



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Local Plan

Housing Topic Paper

September 2026



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1. Introduction

- 1) This is the 'Housing Topic Paper' and is one of a number of topic papers that have been written to support Stockport's Local Plan.
- 2) All topic papers can be found online at Stockport Council's website.
- 3) The main purpose of this document is to set out the current legislation, policies, strategies and plans that have informed the Local Plan in relation to housing.
- 4) It should be read alongside the draft Local Plan itself as well as the key evidence that is referenced within it.

2. Understanding our development needs for housing

- 5) The council is required by the government through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to have up-to-date planning policies for housing, and to plan for the sufficient supply of new homes to support the local population.
- 6) This paper sets out what the NPPF requires with regards to identifying and meeting our development needs. It should be read alongside the draft Local Plan itself as well as the key evidence that is referenced within it.

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 7) **This topic paper has been prepared with regard to the 2024 version of the NPPF, in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out Annex A of the August 2026 NPPF.**
- 8) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024¹ provides, amongst other things, the basis for how all councils should develop their plans and identifies what the key purposes of local plans are, in the context of delivering sustainable development.
- 9) Paragraph 11(a) of the NPPF states that:

“all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;”
- 10) Paragraph 11(b) of the NPPF clarifies that our plan should contain strategic policies which provide, as a minimum, for our objectively assessed needs unless:

“i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

¹ See <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250225172715/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- 11) Para 11(b)i. of the NPPF is subject to footnote 7, which confirms that:

“The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.”

- 12) Section 3 of the NPPF provides the broad requirements for plan-making. In that section, paragraph 36 sets out that Plans are ‘sound’ if they are:

*“a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*

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

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

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

- 13) With all those requirements in mind, the council sets out here the overall need in housing and employment terms, where and how need can be met in the urban and where that need cannot be met in full how the council has assessed the potential for Green Belt release, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146.

- 14) The NPPF sets out the need for local authorities to addressing housing need for its area, both in terms of an overall number and with regards to the particular housing needs of various groups of people. Paragraphs 61-63 of the NPPF:

“61. To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area’s identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

“62. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

“63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; traveller; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

- 15) The NPPF also goes on to state, in para 72 (footnotes removed), that:

“Strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or

b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply; or

c) From 1 July 2026, for the purposes of decision-making only, 20% where a local planning authority has a housing requirement adopted in the last five years examined against a previous version of this Framework, and whose annual average housing requirement is 80% or less of the most up to date local housing need figure calculated using the standard method set out in national planning practice guidance.”

- 16) In addition to identifying the overall housing need using the standard method, the various needs which exist for different groups of people, are assessed in the council’s Housing Needs Assessment (2025) and more information on this is included within the local evidence section of this topic paper.

2.2 Planning Practice Guidance

- 17) Court judgements have also determined that the same status is given to Planning Practice Guidance² (PPG). The PPG gives us more detailed directions on meeting some of the NPPF's requirements.

Assessment of housing need

- 18) The government has produced Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of assessing housing need³.
- 19) Amongst other things, the PPG sets out the requirement to assess the need for additional new homes to be provided in the borough over the next 15+ years. This is referred to as the 'local housing need'.
- 20) The 'standard method' is detailed in the PPG, and importantly this sets out the method to calculate the annual 'local housing need' (LHN) for the area.
- 21) The process to calculate the LHN involves considering the existing homes that already exist in Stockport, and then multiplying that figure by a ratio that is based on the affordability of homes being sold in the area. In summary the 2-step calculation set out in PPG is as follows:

Step 1 - Setting the baseline – 0.8% of existing housing stock for the area

Step 2 - An adjustment to take account of affordability

Adjustment Factor = ((five year average affordability ratio-5)/5)×0.95 + 1

- 22) It is important to note that due to the baseline and adjustment figures being different from one borough to the next, each borough will have their own locally specific LHN.
- 23) For Stockport, the LHN calculation is as follows:

<i>Existing household stock</i>	<i>= 133,427 homes</i>
<i>0.8% of 133,427</i>	<i>= 1,067.42 homes</i>
<i>Affordability 5-year average</i>	<i>= 9.11</i>
<i>Adjustment factor</i>	<i>= 1.78</i>
<i>LHN = (Stock x 0.8%) x Adjustment factor</i>	
<i>LHN for Stockport</i>	<i>= 1,901 homes per annum</i>

Please note figures correct at time of calculation – allow for rounding

² See www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance

³ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>

2.3 Housing Delivery Test

- 24) The Housing Delivery Test measurement is an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of relevant plan-making authorities, looking back over the financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 25) The most recent Housing Delivery Test (HDT) 2025 measurement was published by the government in August 2026 and is available online⁴. For Stockport, this indicates that average delivery for the three years to 2025 was around 43% of need. An extract of this technical information is detailed in Table 1.
- 26) NB: At the time of writing this topic paper, the council has been questioning the delivery figure used for 2024-25 as published by the government, as net completions for the borough have been recorded as 620, as opposed to the figure of 351 detailed in the HDT.

