

Wexham

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

November 2024

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Date	Authorized	Position
1. First Draft	September 2024	Paul Avery	Principal Housing Consultant
2. Internal Review	September 2024	Kerry Parr	Associate Director
3. Group Review	October 2024	John Phipps	Wexham Parish Council
4. Locality Review	November 2024	Annabel Osborne	Neighbourhood Planning Officer
5. Final Report	November 2024	Paul Avery	Principal Housing Consultant

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List of acronyms used in the text:

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
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government
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
RQ	Research Question
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
VOA	Valuation Office Agency

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.1. Wexham is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the county and Unitary Authority of Buckinghamshire. The NA boundary covers the areas administered by Wexham Parish Council.
- 1.1.2. The unitary authority of Buckinghamshire replaced Buckinghamshire County Council, South Bucks District Council and three other neighbouring district councils, in 2020. Wexham had formerly been part of South Bucks. Given the early stage of the development of any new Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, the relevant Local Plan for Wexham remains the South Bucks Local Plan and Core Strategy. These documents are, however, now considered relatively outdated.
- 1.1.3. The 2021 Census recorded 2,463 individuals in Wexham, indicating an increase of 85 people since the 2011 Census.
- 1.1.4. There has been some development in Wexham in recent years. Buckinghamshire Council has provided data showing that a net 5 new homes have been built since 2011. This contrasts with the difference of 14 units between the 2011 and 2021 Census figures. This and other discrepancies between the two datasets may in part be due to higher rates of permanent occupation in the existing housing stock in the most recent Census.
- 1.1.5. This Executive Summary details the conclusions of each chapter of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), addressing each of the themes agreed with the Steering Group at the outset of the research.
- 1.1.6. Data from the 2021 Census is continuing to be released. At present, the available data covers population, households, tenure, and dwelling stock characteristics. Some data from the Census 2021 at the localised level is not yet available, as well as some 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 projections where necessary to build up evidence at the neighbourhood level.

1.2. Conclusions – Affordability and Affordable Housing

Current tenure profile

- 1.2.1. Home ownership is the dominant tenure in Wexham: at 73%, it represents a similar share of the total to the wider county (70%) and national average (61%). Of the remaining non-owning households, more rent from a private landlord (a fast-growing share of 14%) than a social landlord (11%). This pattern is consistent with Buckinghamshire and England.
- 1.2.2. Despite recent growth in private renting and an unusually high proportion of shared ownership, the lack of alternatives to full ownership are likely to present a challenge for those on the lowest incomes seeking to remain in the parish, which may be a factor in the decline of younger families observed in the Type and Size chapter.

Housing costs

- 1.2.3. Home values in the NA have followed a general upward trajectory despite some year-on-year fluctuations. Prices have grown by around 60-70% over the past decade (depending on which average measure is used).
- 1.2.4. The current median house price is £503,000, the current mean is £693,833, and the current lower quartile (the middle value of the cheapest 50% of properties sold) is £412,500. The lower quartile, which is typically taken as a good representation of 'entry-level' housing, is around 82% of the median price, meaning there is limited variety at the lower end of the market and that truly entry-level properties infrequently come up for sale. Average house prices in Wexham are around 30% more expensive than those of Buckinghamshire as a whole.
- 1.2.5. It is apparent that Land Registry data does not include transactions of park homes, mobile homes and caravans in the NA. A limited sample of four park homes listed for sale at The Orchards in September 2024 implies a median value of £195,000, within a fairly limited price range of £145,000 to £200,000 (although anecdotal examples of recent sales include values close to £300,000). Though such prices make these properties significantly cheaper than most bricks-and-mortar options, they remain comparable with houses in other parts of the country. It should also be noted that monthly service charges apply for the maintenance of grounds.
- 1.2.6. AECOM has estimated the annual income required to afford various tenures of housing in Wexham – 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 £59,200 in 2020 and the lower quartile household income for Buckinghamshire was £21,216 in 2023.
- 1.2.7. 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 more than twice the current average. Private renting is more affordable, but is generally only accessible to average and dual earning households – and even then, only for dwellings with 2 bedrooms or fewer. A broader challenge in relation to private renting is that, though potentially cheaper, too few properties are regularly available locally to make this a reliable option for lower income households.
- 1.2.8. 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 Wexham there is a relatively large gap between the income needed to afford to rent (£58,000) and to buy (£114,000), meaning that many households could theoretically benefit from these products – even though they would have above-average incomes.
- 1.2.9. The discount on First Homes can be set at 30%, 40% or 50% in Neighbourhood Plans. In Wexham the minimum 30% discount appears insufficiently affordable to average earning households, and would make First Homes exceed the national price cap (at least, when calculated using the benchmark used to estimate their

value here). A higher discount of 50% would expand access to ownership more widely and bring First Homes within reach of average earners.

- 1.2.10. The affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Wexham as the only option for a large segment of those in the most acute need and the large group of potential residents who cannot afford any mainstream options in this high-value housing market.

The need for Affordable Housing

- 1.2.11. AECOM estimates a modest long-term surplus of affordable rented housing in Wexham rather than an unmet need. The reason for this component of need being met over the long-term is the rate of turnover in the existing stock of social housing, which suggests that vacancies will be able to satisfy the projected newly arising need and erode the backlog over time. Yet whilst it may be possible to address localised needs through the existing stock, new affordable rented housing may still need to be provided for households in acute need living elsewhere in the wider area, and to future-proof the Wexham housing stock in case needs change.
- 1.2.12. AECOM estimate potential demand for 3.7 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in Wexham, equating to a total of 59 over the Neighbourhood Plan period. 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.
- 1.2.13. The NA's future supply of Affordable Housing depends on the delivery of mainstream housing sites larger than the threshold at which Affordable Housing requirements apply (currently 5 dwellings). Given the NA's absence of a housing requirement and the likelihood that future development sites will be smaller than this threshold, the future delivery of Affordable Housing is likely to be extremely limited. This could be addressed through the allocation of mainstream or affordable exception sites should this align with the wishes of the community.

Affordable Housing policy

- 1.2.14. South Bucks's adopted policy on the subject of Affordable Housing requires 40% of all new housing on sites larger than 5 dwellings to be affordable (Policy CP3). This is a policy topic within the remit of the Local Authority (and is now considered very outdated), but it is worth considering what the most appropriate mix of Affordable Housing products might be in the NA specifically.
- 1.2.15. AECOM recommends that the tenure mix of Affordable Housing secured in future years gives priority to affordable rented provision (66%) over affordable home ownership options (33%), in line with adopted South Bucks policy – which appears to remain appropriate for Wexham. Some affordable rented housing would help diversify the NA's tenure offering and support lower earning households despite the relatively small scale of need. The delivery of affordable home ownership would help to meet modest potential demand in a context where home ownership through the open market is very unaffordable.

1.3. Conclusions – Type and Size

The current housing mix

- 1.3.1. The current dwelling mix in Wexham is not dominated by any single dwelling type, although detached and semi-detached housing makes up a combined 60% of the total. Bungalows exist at similar proportions to wider averages (9% of homes). A defining feature of the NA's stock is the presence of many park homes, mobile homes and caravans, which represent around 18% of the total. The relative absence of flats is not an unusual characteristic of rural areas. Although the park homes, mobile homes and caravans at The Orchards offer smaller and generally more affordable accommodation (similar to the role generally played by flats), they are understood to be age restricted (to those aged 55+), meaning there remain few affordable options for younger and newly forming households in Wexham.
- 1.3.2. In terms of size, Wexham has a similar housing stock to the national average. However, the mix skews toward smaller properties to a much greater extent than Buckinghamshire, where there are proportionally fewer 1-2 bedroom homes and more 4+ bedroom homes. Again, this distinction is partly due to the presence of park homes, mobile homes and caravans, which tend to have fewer bedrooms.
- 1.3.3. Census data is fairly unreliable when it comes to revealing changes to the Wexham housing mix over the past decade due to changes in how the relevant datasets are recorded. Combining it with Buckinghamshire Council data (which is also incomplete due to the merger of the former authorities), however, indicates that the most recently built homes have included 3 bedroom semi-detached properties and some smaller homes, most likely including some additional static or mobile caravans / park homes.

Population characteristics

- 1.3.4. The Wexham population, which is markedly older than that of the county and England, has experienced fairly significant ageing in the decade since 2011. The 65-84 and 85+ age groups are the only cohorts to have meaningfully expanded while almost all other age groups have contracted.
- 1.3.5. This data suggests that the NA is struggling to retain younger family households. This evidence would appear to support the potential for any future development to specifically attract and retain these groups if that is the community's wish, alongside an imperative to accommodate the growing population of older people – who may be seeking to downsize or experiencing changing mobility and support needs.
- 1.3.6. Applying ONS household projections for Buckinghamshire to the Wexham 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 51% to become by far the largest cohort at 40% of all residents. Growth in younger age groups is expected to be much more modest or negative.
- 1.3.7. The composition of Wexham's households (in terms of the number of people, their age, and their relationships to one another) differs from Buckinghamshire as a whole

in the NA's higher share of single-person households, many of whom are older (and thus likely to be residents of The Orchards). Of the NA's family households, a relatively high share is composed of older couples. However, more of the families aged under 65 have children than do not. There are relatively few households with older children living at home, although this has risen over the past decade – possibly due to affordability challenges as well as the timing of the Census during a national lockdown when many students returned home from university.

- 1.3.8. As of the 2021 Census, around 72% of households in the NA had at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, and 37% had at least two extra bedrooms. Under-occupancy was most common among two distinct groups: couples with no children and older households. While not uncommon in rural areas, this might suggest that Wexham'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

- 1.3.9. 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 future housing delivery focuses particularly on 2-3 bedroom homes. This could help to achieve two key outcomes: improving affordability, and meeting the needs suggested by demographic trends (notably ageing and counteracting the decline in younger families).
- 1.3.10. However, the absence of 1 and 4+ bedroom homes in the model results means that this recommendation is fairly restrictive and imbalanced. This is partly due to differences in the starting mix of the geographies used for the key data inputs. As such, there is scope to adjust the model results to arrive at a more rational final recommendation that offers wider choice in the market and reflects affordability and other secondary evidence. One potential option, based on AECOM's professional judgement of the model results alongside such additional evidence, would be the following mix:
- 30% 1-2 bedroom homes;
 - 50% 3 bedroom homes; and
 - 20% 4+ bedroom homes.
- 1.3.11. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable 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.

2. Context

2.1. Local context

- 2.1.1. Wexham is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the unitary authority of Buckinghamshire in South East England. The NA boundary follows the existing boundary of Wexham civil parish and was designated in 2023.
- 2.1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan is currently envisaged to start in 2025 and extend to 2040, therefore covering a period of 15 years. The evidence supplied in this report will look ahead to the Plan end date of 2040, but where possible will also provide annualised figures which can be extrapolated to a different term if the Neighbourhood Plan period changes.
- 2.1.3. Wexham parish is a predominantly rural area in the south west of Buckinghamshire. The southern and western edges of the parish form the border between Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, and the Berkshire town of Slough is the closest large settlement to the parish. In 1974 Wexham parish was divided from that of Wexham Court, which now effectively forms part of Slough.
- 2.1.4. The NA is composed of a number of small settlement areas including the west side of Wexham Street (the east side falls within neighboring Stoke Poges parish), Church Lane (which is contiguous with Wexham Court), the hamlet of George Green (where most services are located), the smaller hamlet of Middle Green, and The Orchards (a residential park for static and mobile homes). The NA has a limited range of services and amenities, including two schools, two hotels, a parish church, a grocer, and a takeaway. The parish does, however, also contain two significant country parks – Langley and Black Park – which offer green space and leisure opportunities.

