



South Staffordshire Council

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix SPD 2019

Draft for consultation

Affordable housing

Custom housebuilding

Financial contributions

Shared ownership

Specialist homes

Self-build

Housing mix

Mixed communities

Entry-level exception site

Viability

Rural exception site

Integration

Social rent

Vacant building credit

Tenure

Designated area

Bungalow

Registered Provider



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to assist in the interpretation and delivery of the housing policies in the Council's adopted Local Plan relating to affordable housing, housing mix and housing for older people. It sets out the Council's expectations in relation to the provision of housing in the district in order to provide clarity for landowners, developers, registered providers and residents. This will ensure a consistent approach is taken between sites across the district.
- 1.2. The Council has committed to undertaking a comprehensive Local Plan Review, to be submitted for Examination by the end of 2021. The review will consider all of the adopted housing policies and update them where necessary. **This SPD relates to the current Local Plan** (Core Strategy and Site Allocations Document) to support housing delivery in the district until the new Plan is adopted. The SPD will eventually also be updated in due course to reflect any new policies, following adoption of the new Local Plan.
- 1.3. South Staffordshire's housing market is characterised by rising house prices, with the average lower quartile priced house costing over 8 times the average lower quartile income. This leaves home ownership out of reach for many residents, and with private rental prices also increasing, this means there is a substantial need for affordable housing throughout the district.
- 1.4. A significant proportion of the district's housing stock also consists of large 3 and 4 bedroom homes, creating a mismatch with trends which indicate a decreasing household size. There are not enough small properties for younger residents and families that wish to start their first home, and there is pressure to keep up with the rapidly ageing population and provide housing options to meet their needs.
- 1.5. Priority 1 of the Council's adopted Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 sets out how the Council intends to address some of these issues, by focusing on four objectives:
 1. Increase affordable housing provision
 2. Deliver a balanced housing market
 3. Improve the specialist housing offer
 4. Make best use of the district's existing housing stock
- 1.6. This SPD relates to a number of policies in the Council's adopted Core Strategy, which contribute to these objectives:
 - Core Policy 6: Housing Delivery
 - Policy H1: Achieving a Balanced Housing Market
 - Policy H2: Provision of Affordable Housing
 - Policy H3: Affordable Housing – Rural Exception Sites
 - Policy H4: Delivering Affordable Housing
 - Policy H5: Specialist Housing Accommodation

2. Determining the Affordable Housing Requirement

2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) defines affordable housing as the following four categories:

- Affordable housing for rent (including social rent and affordable rent)
- Starter homes (as per the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation)
- Discounted market sales housing (open market housing sold at a discount of at least 20%)
- Other affordable routes to home ownership (including shared ownership, equity loans and rent to buy)

2.2. Policy H2 of the adopted Core Strategy sets out the thresholds at which affordable housing will be required on new development:

- a) 10 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.3 hectares or more in size) within the Main Service Villages, or*
- b) 5 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.2 hectares or more in size) within the Local Service Villages, or*
- c) 2 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.1 hectares or more in size) within the Small Service Villages.*

2.3. The updated NPPF confirms that affordable housing should only be sought on major developments (i.e. developments of 10 or more dwellings, or sites of 0.5 hectares or more). As the more recently published policy, the NPPF supersedes Policy H2, and therefore the Council will require affordable housing in line with the NPPF threshold across the district. Should national policy change at any point, the Council reserves the right to apply the thresholds and other requirements set out in Policy H2 if they accord with the updated policy. In such cases, settlements classified as 'other village or hamlet' or developments in areas outside of existing settlements will be treated on the same basis as 'small service villages' and the corresponding affordable housing threshold and requirements will apply.

2.4. Policy H2 also confirms the percentage requirement of affordable housing where the relevant threshold is met:

The Council will seek to ensure that a proportion of affordable housing is provided on qualifying sites meeting the above threshold criteria in accordance with the following targets:

On sites of 10 or more dwellings – 30% affordable housing on previously developed land; 40% affordable housing on greenfield land;

Within the Local Service Villages and Small Service Villages on sites of 5-9 dwellings – 20% affordable housing (provided on-site);

Within Small Service Villages on sites of 2-4 dwellings – 20% affordable housing equivalent in lieu of on-site provision.