Number of homes required			Total homes required	Number of homes delivered (net)			Total homes delivered	Estimated Housing Delivery Test: 2025 measurement
2022-23	2023-34	2024-25		2022-23	2023-34	2024-25		
1,186	1,125	1,097	3,408	485	621	351	1,457	43%

Table 1: Government published HDT figure for Stockport 2025

- 27) An amended version is shown below in Table 2 showing what the outcome of the measurement would be, had the figure of 620 homes been used instead. However, whichever delivery figure is used for 2024-25, the council will still be in a position where the ‘presumption’ will need to be applied.

Number of homes required			Total homes required	Number of homes delivered (net)			Total homes delivered	Estimated Housing Delivery Test: 2025 measurement
2022-23	2023-34	2024-25		2022-23	2023-34	2024-25		
1,186	1,125	1,097	3,408	485	621	620	1,713	51%

Table 2: Alternative HDT figure for Stockport 2025

- 28) In this context, the figures clearly indicate that whilst housing delivery has increased in terms of the overall number, it has decreased in relation to the local housing need.

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2025-measurement>

2.4 Local Evidence

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

- 29) Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) helps us to understand the capacity of the borough's existing urban areas to accommodate new housing development. The SHLAA is an extensive survey of potential development sites across the borough, assessing capacity to accommodate housing. The key objectives of a SHLAA are:
- To assess land availability by identifying buildings or areas of land (including previously developed land and greenfield land) that have development potential for housing;
 - To assess the potential capacity of the identified land;
 - To identify constraints that might make a particular site unavailable and/or unviable for development; and
 - To assess and estimate when they are likely to be built
- 30) The SHLAA has been produced in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance on 'housing supply and delivery'⁵.

Stockport Character and Urban Density Study

- 31) The Stockport Character and Urban Density Study (SCUD) was commissioned to form part of the evidence for the Local Plan.
- 32) This study looks at different areas across the borough, focusing on:
- character: the feel and style of the area
 - density: the number of homes within the area
- 33) This study analyses the character of different areas across the borough to understand where increased densities and taller buildings could be accommodated. It provides evidence that the Local Plan's proposed approach to the density and design of residential development is justified.
- 34) There are 14 reports in total, with the main report providing details about the purpose, scope and methods used for the study. The remaining 13 reports analyse different areas across Stockport, focussing on the district centres and local centres, and gives recommendations for future development.

Stockport Town Centre Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)

- 35) Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) is driving forward the UK's most ambitious £2 billion town centre regeneration in the heart of Stockport. As

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-supply-and-delivery>

Stockport Council's delivery vehicle, the MDC is working with partners to transform brownfield sites into new neighbourhoods, bring underused spaces back to life, and create real opportunities for people across Stockport.

Strategic Regeneration Framework – Town Centre West

- 36) Stockport's Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF-TCW) sets out the vision to transform underused brownfield land in the west of the town centre (the original MDC boundary) into vibrant neighbourhoods with 4,000 new homes and 1million square feet of employment space. Covering 130 acres, it will create high-quality mixed homes, major employment space, green areas and improved connectivity. The framework provides a clear, long-term plan for investment and has helped establish Stockport as a national exemplar for town centre regeneration.

Strategic Regeneration Framework – Town Centre East

- 37) The Stockport Town Centre East Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF-TCE) delivers a vision for transformational change across Stockport Town Centre East over the next 15 years, reimagining the area into the series of vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods that set a new standard for urban living in the UK. It will help to shape future land uses and encourage the right type, scale and design of new development coming forward within the framework area.
- 38) This framework will drive transformational change in Stockport Town Centre's east side over the next 15 years and beyond. It will help create vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods, setting a new standard for urban living. The goal is to make the town a place where people are proud to live, work, and visit.
- 39) The SRF-TCE builds upon on Stockport's ongoing £1 billion town centre regeneration programme, which has already seen significant progress in Town Centre West, including the delivery of 1,200 new homes and substantial private sector investment. The SRF aims to deliver an additional 4,000 homes in Town Centre East, contributing to a total of 8,000 new homes across the town centre.

Housing Needs Assessment

- 40) The council produces and regularly updates a Housing Needs Assessment⁶ (HNA), the most recent version of which was published in 2025.
- 41) The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) looks at various issues, including:
- residents' incomes
 - their housing aspirations and needs

⁶ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/housing-strategies-and-documents/housing-needs-assessment>

- their plans for moving home or staying put.
- 42) As detailed in the report, the extent of need for affordable accommodation in the borough continues to be high, with a particular requirement for 1 to 3-bed houses and 1-bed flats. The shortage of affordable family accommodation in the borough means that turnover is very low. There continues to be a particular need for supported and specialist accommodation, especially for older people.
- 43) The HNA sets out where this need exists across for the borough and recommends the type and tenure of housing which the council should be seeking from future homes.
- 44) This and future updates of the document will form the basis for identifying the need for housing types and tenures over the plan period.