2.2. The NA boundary and key statistics

- 2.2.1. For Census purposes, the NA is made up, like the rest of England, of statistical units called Output Areas (OAs). A breakdown of the OAs relevant to Wexham is provided in Appendix A. A map of the Plan area appears overleaf in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1: Map of the Wexham Neighbourhood Area



Source: Buckinghamshire Council

- 2.2.2. At the time of the 2011 Census the NA was home to 2,378 residents, formed into 976 households and occupying 1,019 dwellings. The 2021 Census indicates population growth of around 85 individuals (or 3.6%) since 2011, recording a total of 2,463 residents, 1,000 households and 1,033 dwellings.
- 2.2.3. This is a surprisingly high level of population and household growth relative to the scale of new development (24 additional households and 85 additional people for only 14 additional dwellings). The difference in the number of households can be explained by the higher rate of dwelling occupation at the time of the most recent Census. In 2021, only 33 dwellings were not permanently occupied (usually second homes and holiday lets or vacant properties), compared to 43 in 2011.
- 2.2.4. However, the higher population figure in 2021 also indicates that existing families have grown in size – potentially due to higher birth rates, but potentially also reflecting more adult children living at home either for affordability reasons or because more university students returned home than usual due to the national lockdown in place at the time of the Census. This shift, however, remains fairly small in scale.

- 2.2.5. Buckinghamshire Council has supplied data about the new homes completed in Wexham since 2011. This suggests the addition of 16 new homes (gross), which falls to 5 (net) when the loss of 11 existing homes in 2014/15 is factored in. The majority of these new homes were built in 2021/22 (3 completions) and 2022/23 (7 completions), meaning these properties are too recent to have been counted in the 2021 Census. It is not clear why the Census counts more additional dwellings in Wexham than Buckinghamshire Council data suggests, but this may be due to changes in how completions are recorded due to the merger of former South Bucks into Buckinghamshire Council, or due to data gathering changes or limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.2.6. In terms of dwellings on sites with permission to be built in the near-term, Buckinghamshire Council data suggests a total of 17 additional homes are expected across 7 sites (4 of which are for 1 dwelling, 2 are for 4 dwellings each and 1 is for 5 dwellings). These sites also come with a loss of 7 existing dwellings, meaning that the net additional total on current outstanding completions is 10 homes. Given the low number of net additional homes on each site, it is unlikely that any of them exceed the threshold at which Affordable Housing and other planning contributions are required. A detailed breakdown of the type and size mix is not available.

2.3. The housing market area context

- 2.3.1. Whilst this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) focuses on Wexham 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 boroughs. This is because housing market areas are inherently linked to the labour market, employment patterns and travel to work areas.
- 2.3.2. In the case of Wexham, the NA sits within a housing market area which covers Slough, Maidenhead, Bracknell, Reading and Newbury.¹ This means that when households who live in these authorities move home, the vast majority move within this geography. The housing market area also has links to other neighbouring areas, however, with key settlements including High Wycombe and Beaconsfield (both to the north), and Staines-on-Thames to the south.
- 2.3.3. At the neighbourhood scale it is not possible to be definitive about housing need and demand because neighbourhoods, including Wexham, are closely linked to other areas. In the case of Wexham, changes in need or demand in settlements nearby is likely to impact on the neighbourhood. For example, development in the nearby town of Slough may accommodate housing need from Wexham. Additionally, the South Bucks Core Strategy (2011)² suggests that the focus for residential developments within the district will be Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, and Burnham – which may also influence patterns of housing demand in Wexham. Note that the Strategy for the Buckinghamshire Local Plan is still at too early a stage to provide a clear understanding of whether the focus for development within the County may shift, and

¹ Opinion Research Services (2016) 'HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire: Updating the evidence'. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaluedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/2016%2006%2030%20Bucks%20HMA-FEMA%20update.pdf

² South Bucks Core Strategy (2011). Available here: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/South_Bucks_Core_Strategy_-_Adopted_February_2011_bb48FA7.pdf

the currently proposed changes to national planning policy (particularly around the role of the Green Belt), may also influence how things change in future. It is important to note that the entirety of Wexham parish falls within the metropolitan Green Belt.

- 2.3.4. In summary, Wexham functions within a wider strategic area. As well as fostering good working relationships with the local planning authority (Buckinghamshire Council), 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.

2.4. Planning policy context

- 2.4.1. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic local policies.³ In the case of Wexham, the relevant adopted Local Plan consists of South Bucks Core Strategy (2011)⁴ and saved policies from the South Bucks District Local Plan (1999, consolidated in 2007 and 2011).⁵ The two documents include policies to guide development within the former District, including several on the topic of housing. Finally, a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) were produced to accompany the policies set out in the Core Strategy, including the Affordable Housing SPD (2013).⁶ It should be noted that in 2019 an updated Local Plan for Chiltern and South Bucks failed at examination stage.
- 2.4.2. The adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan are now considered outdated. Work has begun to produce an updated Local Plan through the area's new planning authority, the unitary authority of Buckinghamshire Council (which replaced Buckinghamshire County Council, South Bucks District Council and three other neighbouring district councils, in 2020). The latest information on Buckinghamshire Council's website suggests that early engagement and a call for sites have taken place but no draft policies are yet in the public domain.⁷
- 2.4.3. A detailed breakdown of the adopted Core Policy and Local Plan policies relevant to housing need is provided in Appendix B. Here, it is worth summarising the most important points of these policies:
- The two areas that constitute Wexham NA are considered to be Rural Settlements in the settlement hierarchy of South Bucks, and they sit entirely within Metropolitan Green Belt. This means that only limited infill development is likely to be acceptable, and the NA is not expected to proactively contribute

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>

⁴ South Bucks Core Strategy (2011). Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/South_Bucks_Core_Strategy_-_Adopted_February_2011_bb48FA7.pdf

⁵ South Bucks District Local Plan (1999). Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/South_Bucks_local_plan_i4D6YG4.pdf

⁶ Affordable Housing SPD (2013). Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Affordable_Housing_SPD_Final_May_2015_SPNs9lr.pdf

⁷ <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/local-development-plans-info/buckinghamshire-local-plan/>

towards the District's 2,200-2,800 dwelling target for the period 2006-2026 (according to Core Policy 1 of the Core Strategy);

- Core Policy 3 of the Core Strategy states that at least 40% of all new dwellings are expected to be delivered as Affordable Housing on sites larger than five homes. The suggested tenure mix within Affordable Housing is deferred to the latest SHMA, which suggests a tenure split of 78% affordable rent and 22% affordable home ownership.
- The supplementary text to Core Policy 2 in the Core Strategy discusses the aspiration for new dwellings to achieve the 'Lifetime Homes' standard, referencing the benefit this will have for ensuring that older people can live in their own homes for as long as possible. No measurable target for this (or for the number of homes to be built to Category M4(2) accessibility standards) has been set.

2.5. Quantity of housing to provide

- 2.5.1. The NPPF 2023 (paragraphs 67 and 68) requires LPAs to provide neighbourhood groups upon request with a definitive or an indicative number of houses to plan for over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
- 2.5.2. Buckinghamshire Council is yet to fulfil that requirement due to the early stage that preparation of the new Local Plan has reached. The Steering Group and Parish Council have not been supplied with any indication of housing numbers outside of the Local Plan preparation process.
- 2.5.3. South Bucks opted not to provide Wexham with a target within the Core Strategy due to its position in the settlement hierarchy and location within the green belt. Though AECOM has not discussed this topic with Buckinghamshire Council, it is reasonable to suppose that this implied position – that Wexham is not expected to proactively contribute to housing growth – may continue into the future (subject to the evolving strategy in any emerging new Local Plan and proposed changes to national policy about the role of Green Belt land). As such a fairly limited quantity of new development may be expected over the course of the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2040, and this HNA is drafted with this point of context in mind.

3. Objectives and approach

3.1. Objectives

3.1.1. This HNA is structured according to a number of themes or topics that were agreed at the outset of the research with the Wexham Neighbourhood Plan Steering 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.

Affordability and Affordable Housing

3.1.2. 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.

3.1.3. 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.

3.1.4. 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

3.1.5. 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.

3.1.6. 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.

- 3.1.7. 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.

3.2. Approach

- 3.2.1. 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;
 - 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 Rightmove;
 - Local Authority housing waiting list data; and
 - The 2016 Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). As this document is now relatively dated it is drawn upon to a more limited degree in this HNA.
- 3.2.2. Data from the 2021 Census continues to be released. 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 2024, 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. Affordability and Affordable Housing

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. 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.

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- 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.

4.1.3. 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.

4.2. Definitions

4.2.1. 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 2023 (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 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 the NPPF.⁸

⁸ 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>.

- **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.

4.3. Current tenure profile

- 4.3.1. 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.
- 4.3.2. Table 4-1 presents data on tenure in Wexham compared with Buckinghamshire and England from the 2021 Census. It shows that home ownership is clearly the most common tenure in Wexham (73% of households) – a rate that slightly exceeds the Buckinghamshire average and more strongly exceeds the national average. Of the remaining non-owning households more rent from a private landlord (14%) than a social landlord (11%). This pattern is consistent across the three geographies, although Wexham has the lowest proportion of social renting – which may limit options for local people on the lowest incomes. In contrast, the NA has an unusually high share of shared ownership.

Table 4-1: Tenure (households), various geographies, 2021

Tenure	Wexham	Buckinghamshire	England
Owned	72.7%	70.0%	61.3%
Shared ownership	3.2%	1.3%	1.0%
Social rented	10.6%	13.0%	17.1%
Private rented	13.5%	15.8%	20.6%

Sources: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

- 4.3.3. It is also worth comparing how the tenure mix has changed in the last ten years, using the 2011 Census (Table 4-2 below). This data indicates that home ownership is declining modestly, primarily in favour of private renting. There has been some development of new social rented housing, and the loss of some shared ownership properties as occupants have transitioned to full ownership.
- 4.3.4. Buckinghamshire Council data, conversely, suggests that none of the net additional dwellings completed in the last decade have been Affordable Housing. The discrepancy between these two datasets is unclear.