- 2.5. In calculating the number of affordable dwellings to be provided, where the percentage requirement does not equal a whole number, the figure will **always** be rounded up. For example:

**A development of 36 dwellings is proposed on a greenfield site.
40% requirement = 14.4, therefore this will be rounded up to 15 affordable dwellings.**

- 2.6. In cases where there are existing dwellings on the application site and they are to be replaced with new development, the affordable housing requirement will be calculated based on the gross number of dwellings to be provided (subject to the vacant building credit – see section 3 below).
- 2.7. Proposals that are deliberately planned in order to circumvent the affordable housing threshold will be refused planning permission by the Council. This includes applications of a very low density that fail to make effective use of land and/or provide a housing mix not deemed to be compliant with Policy H1. Applications may also be refused if it appears that a single scheme has been subdivided into smaller parcels in order to avoid the threshold. Where permission has been granted for a scheme and a subsequent application is made which clearly forms part of a single development, then the full affordable housing requirement will be required for the total number of dwellings proposed across all relevant applications.
- 2.8. Affordable housing will only be sought on C3 developments. The Council will assess whether proposals should be classed as C2 or C3 and where it is believed the use will be C3 dwellings, an affordable housing contribution will be required. Where an application is specifically made for C2 development and an affordable housing contribution is not provided, the Council may choose to include occupancy restrictions on the development through the Section 106 agreement (e.g. for only those in receipt of a certain minimum level of care to occupy the units). Such provisions may include clawback clauses related to the provision of affordable housing (or a financial contribution in lieu) should the units be sold/rented in the future as self-contained units to occupants that do not meet the specified occupancy restrictions.

3. Vacant Building Credit

- 3.1. In accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), a Vacant Building Credit (VBC) will be applied to the affordable housing requirement where a vacant building is brought back into lawful use or is demolished to be replaced by a new building. VBC is a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of any qualifying vacant building(s) on the site.
- 3.2. Requests to apply a VBC will be assessed on a case by case basis. In reaching a decision, the Council will have regard to the intention of national policy and will require the applicant to provide evidence to demonstrate that the building(s) meet the relevant criteria to apply the credit. VBC will not be applied in the following circumstances:
- The building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of redevelopment
 - The building has been abandoned
 - The building is in use at the time of application submission
 - The building is covered by an extant or recently expired (within 1 year) planning permission for the same or substantially the same development

This list is not exhaustive and site-specific circumstances will be taken into account in deciding whether a VBC can be applied.

- 3.3. Where the Council has accepted that a VBC can be applied, the revised affordable housing requirement will be calculated using the following formula:

$$RAH = AH \times \frac{PF - EF}{PF}$$

Where:

RAH = Revised affordable housing requirement

AH = Full affordable housing requirement as per Policy H2

PF = Proposed gross internal floorspace

EF = Existing gross internal floorspace of vacant building(s)

For example:

A development of 36 dwellings is proposed on a brownfield site, with a proposed gross internal floorspace of 3,000m².

There is a vacant building on the site with a gross internal floorspace of 2,000m².

The 30% affordable housing requirement as per Policy H2 is 11.

$$RAH = 11 \times \frac{3,000 - 2,000}{3,000}$$

The revised affordable housing requirement is 3.7, rounded up to 4 affordable dwellings.

- 3.4. The same formula will be used to apply the VBC for circumstances when the Council has agreed for the applicant to provide a financial contribution in lieu of onsite affordable housing (see section 6 below).

4. Affordable Housing Tenure

4.1. Paragraph 62 of the NPPF confirms that:

Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required.

Paragraph 64 adds to this:

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups.