Whole Plan Viability Assessment

- 45) A whole plan viability assessment ('viability assessment') was commissioned in early 2026 to form a key part of the evidence for the Local Plan. As part of this work, an assessment of draft policies, selected sites, and developer contributions was undertaken. This approach scrutinised whether the total cost of policy delivery is realistic and deliverable, to help inform the evolution of our policy approach to ensure a sound Local Plan.
- 46) Consultants carried out detailed development appraisals for a variety of development sites and types, following the methodology set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on viability. This involved looking at 'gross development value', deducting all costs to arrive at the 'residential land value' and comparing it to 'benchmark land values'. This is a standardised way of considering a price at which a landowner would be willing to sell their land for development, taking into account 'existing use values' plus a premium.
- 47) Schemes and policies are considered to be viable if the 'residential land value' is positive for a given level of profit, known as being 'fundamentally viable'. If the residential land value is positive but below the benchmark land value, the viability is described as 'marginal' in viability terms. If the balance is negative, sites or policies are not considered to be viable, therefore policies and the approach to developer contributions needs to be reviewed to ensure a robust approach in the Local Plan. This process is iterative, with land values, profits, site clearance, remediation, construction and abnormal costs being key variables which determine viability. The Gross Development Value needs to be capable of absorbing these costs to incentivise scheme delivery.
- 48) Consultants prepared sensitivity appraisals for a range of development site typologies across Stockport. These were split into three broad areas of 'higher', 'middle' and 'lower' viability zones/areas. This approach indicated the maximum potential percentage for affordable housing provision for each typology according to development size, and zone.

- 49) For each viability zone, and for selected policies that had viability impacts, detailed technical data was produced and published in tables to demonstrate the maximum potential affordable housing levels, when taking into account the costs of meeting other policy requirements.
- 50) The analysis related to greenfield, brownfield and Green Belt release sites in the higher, middle and lower viability zones. An extract of the map from the viability assessment is provided below.
- 51) This zonal approach corresponds with the approach set out in our affordable housing policy HOM 5.