Table 4-2: Tenure change (households) in Wexham, 2011-2021

Tenure	2011	2021	% Change
Owned	760	727	-4.3%
Shared ownership	40	32	-20.0%
Social rented	94	106	12.8%
Private rented	73	135	84.9%

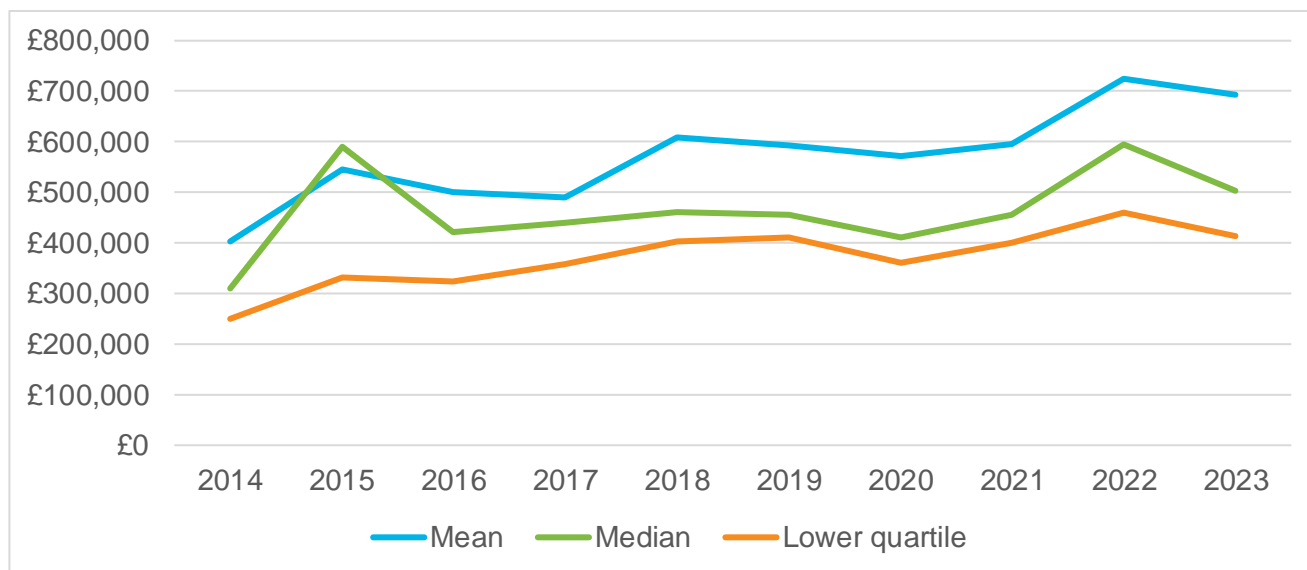
Sources: Census 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

4.4. Affordability

House prices

- 4.4.1. 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.
- 4.4.2. Figure 4-1 looks at the average and lower quartile house prices in Wexham based on sales price data published by the Land Registry. It shows that prices have followed a general upward trajectory over the past decade, with some year-on-year fluctuations.
- 4.4.3. The current median house price is £503,000, the current mean is £693,833, and the current lower quartile (the middle value of the cheapest 50% of properties sold) is £412,500. The lower quartile, which is typically taken as a good representation of 'entry-level' housing, is around 82% of the median price, meaning there is limited variety at the lower end of the market and that truly entry-level properties infrequently come up for sale.
- 4.4.4. The median house price in 2023 is 62% higher than in 2014, the mean is 72% higher and the lower quartile is 65% higher. Such rates of appreciation are likely to present significant challenges for those yet to get a foothold in the property ladder.
- 4.4.5. Average house prices in Wexham are consistently more expensive than those of Buckinghamshire as a whole. The 2023 median house price for the NA is 30% higher than the Borough figure for 2023, translating into a price difference of nearly £160,000. The mean is 20% higher, but the lower quartile is fully 36% higher. These differences primarily point to higher land values in Wexham, given that the mix of dwelling types and sizes in Wexham skews smaller than the county average (see Type and Size chapter).
- 4.4.6. The high cost of housing for market purchase and absence of a wide range of price points presents a significant barrier to entry for lower earning households. Although they may struggle to find appropriate properties within the NA, they do potentially have somewhat lower-cost alternatives if they are prepared to move elsewhere in Buckinghamshire.

Figure 4-1: House prices by quartile in Wexham, 2014-2023



Source: Land Registry PPD

- 4.4.7. Table 4-3 breaks down house prices by type, presenting the median within each type. It shows that detached housing is clearly the most expensive type, reaching a median of nearly £1 million in a number of recent years. All other types fall within a similar price range. However, this data should be approached with caution: the annual average by type is derived from a smaller sample size within each category that can mean that variation in the homes that happen to be sold in a given year (and their characteristics in terms of size, location and condition) can have a large impact on the average.
- 4.4.8. It is also apparent from a review of specific transactions in the Land Registry data drawn upon for this analysis that it does not include transactions of static and mobile caravans / park homes at The Orchards. As such, the data clearly overlooks an important element of the local market.
- 4.4.9. A limited sample of four park homes listed for sale at The Orchards in September 2024 implies a median value of £195,000, within a fairly limited price range of £145,000 to £200,000 (although anecdotal examples of recent sales include values close to £300,000). Although such prices make these properties significantly cheaper than most bricks-and-mortar options, they remain comparable with houses elsewhere, and it should be noted that monthly service charges apply for the maintenance of grounds, and that site owners receive a portion of transaction values.

Table 4-3: Median house prices by type in Wexham, 2014-2023

Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Growth
Detached	£590k	£637.5k	£800k	£695.3k	£805k	£950k	£640k	£820k	£925k	£1,250k	111.9%
Semi-detached	£315k	£552.5k	£422.5k	£442k	£460k	£507.8k	£457.5k	£400k	£530k	£500k	58.7%
Terraced	£278k	£332.5k	£266.5k	£349k	£352.8k	£345.5k	£352k	£419k	£435k	£387.5k	39.4%
Flats	£250k	£821.3k	£263k	£335k	£365k	£292.5k	£332.5k	£445k	£140k	£425k	70.0%
All Types	£310k	£590k	£422.5k	£441k	£462k	£455k	£410k	£455k	£595k	£503k	62.3%

Source: Land Registry PPD

Income

- 4.4.10. 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.
- 4.4.11. 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 £59,200 in 2020 (the most recent year for this dataset). Discussion about the area to which this data applies is provided in Appendix A.
- 4.4.12. 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, it does not represent household income where there are two or more people earning. Buckinghamshire's gross individual lower quartile annual earnings were £21,216 in 2023. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £42,432.
- 4.4.13. 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

- 4.4.14. 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.
- 4.4.15. AECOM has determined thresholds for the income required in Wexham 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.
- 4.4.16. 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.
- 4.4.17. Table 4-4 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 4-4: Affordability thresholds in Wexham (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £59,200	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £21,216	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £42,432
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£452,700	-	£129,343	No	No	No
Estimated NA New Build Entry-Level House Price	£395,230		£112,923	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£371,250	-	£106,071	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£400,500	-	£114,429	No	No	No
Park home	£175,000	£2,400	£52,543	Yes	No	No
3-4 Bed Market Rent	-	£24,300	£81,000	No	No	No
1-2 Bed Market Rent	-	£17,376	£57,920	Yes	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£276,661	-	£79,046	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£237,138	-	£67,754	No	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£197,615	-	£56,461	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£197,615	£5,489	£74,759	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£98,808	£8,234	£55,677	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£39,523	£9,881	£44,228	Yes	No	No
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£8,629	£28,763	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£5,810	£19,368	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

4.4.18. 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

4.4.19. 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 or equity from an existing property. Market housing in Wexham, 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 more than twice the current average. A park home (using a rough

estimated value of £200,000 and annual service charge of £2,400) appears potentially affordable to an average earning household, but may only be available to those over the age of 55, who may be relying on pension income or otherwise have difficulties with mortgage availability.

- 4.4.20. Private renting is generally only affordable to average or higher earners – and even then, only for smaller entry-level rental properties. Households made up of one or two lower quartile earners cannot afford the given rental thresholds. 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.
- 4.4.21. A broader challenge in relation to private renting is that, though potentially cheaper, too few rental properties tend to be available to make this a reliable option. Only two were listed for rent in the NA at the time of search in August 2024.

Affordable home ownership

- 4.4.22. There is a relatively large group of households in Wexham who may be able to afford to rent privately but cannot afford home ownership (based purely on the wide gap between the relevant thresholds). They are typically earning between around £58,000 per year (at which point entry-level rents become affordable) and £114,000 (at which point entry-level market sale homes become affordable [not including age-restricted park homes, mobile homes and caravans]). This 'can rent, can't buy' cohort may benefit from the range of affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership.
- 4.4.23. 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.
- 4.4.24. This report has estimated the income required to afford First Homes and tested the implications of 30%, 40% and 50% discount levels. Only the 50% discount level appears just affordable to average earning households, and no version of this product is close to being affordable to lower earning households. First-time buyers in the former group are the more realistic target market for First Homes, so this analysis suggests that there is a need to exceed the minimum default discount level of 30% in Wexham, ideally to 50%, while acknowledging that even this will primarily serve above average earners. 30% and 40% discounted homes using equivalent market prices are also above the price cap of £250,000 for this product. An alternative approach is to reduce the equivalent market value of First Homes by reducing their size or through other means. The estimates and recommendations given here are based on the costs of recently completed entry-level homes in Wexham – which may have been designed for a different market.
- 4.4.25. 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 Steering Group intend to set a higher First Homes discount level than that set at Local Authority level, further discussions with Buckinghamshire Council are advised.

- 4.4.26. Shared ownership appears to be slightly more affordable than First Homes but is broadly accessible to the same groups (at up to a 25% or possibly a 30% equity share). Government has recently announced that the minimum equity share for shared ownership will fall to 10% of the property value.⁹ 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.
- 4.4.27. 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 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, though again only to households on average incomes. However, discounts on *average* rents would make Rent to Buy affordability, in terms of the household income required, less affordable than 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.
- 4.4.28. 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

⁹ 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>.

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

- 4.4.29. 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 Wexham.
- 4.4.30. Affordable and social 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 other than the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.
- 4.4.31. The evidence in this chapter suggests that the affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Wexham as the only option for a large segment of the population unable to afford market housing, as well as those in the greatest need for other reasons. 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.

4.5. Estimates of the need for Affordable Housing

- 4.5.1. 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

- 4.5.2. AECOM estimates a modest long-term surplus of affordable rented housing in Wexham rather than an unmet need. The model summarized in Table 4-5 below and detailed in Appendix D indicates an annual surplus of 0.7 units – effectively an equilibrium between newly arising need and vacancies arising in the existing stock.

- 4.5.3. This result may initially be surprising since there is understood to be a current backlog of need in the region of 20-30 households (see note about the range of indicators in Appendix D). The reason for the affordable rented housing need being met over the long-term is the rate of turnover in the existing stock of social housing, which suggests that vacancies will be able to satisfy the projected newly arising need and erode the backlog over time.
- 4.5.4. It is, however, important to note that the parish may be meeting wider needs within the surrounding rural hinterland where services and facilities are even more limited, or may simply be expected to service a proportionate share of the needs of Buckinghamshire as a whole. As such, whilst it may be possible to address localised needs through the existing stock, new affordable rented housing may still need to be provided for households in acute need living elsewhere in the wider area, and to future-proof the Wexham housing stock.
- 4.5.5. A further caveat worth emphasizing is that one unit of 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.
- 4.5.6. For these reasons, it may be appropriate for Wexham to encourage the delivery of some affordable rented housing.

Table 4-5: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for rent in Wexham

Component of need or supply in the AECOM estimate	Per annum
Current need	1.7
Newly arising need	0.9
Supply	3.2
Net surplus	0.7

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

- 4.5.7. AECOM estimate potential demand for 3.7 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in Wexham, equating to a total of 59 over the Neighbourhood Plan period. The estimate is summarised in Table 4-6 below and detailed in Appendix D.
- 4.5.8. 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. 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. D

Table 4-6: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for sale in Wexham

Component of need or supply in the AECOM estimate	Per annum
Current need	4.6
Newly arising need	0.7
Supply	1.6
Net shortfall	3.7

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

Evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 4.5.9. A SHMA was undertaken for Berkshire and South Bucks in 2016. Given the age of the study, its findings should be given relatively less weight. However, it is worth pro-rating the Affordable Housing need estimates provided as the best available sense-check for the parish-scale needs calculated in this HNA.
- 4.5.10. The SHMA calculated a net Affordable Housing need of 167 units per year (over the period 2013-36) for South Bucks. At the time of the 2011 Census, Wexham represented 3.6% of the South Bucks population. Simply pro-rating the former Local Authority's need according to contemporaneous population statistics would suggest Wexham might expect to need around 6 units of Affordable Housing per year. The 2016 SHMA predated national guidance changes for separating out affordable rented and affordable home ownership need. This figure therefore probably primarily represents affordable rented need, but the boundaries between the two segments of need may be blurred.
- 4.5.11. This outdated and relatively rough indicator would support the idea that Wexham should continue to deliver affordable rented housing where possible – either because its needs may be higher in practice than the HNA estimate suggests, or to contribute to the NA's share of the wider area's needs.