4.2. Policy H2 states:

Affordable housing may be in the form of social rented, intermediate housing or a mixture of both. The Council has set an initial target of 50% of the affordable housing on a site to be social rented and 50% intermediate tenures

The Council therefore expects affordable housing to be split 50:50 between social rent and intermediate tenure. The Council has a strong track record of delivering this tenure split, therefore any deviation from this approach will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

4.3. Where an odd number of affordable dwellings are to be provided, the balance will always be in favour of social rent. For example:

**A development of 36 dwellings is proposed on a greenfield site.
40% requirement = 14.4, therefore this will be rounded up to 15 affordable dwellings.**

The affordable dwellings will be split with 8 as social rent and 7 as intermediate tenure.

4.4. The 50% rented provision shall always be delivered as social rent (rather than affordable rent or other). The Council has a track record of delivering social rented properties and the 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicated that for a large proportion of those identified as being in need of affordable housing, social rent is the only tenure they are able to afford. Other forms of rented housing will only be considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. in registered provider led schemes which will only come forward with funding from Homes England that is restricted to certain rent levels, such as affordable rent.

- 4.5. As a starting point, the Council will expect the 50% intermediate provision to be delivered as shared ownership housing, with no restriction set on the minimum initial equity share that can be purchased (within the 25-75% range permitted). The 2017 SHMA indicated discounted market housing and initial purchases of higher levels of equity are not as affordable for residents in South Staffordshire. Forms of intermediate tenure other than shared ownership will be considered by the Council only when it can be demonstrated to be a genuinely affordable option for residents. They will also be considered as part of a cascade system within a Section 106 agreement for instances such as when a developer fails to dispose of affordable homes to a registered provider following an extended period of marketing. In all cases, the NPPF requirement of 10% of homes to be provided for affordable home ownership must be complied with, unless the development falls under one of the exemption criteria in paragraph 64.

5. Designated Areas

- 5.1. The district contains a number of Designated Protected Areas and Designated Rural Areas relating to Right to Buy, Right to Acquire and restricted staircasing on shared ownership properties. The Council will endeavour to highlight through pre-application discussions when a site lies in one of these areas and therefore certain restrictions will apply. However, ultimately it is the responsibility of the landowner, developer and registered provider to identify this and take it into consideration when determining the value of the site and managing the properties.
- 5.2. For sites that lie within a Designated Protected Area, the Council's standard position will be for staircasing restrictions to apply (i.e. limited to a maximum of 80% equity, or 100% where the Registered Provider commits to re-purchase the property on sale), in accordance with the provisions of Policies H2 and H4. If a developer or Registered Provider considers that the restrictions cannot be applied on a specific site, they must make a request to the Council in writing for removal of the restrictions, on the set pro-forma (to be provided by the Council), providing reasons for this and any supporting evidence. After considering the reasons provided, the Council will inform the developer/Registered Provider in writing of whether or not the restrictions can be removed. Requests will be considered on a site-by-site basis, based on the information provided on the specific circumstances of the site.
- 5.3. For shared ownership properties included within Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme, it is possible for the Council to apply for a waiver to lift the restrictions on staircasing required by the Capital Funding Guide. The decision as to whether to apply for a waiver will be made by the Council on a case by case basis and evidence will be required from the developer or registered provider to justify the waiver. In these circumstances, early engagement with the Council's housing strategy team is encouraged in order to establish whether a waiver is required. The decision on whether to grant a waiver is taken by Homes England on receipt of the Council's application. The submission of an application by the Council does not in itself guarantee that Homes England will approve it.

6. Affordable Housing Provision and Financial Contributions

- 6.1. As per paragraph 62 of the NPPF, the Council expects affordable housing to be provided onsite. Offsite provision or financial contributions in lieu of onsite provision will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In such instances, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that it can be robustly justified and contributes to the creation of mixed and balanced communities. In the case of offsite provision in particular, the Council must be assured of the deliverability of the alternative site and will require evidence to demonstrate this.
- 6.2. A developer's own preference for offsite provision or a financial contribution is not in itself sufficient justification. Any reference to the effect on surrounding market property values will also not be accepted.
- 6.3. If the Council is satisfied that a financial contribution in lieu of onsite provision is justified, the amount payable will be calculated using the method outlined below. The contribution will be of a broadly equivalent value to if the affordable housing were to be provided onsite, to ensure consistency with the obligations already established through adopted Policy H2. The contribution will reflect the difference in value to a developer between providing the required units as market rather than affordable housing, based on standard assumptions published in the Council's latest viability assessment.
- 6.4. The formula for calculating the contribution is therefore:

$$F = M - A$$

Where:

