals), it is necessary to fall back on the 2011 Census.

Age

242. Table 6-5 shows the current age structure of the NA population, alongside 2011 Census figures. Given the relatively large overall population increase, which is in line with the scale of development in recent years, it is unsurprising that all age groups have experienced growth. The single exception to this is the population aged 15-24. This may be a reflection of the timing of the 2021 Census during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many students returned to their family homes. However, this statistic also chimes with the perception of the Working Group that young adults tend to leave Buckingham for employment and lifestyle reasons, returning (or replaced by others) in later age groups to begin or expand their families. The population of 25-44 year olds has accordingly increased, along with significant growth in the number of younger children.

243. Despite this evidence of the retention and attraction of family groups, another clear trend in Buckingham's population statistics is toward ageing, with by far

the largest proportional changes seen in the 65-84 and 85+ age groups, even though they remain a relatively small proportion of the total.

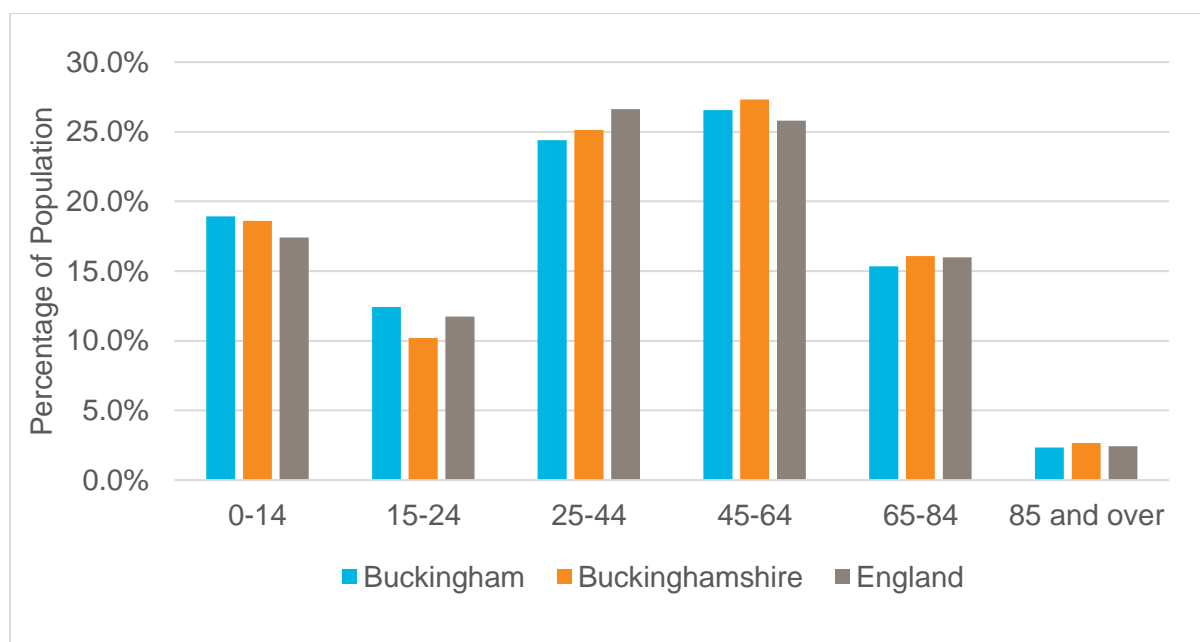
Table 6-5: Age structure of Buckingham, 2011 and 2021

Age group	2011 (Census)		2021 (Census)		Change
0-14	2,163	18.0%	2,706	18.9%	25.1%
15-24	1,882	15.6%	1,776	12.4%	-5.6%
25-44	2,963	24.6%	3,487	24.4%	17.7%
45-64	3,325	27.6%	3,796	26.6%	14.2%
65-84	1,494	12.4%	2,192	15.3%	46.7%
85+	216	1.8%	335	2.3%	55.1%
Total	12,043	100%	14,292	100%	18.7%

Source: ONS 2011, ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

244. For context, it is useful to look at the NA population structure alongside that of the district and country. Figure 6-1 (using 2021 Census data) shows that Buckingham has a slightly younger age profile than the wider Unitary Authority and country – with a higher share of people in the youngest age groups and a lower share in the older groups.

Figure 6-1: Age structure in Buckingham, 2021



Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

Household composition and occupancy

245. Household composition (the combination and relationships of adults and children in a dwelling) is an important factor in the kinds of housing needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Table 6-6 shows that there is little distinction between Buckingham and the wider Unitary Authority in terms of the composition of their respective household types. More than two thirds of households are composed of more than one person, and nearly one third contain dependent children (a slightly higher rate than Buckinghamshire and much higher rate than England).

246. Note that non-dependent children refer to households in which adult children are living at home, or which students still call their primary residence despite living for most of the year near to university. A marked increase in this category can be taken to indicate the relative unaffordability of entry-level homes, where young people are financially unable to move out and form their own households. It is interesting to observe that this category grew by 37% between 2011 and 2021 in the NA (although this may again be influenced by trends arising during the pandemic).

Table 6-6: Household composition, various geographies, 2021

Household composition		Buckingham	Buckinghamshire	England
One person household	Total	27.0%	26.3%	30.1%
	Aged 66 and over	11.9%	12.3%	12.8%
	Other	15.1%	14.0%	17.3%
One family only	Total	68.9%	67.8%	63.1%
	All aged 66 and over	11.9%	10.4%	9.2%
	With no children	17.1%	17.1%	16.8%
	With dependent children	30.6%	29.1%	25.8%
	With non-dependent children ²⁰	10.3%	10.6%	10.5%
Other household types	Total	4.1%	5.9%	6.9%

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

247. The tendency of households to over- or under-occupy their homes is another relevant consideration to the future size needs of the NA. A person is considered to under-occupy their home when there are more bedrooms in their home than a family of their size and composition would normally be expected to need. This is expressed as an occupancy rating of +1 or +2, indicating that there is one surplus bedroom or at least two surplus bedrooms (respectively). Over-occupancy works in the same way, with a rating of -1 indicating at least one bedroom too few.

248. The table shows that the NA's population is generally well housed, with only 3% of houses being over overcrowded. However, the data shows that most households in the parish tend to have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need (76%). This dynamic appears to be most prevalent in the older population but is also common among single person households and couples without children – many of which have two or more bedrooms above what they might be expected to need.

²⁰ Refers to households containing children who are older than 18 e.g students or young working people living at home.

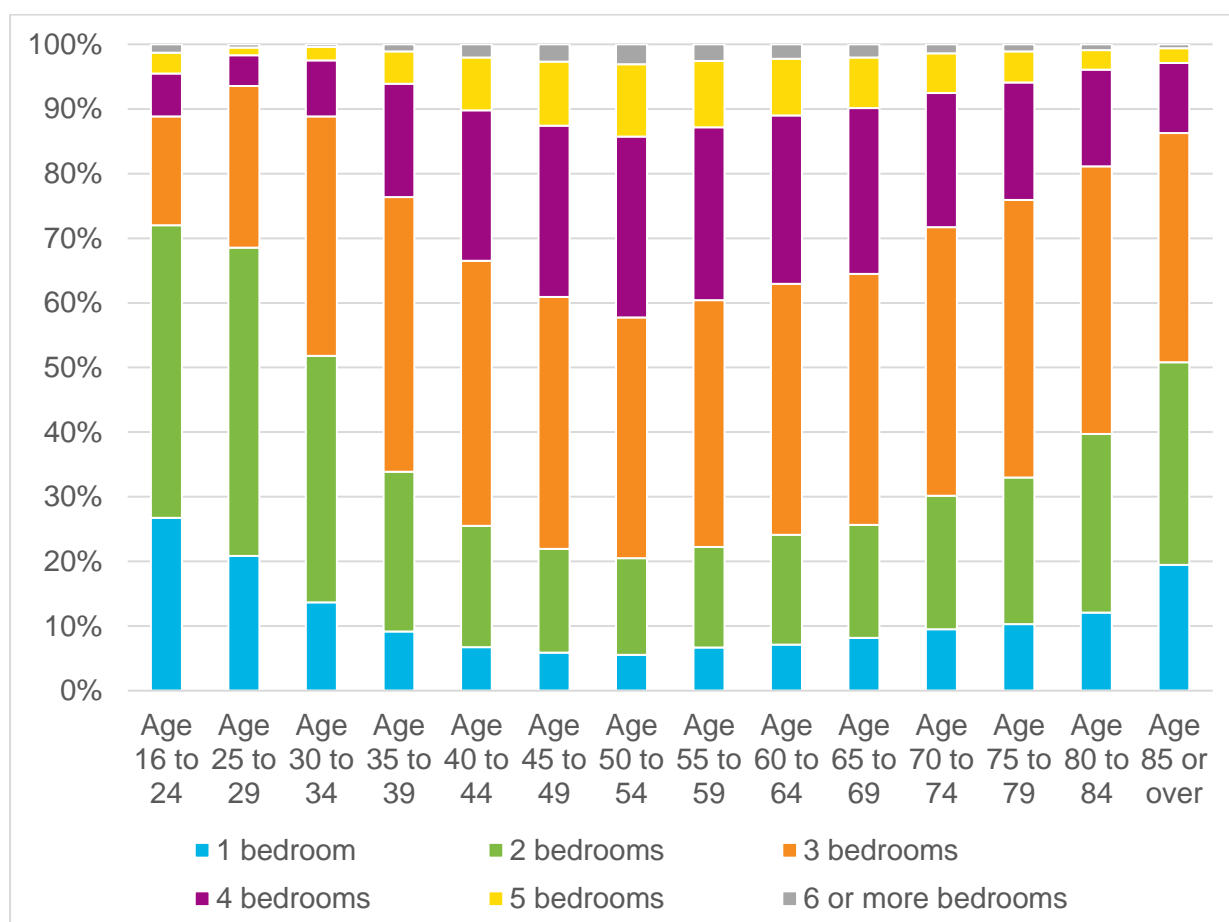
Table 6-7: Occupancy rating by age in Buckingham, 2021

Household type	+2 rating	+1 rating	0 rating	-1 rating
Family 66+	79.5%	18.7%	1.8%	0.0%
Single person 66+	54.4%	29.8%	15.7%	0.0%
Family under 66 - no children	73.9%	18.3%	7.8%	0.0%
Family under 66 - dependent children	30.3%	39.7%	26.8%	3.2%
Family under 66 - adult children	33.3%	39.3%	25.2%	2.2%
Single person under 66	44.8%	29.7%	25.5%	0.0%
All households	46%	30%	20%	3%

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

249. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the life stage of households is strongly correlated with the size of home they tend to occupy. Figure 6-2 sets out this relationship for Buckinghamshire in 2011 (because this data is not available at smaller scales). The graph shows how the youngest households tend to occupy the smallest dwellings, before rapidly taking up larger homes as their families expand, and then more gradually downsizing to smaller homes again as they age.

Figure 6-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size, Buckinghamshire, 2011



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

Future population and size needs

250. This section projects the future age profile of the population in Buckingham at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period and then estimates the mix of dwelling sizes they may need.