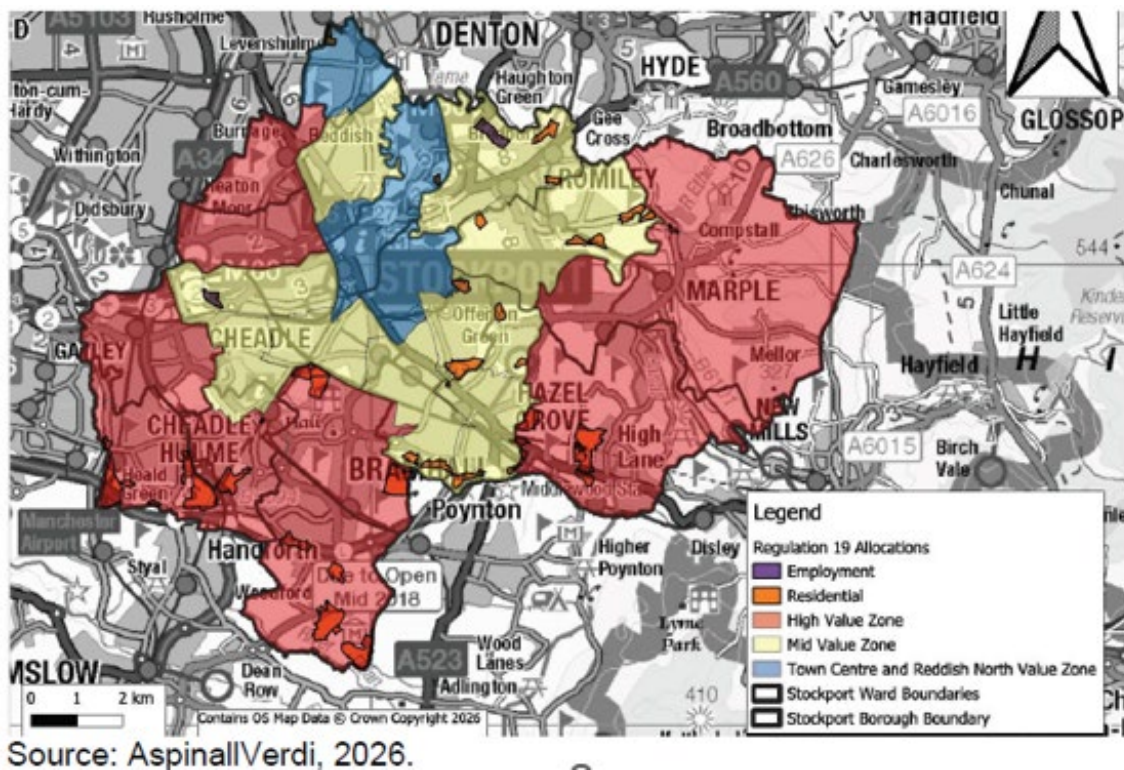


Figure 1: Extract map indicating different viability zones across Stockport

Affordable Housing viability findings

- 52) The detailed analysis clearly demonstrates that seeking affordable housing impacts on development viability.
- 53) In higher viability zones, 45-50% affordable housing is viable, depending on scheme size. Middle viability zones can support 15-20% affordable housing, depending on scheme size. On brownfield sites in higher viability areas, 10-15% affordable housing is the maximum that can be afforded. In mid and lower viability areas for brownfield development, affordable housing could not be viably afforded, requiring a flexible policy approach for these typologies in these areas.

- 54) Given the length of the plan period, viability may improve over time, therefore it is not considered reasonable to set a policy requirement for 0% affordable housing for sites with the poorest viability for brownfield development. Instead, a caveated nominal policy requirement is set out for these sites, requiring individual appraisals to support planning applications.
- 55) Higher benchmark land value costs, remediation costs and higher build costs, especially for smaller schemes contribute to the viability difficulties in these types of areas, and a proactive intervention in the market to deliver housing on these types of sites may be necessary.
- 56) A flexible approach may need to be taken with policies that go above minimum Building Regulations/national policy level. Older persons housing and Build to Rent typologies are unviable, even without any affordable housing, meaning that a flexible approach is required.

Commercial and Industrial viability findings

- 57) Viability testing for industrial and commercial uses indicates none of these typologies tested are viable. This means that industrial and logistics development require a flexible policy approach, especially on brownfield land. Any new build high street retail would be unlikely to support additional development contributions or policy costs.
- 58) Office development appears unviable at current market value and build costs.
- 59) Flexibility will be needed when applying energy and carbon reduction related requirements, to avoid stymying commercial development.

Resultant Changes to Policies

- 60) The viability assessment and iterative working resulted in several key changes to those policies that had greatest impact on viability compared with the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan. The major change related to the affordable housing policy, HOM 5 which now differentiates affordable housing requirements spatially and by scheme size and type. Policy ENV 2 has been amended to reduce the requirement for BNG from 20% to 10%. Policy ENV15 has been revised to require M4(3)2(a) wheelchair housing for schemes of 100 units or more rather than M4(3)(a) and (b) wheelchair housing. Policy CR1 has been relaxed in terms of omitting Nabers and BREEAM requirements, and instead requires a Climate Action Statement. Policy CR2 has been changed to provide a staged approach to net zero requirements over time. Other policies have had minor changes such as replacing 'must' to 'should' to enhance flexibility in the policy approach.

2.5 Calculating our local housing need

- 61) When seeking to address the requirements of paragraph 72 of NPPF (2024) as detailed above, the council should apply a 20% buffer to the first five years of the local housing need calculation, in line with the results set out in the HDT.
- 62) The annual need figure for Stockport has been set out in Section 2.2. Without applying any buffer, the housing need for the first five years is calculated as being:

$$5 \times 1,901 = 9,505$$

- 63) Adding 20% to this gives a figure of:

$$11,406$$

- 64) Therefore, the need for the initial five-year period is 11,406.

- 65) The plan period covers the years 2026-2042 (a 16-year period), this results in the following calculation of local housing need:

$$2026-31: 1,901 \times 5 + 20\% = 11,406 \quad (\text{suitable buffer applied})$$

$$2031-42: 1,901 \times 11 = 20,911 \quad (\text{no buffer required})$$

$$11,406 + 20,911 = 32,317$$

- 66) **Therefore, including the appropriate buffers in line with guidance, the local housing need for Stockport over the plan period is calculated as 32,317.**

- 67) This overall figure does not go into detail regarding the type of new homes required, for example whether the homes need to be larger and suitable for families, or whether they should be sized for first time buyers, or older people who want to downsize. Nor does that headline figure set out other types of needs, for example those living with a disability or in need of affordable housing. The Local Plan has not only set an overall target figure, it has outlined requirements for housing types and tenures to be addressed via other policies in the plan. This has largely been the result of further evidential work undertaken in relation to the Housing Needs Assessment document and viability matters. These documents are addressed later in this paper.