F = Financial contribution

M = The assumed market value of the units based on standard assumptions

A = The assumed affordable value of the units based on standard assumptions

General needs housing

For example:

An offsite financial contribution has been agreed in lieu of providing 2 affordable homes onsite on a development in Brewwood. If the affordable homes were to be provided onsite, the desired mix would be:

- 1 x 2 bedroom house for shared ownership
- 1 x 3 bedroom house for social rent

The 2017 Viability Study (Update) values:

- Market housing in Brewwood at £3,250/m² (para 4.25)
- Social rented housing at £975/m² (para 4.33)
- Shared ownership housing at 65% of market value i.e. £2,112.50/m² (para 4.40)

The Council requires all properties to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

Based on these assumptions, the properties would be valued as follows:

Property	Size per unit (m ² - NDSS)	Market value	Affordable value
2 bedroom (1 unit)	70	£227,500	Shared ownership: £147,875
3 bedroom (1 unit)	84	£273,000	Social rent: £81,900
Total:		£500,500	£299,775

M = £500,500

A = £299,775

Financial contribution = £500,500 – £299,775 = £270,725

The difference in value between providing the properties as affordable housing rather than market housing is therefore: £270,725. If the developer were to provide the units as onsite affordable housing, this is the financial value they would forego as a planning obligation to comply with Policy H2, and is therefore the equivalent financial contribution to provide in lieu of onsite provision.

Specialist Housing

For example:

An offsite financial contribution has been agreed in lieu of providing 12 affordable homes onsite on a specialist housing scheme for older people in Great Wyrley. If the affordable homes were to be provided onsite, the desired mix would be:

- 2 x 1 bedroom flats for social rent
- 2 x 1 bedroom flats for shared ownership
- 4 x 2 bedroom flats for social rent
- 4 x 2 bedroom flats for shared ownership

The 2017 Viability Study (Update) values:

- 1 bed sheltered market property in Great Wyrley at £150,000 (para 4.42)
- 2 bed sheltered market property in Great Wyrley at £200,000 (para 4.42)
- Social rented housing at £975/m² (para 4.33)
- Shared ownership housing at 65% of market value (para 4.40)

The 2017 Viability Study provides assumptions on the size of sheltered and extra-care properties as they are specialist products which are unlikely to align with NDSS.

Based on these assumptions, the properties would be valued as follows:

Property	Size per unit (m ² – Viability Study)	Total Market value	Total Affordable value
1 bedroom (4 units)	50	£600,000	Social rent (2 units): £97,500 Shared ownership (2 units): £195,000 Total: £292,500
2 bedroom (8 units)	75	£1,600,000	Social rent (4 units): £292,500 Shared ownership (4 units): £520,000 Total: £812,500
Total:		£2,200,000	£1,105,000

M = £2,200,000

A = £1,105,000

Financial contribution = £2,200,000-£1,105,000 = £1,095,000

The difference in value between providing the properties as affordable housing rather than market housing is therefore: £1,095,000. If the developer were to provide the units as onsite affordable housing, this is the financial value they would forego as a planning obligation to comply with Policy H2, and is therefore the equivalent financial contribution to provide in lieu of onsite provision.

- 6.5. Financial contributions will be required prior to commencement of the development, and late payments will be charged interest accordingly. The terms of use will be determined on a case by case basis, but generally monies will be used for the provision of affordable housing within five years of receipt. In the first three years, use will ordinarily be restricted to either the parish or locality in which the site is located. Discussion with the relevant local Member(s) will determine the appropriate geography. Thereafter, the monies will be permitted to be expended anywhere within the district.