Age

251. The result of applying Local Authority level household projections to the age profile of Buckingham households in 2011 is shown in Table 6-8 (data on this metric is not yet available for the 2021 Census). This makes clear that population growth is expected to be driven by older households, with the number of households headed by persons aged 65+ expected to increase by two thirds to become around 34% of the total while the age groups younger than 55 all contract slightly.

252. Given the slightly younger population of the NA compared to Buckinghamshire (data for which has been used to derive these projections), it is possible that the rate of ageing shown in the table will be less extreme in practice, particularly if Buckingham continues to attract a replacement population of younger families.

Table 6-8: Projected age of households, Buckingham, 2011 - 2040

Year	24 and under	25 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 64	65 and over
2011	186	523	2,018	874	1,140
2040	177	501	1,958	1,040	1,902
% change 2011-2040	-5%	-4%	-3%	19%	67%

Source: AECOM Calculations

253. The demographic change discussed above can be translated into an ideal mix of dwelling sizes. This is achieved through a model that maps the dwelling size preferences by life stage shown earlier (in Figure 6-2) onto the projected age profile for the NA in Table 6-8 immediately above. The resulting 'ideal' future mix of dwelling sizes can then be compared to the current stock of housing to identify how future development might best fill the gaps.²¹

254. This approach has limitations, in that it embeds existing size preferences and does not anticipate changes in what people want from their homes. As such, it is appropriate for the results to be taken as a baseline scenario – what would occur if current trends persisted. It may well be the intention of the community to intervene to produce a different outcome more in line with their interpretation of emerging trends and their place- and community-shaping objectives.

²¹ Note that significant growth in the population in recent years means that Buckingham has a current number of households that slightly exceeds the total projected in 2040 through this exercise. The model requires household growth to project future housing need, so the overall total and number of households in each age category in 2040 has been manually inflated by 10% to simulate a scenario with modest household growth, roughly in line with the overall housing need identified in the Quantity section of this report (need for 74 homes x 7 years 2033-2040 = 518 new homes. 10% growth on the current number of households is 591).

Layering these factors on top of the indicative picture provided by this model is appropriate for the purpose of drafting neighbourhood plan policies.

255. The result of this exercise is presented in Table 6-9. It suggests that in order to meet the needs of a changing population and diversify its housing offer, Buckingham should provide a range of different sized homes, but focus delivery on those with 3 bedrooms. Despite being the most common size category at present, 3 bedroom homes offer the versatility to accommodate various household types, including new families and downsizers, a fact reflected in their popularity among all age groups in Figure 6-2. Between 15% and 22% of homes are allocated to each of the other size categories, helping to diversify the stock in favour of smaller, more affordable options, without entirely restricting the supply of the largest homes.

Table 6-9: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2040, Buckingham

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2021)	Suggested mix (2040)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix
1	8.7%	9.2%	14.8%
2	21.2%	21.2%	21.3%
3	35.2%	36.2%	45.4%
4+	34.9%	33.4%	18.5%

Source: AECOM Calculations

256. The following points sense-check the results of the model against other evidence and suggest ways to interpret them when thinking about policy options.

- The preceding chapter found that affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the NA. While the provision of Affordable Housing (subsidised tenure products) is one way to combat this, another is to ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type and density for local residents' budgets.
- Maintaining a supply of smaller 1-2 bed homes as suggested by the model would help to address this situation, although it should be considered whether large number of 1 bedroom homes are suitable on the development sites available in the NA and whether the form they tend to take (flats) aligns with the preferences of the local community.
- The delivery of 2-3 bedroom homes may also encourage older households to downsize, in so doing releasing larger family homes to the market and reducing the need for further large dwellings.
- To best meet the needs of the growing cohort of older households expected to be present by the end of the Plan period, it should also be considered whether the existing options are well tailored to older people's requirements in terms of space, flexibility, quality, location and accessibility.
- Variety should be sought within the mid-sized homes that are built in future to attract both newly forming households on lower budgets and older households

with equity from their existing larger homes. While the number of bedrooms required may be similar, other preferences and levels of purchasing power could be very different. Facilitating downsizing among older households may also release those larger homes for use by families who need more bedrooms if the existing stock of larger homes is sufficiently affordable.

- The overall size mix recommended for former Vale of Aylesbury of the Buckinghamshire HEDNA (2016), calculated from Figure 123, is as follows:
 - 4.7% 1 bedroom
 - 22.0% 2 bedroom
 - 49.3% 3 bedroom
 - 24.0% 4+ bedroom
- This recommendation is not dissimilar from the mix proposed for Buckingham here, particularly in the percentages allocated to 2 and 3 bedroom homes. The main difference is that the HEDNA mix places greater emphasis on 4+ bedroom homes and less on 1 bedroom homes. The key reason for this is the current abundance of 4+ bedroom homes in Buckingham. The HEDNA recommendation can be used to adjust the HNA mix to reduce the weight given to 1 bedroom homes in favour of 4+ bedroom properties if remaining in line with wider needs or avoiding large volumes of new flats are priorities of the community.

Tenure

257. The recommendation discussed immediately above applies to all housing in the NA over the Plan period. This is considered proportionate for devising policy at neighbourhood scale. However, in practice different size mixes may be appropriate for market housing and Affordable Housing. While this distinction may not be appropriate to make in Neighbourhood Plan policy, since Local Authorities tend to define the precise mix of Affordable Housing required on applicable sites, it is worth thinking through the factors at play.

258. Generally speaking, higher proportions of smaller homes are needed within affordable tenures, particularly affordable and social rent, than in market housing. This is because there tend to be more single people and couples in need of affordable rented housing, and they are likely to be eligible only for 1 or 2 bedroom properties. In contrast, people buying their own homes tend to want more space than they technically 'need', such as spare rooms for guests, home working or other uses. This fact is established in the data on under-occupancy presented earlier in this chapter.

259. There are three key sources of information for thinking through the size needs of different categories. These are:

- The Buckinghamshire HEDNA, which suggests that around 50% of affordable homes should have 1-2 bedrooms, compared with just 20% of market housing.

- The waiting list for affordable rented housing, kept by the Local Planning Authority, which provides a more current snapshot of the size needs of applicant households. The data provided by Buckinghamshire Council for those with a current address in the NA shows that 110 of the 129 applicant households are only eligible for a 1-2 bedroom property, and 89 of these for a 1 bedroom only.
- Any relevant household survey or consultation work in the NA can also highlight any specific gaps in the market within particular segments of the population.

260. To summarise, the overall size mix recommendation presented above applies generally to new housing in the NA. Within this mix, Affordable Housing might require a greater weighting towards smaller sizes while market homes focus on mid-sized homes and some larger options. It is not necessary (and is potentially not appropriate) for Neighbourhood Plans to be prescriptive about the size mix within different tenures, but a range of data sources exist that indicate a direction of travel, which Local Planning Authorities will draw upon when determining applications, and which it is possible for the neighbourhood planners to monitor.

Type

261. Planning policy also tends to be less prescriptive about the mix of dwelling types that are needed than the mix of home sizes. This is because the choice to occupy a terraced rather than a detached home, for example, is primarily a matter of wealth, personal preference, and the amount of outdoor space or other features sought than 'need' in the strict sense. This stands in contrast to the matter of dwelling size, where it can be more clearly established that a household with a certain number of members, closely correlated with age, requires a particular number of bedrooms.
262. The key distinctions when it comes to dwelling type are between flats and houses and, to a lesser extent, bungalows, each of which tend to appeal to occupants with different life circumstances. However, it remains difficult to generalise about this, particularly when drawing on demographic evidence.
263. The benefits of delivering a certain blend of dwelling types are more closely related to affordability, which is clearly established as an issue in Buckingham and which favours more dense options (e.g. terraces and flats). This imperative to improve affordability is often in conflict with matters of character, which in less urban areas tend to favour lower density options that blend in with the existing built environment. This is particularly relevant in the case of flats, a large block of which may not be a welcome proposition in some parts of the NA. That said, it is possible to deliver flats in the form of low-rise maisonettes that resemble terraces from street level, which can counter this issue.
264. In summary, there is a balance to be struck between, on the one hand, improving affordability and choice in the market by encouraging flats and terraces, and, on the other hand, preserving the distinctive character and other

features that residents like about the area today. How far the Neighbourhood Plan should guide on this issue, and in what direction, is a policy decision for the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and community to consider.

Conclusions- Type and Size

The current housing mix

265. The current dwelling mix in Buckingham is generally weighted in favour of larger and less dense home types. This is somewhat surprising given that the NA is a town with a generally more urban character than the surrounding rural area. This may be due to the impact of Buckinghamshire's larger settlements (e.g. High Wycombe and Aylesbury) on the county average.
266. The most common dwelling type in Buckingham is detached houses (37% compared to the national average of 23%), and there are relatively few flats (13% compared to the national average of 22%). The proportion of bungalows, at nearly 7%, is slightly below the county and national averages (both 9%), which may be reinforcing the high levels of demand observed by the Working Group.
267. Buckingham's size profile more closely tracks that of wider Buckinghamshire, while both areas depart from the national average in their high share of 4+ bedroom homes and low proportions of dwellings with 1-2 bedrooms. Homes with more than 3 bedrooms make up just over 70% of the total in Buckingham.
268. Over the past ten years, despite significant levels of new development, the housing mix has remained relatively similar in the town. The key exceptions to this are relatively high proportional growth (from a low base) in the number of flats, and the large increase in 4+ bedroom homes to become the joint most common size category (with 3 bedroom homes). The former shift has provided useful diversity in the market, while the latter has exaggerated the existing dominance of larger homes.

Population characteristics

269. The NA population, which is generally younger than the wider county and England, has experienced significant growth in the decade since 2011 in line with the scale of residential development in that time.
270. The only age group that has not expanded is that aged 15-24. This may be a reflection of the timing of the 2021 Census during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many students returned to their family homes. However, this statistic also chimes with the perception of the Working Group that young adults tend to leave Buckingham for employment and lifestyle reasons, returning (or replaced by others) in later age groups to begin or expand their families. The population of 25-44 year olds has accordingly increased, along with significant growth in the number of younger children.
271. Despite this evidence of the retention and attraction of family groups, another clear trend in Buckingham's population statistics is toward ageing, with by far

the largest proportional changes seen in the 65-84 and 85+ age groups, even though they remain a relatively small proportion of the total.

272. Applying ONS household projections for Buckinghamshire to the Buckingham population in 2011 suggests that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with the 65+ age group expected to increase by around two-thirds to become approximately 34% of the total, while all other age bands grow at more modest rates or contract. Given the slightly younger population of the NA compared to Buckinghamshire (data for which has been used to derive these projections), it is possible that the rate of ageing will be lower in practice, particularly if Buckingham continues to attract a replacement population of younger families.
273. Buckingham's household composition is similar to that of the wider county, notable for a low proportion of single-person households and a higher share of families with dependent children than the national average.
274. As of the 2011 Census, more than 75% of households in the NA had at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, and 46% had at least two extra bedrooms. This is not surprising given the relatively large skew of the housing stock. Under-occupancy was most common among the three distinct groups: couples with no children, older households and single people. While not uncommon, this might suggest that Buckingham's larger housing is not necessarily being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or by older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.