3. Baseline supply of new homes

3.1 Baseline supply position

- 68) In order to determine a supply of developable or deliverable sites over the plan period, the council has undertaken extensive work to understand and to optimise the number of homes which can be delivered in the urban area, primarily on brownfield sites. This work has included an updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), and a number of 'Call for Sites' exercises, the impact of which is set out below.
- 69) The council has also focused significant housing development in the town centre over the plan period and now has Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) coverage across the whole of the identified 'Town Centre Living Area'. This approach is not simply about building homes in the town centre, but is about creating communities which have access to the necessary infrastructure of various types, alongside the growth of the centre as a place for both employment and leisure uses. The comprehensive approach to a variety of developments is enhanced by the MDC role and powers, which have already been instrumental in helping to bring forward developments.
- 70) Over the period from 2021-42, development across both Town Centre East and Town Centre West will be expected to deliver 8,000 units in total. The figure applied to the baseline supply here is a net figure which takes account of completions and existing permissions across the town centre living area.
- 71) Other factors which have been taken into account in arriving at a baseline supply position are set out below.

Baseline summary

- 72) The baseline supply position is made up of the following:

Source	No. of homes
Permissions	4,044
SHLAA sites	3,437
TC allowance	6,389
Small sites allowance	949
DC allowance	700
TOTAL	15,519

Table 3: Baseline supply of housing

Supply from planning permissions

- 73) Permitted sites are those already with full, outline or reserved matters permissions, or have been approved by other means, such as Prior Approval. The

vast majority of those sites are expected to be delivered in the first five years of the plan. This is set out later in the topic paper in relation to the trajectory. Due to time constraints, monitoring work for the 25/26 year had not been completed at the time of writing. Consequently, the permissioned supply relates to the position as of April 25. It is intended that this figure will be updated prior to submission of the plan and once the monitoring work is complete.

Supply from SHLAA sites

- 74) ‘SHLAA sites’ are primarily those sites which have either been identified by officers or have been put forward through previous ‘call for sites’ exercises and which have been assessed as potentially suitable for housing development within the plan period. An estimate of the capacity of those sites has been made to provide an overall total. The vast majority of these sites and units are expected to be delivered over years 6-16 of the plan period and again, this is set out in relation to the trajectory.
- 75) The SHLAA document itself⁷ has set out the process used to identify potential housing sites and the methodology which has been used to assess the suitability of sites, the potential capacity of those sites and the likely delivery period for housing where they are developable. This work has also fed into the trajectory for anticipated housing delivery over the plan period.
- 76) In assessing sites, the council has prioritised brownfield sites but has also considered the potential capacity on suitable greenfield sites, primarily those where the Open Space Assessment⁸ has assessed the land as being open space of both low quality and low value.
- 77) Where sites have been identified as having potential for housing development, an assessment has been made of the potential capacity, seeking to optimise densities on the site, in line with the government’s approach in Section 11 of the NPPF, having regard to the site specific conditions, and using the council’s ‘Stockport Character and Urban Density Study’⁹ to help understand how best use can be made of sites where they are potentially suitable for residential development.
- 78) Where sites have been identified as potentially delivering over 100 units, these sites have been allocated on the Policies Map and further details set out in policies HOM 2a and 2b, where appropriate.

⁷ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment-shlaa>

⁸ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/open-space-sport-and-recreation>

⁹ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/environment-and-heritage>

Supply from Town Centre

- 79) The 'Town Centre allowance' is based on the area identified on the Policies Map accompanying the draft Stockport Local Plan. This identifies a total of 8,000 units across the area from 2021. As noted above, the figure in the table takes account of the homes in that area which have been delivered or permissioned since that time.

Supply from 'small sites'

- 80) The small sites allowance is applied because in assessing sites for potential housing development in the SHLAA, it is not practically possible to assess all smaller sites in Stockport. However, such sites have proven to be a material source of housing supply in the borough. As such, this allowance is based on the average number of homes delivered on sites of under 5 units in Stockport over last ten years (73 units) multiplied by 13 years. The first 3 years of the plan period are assumed to be covered by existing permissions and therefore no allowance for small sites is made for that period. The trajectory information will indicate the implications of this in terms of a stepped target for the plan period.

Supply from our district centres

- 81) The district centre allowance is applied having undertaken work to examine the potential for development in those centres around Stockport. Particularly through the work on the Stockport Character and Urban Density (SCUD) study¹⁰, there is clearly scope for better use of land and buildings in those centres which can deliver more units over the plan period, but which have yet to come forward for redevelopment and which have not been identified through the SHLAA work.

3.2 Implications of baseline position

- 82) Given the identified plan period housing need of 32,317 and a total baseline supply of 15,519, this represents 48% of need and leaves a shortfall of 16,798 homes required.
- 83) However, the council is required to address the need, as set out in the NPPF, and there are a number of approaches that need to be explored to establish other options for meeting that shortfall in need.

Duty to Cooperate

- 84) The council has engaged with neighbouring and nearby authorities in order to determine whether those areas are able to take any of Stockport's unmet housing

¹⁰ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/scud-study>

need. The Duty to Cooperate document will set out in more detail at submission those discussions, including who the council has co-operated with, the number of meetings held and the outcomes of that work.

- 85) To date, these discussions have not resulted in any of that need being taken by another authority and therefore the shortfall to be addressed remains very significant.