Additional evidence of Affordable Housing needs

- 4.5.12. In support of the estimates summarized here, Buckinghamshire Council provided data about the households currently on its housing register. However, the smallest available scale for gathering this data is postcode area, and in Wexham's case the SL3 postcode area extends well beyond the parish into the urban areas in and around Slough. As such, the total of 33 households in need as of August 2024 was deemed insufficiently accurate as an input to the HNA model (a lower prorated figure from Buckinghamshire as a whole was used in its place). It is interesting to note that 17 of these 33 households are in the lowest priority band (Band E), and 9 are in Band D, meaning that only 7 households fall into the highest priority bands (A and B). This supports the HNA conclusion that there is likely to be limited long-term unmet need arising from the parish and its surroundings.
- 4.5.13. The housing register data was also broken down by bedroom eligibility, as referenced in greater detail in the Type and Size chapter of this HNA. In summary, around half of

the need (across all bands) is for studio or 1 bedroom accommodation – a finding that is not uncommon in other housing registers.

- 4.5.14. Buckinghamshire Council also indicated that since October 2022, 7 affordable rented homes became available (either through new delivery or vacancies) within the parish. This equates to roughly 3.5 vacancies per year, which is closely aligned with AECOM's standard assumption that roughly 3% of the stock turns over each year (for Wexham this amounts to 3.2 vacancies per year).

4.6. Affordable Housing policies in Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.6.1. 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

- 4.6.2. Former South Bucks District Council's adopted policy on this subject (CP3) requires 40% of all new housing on sites above 5 dwellings to be affordable. Given that Affordable Housing made up little to none of the new housing built in Wexham over the last decade according to Buckinghamshire Council completions figures, it is understood that this target is not usually met in the NA due to the small site and in-fill nature of development.
- 4.6.3. The overall proportion of housing that must be affordable is not an area of policy that a Neighbourhood Plan can usually influence, but it is worth emphasizing that the HNA finds there to be robust evidence of need for Affordable Housing in the NA, and every effort should be made to maximise delivery where viable. Changing or influencing the overall proportion of housing that must be affordable is uncommon in Neighbourhood Plans and would demand a high standard of evidence to depart from the Local Plan. If this is of interest, it should first be discussed with the LPA to ensure their support and to determine what additional evidence (e.g. about development viability) would be needed.
- 4.6.4. How the Affordable Housing that comes forward through mainstream development sites is broken down into specific tenures – such as the balance between rented tenures and routes to home ownership – is specified in the adopted Local Plan as roughly two-thirds affordable rented tenures and one-third affordable routes to home ownership.

Affordable Housing at Neighbourhood level

- 4.6.5. The HNA can provide more localised evidence, which may be used to support Neighbourhood Plan policies. This section suggests an Affordable Housing tenure mix that might be suitable for Wexham on the basis of identified housing need and a range of other considerations detailed in Appendix D.
- 4.6.6. The key factors here can be summarised as follows:
- AECOM's estimates suggest limited long-term need for affordable rented housing and moderate potential demand (amounting to around 4 units per year)

of affordable home ownership in Wexham. This points toward more need for routes to ownership than affordable renting.

- However, the NA's future supply of Affordable Housing is informed by its low position in the settlement hierarchy, green belt constraints, and lack of a formal target or requirement. This means that the future delivery of Affordable Housing is unlikely to be sufficient to meet identified demand. In this context, it may be prudent to prioritise the more acutely needed forms of Affordable Housing within any supply that does come forward in future – i.e. affordable rented housing. Even though AECOM estimates limited actual need, this is within the margin of error.
- The affordability analysis earlier in this chapter established that affordable rented housing is the only option for most lower earning households. In contrast, affordable home ownership products would meaningfully widen access to home ownership to some local people – but primarily higher than average earners. This suggests both should feature in the tenure mix, with greater emphasis on rented housing, which also appears undersupplied relative to wider averages, while shared ownership already exists at an unusually high share of the stock.
- National requirements currently exist for the delivery of First Homes and affordable home ownership. Given the 40% requirement for Affordable Housing overall in former South Bucks, these requirements imply that at least 25% of Affordable Housing should be for affordable home ownership, and at least 25% should be First Homes (which can fall within (or completely absorb) the portion allotted to affordable home ownership). Former South Bucks currently seeks around 33% affordable home ownership, leaving room for 8% shared ownership and other tenures beyond First Homes.
- However, both of these national requirements are planned to be abandoned in the ongoing 2024 consultation on changes to the NPPF. If this proposal goes forward there will be less prescriptive expectations about the supply of affordable home ownership products, leaving Local Authorities more room to negotiate mixes in line with local evidence. Discussion is provided below about how the proposed tenure mix within Affordable Housing might be adjusted in light of these two scenarios (in which current requirement remain or abandoned).
- The 2024 Wexham household survey indicated demand for affordable homes both for purchase and those reliant on subsidised rented housing, with potentially more emphasis on the former.

4.6.7. On balance, AECOM suggests that there is an opportunity here to secure affordable rented housing to diversify the NA's tenure offering and ensure options remain available for the large segment of the population who cannot afford market housing unless they hold equity in an existing property. There is also an imperative to boost levels of affordable home ownership to meet notable potential demand (identified in the HNA estimate and made clear in household survey responses) in a context

where home ownership through the open market – as well as private renting – is very unaffordable.

- 4.6.8. 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 balanced mix following that outlined in the South Bucks Local Plan remains appropriate. This also complies with current national requirements and favours affordable rented housing to a moderate degree. Table 4-7 sets out this option in more detail, breaking down the headline split between rented and ownership tenures with reference to the affordability analysis earlier in the chapter. This suggested that First Homes at higher discount levels may be beneficial (though primarily to higher earners), Shared Ownership is a potentially more affordable option at lower equity shares, and that rent to buy serves a purpose for those without savings for a deposit.
- 4.6.9. However, the breakdown of tenures within each category is also determined with reference to national minimum requirements that may be abandoned in the near future. If that happens, AECOM would recommend distributing the share allocated to First Homes more evenly to shared ownership and rent to buy (even potentially as 11% each). This reflects the greater apparent affordability of the latter two products. It is also worth remembering that the scale of Affordable Housing delivery in Wexham is likely to be minimal, so small percentage targets (like 3% allocated to rent to buy in the table below) will have little impact in practice. Given this context, it may not be necessary to prescribe specific proportions for sub-tenures. Instead, simply echoing the headline split between renting and ownership may be sufficient. (Note that echoing existing Local Plan policy is generally unnecessary. However, in this case, the merging of South Bucks into Buckinghamshire leaves more uncertainty about the wider policy environment.)
- 4.6.10. Where the Steering Group wish to develop policy that deviates from that outlined in the Local Plan, it is important that they liaise with Buckinghamshire Council to understand if any more detailed viability information is needed, and to ensure that departures from the local policy context have their support.
- 4.6.11. It is also important to recognise that there is little realistic chance of meaningful Affordable Housing delivery in the NA in the near term, since Affordable Housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy, and few suitably sized housing schemes exist in the pipeline. If the community wishes to deliver Affordable Housing to meet the demand indicated here, there are other routes available. For example, using neighbourhood development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

Table 4-7: Indicative tenure split (Affordable Housing)

Tenure	Indicative mix	Considerations and uncertainties
Routes to home ownership, of which	33%	
First Homes	25%	Product untested so uncertainties around viability, developer, lenders and buyer appetite etc.
Shared ownership	5%	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	3%	Emerging product with popularity and effectiveness as yet unknown. Impact of displacement by First Homes unknown.
Affordable Housing for rent, of which	66%	
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

4.7. Conclusions- Affordability and Affordable Housing

Current tenure profile

- 4.7.1. Home ownership is the dominant tenure in Wexham: at 73%, it represents a similar share of the total to the wider county (70%) and national average (61%). Of the remaining non-owning households, more rent from a private landlord (a fast-growing share of 14%) than a social landlord (11%). This pattern is consistent with Buckinghamshire and England.
- 4.7.2. Despite recent growth in private renting and an unusually high proportion of shared ownership, the lack of alternatives to full ownership are likely to present a challenge for those on the lowest incomes seeking to remain in the parish, which may be a factor in the decline of younger families observed in the Type and Size chapter.

Housing costs

- 4.7.3. Home values in the NA have followed a general upward trajectory despite some year-on-year fluctuations. Prices have grown by around 60-70% over the past decade (depending on which average measure is used).
- 4.7.4. The current median house price is £503,000, the current mean is £693,833, and the current lower quartile (the middle value of the cheapest 50% of properties sold) is £412,500. The lower quartile, which is typically taken as a good representation of 'entry-level' housing, is around 82% of the median price, meaning there is limited variety at the lower end of the market and that truly entry-level properties infrequently come up for sale. Average house prices in Wexham are around 30% more expensive than those of Buckinghamshire as a whole.
- 4.7.5. It is apparent that Land Registry data does not include transactions of static and mobile caravans / park homes in the NA. A limited sample of four park homes listed for sale at The Orchards in September 2024 implies a median value of £195,000, within a fairly limited price range of £145,000 to £200,000 (although anecdotal examples of recent sales include values close to £300,000). Though such prices make these properties significantly cheaper than most bricks-and-mortar options, they remain comparable with houses in other parts of the country. It should also be noted that monthly service charges apply for the maintenance of grounds.
- 4.7.6. AECOM has estimated the annual income required to afford various tenures of housing in Wexham – 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 £59,200 in 2020 and the lower quartile household income for Buckinghamshire was £21,216 in 2023.
- 4.7.7. 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 more than twice the current average. Private renting is more affordable, but is generally only accessible to average and dual earning households – and even then, only for dwellings with 2 bedrooms or fewer. A broader challenge in relation to private renting is that, though potentially cheaper, too few properties are regularly available locally to make this a reliable option for lower income households.
- 4.7.8. 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 Wexham there is a relatively large gap between the income needed to afford to rent (£58,000) and to buy (£114,000), meaning that many households could theoretically benefit from these products – even though they would have above-average incomes.
- 4.7.9. The discount on First Homes can be set at 30%, 40% or 50% in Neighbourhood Plans. In Wexham the minimum 30% discount appears insufficiently affordable to average earning households, and would make First Homes exceed the national price cap (at least, when calculated using the benchmark used to estimate their

value here). A higher discount of 50% would expand access to ownership more widely and bring First Homes within reach of average earners.

- 4.7.10. The affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Wexham as the only option for a large segment of those in the most acute need and the large group of potential residents who cannot afford any mainstream options in this high-value housing market.

The need for Affordable Housing

- 4.7.11. AECOM estimates a modest long-term surplus of affordable rented housing in Wexham rather than an unmet need. The reason for this component of need being met over the long-term is the rate of turnover in the existing stock of social housing, which suggests that vacancies will be able to satisfy the projected newly arising need and erode the backlog over time. Yet whilst it may be possible to address localised needs through the existing stock, new affordable rented housing may still need to be provided for households in acute need living elsewhere in the wider area, and to future-proof the Wexham housing stock in case needs change.
- 4.7.12. AECOM estimate potential demand for 3.7 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum in Wexham, equating to a total of 59 over the Neighbourhood Plan period. 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.
- 4.7.13. The NA's future supply of Affordable Housing depends on the delivery of mainstream housing sites larger than the threshold at which Affordable Housing requirements apply (currently 5 dwellings). Given the NA's absence of a housing requirement and the likelihood that future development sites will be smaller than this threshold, the future delivery of Affordable Housing is likely to be extremely limited. This could be addressed through the allocation of mainstream or affordable exception sites should this align with the wishes of the community.