Future population and size needs

275. It is possible to estimate the size mix of future homes that might best accommodate demographic trends and address imbalances in the existing housing stock. The result of this process suggests that new development should deliver a variety of dwelling sizes with a focus on 3 bedroom homes. Despite being the most common size category at present, 3 bedroom homes offer the versatility to accommodate various household types, including new families and downsizers, a fact reflected in their popularity among all age groups locally.
276. This balanced mix, with a lower share of 4+ bedroom homes than are present in the existing housing stock, could help to achieve three key outcomes: improving affordability, meeting the needs suggested by demographic trends (notably the ageing of older people and continuing to attract younger families), and diversification away from the high proportion of 4+ bedroom homes in the current stock.
277. This recommendation is broadly in line with the evidence for former Vale of Aylesbury presented in the 2016 Buckinghamshire HEDNA Housing Need Study. However, this source could also be used to justify promoting slightly more larger homes and fewer 1 bedroom options if this is desired by the community – for example if flats are not supported throughout the NA for reasons of character.

278. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the NA or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors. The size mix of Affordable Housing also tends to be considered separately from market housing by the Local Planning Authority, and to focus on the smaller units for which the vast majority of those on the waiting list in Buckingham are eligible.

7. Specialist housing for older people

Introduction

279. It is relatively common for neighbourhood plans in areas with aging populations to include policies relating to specialist housing for older people. This chapter considers in detail the specialist housing needs of older people in Buckingham. It focuses on specialist forms of provision but recognises that the majority of older people will live in the mainstream housing stock. The approach is as follows:

- To review the **current provision** of specialist housing in the NA;
- To estimate the **potential demand** for this form of accommodation with reference to the projected growth in the older population and current rates of mobility limitation; and
- To discuss the potential for meeting this need through adaptations to the mainstream stock and other **additional considerations**.

280. Because of the wide variation in the level of support needed, as well as the financial capabilities of those affected, the estimates of need presented here should be viewed with caution – as an idea of the broad scale of potential need rather than an obligatory target that must be met.

281. It is important to note that the need for housing for particular groups of people may well exceed, or be proportionally high in relation to, the total housing need or requirement. This is because the needs of particular groups will often be calculated having consideration to the whole population of an area as opposed to the projected new households which form the baseline for estimating housing need overall.²²

282. This study covers the need for housing, i.e. buildings that the planning system classifies as Use Class C3 (private dwellings).²³ Residences that fall into Use Class C2 (institutions including prisons, boarding schools and some care homes for older people) are largely beyond the scope of this research. However, it is possible to estimate the likely need for residential and nursing care over the Neighbourhood Plan period.

283. The distinction between care homes for older people that fall into use class C2 and those where accommodation is counted as C3 is blurred. As such, the findings of this chapter may justify the provision of extra-care C3 housing and/or C2 care home units, but it is not possible to state definitively how much of each would be required. C3 specialist accommodation is typically self-contained with its own front door, made available on an individual basis with support provided

²² See Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 2a-017-20190220, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>)

²³ For a full description of Planning Use Classes, please refer to https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

in the home or not at all if the resident does not require it, and offered for sale or rent on the open market.

Definitions

- **Older people:** people over retirement age, ranging from the active newly retired to the very frail elderly. Their housing needs tend to encompass accessible and adaptable general needs housing as well as the full spectrum of retirement and specialised housing offering additional care.
- **Specialist housing for older people:** a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups. This could include residential institutions, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services.
- **Sheltered Housing²⁴:** self-contained flats or bungalows where all the residents are older people. Schemes on the whole provide independent, self-contained homes, either to rent or buy. Properties in most schemes have features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on, as well as being linked to an emergency alarm service. Some will be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, guest flats and gardens.
- **Extra Care Housing:** housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required. Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff, and meals are often also available. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.
- **Category M4(2):** accessible and adaptable dwellings.
- **Category M4(3):** wheelchair user dwellings.

Specialist housing for older people

284. The housingcare.org website identifies a total of 181 units of specialist accommodation in the NA at present, roughly half of which are social housing and the other half are offered for leasehold purchase. There have also been two new care homes recently developed which have a capacity for 152 people, and further care home facilities are available in Maids Moreton beyond the NA boundary. Details of the facilities existing within the NA are provided in Appendix E.

²⁴ See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

285. The 2021 Census suggests that there are currently 1,157 individuals aged over 75 in Buckingham. This suggests that current provision is in the region of 156 units per 1,000 of the 75+ population (a common measure of specialist housing supply).

Demographic characteristics

286. The starting point for estimating the need for specialist housing for older people is to project how the overall number of older people in Buckingham is likely to change in future. This is calculated by extrapolating population projections from the ONS Sub-National Population Projections for Buckinghamshire. The results are set out in Table 7-1.

287. The table estimates that by 2040 the population over 75 years old will make up approximately 12% of the overall NA population, up from 8% in 2021. As for the projections presented in the Type and Size section, it is possible that the ageing trend will not be as strong in practice due to the different starting age profiles of Buckingham and the Unitary Authority. It is also likely that the overall population growth indicated here is an underestimate given the rate of development in recent years. However, the main purpose of this exercise is to understand the trend toward ageing.

288. A key assumption for the estimate given at the end of this section is that the older people living in the NA currently are already suitably accommodated, either because they occupy the existing stock of specialist accommodation, have made appropriate adaptations to their own homes or do not require support or adaptations. This is unlikely to be completely true, but it is not possible to determine how many such individuals are inadequately housed without evidence from a household survey (which itself may not give a complete picture). As such, the growth in the older population rather than the total at the end of the Plan period is the key output of this calculation.

Table 7-1: Modelled projection of older population in 2040 by end of Plan period

Age group	2021		2040	
	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire	Buckingham	Buckinghamshire
All ages	14,292	553,078	14,859	575,019
75+	1,157	49,812	1,770	76,194
%	8.1%	9.0%	11.9%	13.3%

Source: ONS SNPP 2020, AECOM Calculations

289. The next step is to consider the need for different tenures of dwelling for older people. It is assumed that those currently occupying their own home will wish to do so for as long as practicably possible in future, even where downsizing or moving into specialist accommodation. Equally, those who currently rent, either in the private or social sectors, are projected to need affordable rented specialist accommodation.

290. The 2011 55-75 age bracket is considered the best proxy for the group likely to fall into need for specialist accommodation during the Plan period to 2040. The

top row in Table 7-1 outlines the tenure mix among households aged 55-75 at Local Authority scale (due to data availability), which indicates that the vast majority of older people own their own homes, with some social renters and very few private renters.

291. The expected growth in the 75+ population in the NA is 613 additional individuals by the end of the plan period. This can be converted into 438 households based on the average number of people per household aged 75+ at Local Authority scale (1.4). Multiplying this figure by the percentages of 55-75 year olds occupying each tenure gives a breakdown of which tenures Buckingham households are likely to need in 2040, and is shown in the bottom row of Table 7-2.

Table 7-2: Tenure of households aged 55-75 in Buckinghamshire (2011) and projected aged 75+ in Buckingham (2040)

	All owned	Owned outright	Owned (mortgage) or Shared Ownership	All Rented	Social rented	Private rented	Living rent free
Buckinghamshire (2011)	83.0%	57.2%	25.8%	17.0%	11.2%	4.7%	1.1%
Buckingham (2040 projection)	363	251	113	75	49	21	5

Source: Census 2011

292. It is also important to consider rates of disability by tenure. The tendency for people in rented housing to have higher disability levels is well established. It arises partly because people with more limiting disabilities tend to have lower incomes. It also reflects the fact that as people develop support and care needs they may find that the only suitable and affordable option to them is available in the social rented sector. Table E-2 in Appendix E presents this data for those aged over 65 in Buckingham from the 2011 Census.

293. It is also relevant to consider disability rates for other age groups. Specialist housing is targeted at older people, and they are the focus of this analysis, because disability rates are significantly higher among older age groups. In Buckingham in 2011, the proportion of people with a disability that limits their daily activities a lot was under 2% for those aged below 49 and 5% for those aged 50-64 but jumps to 19% for those aged over 65. The same pattern holds for less limiting disabilities (26% for those aged over 65, 8% for the 50-64 age group and below 4% for younger people). Disability rates in Buckingham among all age groups generally followed the trend seen across Buckinghamshire, suggesting that there is not an unusually high rate of disability among younger people requiring action from a housing standpoint.

Future needs for specialist accommodation and adaptations

294. Based on the evidence outlined above, the number of households falling into potential need for specialist accommodation over the Plan period is calculated to be 200.
295. AECOM's modelling, summarised in Table 7-3, is based on the assumption that those whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot may need housing with care (e.g. extra care housing, with significant on-site services, including potentially medical services), while those with their day to day activities limited only a little may simply need adaptations to their existing homes, or alternatively sheltered or retirement living that can provide some degree of oversight or additional services. However, it is important to note that, even those people who have high support or care needs can often be supported to live in their own homes. This is often reflected in policy of local authorities, with explicit aim to reduce the need to commission increasing numbers of care home beds.
296. The model suggests there is an opportunity to provide a large share of the need for specialist housing in the NA through adaptations to the existing housing stock and the provision of sheltered or retirement living. However, there remains robust potential demand for housing with care.
297. The model suggests that the balance of tenure options in both forms of specialist housing should be weighted in favour of market rather than socially rented housing. This is because of the high rates of ownership among the existing older population (noting that Buckinghamshire rates have been assumed due to a lack of data for the NA specifically).

Table 7-3: AECOM estimate of specialist housing for older people need in Buckingham by the end of the Plan period

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	30	56	86
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	23	91	114
Total	53	147	200

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

298. It is worth comparing these findings with the recommendations of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (HLIN), one of the simplest and widely used models estimating for the housing needs of older people. Table 7-4 in Appendix E reproduces the key assumptions of HLIN's Strategic Housing for Older People (SHOP) toolkit. Applying those assumptions to the growth in the older population of Buckingham results in a total of 154 specialist dwellings that might be required to the end of the Plan period. This is set out in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4: HLIN estimate of specialist housing for older people need in Buckingham by the end of the Plan period

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	19	25	44
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	37	73	110
Total	56	98	154

Source: Housing LIN, AECOM calculations

Further considerations

299. The above estimates suggest that potential need for specialist accommodation could be in the range of 154-199 units over the Neighbourhood Plan period. However, it may not be possible or appropriate to deliver this scale of new accommodation. It may be considered proportionally high in relation to the overall housing need identified in this report (depending on whether the annual target is applied only to the years after 2033 or the whole plan period), and therefore should not necessarily be prioritised to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing.
300. In addition, specialist housing for older people should only be provided in sustainable, accessible locations that offer services and facilities, public transport options, and the necessary workforce of carers and others.
301. It is considered that Buckingham is, in broad terms, a suitable location for specialist accommodation on the basis of the accessibility criteria and the considerations of cost-effectiveness above. As such, there is potential for such accommodation to be provided within the NA (while noting there is no specific requirement or obligation to do so).
302. It is also important to emphasise that the potential need for specialist housing for older people overlaps with the need for care home bedspaces and the need for adaptations to mainstream housing. These topics are considered in the sections below.