Green Belt Assessment

- 86) Consequently, as required by the NPPF to address unmet need, the council has undertaken a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) across the borough. This has involved both a full assessment of the 'value' of land parcels across all of Stockport's Green Belt and an assessment of individual sites in relation to a wide range of factors and constraints.
- 87) The NPPF (paragraphs 145 and 146) sets out that changes to Green Belt boundaries would require there to be exceptional circumstances, which includes an inability to meet housing need. Consequently, the council has been required to consider development of land in the Green Belt.
- 88) Other than sites in the Green Belt where permissions already exist, and which are therefore already included in the 'Baseline Supply' identified above, further work has been undertaken to identify potential housing allocations in the Green Belt.
- 89) To that end, the council has undertaken a full assessment of the Green Belt including the identification of previously developed and grey belt land, as required by NPPF paragraph 146. A further site selection process has then been followed, which is set out in more detail in the [Green Belt Site Selection Methodology paper]. The sequential approach set out in NPPF paragraph 148 expects that, in considering Green Belt, the council will first look at sites which have been previously developed, then those grey belt sites which are not previously developed and then other Green Belt sites.
- 90) The site selection paper identifies why many sites in the Green Belt, including on potential grey belt land, have constraints which mean they are unsuitable for residential development. Key reasons for this including flooding issues, impact on sensitive landscape character areas/river valleys and accessibility of the site which could not reasonably be mitigated as a result of development.
- 91) In addition to site specific site selection work the impact of further development in relation to the wider transport network is explored in the Transport Topic Paper. This has identified a number of issues with regards to capacity on the network exacerbated by additional housing and also restricted opportunities to deliver improved public transport and/or active travel routes to potential new sites. This has meant that the impact on the transport network of development of a scale greater than that proposed would have a significantly detrimental effect.

- 92) The council has undertaken an approach whereby the sites which are identified inform the overall Green Belt supply, rather than seeking to identify an appropriate number of homes and find sites to meet that number. Work has been undertaken with the express intention of identifying as many suitable sites as possible.
- 93) Having undertaken this process and taking all relevant factors into account 30 potentially suitable sites have been allocated, generating an additional 8,689 homes in the Green Belt.
- 94) These sites and their expected minimum delivery of housing numbers are set out in Policy HOM 2a of the Stockport Local Plan. In addition, as a result of more detailed work on potential sites subsequent to the Regulation 18 consultation of the Draft Local Plan, policies to be applied to these sites are set out in policy HOM 2b. These associated policies are intended to ensure that should those sites come forward for development, they will suitably mitigate any impacts and where there are potential benefits from the development, these will be delivered.
- 95) Nevertheless, the starting point for all sites will be that as a minimum the ‘Golden Rules’ as set out in para 156 of the NPPF will apply:
- a) setting a minimum affordable housing provision – for Stockport this will be 50%*
 - b) necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and*
 - c) the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public.*

3.3 Housing Targets and Trajectories

Site sources

- 96) Having optimised supply in the urban area and weighed the benefits of housing sites in the Green Belt against the harm which would be caused by doing so, the council has arrived at a housing target of 24,253.
- 97) Having undertaken a full assessment of potential capacities at sites in the supply, including Green Belt allocations, there has also been a consideration of likely delivery rates at those sites.
- 98) Not all developments will come forward in the early years of the plan and many of the larger sites will take several years to deliver their housing in full. As such the delivery of housing will vary across the plan period and the council is setting out a trajectory of housing which reflects likely delivery and which will be used to calculate the housing need position when determining the council’s five-year housing land supply position.

- 99) It should be noted that the years are for the 1st April-31st March period, e.g. The period for 2026-31 is from 2026/27 to 2030/31 inclusive.
- 100) The table below illustrates the breakdown of the various sources of housing supply and the anticipated delivery rates over the plan period. For each time period, the annual figure is determined by the total supply to be delivered over the number of years in that time period.

Please note that the final total figure of annualised target is very marginally more than the total supply due to rounding.

Source	Period	2026-31	2031-36	2036-42	Total
Permissioned		3,935	109	0	4,044
SHLAA		109	1,827	1,501	3,437
TCLA		990	2,850	2,549	6,389
Small Sites Allowance		146	365	438	949
District Centre Allowance		0	350	350	700
Allocations		1,553	5,186	1,995	8,734
TOTAL		6,733	10,807	6,833	24,253
Annual target		1,347	2,137	1,139	(Total = 24,254)

Table 4: Composition of new housing supply from various sources

Housing target and trajectory

- 101) As set out in the earlier section relating to local housing need, taking into account the 20% buffer required in the first five years of the plan, the plan period need is 32,317. The housing target has been set based on the supply identified in the existing built-up area and the capacity of the sites that are considered suitable and deliverable in the context of a plan promoting sustainable development.
- 102) As such this means that the overall plan target for housing 24,253, equates to 75% of the local housing need. In addition to this however the assessment of the potential supply has also taken into account likely delivery of homes over the plan period. The trajectory shown in the table above reflects this assessment, so the greatest delivery of homes will be in the middle of the plan period (2031-36), with the later years (2036-42) delivering the lowest annual number. This will also allow the council to demonstrate a 5-year deliverable supply at adoption, whilst ensuring that the housing target for the plan period is met.