Affordable Housing policy

- 4.7.14. South Bucks's adopted policy on the subject of Affordable Housing requires 40% of all new housing on sites larger than 5 dwellings to be affordable (Policy CP3). This is a policy topic within the remit of the Local Authority, but it is worth considering what the most appropriate mix of Affordable Housing products might be in the NA specifically.
- 4.7.15. AECOM recommends that the tenure mix of Affordable Housing secured in future years gives priority to affordable rented provision (66%) over affordable home ownership options (33%), in line with adopted South Bucks policy – which appears to remain appropriate for Wexham. Some affordable rented housing would help diversify the NA's tenure offering and support lower earning households despite the relatively small scale of need. The delivery of affordable home ownership would help to meet modest potential demand in a context where home ownership through the open market is very unaffordable.

5. Type and Size

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. 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.
- 5.1.2. 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.
- 5.1.3. 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.
- 5.1.4. 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.
- 5.1.5. 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.

5.2. The current housing mix

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

Dwelling type

5.2.2. Table 5-1 below shows that Wexham's housing type mix deviates from the wider comparator areas of Buckinghamshire and England primarily due to its high share of static and mobile caravans / park homes (18% of the total), most of which are located in The Orchards. Otherwise, the parish differs from the wider county mainly in its relative lack of flatted accommodation. This absence of flats (with the exception of a small number of notable schemes) is not an unusual characteristic of rural areas, which tends to limit the availability of lower cost market housing. In Wexham's case, the number of static and mobile homes plays a somewhat similar role to flats in terms of affordability. However, it is understood that most units at The Orchards are restricted to older householders, and thus do not provide affordable options for younger and newly forming households.

Table 5-1: Accommodation type, Wexham and comparator geographies, 2021

Type	Wexham	Buckinghamshire	England
Detached	29.6%	34.3%	22.9%
Semi-detached	29.9%	30.2%	31.5%
Terrace	15.0%	17.8%	23.0%
Flat	8.0%	17.2%	22.2%
Caravan, mobile or temporary structure	17.5%	0.5%	0.4%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

- 5.2.3. The Census divides dwellings into a standard set of categories that does not include bungalows: a detached bungalow will be counted only as a detached house, and so forth. It is therefore useful to refer to Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, which separates bungalows out as a separate category. This data, however, is only available at certain geographical scales and in this case relates to an area slightly wider than the NA (see Appendix A for details). VOA data suggests that 9.1% of homes were bungalows in this area in 2023. This exactly matches the national average and is slightly above the county rate of 8.7%. Bungalows tend to appeal to older households and those with mobility limitations, so this element of the housing stock (in addition to that of age-restricted park homes, mobile homes and caravans) may be linked to the age profile of the population, considered later in this chapter.
- 5.2.4. Unfortunately, a discrepancy in how Census data is recorded for this metric means that it is not possible to meaningfully compare the 2021 and 2011 type mix at this scale. Table 5-2 below indicates that there has been particular growth in the number of semi-detached homes over the past decade. However, the losses in some other categories are more likely to reflect the data discrepancy than actual demolitions.
- 5.2.5. Completions data provided by Buckinghamshire Council indicates a gross increase of 16 new homes in Wexham since 2021, only 6 of which are likely to have been built and occupied by the time of the 2021 Census. However, 11 demolitions mean the net additional total is just 5 dwellings. Of the 7 new homes built in 2022/23 (the only year for which a type breakdown was available), 5 were houses and 3 were flats. Given this finding, and the discrepancy in the Census data noted above, the below figures relating to changes over the past decade should be viewed with caution.

Table 5-2: Accommodation type, Wexham, 2011-2021

Type	2011	%	2021	%
Detached	297	29.1%	294	29.6%
Semi-detached	260	25.5%	297	29.9%
Terrace	169	16.6%	149	15.0%
Flat	108	10.6%	79	8.0%
Caravan, mobile or temporary structure	174	17.5%	186	18.3%

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

Dwelling size

- 5.2.6. Table 5-3 below presents the current housing mix in terms of size compared to the wider county and country. It shows that the NA has a generally similar size mix to the England average, but one that skews significantly smaller than Buckinghamshire – with more 1-2 bedroom homes (40% in total for the NA compared to 33% across Buckinghamshire) and far fewer 4+ bedroom properties (23% compared to 32%). This is likely to reflect the presence of a large number of park homes, mobile homes and caravans, which tend to have 2 (and less frequently 3) bedrooms. It may be that, if considered on its own, the bricks and mortar housing stock of Wexham is closer to

the pattern seen across wider Buckinghamshire. (The function to cross-reference dwelling type and size categories is unfortunately not available for the 2021 Census).

Table 5-3: Dwelling size (bedrooms), Wexham and comparator geographies, 2021

Number of bedrooms	Wexham	Buckinghamshire	England
1	13.1%	9.5%	11.6%
2	27.0%	22.3%	27.3%
3	37.3%	36.1%	40.0%
4+	22.5%	32.0%	21.1%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.2.7. Table 5-4 shows changes in the size mix in Wexham over the past decade. The data indicates an uptick in the number of 1, 3 and 4+ bedroom homes and a loss in the 2 bedroom category. The latter finding may be in part due to the loss of 11 homes in 2014-15 indicated in Buckinghamshire Council completions figures, combined with the impact of some extensions and other changes to existing homes. However, as noted above, these Census figures should be viewed with caution. Treating the data as such, new development broadly seems to have followed the size distribution of the existing stock, meaning that few significant proportional changes are evident. According to Buckinghamshire Council figures, of the 7 new units built in 2022/23 (the only year for which a size breakdown is available) 5 had 1 bedroom, 2 had 3 bedrooms and 1 had 4 bedrooms.

Table 5-4: Dwelling size (bedrooms), Wexham, 2011-2021

Number of bedrooms	2011	%	2021	%
1	104	10.7%	131	13.1%
2	313	32.1%	270	27.0%
3	351	36.0%	373	37.3%
4+	208	21.3%	225	22.5%

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.3. Population characteristics

5.3.1. 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 it is necessary to fall back on the 2011 Census.

Age

5.3.2. Table 5-5 shows the most recent age structure of the NA population, alongside 2011 Census figures. This reveals the clear trend toward ageing in Wexham, with the oldest two age groups being the only cohorts to expand (and at significant rates of 30% and 13% respectively) while all other age groups contract or remain stable. Despite a slight uptick in the number of young children, this data suggests that Wexham is struggling to retain or attract younger family households. Reversing this trend, if an objective shared by the community, could inform planning policies to promote development aimed at that demographic, or at allowing older households to downsize if they wish.

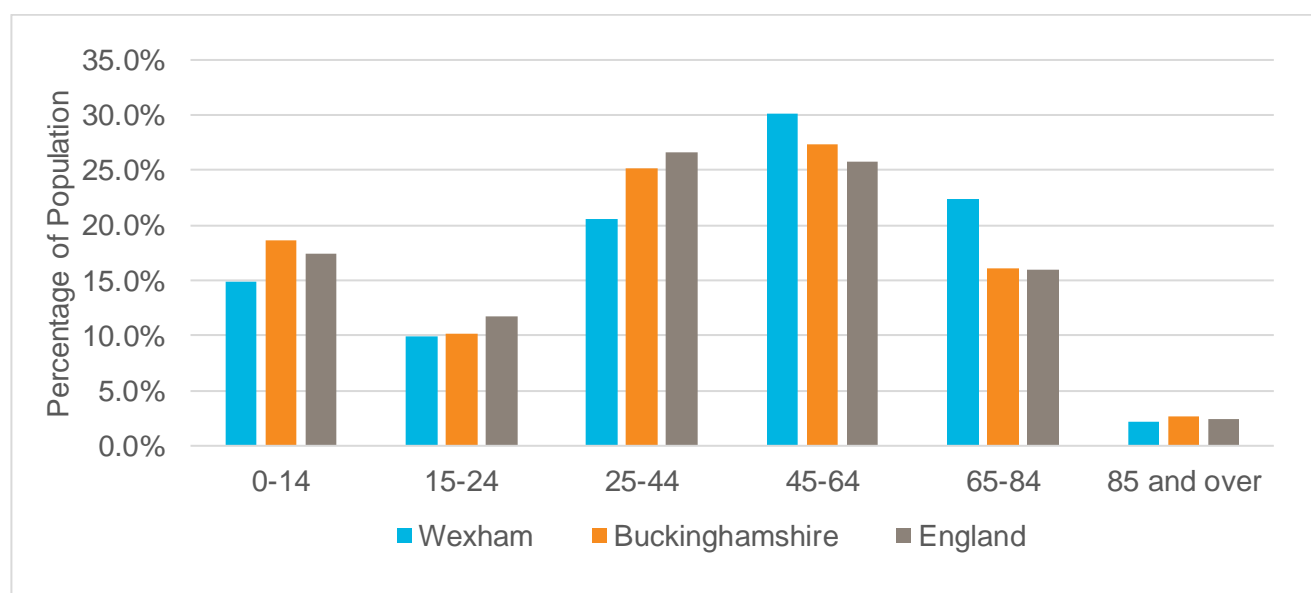
Table 5-5: Age structure of Wexham, 2011 and 2021

Age group	2011 (Census)		2021 (Census)		Change
0-14	355	14.9%	368	14.9%	3.7%
15-24	289	12.2%	243	9.9%	-15.9%
25-44	510	21.4%	508	20.6%	-0.4%
45-64	754	31.7%	741	30.1%	-1.7%
65-84	423	17.8%	550	22.3%	30.0%
85 and over	47	2.0%	53	2.2%	12.8%
Total	2,378	100.0%	2,463	100.0%	3.6%

Source: ONS 2011, ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.3.3. For context, it is useful to look at the NA population structure alongside that of the wider county and country. Figure 5-1 (using 2021 Census data) shows that Wexham's population is markedly older than either Buckinghamshire or England, though primarily in the 45-64 and 65-84 age cohorts, rather than the 85+ group. As the population continues to evolve to 2040 it is likely that the large 65-84 group in particular will enter the 85+ cohort, at which point people's housing needs tend to change – for example, requiring accessibility adaptations or additional support.

Figure 5-6: Age structure in Wexham, 2021



Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

Household composition and occupancy

5.3.4. 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 5-6 shows that Wexham has a notably higher proportion of single-person households (33%) than the comparator areas, primarily driven by large numbers of older single people. This may be a function of the NA's greater availability of smaller age-restricted properties at The Orchards. Within Wexham's family households, older couples are again overrepresented – likely for a similar reason. Of the NA's other family households, more have dependent children

(20%) than do not (15%), but the proportion of households with younger children remains significantly below the Buckinghamshire average (29%).

- 5.3.5. 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. While the proportion of households of this type in Wexham is similar to wider averages, 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 17% between 2011 and 2021 in the NA – in line with the national average.