Care homes

303. Residential and nursing care homes are not defined as housing because they do not provide self-contained accommodation where an older person can live independently. Care home accommodation is defined as institutional accommodation rather than housing.
304. However, residents of care homes may be similar in terms of their care and support needs as those living in specialist housing, or even mainstream housing with appropriate care and support delivered in their homes. There may be some scope for older people who would otherwise have been accommodated in care homes to meet their needs within specialist or mainstream housing if sufficient appropriate accommodation can be provided. Nevertheless, there is likely to be

continued need for care home accommodation to meet more acute and severe needs, and to offer choice to some older people and their families about how they are cared for and supported.

305. Given the overlap between people who might enter care home accommodation and those who might take up specialist housing or care and support in their own home if available, estimates of the future need for care home accommodation, as with estimates of the need for specialist housing above, are uncertain and depend on both local and national policies, delivery, and the appetite of private developers.
306. AECOM has estimated the likely need for care home accommodation over the plan period, based on the HLIN SHOP toolkit prevalence rates for residential and nursing care homes for older people (aged 75+). This estimate applied the prevalence rates in the 'More Choice, Greater Voice' 2008 report which informed the development of the HLIN toolkit. This report suggested that 65 residential care beds per 1,000 people aged 75+ was an appropriate rate. Based on this rate, applied to the growth in the older population for consistency with the calculations above, it is estimated that in 2040 there would be a need for 40 care homes beds in the NA. The recent delivery of two new care homes with the capacity for 152 new units represents a significant injection of supply that is capable of fully meeting the need identified here.
307. It is important to note that as these estimates relate to care homes (or the population in institutions) rather than independent housing, these figures are in addition to the overall need for housing in the NA. However, as discussed in this section, some of the need for care home beds might be met by independent housing accommodation and vice versa.

The Role of Mainstream Housing

308. The majority of older people live in mainstream housing and will continue to do so all of their lives. Based on the estimated number of older people and the tally of the existing stock in Appendix E, around 84% of the Buckingham population aged 75 and over is likely to live in the mainstream housing stock²⁵.
309. It is not possible to be precise about how well older people are accommodated within mainstream housing, in terms of whether their accommodation is suitable to their needs and whether adequate care or support is provided within the home when they need.
310. However, if there is unlikely to be a large volume of additional specialist supply during the Plan period, another key avenue to addressing those with relevant needs is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability in new development to be met in the Local Plan with Buckinghamshire Council.
311. It is relatively common for Local Plans to require that all or a majority of new housing meets Category M4(2) standards in response to the demographic shifts

²⁵ 1,157 over 75s in 2020, of which 181 are accommodated in specialist housing, leaving 976 people living in mainstream housing. This is approximate since some people in specialist housing and care homes will be under the age of 75.

being observed nationwide. Government is considering mandating M4(2) on newly erected dwellings²⁶, although changes to Building Regulations have not yet been made.

312. The adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan in Policy H6b provides explicit encouragement for development to accommodate specific groups such as older people and allocates sites for new specialist accommodation in the NA (none of which are in the NA). Local Plan Policy H6c sets out that all new development should meet national standards for accessibility and adaptability (Category M4(2)), and 15% of Affordable Housing should be nominated for wheelchair users (Category M4(3)).

313. The evidence gathered here would appear to justify these provisions being maintained in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan. It is unclear whether Neighbourhood Plans can set their own requirements for the application of the national standards of adaptability and accessibility for new housing and so discussions with the LPA are advised if this is a key priority.

Conclusions- Specialist Housing for Older People

Characteristics of the current older population

314. There are currently estimated to be around 1,157 individuals aged 75 or over in Buckingham, a number that has grown from 809 in 2011 and is projected to rise to 1,770 by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period (2040).

315. A clear majority (83%) of Buckinghamshire households aged 55-75 in 2011 (and therefore likely to reach the 75+ bracket by 2040) are owner occupiers and the remainder predominantly rent from a social landlord. This is important because those currently owning will require specialist accommodation for market purchase, being largely ineligible for subsidised housing, while those in private or social rent will need to rely on subsidised rented housing because they are unlikely to have the funds to buy. Rates of disability in Buckingham are also higher among social tenants than owner-occupiers.

Projected demographic change and need for specialist housing

316. The 75+ population of the NA is projected to increase from 8% to 12% of the population between 2021 and 2040. As established in the previous chapter, Buckingham has a slightly younger population than the wider county and may therefore age slower in the coming years than is estimated here.

317. The growth in the older population, which, rather than the total, is the focus of the estimates of need here, should be converted into households because some older people will be cohabiting in old age. The projected 75+ population growth of 613 is equivalent to roughly 438 households in that age category.

318. The potential need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people can be estimated by bringing together data on population

²⁶ See [Raising accessibility standards for new homes: summary of consultation responses and government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes)

projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the NA. This can be sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research.

319. Specialist housing is targeted at older people, and they are the focus of this analysis, because disability rates are significantly higher among older age groups. In Buckingham in 2011, the proportion of people with a disability that limits their daily activities a lot was under 2% for those aged below 49 and 5% for those aged 50-64 but jumps to 19% for those aged over 65.
320. The two estimates suggest a range of 154 to 200 specialist accommodation units might be required during the Plan period. The estimates are also broken down by tenure and level of support required. Broadly, 60-75% of the need is for accommodation offered for market purchase. This chimes with the higher propensity of older households to be homeowners. A similar range (60-75%) of the need is found to be for sheltered housing with limited support rather than additional care arrangements. The potential need for care and nursing home beds in Buckingham to 2035 can be roughly estimated at 40 units, a level of demand that could easily be met by the two recent care homes offering 152 bedspaces in total.
321. These estimates are fairly large relative to the overall housing need of the NA. Despite this, it would not be prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families, and others important to maintaining a balanced and vibrant community. The HNA evidence can be used to support specialist housing development but does not make that obligatory. How far to promote this is a choice for the Working Group and wider community.

Accessibility and adaptability

322. Given that there may not be a large volume of additional specialist supply during the Plan period, an alternative or additional avenue to the provision of additional specialist homes is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability required of new development with Buckinghamshire Council. There is a particularly high degree of overlap between the groups served by sheltered specialist housing and adapted mainstream housing, so the unmet need for such homes identified here can be reduced through this avenue.
323. The current adopted Local Plan provides explicit encouragement for development to accommodate specific groups such as older people. Policy H6c sets out that all new development should meet national standards for accessibility and adaptability (Category M4(2)), and 15% of Affordable Housing should be nominated for wheelchair users (Category M4(3)). The evidence gathered here further justifies these requirements. It is unclear whether Neighbourhood Plans can set their own requirements for the application of the national standards of adaptability and accessibility for new housing, and existing requirements in the Local Plan are robust, so discussions with the LPA are advised exceeding or departing from them is a priority here.

8. Next Steps

Recommendations for next steps

324. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the neighbourhood planners should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Buckinghamshire Council with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, bearing the following in mind:

- All Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, but in particular Condition E, which is the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan;
- The views of Buckinghamshire Council;
- The views of local residents;
- The views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers and estate agents; and
- The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by Buckinghamshire Council.

325. This assessment has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data, national guidance and other relevant and available information current at the time of writing.

326. Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the Government, Buckinghamshire Council or any other relevant party and review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.

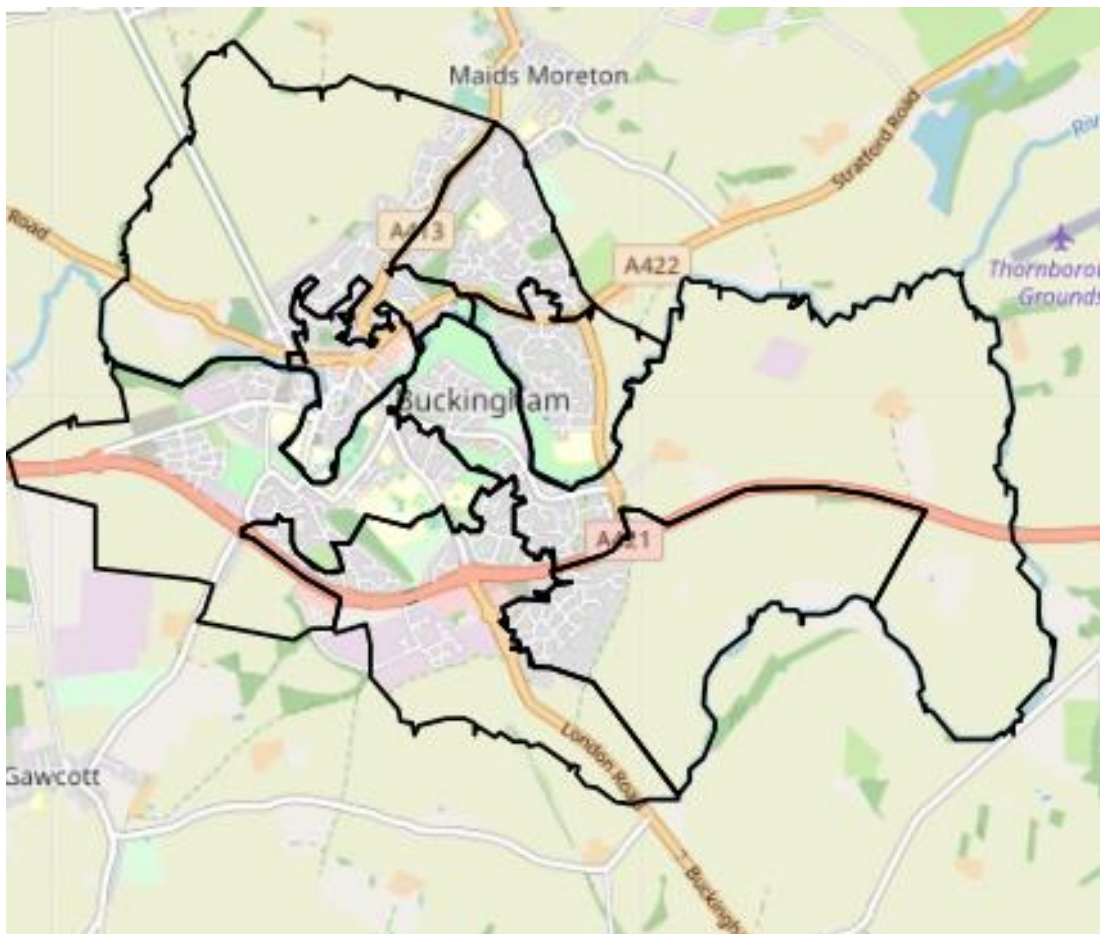
327. At the same time, monitoring on-going demographic or other trends over the Neighbourhood Plan period will help ensure the continued relevance and credibility of its policies.