Housing Mix

- 103) The local plan seeks to deliver housing which meets the needs of a variety of people, which includes both the housing type and tenure to be delivered. Policy HOM 4 'Housing mix' sets out the criteria which will be used to assess proposals for development. This acknowledges there is no 'one size fits all' approach to requirements on development. This however the starting point is that schemes should seek to address need taking into account the most recent evidence available in that regard.

Affordable Housing

- 104) The Housing Needs Assessment has identified an annual net shortfall of 1,305 affordable homes in Stockport. In the context of overall housing need, this represents a very significant percentage of housing which is required to be affordable. Notwithstanding the target to be set in the local plan, the council has sought to optimise affordable housing delivery through policy.
- 105) As set out previously in this paper, the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (WPVA) undertaken after the Regulation 18 consultation has revealed some issues with regards to the viability of affordable provision in certain parts of the borough and also variability of deliverability dependent on land type and development size. Policy HOM 5 (Affordable housing) therefore sets requirements for the overall level of provision based on three elements: the scale of development (fewer than 100 units/100+ units); the type of land (greenfield/brownfield/Green Belt); and the viability area (lower/medium/higher).
- 106) Whilst this will mean that the affordable housing requirement identified in the HNA will not be met in full, it represents the optimal position in terms of balancing delivery of affordable homes with the need for residential development to be viable, based on the current evidence.

Site type (area)	Fewer than 100 homes	100 or more homes
Previously developed land (lower viability)	5%	10%
Previously developed land (middle viability)	5%	10%
Previously developed land (higher viability)	10%	15%
Greenfield (lower viability)	5%	10%
Greenfield (middle viability)	10%	15%
Greenfield (higher viability)	40%	40%
Green Belt (lower viability)	5%	10%
Green Belt (middle viability)	15%	20%
Green Belt (higher viability)	45%	50%

Table 5: Table of affordable housing requirements (extract of policy HOM 5)

- 107) In addition to the overall requirement for affordable provision, the HNA identifies an overall split for the tenure mix, with a recommended affordable tenure split as

22% social rent, 13% affordable rent and 65% affordable home ownership, with a focus on delivering social rented where possible. The council recognises that requirements for tenure split will vary from area to area across Stockport and the HNA examines in more detail this aspect of affordable provision. Consequently, policy HOM 5 allows for flexibility in this regard, referencing the evidence provided by the most recently published HNA as the basis for tenure requirements.

Self-build Housing

- 108) Policy HOM 12 ‘Self-build and custom build housing’ includes a requirement for 5% self-build provision on schemes of 100 units or more (apartment schemes excepted). The council’s self-build register currently has circa 150 entries for people or groups seeking self-build plots in the borough. The provision of such plots has proven to be very difficult except where individuals have purchased an existing house and replaced it with their own design.
- 109) As such, and in order to help address the obligation placed upon local authorities by the government, the requirement of 5% on those larger sites will help to meet the need of those already on the self-build register and potential future need over the plan period.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 110) The NPPF states that requirements for and provision of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople should be addressed according to the relevant guidance. This includes developing an evidence base of need for each type of site requirements and planning for the need through the development plan.
- 111) The 2024 Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)¹¹ provides the latest available evidence to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the ten local authority areas of Greater Manchester. The needs of Travelling Showpeople are presented in the 2018 GTAA¹², which the 2024 GTAA concluded remains appropriate evidence for the preparation of local plans.
- 112) With regards to provision for Gypsies and Travellers, the 2024 GTAA concluded that was no current shortfall and no need for any permanent pitches in Stockport (see table ES1 of that document). The matter of transit sites is a GM-wide matter to be addressed collectively, although at present no suitable sites have been identified in Stockport.
- 113) The 2018 GTAA identified a need through to 2036 for 12 plots suitable for Travelling Showpeople. Similarly, there have been no suitable sites identified in Stockport.

¹¹ See <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/jotblsr1/gmca-gtaa-final-report-08-11-24-accessible-for-publishing.pdf>

¹² See <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1678/greater-manchester-gypsy-and-traveller-and-travelling-showperson-accommodation-assessment-update-2018.pdf>

However, in order to help guide such development and to provide a framework for assessing applications which come forward over the plan period, a criteria-based policy (HOM 9) is proposed in the local plan.

Older persons and Specialist Housing

114) Stockport's Housing Needs Assessment 2025 (HNA) has assessed the scale of need for various types of specialist/support housing. This has included:

- Specialist housing for older people.
- Housing for people with disabilities (physical, learning, autism, mental health).
- Supported housing for young people, care leavers, and other vulnerable groups.