7. Viability

- 7.1. The updated PPG is clear that viability should be focused on the plan-making stage. The Council's affordable housing policies have been assessed for adoption of the Core Strategy and again for adoption of the Site Allocations Document, and have been deemed viable. Therefore, planning applications that comply with the affordable housing policies are assumed to be viable.
- 7.2. The Council will only consider viability at planning application stage if the proposal meets at least one of the following tests:
- Where development is proposed on unallocated sites of a wholly different type to those used in the viability assessment that informed the plan
 - Where further information on infrastructure or site costs is required
 - Where particular types of development are proposed which may significantly vary from standard models of development for sale (for example build to rent or housing for older people)
 - Where a recession or similar significant economic changes have occurred since the plan was brought into force

The onus will be on the applicant to robustly demonstrate to the Council, with supporting evidence, that one of the above circumstances apply.

- 7.3. If the Council is satisfied that at least one of the four tests has been met, the applicant will be required to submit a viability assessment for the proposed scheme that is based upon and refers back to the Council's latest plan-wide viability assessment. This should provide evidence of what has changed since then. For the purposes of transparency and accountability for South Staffordshire's communities, the assessment should be carried out in accordance with the PPG including the standardised inputs and methodology for calculating land value.
- 7.4. As per the Planning Practice Guidance:
- Under no circumstances will the price paid for land be a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.*
- 7.5. The Council may utilise the services of an independent consultant to verify the applicant's assessment. Any costs associated with this will be met by the applicant.
- 7.6. For transparency and accountability, any viability assessment submitted by the applicant in support of their proposal or commissioned by the Council in relation to the application will be published in its entirety on the Council's website. It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify and provide a robust case to the Council if they feel any information contained in the assessment is commercially sensitive and should not be disclosed. The Council will then determine whether or not the case is accepted. Even if the case is accepted, a redacted copy of the full assessment will be published,

or alternatively an executive summary containing key information (the Council will determine which is most appropriate).

8. Integration of Affordable Housing

8.1. Policy H4 confirms that:

Where new housing development makes provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H2 such development must:

...c) be fully integrated within the development where the affordable housing is located within a larger housing scheme.

8.2. This is also echoed in the Planning Practice Guidance which states:

In well-designed places affordable housing is not distinguishable from private housing by its design, nor is it banished to the least attractive part of the site.

8.3. The Council expects the provision of affordable housing to contribute to creating mixed and sustainable communities. Affordable homes should form an integral part of the development and as such, their integration and design within a scheme layout should be given careful consideration at an early stage, including through pre-application discussion, rather than as a matter to address later on in the development process.

8.4. Proposals which clearly concentrate affordable homes in the least desirable area(s) of a site will not be acceptable. Under no circumstances will impact on property value be considered a justification for an unacceptable affordable housing layout.

8.5. The layout of any proposal should ensure the creation of a socially inclusive community. In order to ensure integration of affordable housing with market housing, affordable units should be pepper potted throughout the entire site, in clusters of no more than 10 units. Clusters should also include a mixture of affordable tenures in order to further promote sustainable communities. Affordable units should be situated in a way that allows for interaction with market housing on the site. Clusters of affordable housing should not be isolated from surrounding market housing, in order to ensure that the units and their occupants are considered a fundamental part of the community.

8.6. Properties should be completely tenure-blind i.e. all forms of affordable housing should be materially indistinguishable from market housing. In assessing whether this is the case, the Council will have regard to a number of considerations including, but not limited to:

- Layout
- Design and materials
- Landscaping
- Parking provision and layout
- Amenity space and privacy

- Internal space

Affordable housing will not be considered indistinguishable from market housing if any of the above considerations highlight clear differences between tenures on a site.

- 8.7. In order for the Council to assess a proposal against all of the above requirements and consider the proposed housing mix (see section 13 below), applications must include a planning layout that clearly identifies which plots are to be affordable, including which are for social rent and which for shared ownership.