Table 5-6: Household composition, Wexham, 2021

Household composition		Wexham	Buckinghamshire	England
One person household	Total	33.1%	26.3%	30.1%
	Aged 66 and over	16.6%	12.3%	12.8%
	Other	16.6%	14.0%	17.3%
One family only	Total	59.2%	67.8%	63.1%
	All aged 66 and over	16.6%	10.4%	9.2%
	With no children	15.9%	17.1%	16.8%
	With dependent children	19.9%	29.1%	25.8%
	With non-dependent children ¹⁰	11.1%	10.6%	10.5%
Other household types	Total	7.7%	5.9%	6.9%

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

- 5.3.6. 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.
- 5.3.7. The 2021 Census data presented in Table 5-7 shows that around 72% of households have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need based on their household size and composition (according to the thresholds set by ONS), and 37% have two more. This is particularly the case for couples aged over 66 and families without children. While not uncommon or inherently problematic, this might suggest that the larger housing is not necessarily being occupied mainly by households with the most family members, but also by people able to afford larger homes or who have not been able to move to smaller properties as their needs change due to limitations in the housing stock.

¹⁰ Refers to households containing children who are older than 18 e.g students or young working people living at home.

Table 5-7: Occupancy rating by age in Wexham, 2021

Household type	+2 rating	+1 rating	0 rating	-1 rating
Family 66+	60.3%	33.1%	6.6%	0.0%
Single person 66+	33.7%	49.4%	16.9%	0.0%
Family under 66 - no children	61.1%	22.2%	16.7%	0.0%
Family under 66 - dependent children	19.5%	39.5%	32.3%	8.7%
Family under 66 - adult children	25.7%	38.1%	30.1%	6.2%
Single person under 66	31.7%	31.7%	36.6%	0.0%
All households	36.5%	35.9%	24.1%	3.5%

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.3.8. 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 5-2 sets out this relationship for South Bucks in 2011 (because this data is not available at smaller scales and has not yet been released for the 2021 Census). 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 5-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size in South Bucks, 2011

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.4. Future population and size needs

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

Age

- 5.4.2. The result of applying Local Authority level household projections (using those for former South Bucks to align with the relevant Census data) to the age profile of Wexham households in 2011 is shown in Table 5-8. This makes clear that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with the 65+ age group expected to increase by 51% to become over 40% of the total and by far the largest cohort. Growth in younger age groups is projected to be much more limited or even negative. This is a simplistic projection based on trends at a wider scale. In practice the rate of ageing may be sharper than indicated here, although successful efforts to attract and retain younger households could significantly disrupt the natural pattern of ageing.

Table 5-8: Projected age of households, Wexham, 2011 - 2040

Year	24 and under	25 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 64	65 and over
2011	6	73	380	220	297
2040	6	65	324	254	450
% change 2011-2040	-8%	-11%	-15%	15%	51%

Source: AECOM Calculations

- 5.4.3. The demographic change discussed above can be translated into an ideal mix of dwelling sizes. This is achieved through a model that would normally map the dwelling size preferences by life stage shown earlier (in Figure 5-2) onto the projected age profile for the NA in Table 5-8 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.
- 5.4.4. However, in this case, Wexham's current mix of dwelling sizes diverges so strongly from Buckinghamshire / South Bucks – as displayed in Table 5-3 – that the model becomes overly influenced by this difference and consequently recommends a significant skew toward larger homes in the future mix to correct for the imbalance between the two areas. To resolve this clearly inappropriate outcome, the dwelling size preferences of England and Wales are used in place of South Bucks. This achieves an outcome that more purely reflects the dwelling size preferences of different age groups, rather than differences in the existing size mix of homes at the two scales.
- 5.4.5. This approach has further 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. Layering these factors on top of the indicative picture provided by this model is appropriate for the purpose of drafting neighbourhood plan policies.

The result of this exercise is presented in Table 5-9. The model recommends that future

housing delivery focus predominantly on 3 bedroom homes, with some 2 bedroom properties alongside. These size categories tend variously to appeal to young people, starter families and some downsizing older households, and offer greater affordability than larger homes. However, the absence of 1 and 4+ bedroom homes in the model results means that this recommendation is fairly restrictive and imbalanced. This implications of and alternatives to this are discussed below the table.

Table 5-9: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2040, Wexham

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2011)	Suggested mix (2040)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix
1	13.4%	11.3%	0.0%
2	27.7%	26.7%	18.8%
3	38.2%	43.0%	81.2%
4+	23.1%	19.1%	0.0%

Source: AECOM Calculations

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

- As noted above, the geography that is used to capture the dwelling size preferences of households at different stages of life can skew the result of models like this where there are significant differences between the housing mix of the geography in question and that of the NA. Because Wexham has a fairly unusual size mix, particularly compared to South Bucks but also to England and Wales, there is scope to adjust the model results to arrive at a more rational final recommendation.
- Chiefly, this might involve seeking a more balanced size mix that allows for some delivery of the smallest and largest homes in order to provide choice and variety in the market. Other reasons supporting the continued provision of 1 bedroom properties include the fact that many of the existing 1 bedroom properties are age-restricted park homes, mobile homes and caravans, and the rising affordability pressures established in the previous chapter. For 4+ bedroom properties, the justification to increase their share in the mix is weaker, but would include the fact that Wexham has a smaller proportion of this size category than Buckinghamshire, and the potential community objective to attract families with children.
- These reasons aside, the key recommendation here is that smaller and mid-sized properties should be the focus for future development. Within the 2-3 bedroom category, variety should be sought 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 they existing stock of larger homes is sufficiently affordable.

5.4.7. Taking these various points into account, a potential adjusted size mix for Wexham is proposed below:

- 30% 1-2 bedroom;
- 50% 3 bedroom; and
- 20% 4+ bedroom.

Tenure

5.4.8. The recommendation discussed immediately above applies to all housing in the NA over the Neighbourhood 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.

5.4.9. Generally speaking, the size mix needed within affordable tenures, particularly affordable and social rent, is smaller than the size mix of market housing. This is because there tend to be higher proportions of 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.

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

- The relevant SHMA for the Local Authority, which will usually set out the projected need by size within each tenure over the long-term. In this case, the 2016 SHMA (which is now considered fairly dated) indicates that 1-2 bedroom homes might make up 35% of market housing but 76% of Affordable Housing (the geographies for these two findings differ slightly).
- The waiting list for affordable rented housing, kept by the Local Authority. This provides a more current snapshot of the size needs of applicant households. As this changes over time, individual planning applications can be decided in ways that meet evolving needs. In this case, Buckinghamshire Council data for applicant households living in the SL3 postcode area in August 2024 indicates that 48% of need is for studio or 1 bedroom properties, 24% of need is for 2 bedroom properties and 27% of need is for 3 bedroom properties.
- 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. The qualitative responses to the 2024 household survey indicate demand for a range of home sizes with an emphasis on family and starter homes enabling younger people to access the property ladder.

5.4.11. 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

- 5.4.12. 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.
- 5.4.13. 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.
- 5.4.14. The benefits of delivering a certain blend of dwelling types are more closely related to affordability, which is clearly established as an issue in Wexham, 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 rural 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 the NA (a point also highlighted in a number of household survey responses). 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.
- 5.4.15. 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 NA today. How far the Neighbourhood Plan should guide on this issue, and in what direction, is a policy decision for the Steering Group and community to consider.

5.5. Conclusions- Type and Size

The current housing mix

- 5.5.1. The current dwelling mix in Wexham is not dominated by any single dwelling type, although detached and semi-detached housing makes up a combined 60% of the total. Bungalows exist at similar proportions to wider averages (9% of homes). A defining feature of the NA's stock is the presence of many static and mobile caravans

/ park homes, which represent around 18% of the total. The relative absence of flats is not an unusual characteristic of rural areas. Although the park homes, mobile homes and caravans at The Orchards offer smaller and generally more affordable accommodation (similar to the role generally played by flats), they are understood to be age restricted (to those aged 55+), meaning there remain few affordable options for younger and newly forming households in Wexham.

- 5.5.2. In terms of size, Wexham has a similar housing stock to the national average. However, it skews significantly smaller than Buckinghamshire, where there are proportionally fewer 1-2 bedroom homes and more 4+ bedroom homes. Again, this distinction is partly due to the presence of park homes, mobile homes and caravans, which tend to have fewer bedrooms – although park homes can have upwards of 5 bedrooms.
- 5.5.3. Census data is fairly unreliable when it comes to revealing changes to the Wexham housing mix over the past decade due to changes in how the relevant datasets are recorded. Combining it with Buckinghamshire Council data (which is also incomplete due to the merger of the former authorities), however, indicates that the most recently built homes have included 3 bedroom semi-detached properties and some smaller homes, most likely including some additional static or mobile caravans / park homes.

Population characteristics

- 5.5.4. The Wexham population, which is markedly older than that of the county and England, has experienced fairly significant ageing in the decade since 2011. The 65-84 and 85+ age groups are the only cohorts to have meaningfully expanded while almost all other age groups have contracted.
- 5.5.5. This data suggests that the NA is struggling to retain younger family households. This evidence would appear to support the potential for any future development to specifically attract and retain these groups if that is the community's wish, alongside an imperative to accommodate the growing population of older people – who may be seeking to downsize or experiencing changing mobility and support needs.
- 5.5.6. Applying ONS household projections for Buckinghamshire to the Wexham 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 51% to become by far the largest cohort at 40% of all residents. Growth in younger age groups is expected to be much more modest or negative.
- 5.5.7. The composition of Wexham's households (in terms of the number of people, their age, and their relationships to one another) differs from Buckinghamshire as a whole in the NA's higher share of single-person households, many of whom are older (and thus likely to be residents of The Orchards). Of the NA's family households, a relatively high share is composed of older couples. However, more of the families aged under 65 have children than do not. There are relatively few households with older children living at home, although this has risen over the past decade – possibly due to affordability challenges as well as the timing of the Census during a national lockdown when many students returned home from university.

5.5.8. As of the 2021 Census, around 72% of households have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need based on their household size and composition (according to the thresholds set by ONS), and 37% have two more. This is particularly the case for couples aged over 66 and families without children. While not uncommon or inherently problematic, this might suggest that the larger housing is not necessarily being occupied mainly by households with the most family members, but also by people able to afford larger homes or who have not been able to move to smaller properties as their needs change due to limitations in the housing stock.

Future population and size needs

5.5.9. 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 future housing delivery focuses particularly on 2-3 bedroom homes. This could help to achieve two key outcomes: improving affordability, and meeting the needs suggested by demographic trends (notably ageing and counteracting the decline in younger families).

5.5.10. However, the absence of 1 and 4+ bedroom homes in the model results means that this recommendation is fairly restrictive and imbalanced. This is partly due to differences in the starting mix of the geographies used for the its key data inputs. As such, there is scope to adjust the model results to arrive at a more rational final recommendation that offers wider choice in the market and reflects affordability and other secondary evidence. One potential option, based on AECOM's professional judgement of the model results alongside such additional evidence, would be the following mix:

- 30% 1-2 bedroom homes;
- 50% 3 bedroom homes; and
- 20% 4+ bedroom homes.

5.5.11. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable 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.