115) With regards to special housing for older people, there is a projected need for an additional 4,613 C3 units (sheltered/retirement housing), 1,157 Extra Care units, and 422 residential care bedspaces. This equates to 256, 64, and 23 units per year respectively.

116) This will require a range of accommodation types to be delivered including:

- Sheltered/retirement housing (for independent living with some support)
- Extra Care housing (with on-site care and support)
- Residential care (for those with high care needs, including dementia)

117) The HNA identifies that around 73 homes per year should be built to M4(3) standard and that all other new dwellings should be built to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard, reflecting the ageing population and prevalence of disability.

118) Housing requirements also exist for those with learning disabilities, autism, mental health issues and dementia. There is also a need to ensure that there is suitable supported housing for young people and for care leavers.

119) The HNA has identified a shortage of affordable, accessible, and specialist housing across all tenures and sizes. There is a high demand for adapted properties, especially for older people and those with disabilities, insufficient supported accommodation for care leavers, young people with complex needs, and those with mental health issues.

120) The findings of the HNA highlight that Stockport faces significant and growing needs for specialist and supported housing, particularly for older people, those with disabilities, care leavers, and other vulnerable groups. Addressing these needs requires a coordinated approach to increase the supply, diversity, and accessibility of housing, alongside robust support services. As such, this is clearly not a matter that can only be addressed by local plan policy. However, the encouragement and requirement in policy to deliver a range of housing types, and

for that housing to be delivered in a way which meets the wide variety of housing needs, is part of the means of addressing that need.

4. Conclusion

- 121) The chapter of the Local Plan entitled ‘Our Homes’ provides a comprehensive policy approach to meeting Stockport’s housing needs over the plan period 2026-42. It is underpinned by proportionate evidence to provide a justified approach, including key pieces of evidence including the Housing Needs Assessment, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Whole Plan Viability Assessment, other pieces of technical evidence include the Stockport Character and Urban Density study, and the strategic regeneration frameworks covering the town centre.
- 122) Our evidence shows a clear need for new homes to be provided to meet a variety of different needs including different sizes of homes, types of homes (i.e. apartments, retirement homes, houses), and also different tenures across Stockport. The Local Plan provides a strategy to deliver against these needs, whilst also taking into account other considerations for Stockport such as environmental considerations, accessibility of sites, transport matters, proximity to social infrastructure, and the flagship regeneration and £1 billion investment into Stockport town centre.
- 123) A key piece of evidence which has informed the approach to housing allocations is the Green Belt Assessment, more information on this is contained with the Green Belt Topic Paper.
- 124) In respect of housing, further release of land from the Green Belt would:
- Lead to fundamental impacts on the openness of the remaining Green Belt.
 - Cause irreparable damage to the natural environment.
 - Cause very significant harm to river valleys/landscape character beyond that to the Green Belt alone.
 - Cause severe impacts on the ability of the borough’s transport network to function effectively and which with mitigation could not address satisfactorily, thereby harming the economy and people’s quality of life.
- 125) The whole plan viability assessment demonstrates that parts of Stockport have a very strong residential market, however viability challenges exist, particularly for apartment-led schemes and brownfield regeneration. In response to the evidence set out in the whole plan viability assessment, specific affordable housing requirements have been developed for development in different parts of the borough. These varied requirements respond to the challenges posed by the current global circumstances, thus impacting on build costs and pushing them higher.
- 126) Other policies in the local plan have also been reframed in order to support viability for the delivery of new homes, these include amending the BNG percentage requirement to bring it line with statutory requirements, and an

updated evidence base and policy approach to energy efficiency and net zero development.

- 127) As set in Section 3, the council has set a housing target based on an assessment of deliverable supply over the plan period. In doing so, the council has sought to optimise delivery on sites in the existing built-up area of the borough and has undertaken numerous calls for sites to maximise the opportunity for potential sites to be put forward. Despite this, the baseline supply falls considerably short of the local housing need.
- 128) The council has then further assessed sites in the Green Belt, following the government's required approach as set out in the NPPF. This has taken into account a wide range of potential constraints and opportunities. As part of that process the council has weighed up those constraints and the harm that would be caused in Green Belt and other terms, against the benefit of delivering housing and the requirement to seek to meet housing need in full. In arriving at the figure of 24,253, or 75% of need, the council believes this provides reasonable balance in delivering sustainable development for the borough.
- 129) Collectively, the evidence indicates that a flexible and realistic approach needs to be taken to housing delivery, to enable it to come forward in sustainable locations, with much-needed affordable housing provision, whilst delivering against wider strategic objectives such as responding to the challenges posed by the climate emergency including extreme weather in the form of heat stress and potential flooding.
- 130) The Local Plan seeks to provide a framework for housing delivery which is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.