Appendix A : Assessment geography

328. For Census purposes, the whole of England is divided into statistical units of similar population size called Output Areas (OAs) and their larger equivalents. OAs are the smallest units. They make up Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which in turn make up Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs). The NA equates to the following combination of LSOAs:

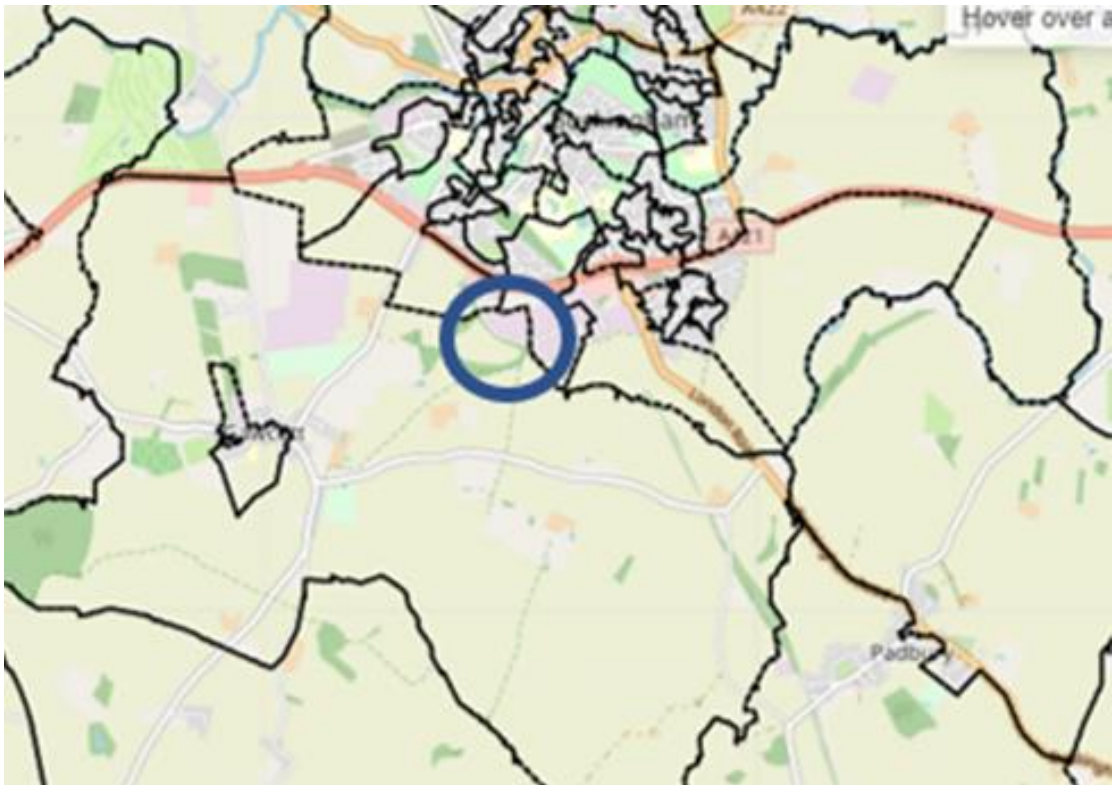
- E01017648;
- E01017649;
- E01033953;
- E01033954;
- E01017644;
- E01017645;
- E01017646;
- E01017647.

329. A map of the relevant LSOAs for the NA is provided below:



330. As noted in the Context section of this report, there is a small area in the southwest of Buckingham which is accounted for in the designated NA map but cannot be disaggregated using OAs. The area includes Buckingham Industrial Estate but also extends far beyond the NA into the surrounding rural area,

meaning that any households captured live outside of Buckingham and would skew the data in this report. Accordingly, this small area has not been included in the data gathered. A map of the excluded OA is provided below, with the area that falls within the NA circled in blue:



331. As noted in the Affordability section of the report, household income data for small areas is only provided down to the scale of MSOAs. The relevant MSOAs, in which the NA is located, and which will need to serve as a proxy for it for this data source, are:

- E02003652;
- E02003653.

Appendix B : Local Plan context

Policies in the adopted local plan

332. Table B-1 below summarises adopted Local Plan policies that are relevant to housing need and delivery in Buckingham.

Table B-1: Summary of relevant policies in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 (adopted 2021)

Policy	Provisions
Settlement hierarchy and cohesive development	Buckingham is designated as one of five strategic settlements which should be the focus for the majority of development and act as service centres for other nearby towns and villages.
S2 Spatial Strategy for Growth	<p>Provision should be made for the delivery of 28,600 new dwellings between 2011 and 2033.</p> <p>Of this overall target 2,177 is expected to be delivered within Buckingham.</p>
H1 Affordable Housing	Residential developments of 11 or more dwellings will be required to provide a minimum of 25% affordable homes on site.
H6a Housing Mix	<p>New residential development will be expected to meet the current and expected future needs of the future population and meet the following size mix:</p> <p>Market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Bed Flats: 4% 2 Bed Flats: 4% 2 Bed House: 13% 3 Bed House: 52% 4 Bed House: 21% 5+ Bed House: 6.5% <p>Affordable Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Bed Flats: 9% 2 Bed Flats: 6% 2 Bed House: 36% 3 Bed House: 39% 4 Bed House: 10%
H6b Housing for older people	Class C2 older persons provision will be met through the allocation of sites, none of which are in Buckingham.
H6c Accessibility	New development should meet at least category 2 accessible and adaptable dwelling standards (subject to viability). A minimum of 15%

Policy	Provisions
	of Affordable Housing should meet M4(3) wheelchair accessibility housing standards

Source: Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

Table B-2: Summary of relevant policies in the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2012-2031 (made 2015)

Policy	Provisions
HP1 - Allocate land for 617 new dwellings	Five sites are allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan which could deliver a total of 617 new dwellings. A further reserve site is allocated which is capable of delivering 300 dwellings.
HP2 – Allocate land for 400 new rooms for University expansion	Two sites are allocated which are capable of delivering 400 additional rooms of student accommodation.
HP5 – Provide Affordable Housing	All proposals for new housing on sites delivering over 25 units should provide 35% of the new dwellings as Affordable Housing.

Source: Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan (made 2015)

Appendix C : Affordability calculations

333. This section outlines how the affordability thresholds discussed in the Affordability and Affordable Housing have been calculated.

C.1 Market housing

334. Market housing is not subsidised and tends to be primarily accessible to people on higher incomes.

i) Market sales

335. The starting point for calculating the affordability of a dwelling for sale from the perspective of a specific household is the loan to income ratio which most mortgage companies are prepared to agree. This ratio is conservatively estimated to be 3.5. In practice this can be highly variable. Multipliers up to 4.5 or even above 5 times income increasingly available, although the actual average in practice tends to be lower, particularly where applicants are dual earning. The Financial Conduct Authority uses 3.5 or more as its standard assumption for single applicants and 2.75 or more for dual applicants.

336. To produce a more accurate assessment of affordability, the savings required for a deposit should be taken into account in addition to the costs of servicing a mortgage. However, unlike for incomes, data is not available for the savings available to households in Buckingham, and the precise deposit a mortgage provider will require of any buyer will be determined by their individual circumstances and the state of the mortgage market. An assumption is therefore made that a 10% purchase deposit is required and is available to the prospective buyer. In reality it is possible that the cost of the deposit is a greater barrier to home ownership than the mortgage costs.

337. The calculation for the purchase threshold for market housing is as follows:

- Value of a median NA house price (2022) = £370,000;
- Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £37,000;
- Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £332,000;
- Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £95,000.

338. The purchase threshold for an entry-level dwelling is a better representation of affordability to those with lower incomes or savings, such as first-time buyers. To determine this threshold, the same calculation is repeated but with reference to the lower quartile rather than the median house price. The lower quartile average in 2022 was £288,000, and the purchase threshold is therefore £74,000.

339. It is also worth assessing the purchase threshold for new build homes, since this most closely represents the cost of the new housing that will come forward

in future. Land Registry records 36 sales of new build properties in the NA in 2022, with an average price of £375,000.

340. It is necessary to also understand the likely cost of newly built entry-level housing as the basis for estimating the costs of affordable home ownership tenures (considered below). Given the small sample size and the potential for higher value sales skewing the average cited above, an estimate for new entry-level housing has been calculated by determining the uplift between all house prices in 2022 across Buckinghamshire and new build house prices in 2022 in the same area. This percentage uplift (or 'new build premium') is then applied to the 2022 lower quartile house price in the NA to give an estimated NA new build entry-level house price of £297,600 and purchase threshold of £76,500.

ii) Private Rented Sector (PRS)

341. It is assumed here that rented housing is affordable if the annual rent does not exceed 30% of the household's gross annual income. The percentage of income to be spent on rent before the property is considered affordable varies considerably for individuals, and it is increasingly common for households to dedicate a larger proportion of their earnings to rent. When considering affordability it is considered good practice to be conservative, and the 30% benchmark is used as ONS's current standard assumption.
342. This is an important assumption because it is possible that a household will be able to afford tenures that are deemed not affordable in this report if they are willing or able to dedicate a higher proportion of their income to housing costs. It is becoming increasingly necessary for households to do so. However, for the purpose of planning it is considered more appropriate to use this conservative lower benchmark for affordability on the understanding that additional households may be willing or able to access housing this way than to use a higher benchmark which assumes that all households can afford to do so when their individual circumstances may well prevent it.
343. The property website [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk) shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Area. The best available data is derived from properties available for rent within the MK18 postcode area, which covers a larger area than the Plan area itself but can be used as a reasonable proxy for it. Moreover, because it forms a larger geography with a greater number of rental properties offered, the larger sample size is likely to generate more robust findings.
344. According to [home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk), there were 23 properties for rent at the time of search in July 2023, with an average monthly rent of £1,370. There were 15 1-2 bedroom properties listed, with an average price of £850 per calendar month.
345. The calculation for the private rent income threshold for entry-level (1-2 bedroom) dwellings is as follows:
- Annual rent = £850 x 12 = £10,200;
 - Multiplied by 3.33 (so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent) = income threshold of £34,000.

346. The calculation is repeated for the overall average to give an income threshold of £54,800.

C.2 Affordable Housing

347. There are a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the NPPF 2021: social rent and affordable rent, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. More recently, a new product called First Homes has been introduced in 2021. Each of the affordable housing tenures are considered below.

i) Social rent

348. Rents in socially rented properties reflect a formula based on property values and average earnings in each area, resulting in substantial discounts to market rents. As such, this tenure is suitable for the needs of those on the lowest incomes and is subject to strict eligibility criteria.

349. To determine social rent levels, data and statistical return from Homes England is used. This data is only available at Local Authority scale so must act as a proxy for Buckingham. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and is presented for former Vale of Aylesbury district in Table C-1.

350. To determine the income needed, it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent. This is an assumption only for what might generally make housing affordable or unaffordable – it is unrelated to the eligibility criteria of Affordable Housing policy at Local Authority level. The overall average across all property sizes is taken forward as the income threshold for social rent.