6. Next Steps

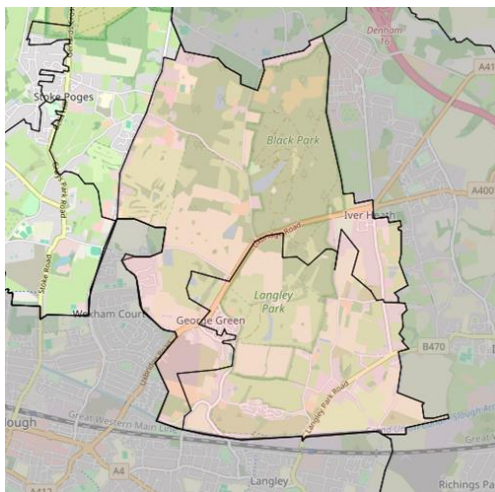
6.1. Recommendations for next steps

- 6.1.1. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide Steering Group with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the Steering Group 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.
- 6.1.2. 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.
- 6.1.3. Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that the Steering 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.
- 6.1.4. 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

- A.1 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 (and parish) equates to the following combination of OAs:
- OA E00089987;
 - OA E00089988;
 - OA E00089989;
 - OA E00089990;
 - OA E00089991;
 - OA E00089992;
 - OA E00089993; and
 - OA E00089994.
- A.2 Many other datasets besides the Census itself make use of OAs, but not necessarily down to the same level of detail. For example, Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, which can be used to understand the type and size mix of housing, is only available down to the scale of LSOAs. The most relevant combination of LSOAs in this case, which will need to be used as a proxy for the NA, is listed below. This area is a fairly accurate proxy for the NA. It is only slightly larger than the parish, with the west side of Iwer Heath being the only notable settlement included within its boundary. This is shown in Figure A-1 below.
- A.3 LSOA E01017834; and
- A.4 LSOA E01017835.

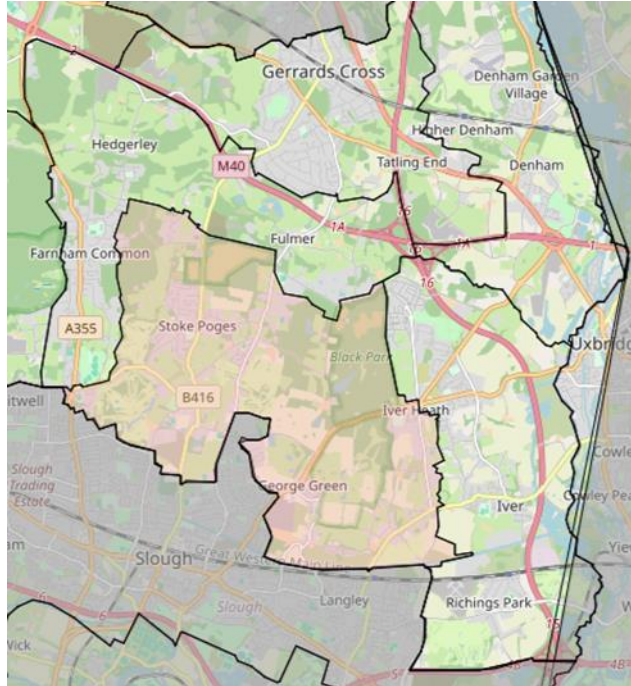
Figure A-1: Map of LSOAs for VOA Data



Source: NOMIS

- A.5 Finally, as noted in the analysis of affordability in the main body of the report, household income data for small areas is only provided down to the scale of MSOAs. The relevant MSA, in which the NA is located and which will need to serve as a proxy for it, is MSA E02003692. This includes the same parts of Iver Heath as the proxy area described above, as well as a larger area to the west of the parish dominated by the settlement of Stoke Poges. This is shown in Figure A-2 below.

Figure A-2: Map of MSA for Income Data



Source: NOMIS

Appendix B : Local Plan context

Policies in the adopted local plan

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

Table B-1: Summary of relevant adopted policies in the South Bucks Core Strategy (2011) and saved policies from the South Bucks District Council Local Plan (1999)

Policy	Provisions
	South Bucks Core Strategy (2011)
CP1 – Housing Provision and Delivery	<p>Provision will be made for a net increase of 2,200-2,800 dwellings in the period 2006 to 2026, broadly in accordance with the Spatial Strategy. At least 80% of this development will be accommodated on Previously Developed Land.</p> <p>The focus for new residential development will be Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and, to a lesser extent, Burnham. Future development within the District's Secondary settlements will be more limited, and there will be very little new development in the Tertiary and Rural settlements in South Bucks. Further development at Farnham Common will be managed, to avoid a cumulative adverse impact on Burnham Beeches.</p> <p>Wexham (Church Lane / Wexham Park) and Wesham Street are defined as two of 13 Rural Settlements in the settlement hierarchy. These settlements contain a very limited range of shops and community facilities and generally have poor access to public transport. Wexham and Wexham Street are among those where limited infill development may be acceptable.</p> <p>The Rural Settlements Together are given an indicative scale of housing development over the period 2006-26 of 46 new homes (composed of 10 completions, 3 commitments and 33 homes on sites identified as having potential in the SHLAA). The parish has not been assigned a definitive housing delivery target.</p>
CP2 – Housing Type and Size	<p>To deliver mixed and sustainable communities, the Council will encourage a range of housing types and sizes.</p> <p>On sites of 5 units or more, provision should be made for a suitable mix of dwelling types and sizes. The mix of housing provided will vary from site to site, but the aim should be to provide a range of types and sizes that take account of the existing housing mix in the area.</p> <p>To ensure that new accommodation is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of all sections of the community, a proportion of the new dwellings on sites of 5 units or more must be to the full Lifetime Homes standard.</p> <p>The Council will also support and encourage the provision of sufficient new accommodation for older people, including nursing accommodation and extra</p>

Policy

Provisions

care units. Favourable consideration will be given to planning applications for specialist accommodation for the elderly on sites currently (or most recently) used for community infrastructure or employment. Such accommodation should be provided in sustainable locations within settlements (normally in the Principal or Secondary settlements) where there is good access to services and facilities.

With regard to affordable housing, the SHMA (2008) suggests that the need in South Bucks is:

- One bedroom – 38%
- Two bedrooms – 25%
- Three bedrooms – 34%
- Four or more bedrooms – 3%

The most recent SHMA, published in 2016, recommends the following size mix for new developments in Eastern Berks and South Bucks:

- One bedroom: 35-40%
- Two bedroom: 25-30%
- Three bedroom: 25-30%
- Four or more bedrooms: 5-10%

CP3 – Affordable Housing 350-500 affordable dwellings will be provided in South Bucks District between 2006 and 2026.

At least 40% of all dwellings in schemes of 5 units and above (gross), or on sites of 0.16 hectares and above (where there is a net gain in the number of dwellings) should be affordable, unless it is clearly demonstrated that this is not economically viable. The Council will seek affordable housing on smaller sites where these could reasonably form part of a larger developable area.

On qualifying sites, about two thirds of the affordable units provided should be social rented, with the remainder as intermediate affordable dwellings. The precise tenure split will vary from place to place and should reflect the evidence in the latest SHMA.

Affordable housing should normally be provided on-site. However, where there are sound planning or other reasons, and the developer and Council agree, a financial contribution (or off-site provision) in lieu of on-site provision, may be acceptable. In addition, a partial commuted payment will be sought on sites where, by virtue of the number of dwellings proposed, it would not be possible to deliver 40% affordable housing on-site.

The development of small-scale sites for 100% affordable housing within or adjacent to villages within designated parishes ('Rural Exception sites') will be supported in principle, where there is a demonstrable local need for such dwellings, and local community support.

The most recent SHMA, published in 2016, recommends the following tenure mix for new developments in South Bucks:

- 78% affordable rent
- 22% affordable home ownership

Policy

Provisions

South Bucks District Council Local Plan (1999)	
GB1 – Green Belt Boundaries and the Control over Development in the Green Belt	<p>In relation to housing, planning permission will only be granted in Green Belt Land for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings... • limited infilling in existing villages... • 'the re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction...' <p>This policy also requires that the developments do not adversely affect the character of the Green Belt or nearby properties and complies with other saved policies in the Local Plan.</p>
H6 – Specialist Residential Accommodation	<p>Proposals to provide new accommodation or extend existing accommodation specifically for people with limited mobility or for people in need of care, including nursing homes, residential care homes and sheltered housing schemes, will only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) the proposal would not adversely affect the character or amenities of nearby properties or the locality in general and would be in accordance with policy EP3 (Use, Design and Layout of Development); and • (b) proposals for extensions would harmonise with the scale, height, form, and design of the original building; and • (c) in the case of a site which is not currently used for such purposes, the site is conveniently located for shops, services and public transport; and • (d) suitable provision would be made for access for the disabled or people with mobility problems; and • (e) adequate garden space is provided or retained to meet the needs of residents; and • (f) the proposal would comply with all the other policies in the Plan.

Source: South Bucks Core Strategy (2011) and South Bucks District Council Local Plan (1999)

Appendix C : Affordability calculations

- C.1 This section outlines how the affordability thresholds discussed in the Affordability and Affordable Housing have been calculated.

Market housing

- C.2 Market housing is not subsidised and tends to be primarily accessible to people on higher incomes.

Market sales

- C.3 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.
- C.4 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 Wexham, 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.
- C.5 The calculation for the purchase threshold for market housing is as follows:
- Value of a median NA house price (2023) = £503,000;
 - Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £50,300;
 - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £452,700;
 - Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £129,343.
- C.6 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 2023 was £412,500, and the purchase threshold is therefore £106,071.
- C.7 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 only a single sale of a new build properties in the NA since 2014. There were, therefore, too few recent sales in the NA to determine an accurate

average for the cost of new build housing in Wexham. It is, however, important to understand the likely cost of new housing because new housing is where the Neighbourhood Plan has most influence and is the appropriate benchmark for understanding the costs of affordable home ownership tenures (considered below).

- C.8 Therefore, an estimate has been calculated by determining the uplift between all house prices in 2023 across Buckinghamshire and new build house prices in 2023 in the same area. This percentage uplift (or 'new build premium' – of 6.5%) is then applied to the 2023 lower quartile house price in the NA to give an estimated NA new build entry-level house price of £439,145 and purchase threshold of £112,923.
- C.9 In order to provide a comparison with the wider local authority area, it is helpful to also look at the cost of new build housing across Buckinghamshire in 2023. The median cost of new build dwellings in Buckinghamshire was £445,000, with a purchase threshold of £114,429.
- C.10 Since static and mobile caravans / park homes appear not to be captured in Land Registry pricing data, a sample of listed properties in September 2024 is taken to produce a median value of £195,000

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

- C.11 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.
- C.12 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.
- C.13 The property website Rightmove.co.uk shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Area. However, only two homes were listed for rent in the parish itself (and both were high value 5+ bedroom homes). A wider area of search covering neighbouring rural parishes (Stoke Poges, Iver, Iver Heath) but excluding the suburbs of Slough, was selected to generate a more robust sample size of 13 rental listings, as of August 2024. These listings range from £1,250 per month for a studio / 1 bedroom property to £15,000 for a 6 bedroom property.

- C.14 The relevant benchmarks extracted from this data are the median rent for 1-2 bedroom (entry-level homes), which is £1,448 per month, and the median rent for 3-4 bedroom homes, which is £2,025 per month. There were also a number of listings for 5 and 6 bedroom homes, with a median monthly price of £6,500.
- C.15 The calculation for the private rent income threshold for entry-level (1-2 bedroom) dwellings is as follows:
- Annual rent = £1,448 x 12 = £17,376;
 - Multiplied by 3.33 (so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent) = income threshold of £57,920.
- C.16 The calculation is repeated for the 3-4 bedroom average to give an income threshold of £81,000.

Affordable Housing

- C.17 There are a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the NPPF 2023: social rent and affordable rent, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. The new First Homes was introduced in 2021 but is not yet included in the NPPF. Each of the affordable housing tenures are considered below.