9. Planning Obligations and Section 106 Agreements

- 9.1. Affordable housing obligations will be secured through a Section 106 agreement. This will include the percentage requirement and the tenure split.
- 9.2. The Council has a template for affordable housing provisions (available on request) to use as a starting point for drafting a Section 106 agreement. This includes numerous standard provisions regarding the delivery of affordable housing including:
 - The phasing of affordable and market housing construction
 - Cascade mechanisms for disposal of affordable units to a Registered Provider
 - Mortgagee in Possession clause
- 9.3. These standard provisions will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain up to date and appropriate for the district. In order to maximise consistency of delivery across the district, any deviation from the standard provisions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and on a site-by-site basis.
- 9.4. For large sites and phased developments, the Council may consider the option of utilising viability review mechanisms in Section 106 agreements where an application is approved and the full affordable housing requirement is not being provided. The Section 106 agreement will clearly set out the timescales and process for review. For the avoidance of doubt, this will only be relevant when the full guidance at section 7 of this document has first been followed and the Council is satisfied that the development is unable to viably provide the full requirement at the time of application. The review mechanism will be used purely for the purpose of achieving compliance with the Council's affordable housing policy over the lifetime of a development. A review of viability will not be triggered as a result of the realisation of risk, as this is already built into the developer's expected profit level.

10. Affordable Housing Delivery

- 10.1. The Council expects affordable housing to be delivered in partnership with a Registered Provider that is accredited by Homes England. In order to protect the interests of residents, the provider must be able to demonstrate to the Council that appropriate local management arrangements are in place, and also that they are committed to maintaining sustainable communities by ensuring properties remain affordable in the longer term.
- 10.2. Appendix A provides a list of registered providers currently operating in the district. If a registered provider with no stock in the district is being considered for delivery of affordable units on a particular site, discussion with the Council is encouraged from an early stage, in order to ensure the above issues are addressed and delays are prevented later on in the process.
- 10.3. The Council intends to review its existing nomination agreements with its Registered Provider partners. On completion of the new agreements, these will determine how the Council and Registered Providers will work together to allocate new affordable properties in the district.
- 10.4. In some circumstances, a developer may elect to transfer areas of open space to a management company, rather than the Council, for long term maintenance. Occupants of that development are often then required to pay a fee to this company on an ongoing basis. In order to protect the genuine affordability of affordable homes on the site, the Council may choose to restrict any fee payable to the management company only to the market homes on the development. This restriction will be secured through the associated Section 106 agreement.

11. Rural Exception Sites

- 11.1. Policy H3 sets out the criteria that must be met for a rural exception site to be approved by the Council. A rural exception site will only be considered acceptable if there is a proven affordable housing need in the parish. The Council considers the appropriate way of demonstrating this need to be through a Parish Need Survey. This is a survey which is distributed to all households in the parish which assesses the need for a range of affordable housing tenures. The findings of the survey are based on real-time information and actual households that are in housing need.
- 11.2. The Council expects rural exception sites to be progressed through partnership working with a Registered Provider and the relevant parish council. South Staffordshire Housing Association has commissioned a Rural Housing Enabler to work with parish councils to carry out Parish Need Surveys and assist in identifying potential land for rural exception sites. This is the process which the Council expects to be followed for all rural exception sites in the district, to ensure schemes are community led and there is local buy-in. Parish councils, Registered Providers and developers are strongly encouraged to engage in early discussions with the Council if they wish to explore the possibility of progressing a rural exception site.
- 11.3. The occupancy of properties on a rural exception site will be restricted to those with a strong local connection. The local connection criteria will be set out in the accompanying Section 106 agreement. The cascade of local connection will be a matter to be determined jointly by the Registered Provider, parish council and District Council.
- 11.4. The properties will also be secured as affordable in perpetuity through the Section 106 agreement. This will include restrictions on staircasing for shared ownership properties, to ensure they always remain in the affordable housing supply for local people.

12. Entry-level Exception Sites

12.1. Entry-level exception sites are a relatively new policy designation, introduced in the July 2018 NPPF:

Local planning authorities should support the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority's area. These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:

a) comprise of entry-level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of this Framework; and

b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards.