Table C-1: Social rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average social rent per week	£96.00	£106.00	£115.00	£133.00	£107.00
Annual average	£4,992	£5,512	£5,980	£6,916	£5,564
Income needed	£16,623	£18,355	£19,913	£23,030	£18,528

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

ii) Affordable rent

351. Affordable rent is controlled at no more than 80% of the local market rent. However, registered providers who own and manage affordable rented housing may also apply a cap to the rent to ensure that it is affordable to those on housing benefit (where under Universal Credit the total received in all benefits to working age households is £20,000).

Even a 20% discount on the market rent may not be sufficient to ensure that households can afford this tenure, particularly when they are dependent on

benefits. Registered Providers in some areas have applied caps to larger properties where the higher rents would make them unaffordable to families under Universal Credit. This may mean that the rents are actually 50-60% of market levels rather than 80%.

352. Data on the most realistic local affordable rent costs is obtained from the same source as social rent levels for former Vale of Aylesbury. Again, it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent, and the overall average is taken forward.

353. Comparing this result with the average 2-bedroom annual private rent above indicates that affordable rents in the NA are actually closer to 75% of market rates than the maximum of 80%, a feature that is necessary to make them achievable to those in need.

Table C-2: Affordable rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average affordable rent per week	£121.00	£147.00	£172.00	£214.00	£152.00
Annual average	£6,292	£7,644	£8,944	£11,128	£7,904
Income needed	£20,952	£25,455	£29,784	£37,056	£26,320

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

iii) Affordable home ownership

354. Affordable home ownership tenures include products for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. The three most widely available are discounted market housing (a subset of which is the new First Homes product), shared ownership, and Rent to Buy. These are considered in turn below.

355. In paragraph 65 of the NPPF 2021, the Government introduces a recommendation that “where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership.” The recently issued Ministerial Statement and updates to PPG state that 25% of all Affordable Housing should be First Homes – the Government’s new flagship discounted market sale product. When the NPPF is next updated, it is expected that the 10% affordable home ownership requirement referenced above may be replaced by the First Homes requirement.

First Homes

356. Because First Homes are a new tenure product, it is worth explaining some of their key features:

- First Homes should be available to buy with a minimum discount of 30% below their full market value (i.e. the value of an equivalent new home);

- The discount level can be set higher than 30% – at 40% or 50% – where this can be suitably evidenced. The setting and justifying of discount levels can happen at neighbourhood as well as local authority scale;
- After the discount is applied the initial sale price must not exceed £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London), and lower caps can be set locally;
- Purchasers must be first-time buyers with an income less than £80,000 (or £90,000 in Greater London), and First Homes can be prioritised for local people and/or key workers;
- They will be subject to legal restrictions ensuring the discount is retained for future occupants, and renting out or sub-letting will not normally be permitted;
- In addition to setting the discount level, local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups can apply additional criteria, such as a lower income cap, local connection test or prioritisation for key workers through adopted plans, emerging policy or Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 25% of all homes delivered through section 106 developer contributions on sites enabled through the planning process should be sold as First Homes. In simpler terms, 25% of all subsidised Affordable Housing on mainstream housing developments should be First Homes. This is likely to mean that First Homes will take the place of shared ownership housing in many circumstances, and in some cases may also displace social or affordable rented homes.

357. The starting point for considering whether First Homes are affordable is the estimated cost of new build entry-level housing in the NA noted above of £297,600.

358. For the minimum discount of 30% the purchase threshold can be calculated as follows:

- Value of a new home (estimated NA new build entry-level) = £297,600;
- Discounted by 30% = £208,320;
- Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £20,800;
- Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £187,500;
- Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £54,000.

359. The income thresholds analysis in the Affordability and Affordable Housing chapter also compares local incomes with the costs of a 40% and 50% discounted First Home. This would require an income threshold of £46,000 and £38,000 respectively.

360. All of the income thresholds calculated here for First Homes are below the cap of £80,000 above which households are not eligible. All discount rates are comfortably below the £80,000 threshold for eligibility.

361. Note that discounted market sale homes may be unviable to develop if the discounted price is close to (or below) build costs. Build costs vary across the country but as an illustration, the build cost for a 2 bedroom home (assuming 70 sq. m and a build cost of £1,750 per sq. m²⁷) would be around £122,500. This cost excludes any land value or developer profit. This is unlikely to be an issue in Buckingham.

362. Table C-3 shows the discount required for First Homes to be affordable to the three income groups considered in the main body of this report. The cost of a typical First Home is calculated using an estimate for new build entry-level housing in the NA. However, it is worth thinking about First Homes in relation to the cost of new build prices in the wider area, as well as median and entry-level existing prices locally to get a more complete picture. The discount levels required for these alternative benchmarks are given below.

Table C-3: Discount on sale price required for households to afford First Homes

House price benchmark	Mean household income	Single LQ earner	Dual LQ earning household
NA median house price	45%	80%	60%
NA estimated new build entry-level house price	32%	75%	50%
NA entry-level house price	30%	74%	48%
LA median new build house price	56%	84%	68%

Source: Land Registry PPD; ONS MSOA total household income

Shared ownership

363. Shared ownership involves the purchaser buying an initial share in a property, typically of between 25% and 75% (but now set at a minimum of 10%), and paying rent on the share retained by the provider. Shared ownership is flexible in two respects, in the share which can be purchased and in the rent payable on the share retained by the provider. Both of these are variable. The share owned by the occupant can be increased over time through a process known as 'staircasing'.

364. In exceptional circumstances (for example, as a result of financial difficulties, and where the alternative is repossession), and at the discretion of the provider, shared owners may staircase down, thereby reducing the share they own. Shared equity is available to first-time buyers, people who have owned a home previously and council and housing association tenants with a good credit rating whose annual household income does not exceed £80,000.

365. To determine the affordability of shared ownership, calculations are again based on the estimated costs of new build housing as discussed above. The deposit available to the prospective purchaser is assumed to be 10% of the value of the dwelling, and the standard loan to income ratio of 3.5 is used to calculate the income required to obtain a mortgage. The rental component is estimated at

²⁷ It is estimated that in 2022, build costs for a house are between £1,750 and £3,000 per square metre - <https://urbanistarchitecture.co.uk/cost-to-build-a-house-uk/>

2.5% of the value of the remaining (unsold) portion of the price. The income required to cover the rental component of the dwelling is based on the assumption that a household spends no more than 30% of the income on rent (as for the income threshold for the private rental sector).

366. The affordability threshold for a 25% equity share is calculated as follows:

- A 25% equity share of £297,600 is £74,400;
- A 10% deposit of £7,440 is deducted, leaving a mortgage value of £66,960;
- This is divided by the loan to value ratio of 3.5 to give a purchase threshold of £19,130;
- Rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £223,200;
- The estimated annual rent at 2.5% of the unsold value is £5,580;
- This requires an income of £18,600 (annual rent multiplied by 3.33 so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent).
- The total income required is £37,730 (£19,130 plus £18,600).

367. The same calculation is repeated for equity shares of 10% and 50% producing affordability thresholds of £30,000 and £51,000 respectively.

368. All discount rates are comfortably below the £80,000 threshold for eligibility.

Rent to Buy

369. Rent to Buy is a relatively new and less common tenure, which through subsidy allows the occupant to save a portion of their rent, which is intended to be used to build up a deposit to eventually purchase the home. It is therefore estimated to cost the same as private rents – the difference being that the occupant builds up savings with a portion of the rent.

Help to Buy (Equity Loan)

370. The Help to Buy Equity Loan is not an affordable housing tenure but allows households to afford market housing through a loan provided by the government. With a Help to Buy Equity Loan the government lends up to 20% (40% in London) of the cost of a newly built home. The household must pay a deposit of 5% or more and arrange a mortgage of 25% or more to make up the rest. Buyers are not charged interest on the 20% loan for the first five years of owning the home.

371. It is important to note that this product widens access to market housing but does not provide an affordable home in perpetuity.

Appendix D : Affordable Housing need and policy

Affordable Housing estimates

372. In Table D-1 AECOM has calculated, using PPG as a starting point,²⁸ an estimate of the total need for affordable rented housing in Buckingham over the Plan period to 2040 (using an assumed start date of 2024). It should, however, be noted that the accuracy of the findings generated by the model is only as strong as the evidence available, including that provided by Buckinghamshire Council in its capacity as manager of the local housing waiting list. However, given the test of proportionality for evidence supporting neighbourhood plans, and the need to be in conformity with Local Authority strategic policies, the calculations set out here are considered a reasonable basis for understanding and planning for neighbourhood-level affordable housing need.

Table D-1: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for rent in Buckingham

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current households in need	298.0	Number of households on the affordable housing register living in Buckingham (based on first four postcode digits MK18 and MK17) as of 26 July 2023.
1.2 Per annum	18.6	Step 1.1 divided by the plan period to produce an annualised figure.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	927.1	DLUHC 2018-based household projections for former Vale of Aylesbury between start and end of plan period. % increase applied to NA.
2.2 Proportion of new households unable to rent in the market	23.3%	(Steps 1.1 + 2.2.1 + 2.2.2) divided by number of households in NA.
2.2.1 Current number of social renters in NA	778.0	2021 Census social rented occupancy
2.2.2 Number of private renters on housing benefits	287.6	Proportion of households on housing benefits or universal credit across Buckinghamshire in March 2021 applied to the number of private renters currently in Buckingham.
2.3 New households unable to rent	215.9	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.

²⁸ Paragraphs 024-026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20140306, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

2.4 Per annum	13.5	Step 2.3 divided by plan period.
STAGE 3: TURNOVER OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
3.1 Supply of social/affordable re-lets (including transfers) %	3%	Assumed proportion of stock re-let each year. Precise relets data for Buckingham not able to be supplied by Buckinghamshire Council.
3.2 Supply of social/affordable re-lets (including transfers)	23.3	Step 3.1 x NA social rented stock (2.2.1).
NET SURPLUS OF RENTED UNITS PER ANNUM		
Overall surplus per annum	8.8	Step 1.2 + Step 2.4 - Step 3.2

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, DLUHC 2018 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. 2018 is the latest reliable data for some datasets so is used throughout for consistency. Figures may not sum up due to rounding.

373. Turning to Affordable Housing providing a route to home ownership, Table D-2 estimates the potential demand in Buckingham. This model aims to estimate the number of households that might wish to own their own home but cannot afford to. The model is consistent with methods used at Local Authority scale in taking as its starting point households currently living in or expected to enter the private rented sector who are not on housing benefit.

374. There may be other barriers to these households accessing home ownership on the open market, including being unable to save for a deposit, or being unable to afford a home of the right type/size or in the right location. The model also discounts 25% of households potentially in need, assuming a proportion will be renting out of choice. This assumption is based on consistent results for surveys and polls at the national level which demonstrate that most households (typically 80% or more) aspire to home ownership.²⁹ No robust indicator exists for this area or a wider scale to suggest aspirations may be higher or lower in the NA.