Social rent

- C.18 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.
- C.19 To determine social rent levels, 2021 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 Wexham. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and local authorities and is presented for Buckinghamshire in Table C-1.
- C.20 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	£76.92	£95.85	£109.41	£123.42	£111.74
Annual average	£4,000	£4,984	£5,689	£6,418	£5,810
Income needed	£13,333	£16,614	£18,964	£21,393	£19,368

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

Affordable rent

- C.21 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).
- C.22 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%.
- C.23 Data on the most realistic local affordable rent costs is obtained from the same source as social rent levels for Buckinghamshire. Again, it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent, and the overall average is taken forward.
- C.24 Comparing this result with the average 2 bedroom annual private rent above indicates that affordable rents in the NA are actually closer to 40% 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	£120.71	£133.96	£163.74	£190.55	£165.94
Annual average	£6,277	£6,966	£8,514	£9,909	£8,629
Income needed	£20,923	£23,220	£28,382	£33,029	£28,763

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

Affordable home ownership

- C.25 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.
- C.26 In paragraph 66 of the NPPF 2023, 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.” There are exemptions to this requirement, including where:
- The provision would exceed the level of affordable housing required in an area;
 - The provision would significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups;
 - A proposed development provides solely Build to Rent homes;

- A proposed development provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for students or the elderly);
- The development is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or
- The proposed development is exclusively for affordable housing, a community-led development exception site, or a rural exception site.

C.27 Note that the ongoing 2024 consultation on changes to the NPPF and wider planning system proposes dropping this minimum 10% requirement.

First Homes

C.28 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.
- Currently, 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. However, the ongoing 2024 consultation on changes to the planning system proposes abandoning this minimum requirement.

C.29 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 £439,145.

- C.30 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) = £439,145;
 - Discounted by 30% = £307,401;
 - Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £30,740;
 - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £276,661;
 - Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £79,046.
- C.31 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 £67,754 and £56,461 respectively.
- C.32 All of the income thresholds calculated here for First Homes are below the cap of £80,000 above which households are not eligible. However, in both the 30% and 40% discount scenarios, the discounted prices are above £250,000 and would therefore also fail to meet the criteria listed above. In this circumstance, either a greater discount (i.e. 50%) is justified, developers would need to bring the equivalent market value down at lower discounts, or smaller or lower value properties would need to be delivered than our assumed benchmark.
- C.33 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 square metre¹¹) would be around £122,500. This cost excludes any land value or developer profit. This would not appear to be an issue in Wexham.
- C.34 Table C-3 shows the discount required for First Homes to be affordable to the three income groups. 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	54%	84%	67%
NA estimated new build entry-level house price	48%	81%	62%
NA entry-level house price	44%	80%	60%
LA median new build house price	48%	81%	63%

Source: Land Registry PPD; ONS MSOA total household income

¹¹ 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/>

Shared ownership

- C.35 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'.
- C.36 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.
- C.37 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 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).
- C.38 The affordability threshold for a 25% equity share is calculated as follows:
- A 25% equity share of £439,145 is £109,786;
 - A 10% deposit of £10,979 is deducted, leaving a mortgage value of £98,808;
 - This is divided by the loan to value ratio of 3.5 to give a purchase threshold of £28,231;
 - Rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £329,359;
 - The estimated annual rent at 2.5% of the unsold value is £8,234;
 - This requires an income of £27,447 (annual rent multiplied by 3.33 so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent).
 - The total income required is £55,677 (£28,231 plus £27,447).
- C.39 The same calculation is repeated for equity shares of 10% and 50% producing affordability thresholds of £44,228 and £74,759 respectively. These are again below the £80,000 eligibility cap.

Rent to Buy

- C.40 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.

Appendix D : Affordable Housing need and policy

Affordable Housing estimates

- D.1 In Table D-1 AECOM has calculated, using PPG as a starting point,¹² an estimate of the total need for affordable rented housing in Wexham over the Neighbourhood Plan period. It should, however, be noted that the accuracy of the findings generated by the model is only as strong as the evidence available. 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.

¹² Paragraphs 024-026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20140306, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

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

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current households in need	26.6	Latest waiting list data available from MHCLG Local authority housing statistics data return (households in priority need). Pro rata for the NA. (Note that Buckinghamshire Council data was only available for the wider SL3 postcode area, which extends beyond the parish into Slough. This totalled 33 households in need, so the pro rata estimate used here is broadly in line with the scale of that figure.
1.2 Per annum	1.7	Step 1.1 divided by the plan period to produce an annualised figure.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	71.9	MHCLG 2018-based household projections for the LA between start and end of plan period. % increase applied to NA.
2.2 Proportion of new households unable to rent in the market	19.0%	(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	106.0	2021 Census social rented occupancy
2.2.2 Number of private renters on housing benefits	36.3	Housing benefit caseload May 2018. Pro rata for NA.
2.3 New households unable to rent	13.6	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.
2.4 Per annum	0.9	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.
3.2 Supply of social/affordable re-lets (including transfers)	3.2	Step 3.1 x NA social rented stock (2.2.1). Note that Buckinghamshire Council data indicates 7 lettings between October 2022 and September 2024 in Wexham, which equates to roughly 3.5 per year – which validates the estimate used here.
NET SURPLUS OF RENTED UNITS PER ANNUM		
Overall surplus per annum	0.7	Step 1.2 + Step 2.4 - Step 3.2

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, MHCLG 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 due to rounding.

- D.2 Turning to Affordable Housing providing a route to home ownership, Table D-2 estimates the potential demand in Wexham. 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.
- D.3 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.¹³ No robust indicator exists for this area or a wider scale to suggest aspirations may be higher or lower in the NA.

¹³ <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/housing.html>

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

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current number of renters in NA	135.0	Census 2021 private rented occupancy.
1.2 Percentage renters on housing benefit in LA	26.9 %	% of renters in 2021 on Housing Benefit / Universal Credit with housing entitlement
1.3 Number of renters on housing benefits in the NA	36.3	Step 1.1 x Step 1.2.
1.4 Current need (households)	74.0	Current renters minus those on housing benefit and minus 25% assumed to rent by choice. ¹⁴
1.5 Per annum	4.6	Step 1.4 divided by plan period.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	71.9	LA household projections for plan period (2018 based) pro rated to NA.
2.2 % of households unable to buy but able to rent	11.9%	(Step 1.4 + Step 3.1) divided by number of households in NA.
2.3 Total newly arising need	8.6	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.
2.4 Total newly arising need per annum	0.7	Step 2.3 divided by plan period.
STAGE 3: SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
3.1 Supply of affordable housing	32.0	Number of shared ownership homes in the NA (Census 2021).
3.2 Supply - intermediate resales	1.6	Step 3.1 x 5% (assumed rate of re-sale).
NET SHORTFALL PER ANNUM		
Overall shortfall per annum	3.7	(Step 1.5 + Step 2.4) - Step 3.2.

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, MHCLG 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.

- D.4 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 Steering 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).
- D.5 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

¹⁴ 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.

housing to those in need, and the management of the housing waiting list all remain the responsibility of the Local Authority rather than the Steering Group.

Affordable housing policy

- D.6 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 the NA may experience a long-term equilibrium (or slight surplus) when it comes to the need for affordable rented housing. For affordable home ownership, potential demand is estimated that to be in the region of 4 units per annum over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Both forms of Affordable Housing appear to be valuable in meeting the needs of people on various incomes – with a particularly important role for affordable rented housing given the high costs of market housing and affordable home ownership.</p> <p>The relationship between these figures suggests that most new Affordable Housing should provide a route to ownership. However, the lack of need for affordable rented housing is within the margin of error and may be advantageous to provide to future-proof the stock for local people and/or meet a share of the wider area's needs.</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>It is unlikely than any much (if any) Affordable Housing will be built during the Neighborhood Plan period given the absence of a positive housing target, and given the fact that most recent development has taken the form of infill development on sites that do not exceed the size threshold at which Affordable Housing requirements apply.</p> <p>If a housing requirement or allocation for 5 or more dwellings is made in the future, the Local Plan target of 40% Affordable Housing</p>

	<p>can be applied to understand the expected scale of delivery.</p> <p>This is currently not possible. In this context of very limited future supply, it may be prudent to prioritise the most acute and urgent need for affordable rented housing (even though this may be small in scale), while allowing for some provision of affordable home ownership (for which needs are greater but less acute).</p>
<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>The ongoing 2024 consultation on changes to the NPPF and wider planning system proposes abandoning this target. This may impact on the Local Authority's approach to the affordable housing tenure mix.</p>	<p>For 10% of all housing to be affordable ownership in Wexham, where 40% of all housing should be affordable, 25% of Affordable Housing should be for affordable ownership. This complies with the guideline tenure split sought in the Local Plan.</p> <p>There is uncertainty about whether this requirement will remain in force, but given Buckinghamshire's 40% overall target, seeking for 25% of Affordable Housing to be delivered as routes to ownership may remain a reasonable and proportionate approach – at least in Wexham's specific context.</p>
<p>D. Local Plan policy:</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plan seeks a tenure split of roughly two-thirds affordable rent and one-third affordable home ownership.</p>
<p>E. First Homes policy:</p> <p>The Government introduced the First Homes product (to provide at least 30% discount on new build home prices) in 2021, and subsequently enacted the relevant proposals in a ministerial statement. This states that a minimum of 25% of all Affordable Housing secured through developer contributions are 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>This 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. Because former South Bucks looks for one-third of Affordable Housing to provide a route to ownership, this comfortably allows for the current First Home requirement to be met, and may only displace shared ownership and similar products rather than affordable rented tenures.</p> <p>However, as noted above, this minimum requirement may be abandoned following the ongoing consultation on the NPPF. This would allow for greater flexibility to boost the number of affordable rented homes and/or</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 rented housing and uncertainty over whether First Homes could replace this model.</p> <p>However, the ongoing 2024 consultation on changes to the planning system also proposes abandoning this requirement, leaving the proportion of First Homes to be sought on new developments as a matter for each LPA to consider in light of local evidence.</p>	<p>other affordable home ownership products, subject to Buckinghamshire Council’s decision-making in this policy area.</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 and it is acknowledged that this may affect the provision of affordable housing, the mix of tenures provided and the discounts that can be sought on First Homes properties.</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 Steering 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 Wexham:</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>Wexham’s current tenure mix implies a slight undersupply of affordable rented housing compared to the wider county and country, and an unusually high proportion of shared ownership homes. This suggests that there is a larger gap in the market for rented than ownership Affordable Housing. However, this tenure mix may also reflect the lack of local</p>

	services and facilities on which occupants of affordable rented housing may rely.
I. Views of registered providers:	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.
J. Wider policy objectives:	The Steering Group may wish to take account of broader policy objectives for Wexham and/or the wider Local Authority. 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.

Appendix E : 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 = $\text{£}200,000/\text{£}25,000 = 8$, (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 methods¹⁵.

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 Standard¹⁶

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.

¹⁵ The Tenant Services Authority has issued an explanatory note on these methods at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1918430.pdf>

¹⁶ 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 developments (NPPF definition)

A development instigated and taken forward by a not-for-profit organisation set up and run primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of its members and the wider local community, rather than being a primarily commercial enterprise. The organisation is created, managed, and democratically controlled by its members. It may take any one of the various legal forms including a community land trust, housing co-operative, and community benefit society. Membership of the organisation is open to all beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of that organisation. The organisation should own, manage, or steward the homes in a manner consistent with its purpose, for example through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider of Social Housing. The benefits of the development to the specified community should be clearly defined and consideration given to how these benefits can be protected over time, including in the event of the organisation being wound up.

Community Right to Build Order¹⁷

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)¹⁸

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.

¹⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

¹⁸ 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 Neighbourhood 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 years¹⁹, 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 living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

¹⁹ See <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/>

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, this 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 Housing²⁰

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

²⁰ See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

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 Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood 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.²¹

²¹ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing>