12.2. In line with the above definition, entry-level exception sites will therefore only be acceptable in areas of Open Countryside in the district (i.e. not acceptable in the Green Belt or AONB).

12.3. Affordable homes provided on entry-level exception sites must be suitable for first time buyers or those looking to rent their first home. Applicants will therefore be required to demonstrate that the tenure of the proposed homes is genuinely affordable and suitable for first time buyers or renters. The Council may also choose to include provisions within a Section 106 agreement that ensure properties are secured in perpetuity for such occupants.

13. Housing Mix

- 13.1. Policy H1 sets out the Council's policy on housing mix for new developments. The aim of the policy is to better balance the local housing market, which is currently characterised by an oversupply of large properties, and a shortage of smaller homes. This will meet local need, allow better flow of households through the existing housing stock, and offer opportunities to downsize for the district's ageing population.
- 13.2. The provision of more 2 and 3 bedroom properties across all market areas of the district is required, and the Council expects this to be reflected in the housing mix of new development. The specific proportion of 2 vs. 3 bedroom homes (along with the provision of 1 and 4+ bedroom properties) should reflect the need identified in the Council's latest SHMA. The Longer Term Balancing Housing Markets report highlights need in five sub-areas of the district. This is broken down by bedroom count and tenure i.e. separately for market, social rented and shared ownership housing. The housing mix for each tenure will be considered individually to ensure housing need is effectively addressed for all of them.
- 13.3. Data from the Council's waiting list may also be used to supplement information from the SHMA in relation to current affordable housing need in specific villages of the district.
- 13.4. For all outline applications for major development, the Council will secure the required housing mix for both the market and affordable housing by condition. This provides clarity to landowners, developers and Registered Providers at an early stage on the Council's expectations for the development, so this can be taken into consideration for any transactions associated with the site.

14. Homes for Older People

- 14.1. Policy H1 also confirms the requirement for proposals for new housing to provide a housing mix which particularly meets the needs of the district's ageing population. This is supported by the Council's adopted Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022, which sets targets for specialist housing and other age-specific properties e.g. bungalows.
- 14.2. The provision of properties for older people will be determined through site-by-site negotiation, however the Council considers that as a starting point, the provision of 10% of housing (both market and affordable) as bungalows is an appropriate and achievable contribution. Other forms of housing for older people can be considered, but only where it can be robustly demonstrated that bungalows are not achievable and the alternatives offer a suitable form of accommodation for older people e.g. single storey, of a size to facilitate downsizing etc.
- 14.3. Proposals for specialist housing that are designed to meet the needs of older people e.g. over 55s retirement apartments, will not be required to provide bungalows as part of the scheme.

15. Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

- 15.1. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF confirms that authorities must plan to meet the needs of people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 15.2. The Council does not currently have an adopted policy dedicated to the provision of self-build and custom housebuilding. Policy H1 does require new housing development to provide a mixture of property types to meet the needs of all groups of the community, and this includes those that wish to build their own home.
- 15.3. Applicants for major developments will be expected to consider making provision for those that are looking to build their own home. Plots for self and custom build housing will be secured by negotiation on a site-by-site basis. The level of provision will be guided by evidence from the Council's self-build and custom housebuilding register.
- 15.4. On sites where self-build and custom housebuilding plots are being provided, these will be secured via appropriate provisions in the Section 106 agreement. Where considered necessary, cascade mechanisms will be utilised allowing the developer to build out the plot(s) after a certain period of time if no self/custom build buyer has been secured. Minimum periods of marketing will be required in order to ensure that the developer has made all efforts to dispose of the plot(s) to a self or custom housebuilder.

APPENDIX A – Registered Providers operating in the district

Accord	www.accordgroup.org.uk
Anchor	www.anchor.org.uk
Bromford	www.bromford.co.uk
Housing Plus Group	www.housingplusgroup.co.uk
Midland Heart	www.midlandheart.org.uk
Sanctuary Housing	www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk
whg	www.whg.uk.com
Wrekin Housing Trust	www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk



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