²⁹ <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/housing.html>

Table D-2: Estimate of the potential demand for affordable housing for sale in Buckingham

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current number of renters in NA	1,069.0	Census 2021 private rented occupancy.
1.2 Percentage renters on housing benefit in LA	26.9%	% of renters in 2018 on housing benefit or universal credit (using Buckinghamshire rate for March 2021).
1.3 Number of renters on housing benefits in the NA	287.6	Step 1.1 x Step 1.2.
1.4 Current need (households)	586.1	Current renters minus those on housing benefit and minus 25% assumed to rent by choice. ³⁰
1.5 Per annum	36.6	Step 1.4 divided by plan period.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	927.1	Vale of Aylesbury household projections for plan period (2018 based) pro rated to NA.
2.2 % of households unable to buy but able to rent	12.5%	(Step 1.4 + Step 3.1) divided by number of households in NA.
2.3 Total newly arising need	115.8	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.
2.4 Total newly arising need per annum	8.9	Step 2.3 divided by plan period.
STAGE 3: SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
3.1 Supply of affordable housing	145.0	Number of shared ownership homes in the NA (Census 2021).
3.2 Supply - intermediate resales	7.3	Step 3.1 x 5% (assumed rate of resale).
NET SHORTFALL PER ANNUM		
Overall shortfall per annum	38.3	(Step 1.5 + Step 2.4) - Step 3.2.

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, DLUHC 2018 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. 2018 is the latest reliable data for some datasets so is used throughout for consistency.

375. There is no policy or legal obligation on the part either of the Local Authority or Neighbourhood Plan to meet affordable housing needs in full, though there are tools available to the Working Group that can help ensure that it is met to a greater extent if resources permit (e.g. the ability to allocate sites for affordable housing).

³⁰ The assumption of approximately 25% preferring to rent and 75% preferring to buy is AECOM's judgement, based on national level polls which consistently reveal that most households who prefer home ownership eg <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/housing.html> and informed by our experience across numerous neighbourhood level HNAs. The assumption is based on the fact that some households choose to rent at certain stages in their life (e.g. when young, when needing flexibility in employment market, or when new migrants move into an area). While most households prefer the added security and independence of owning their own home, private renting is nevertheless a tenure of choice at a certain points in many households' journey through the housing market. The actual percentage of preference will differ between areas, being higher in large metropolitan areas with younger households and more new migrants, but lower in other areas. 25% is used as a reasonable proxy and for consistency across HNAs and similar assumptions are used in some larger scale assessments such as LHNAs and SHMAs. If the neighbourhood planning group feel this is not an appropriate assumption in their particular locality they could use the results of a local residents survey to refine or confirm this calculation.

376. It is also important to remember that even after the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, the assessment of need for Affordable Housing, the allocation of affordable rented housing to those in need, and the management of the housing waiting list all remain the responsibility of the Local Authority rather than the Working Group.

Affordable housing policy

377. The following table reviews the relevant factors in developing a policy on the Affordable Housing tenure mix, which inform the recommendation given in the main body of the report.

Table D-3: Wider considerations in developing Affordable Housing mix policy

Consideration	Local Evidence
<p>A. Evidence of need for Affordable Housing:</p> <p>The need for affordable rent and affordable home ownership is not directly equivalent: the former expresses the identified need of a group with acute needs and no alternative options; the latter expresses potential demand from a group who are generally adequately housed in rented accommodation and may not be able to afford the deposit to transition to ownership.</p>	<p>This HNA suggests that there is an unmet need for 9 new social/affordable rented homes in the NA and a potential demand for around 38 units of affordable home ownership per annum over the period to 2040. Both forms of Affordable Housing appear to be valuable in meeting the needs of people on various incomes.</p> <p>The relationship between these figures suggests that a majority of new affordable housing should provide a route to ownership. However, it would be prudent to secure the delivery of more affordable rented housing because of the risk of relying on turnover if needs rise in future and the potential expectation for Buckingham to meet the unmet needs of the surrounding rural area or wider county.</p>
<p>B. Can Affordable Housing needs be met in full?</p> <p>How far the more urgently needed affordable rented housing should be prioritised in the tenure mix depends on the quantity of overall housing delivery expected.</p>	<p>If the existing Neighbourhood Plan target of 35% were achieved on every new development site, Buckingham might expect around 165 units of Affordable housing from the 471 new homes with planning permission at present, plus around 26 per year for every year for which the annual housing need figure of 74 identified in the Quantity chapter of this report is taken forward.</p> <p>This level of delivery would allow for allow for a moderate number of affordable rented</p>

	homes to future-proof the stock as well as a broader opportunity to service a large share of the potential demand for affordable home ownership.
<p>C. Government policy (eg NPPF) requirements:</p> <p>Current NPPF policy requires 10% of all homes to be delivered for affordable home ownership. There can be exceptions to this requirement if it would prevent the delivery of other forms of Affordable Housing.</p>	<p>For 10% of all housing to be affordable ownership in Buckingham, where 35% of all housing should be affordable, at least 28.5% of Affordable Housing should be for affordable ownership.</p>
<p>D. Local Plan policy:</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plan does not contain a recommended split between affordable rent and affordable home ownership.</p>
<p>E. First Homes policy:</p> <p>The Government recently concluded a consultation on the introduction of First Homes (to provide at least 30% discount on new build home prices). The proposals have now been enacted through a ministerial statement. A minimum of 25% of all Affordable Housing secured through developer contributions are now required to be First Homes.</p> <p>After the 25% First Homes requirement has been met, the remaining 75% of Affordable Housing units should as a first priority protect the provision for social rent set out in the Local Plan. The remaining units should then be allocated to other tenure products in the relative proportions set out in the Local Plan.</p> <p>AECOM is aware that some Local Planning Authorities are considering 'top slicing' their affordable housing quota to provide 25% First Homes and then allocating the remaining proportion according to their existing policy tenure split. Some LPAs are considering this approach because of the existing business models of registered providers which have relied on shared ownership to cross subsidise affordable</p>	<p>This new minimum requirement may have the effect of displacing other products in any established tenure mix, and will reduce the amount of social or affordable rent if this was proposed to be more than 75% of Affordable Housing. As this is not specified in the adopted Local Plan it is not clear whether any affordable rented homes would be displaced by the First Homes requirement in the former district.</p>

<p>rented housing and uncertainty over whether First Homes could replace this model.</p>	
<p>F. Viability:</p>	<p>HNAs cannot take into consideration the factors which affect viability in the neighbourhood area or at the site-specific level. Viability issues are recognised in the Local Plan. It is acknowledged that this may affect the provision of affordable housing, the mix of tenures and the discounts that can be sought on First Homes.</p>
<p>G. Funding:</p> <p>The availability of funding to support the delivery of different forms of Affordable Housing may also influence what it is appropriate to provide at a particular point in time or on any one site.</p>	<p>The Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group may wish to keep this in mind so that it can take up any opportunities to secure funding if they become available.</p>
<p>H. Existing tenure mix in Buckingham:</p> <p>The current stock of homes in an area, in terms of balance between ownership, rented and affordable provision may be a consideration in the mix of tenures provided on new development sites.</p>	<p>Buckingham currently benefits from a higher provision of social rented and shared ownership homes than the average for the county, which suggests that there is no particular deficit to be addressed.</p>
<p>I. Views of registered providers:</p>	<p>It is not within the scope of this HNA to investigate whether it would be viable for housing associations (registered providers) to deliver and manage affordable rented homes in the NA. The funding arrangements available to housing associations will determine rent levels.</p>
<p>J. Wider policy objectives:</p>	<p>The Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group may wish to take account of broader policy objectives for Buckingham and/or the wider district. These could include, but are not restricted to, policies to attract younger households, families or working age people to the NA. These wider considerations may influence the mix of Affordable Housing provided.</p>

Appendix E : Specialist housing for older people

Background data tables

Table E-1: Existing specialist housing supply, Buckingham

	Name	Description	Dwellings	Tenure	Type
1	Chandos Court	Retirement Housing	23	Social Landlord	1 Bed Flats
2	McKenzie	Age Exclusive Housing	32	Shared Ownership	2 Bed Flats
3	Brooks Court	Retirement Housing	19	Social Landlord	1 Bed Flats
4	Regents Gate	Age Exclusive Housing	31	Leasehold	1-2 Bed Flats
5	Paynes Court	Retirement Housing	35	Leasehold	2 Bed Flats
6	Mary McManus Drive	Retirement Housing	16	Social Landlord	2 Bed Bungalows
7	Northend Court	Retirement Housing	25	Social Landlord	1-2 Bed Flats

Source: <http://www.housingcare.org>

Table E-2: Tenure and mobility limitations of those aged 65+ in Buckingham, 2011 (65+ is the closest proxy for 75+ in this data)

Tenure	Day-to-day activities limited a lot		Day-to-day activities limited a little		Day-to-day activities not limited	
All categories	320	19.2%	431	25.9%	916	54.9%
Owned Total	220	15.5%	354	25.0%	841	59.4%
Owned outright	199	15.7%	318	25.1%	749	59.2%
Owned (mortgage) or shared ownership	21	14.1%	36	24.2%	92	61.7%
Rented Total	100	39.7%	77	30.6%	75	29.8%
Social rented	85	42.9%	66	33.3%	47	23.7%
Private rented or living rent free	15	27.8%	11	20.4%	28	51.9%

Source: DC3408EW Health status

HLIN calculations

Table E-3: Recommended provision of specialist housing for older people from the HLIN SHOP toolkit

FORM OF PROVISION	ESTIMATE OF DEMAND PER THOUSAND OF THE RELEVANT 75+ POPULATION
Conventional sheltered housing to rent	60
Leasehold sheltered housing	120
Enhanced sheltered housing (divided 50:50 between that for rent and that for sale) ³⁶	20
Extra care housing for rent	15
Extra care housing for sale	30
Housing based provision for dementia	6

Source: *Housing LIN SHOP Toolkit*

378. As Table 7-4 in the main report shows, Buckingham is forecast to see an increase of 613 individuals aged 75+ by the end of the Plan period. According to the HLIN tool, this translates into need as follows:

- Conventional sheltered housing to rent = $60 \times .613 = 37$
- Leasehold sheltered housing = $120 \times .613 = 74$
- Enhanced sheltered housing (divided 50:50 between that for rent and that for sale) = $20 \times .613 = 12$
- Extra care housing for rent = $15 \times .613 = 9$
- Extra care housing for sale = $30 \times .613 = 18$
- Housing based provision for dementia = $6 \times .613 = 4$

Appendix F : Housing Needs Assessment Glossary

Adoption

This refers to the final confirmation of a local plan by a local planning authority.

Affordability

The terms 'affordability' and 'affordable housing' have different meanings. 'Affordability' is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. 'Affordable housing' refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

Affordability Ratio

Assessing affordability involves comparing housing costs against the ability to pay. The ratio between lower quartile house prices and the lower quartile income or earnings can be used to assess the relative affordability of housing. The Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Governments publishes quarterly the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local authority (LQAR) as well as median house price to median earnings by local authority (MAR) e.g. income = £25,000, house price = £200,000. House price: income ratio = $\frac{£200,000}{£25,000} = 8$, (the house price is 8 times income).

Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

c) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and

Rent to Buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). The national rent regime is the regime under which the social rents of tenants of social housing are set, with particular reference to the Guide to Social Rent Reforms (March 2001) and the Rent Influencing Regime Guidance (October 2001). Local market rents are calculated using the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) approved valuation methods³¹.

Age-Restricted General Market Housing

A type of housing which is generally for people aged 55 and over and active older people. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Annual Monitoring Report

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

Basic Conditions

The Basic Conditions are the legal tests that are considered at the examination stage of neighbourhood development plans. They need to be met before a plan can progress to referendum.

Backlog need

The backlog need constitutes those households who are eligible for Affordable Housing, on account of homelessness, over-crowding, concealment or affordability, but who are yet to be offered a home suited to their needs.

Bedroom Standard³²

The bedroom standard is a measure of occupancy (whether a property is overcrowded or under-occupied, based on the number of bedrooms in a property and the type of household in residence). The Census overcrowding data is based on occupancy rating (overcrowding by number of rooms not including bathrooms and hallways). This tends to produce higher levels of overcrowding/ under occupation. A detailed definition of the standard is given in the Glossary of the EHS Household Report.

³¹ The Tenant Services Authority has issued an explanatory note on these methods at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1918430.pdf>

³² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report>

Co-living

Co-living denotes people who do not have family ties sharing either a self-contained dwelling (i.e., a 'house share') or new development akin to student housing in which people have a bedroom and bathroom to themselves, but share living and kitchen space with others. In co-living schemes each individual represents a separate 'household'.

Community Led Housing/Community Land Trusts

Housing development, provision and management that is led by the community is very often driven by a need to secure affordable housing for local people in the belief that housing that comes through the planning system may be neither the right tenure or price-point to be attractive or affordable to local people. The principal forms of community-led models include cooperatives, co-housing communities, self-help housing, community self-build housing, collective custom-build housing, and community land trusts. By bringing forward development which is owned by the community, the community is able to set rents and/or mortgage payments at a rate that it feels is appropriate. The Government has a range of support programmes for people interested in bringing forward community led housing.

Community Right to Build Order³³

A community right to build order is a special kind of neighbourhood development order, granting planning permission for small community development schemes, such as housing or new community facilities. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare community right to build orders.

Concealed Families (Census definition)³⁴

The 2011 Census defined a concealed family as one with young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents, older couples living with an adult child and their family or unrelated families sharing a household. A single person cannot be a concealed family; therefore one older parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family; the latter are reported in an ONS analysis on increasing numbers of young adults living with parents.

Equity Loans/Shared Equity

An equity loan which acts as a second charge on a property. For example, a household buys a £200,000 property with a 10% equity loan (£20,000). They pay a small amount for the loan and when the property is sold e.g. for £250,000 the lender receives 10% of the sale cost (£25,000). Some equity loans were available for the purchase of existing stock. The current scheme is to assist people to buy new build.

³³ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

³⁴ See http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_350282.pdf

Extra Care Housing or Housing-With-Care

Housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Fair Share

'Fair share' is an approach to determining housing need within a given geographical area based on a proportional split according to the size of the area, the number of homes in it, or its population.

First Homes

First Homes is another form of discounted market housing which will provide a discount of at least 30% on the price of new homes, introduced in 2021. These homes are available to first time buyers as a priority but other households will be eligible depending on agreed criteria. New developments will be required to provide 25% of Affordable Housing as First Homes. A more detailed explanation of First Homes and its implications is provided in the main body of the HNA.

Habitable Rooms

The number of habitable rooms in a home is the total number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets and halls.

Household Reference Person (HRP)

The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the head of the household. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

Housing Market Area

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate.

Housing Needs

There is no official definition of housing need in either the National Planning Policy Framework or the National Planning Practice Guidance. Clearly, individuals have their own housing needs. The process of understanding housing needs at a population scale is undertaken via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see below).

Housing Needs Assessment

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is an assessment of housing needs at the Neighbourhood Area level.

Housing Products

Housing products simply refers to different types of housing as they are produced by developers of various kinds (including councils and housing associations). Housing products usually refers to specific tenures and types of new build housing.

Housing Size (Census Definition)

Housing size can be referred to either in terms of the number of bedrooms in a home (a bedroom is defined as any room that was intended to be used as a bedroom when the property was built, any rooms permanently converted for use as bedrooms); or in terms of the number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between more than one household, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

Housing Type (Census Definition)

This refers to the type of accommodation used or available for use by an individual household (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced including end of terraced, and flats). Flats are broken down into those in a purpose-built block of flats, in parts of a converted or shared house, or in a commercial building.

Housing Tenure (Census Definition)

Tenure provides information about whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, combines this with information about the type of landlord who owns or manages the accommodation.

Income Threshold

Income thresholds are derived as a result of the annualisation of the monthly rental cost and then asserting this cost should not exceed 35% of annual household income.

Intercensal Period

This means the period between the last two Censuses, i.e. between years 2001 and 2011.

Intermediate Housing

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low-cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Life Stage modelling

Life Stage modelling is forecasting need for dwellings of different sizes by the end of the Plan period on the basis of changes in the distribution of household types and key age brackets (life stages) within the NA. Given the shared behavioural patterns associated with these metrics, they provide a helpful way of understanding and predicting future community need. This data is not available at neighbourhood level so LPA level data is employed on the basis of the NA falling within its defined Housing Market Area.

Life-time Homes

Dwellings constructed to make them more flexible, convenient adaptable and accessible than most 'normal' houses, usually according to the Lifetime Homes Standard, 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost: <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>.

Life-time Neighbourhoods

Lifetime neighbourhoods extend the principles of Lifetime Homes into the wider neighbourhood to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way to be as inclusive as possible and designed to address the needs of older people, for example providing more greenery and more walkable, better connected places.

Local Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need (NPPF definition)

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

Local Planning Authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the District Council, London Borough Council, County Council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority or the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Plan

This is the plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies form part of the Local Plan and are known as 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs).

Lower Quartile

The bottom 25% value, i.e. of all the properties sold, 25% were cheaper than this value and 75% were more expensive. The lower quartile price is used as an entry level price and is the recommended level used to evaluate affordability; for example for first time buyers.

Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Lower Quartile Household Incomes and Lower Quartile House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on relatively low incomes.

Market Housing

Market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.

Mean (Average)

The mean or the average is, mathematically, the sum of all values divided by the total number of values. This is the more commonly used "average" measure as it includes all values, unlike the median.

Median

The middle value, i.e. of all the properties sold, half were cheaper and half were more expensive. This is sometimes used instead of the mean average as it is not subject to skew by very large or very small statistical outliers.

Median Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Median Household Incomes and Median House Prices and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on middle-range incomes.

Mortgage Ratio

The mortgage ratio is the ratio of mortgage value to income which is typically deemed acceptable by banks. Approximately 75% of all mortgage lending ratios fell below 4 in recent years³⁵, i.e. the total value of the mortgage was less than 4 times the annual income of the person who was granted the mortgage.

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)

An NDO will grant planning permission for a particular type of development in a particular area. This could be either a particular development, or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). A number of types of development will be excluded from NDOs, however. These are minerals and waste development, types of development that, regardless of scale, always need Environmental Impact Assessment, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Neighbourhood plan

A plan prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Older People

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to very frail older people, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Output Area/Lower Super Output Area/Middle Super Output Area

An output area is the lowest level of geography for publishing statistics, and is the core geography from which statistics for other geographies are built. Output areas were created for England and Wales from the 2001 Census data, by grouping a number of households and populations together so that each output area's population is roughly the same. 175,434 output areas were created from the 2001 Census data, each containing a minimum of 100 persons with an average of 300 persons. Lower Super Output Areas consist of higher geographies of between 1,000-1,500 persons (made up of a number of individual Output Areas) and Middle Super Output Areas are higher than this, containing between 5,000 and 7,200 people, and made up of individual Lower Layer Super Output Areas. Some statistics are only available down to Middle Layer Super Output Area level, meaning that they are not available for individual Output Areas or parishes.

Overcrowding

There is no single agreed definition of overcrowding, however, utilising the Government's bedroom standard, overcrowding is deemed to be in households where there is more than one person in the household per room (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, halls and storage areas). As such, a home with one bedroom and one

³⁵ See <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/>

living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

Planning Condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Purchase Threshold

Purchase thresholds are calculated by netting 10% off the entry house price to reflect purchase deposit. The resulting cost is divided by 4 to reflect the standard household income requirement to access mortgage products.

Proportionate and Robust Evidence

Proportionate and robust evidence is evidence which is deemed appropriate in scale, scope and depth for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, sufficient so as to meet the Basic Conditions, as well as robust enough to withstand legal challenge. It is referred to a number of times in the PPG and its definition and interpretation relies on the judgement of professionals such as Neighbourhood Plan Examiners.

Private Rented

The Census tenure private rented includes a range of different living situations in practice, such as private rented/ other including households living “rent free”. Around 20% of the private rented sector are in this category, which will have included some benefit claimants whose housing benefit at the time was paid directly to their landlord. This could mean people whose rent is paid by their employer, including some people in the armed forces. Some housing association tenants may also have been counted as living in the private rented sector because of confusion about what a housing association is.

Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing

Housing for older people which usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes

Housing for older people comprising of individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually

include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Rightsizing

Households who wish to move into a property that is a more appropriate size for their needs can be said to be rightsizing. This is often used to refer to older households who may be living in large family homes but whose children have left, and who intend to rightsize to a smaller dwelling. The popularity of this trend is debatable as ties to existing communities and the home itself may outweigh issues of space. Other factors, including wealth, health, status and family circumstance also need to be taken into consideration, and it should not be assumed that all older households in large dwellings wish to rightsize.

Rural Exception Sites

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable dwellings without grant funding.

Shared Ownership

Housing where a purchaser part buys and part rents from a housing association or local authority. Typical purchase share is between 25% and 75% (though this was lowered in 2021 to a minimum of 10%), and buyers are encouraged to buy the largest share they can afford. Generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available. There may be an opportunity to rent at intermediate rent level before purchasing a share in order to save/increase the deposit level

Sheltered Housing³⁶

Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bed roomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also

³⁶ See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the Plan period. SHLAAs are sometimes also called LAAs (Land Availability Assessments) or HELAAs (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments) so as to integrate the need to balance assessed housing and economic needs as described below.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPPF Definition)

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to assess their housing needs under the 2012 version of the NPPF, usually across administrative boundaries to encompass the whole housing market area. The NPPF makes clear that SHMAs should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need over the Plan period. Sometimes SHMAs are combined with Economic Development Needs Assessments to create documents known as HEDNAs (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments).

Specialist Housing for Older People

Specialist housing for Older People, sometimes known as specialist accommodation for older people, encompasses a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (usually 55+ or 65+). This could include residential institutions, sometimes known as care homes, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services. This housing can be provided in a range of tenures (often on a rented or leasehold basis).

Social Rented Housing

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.³⁷

³⁷ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing>

