



Housing Technical Note 2024

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SUMMARY

In 2015, as part of the Stevenage local plan preparation process, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was undertaken to assess Stevenage Local Housing Need. The assessment concluded an overall housing need of 7,300 dwellings up to the end of the plan period 2031. However, the release of Census data around a similar time presented evidence which identified estimates of Stevenage's population were too low.

The figure of 7,300 remained a starting point for the revised Housing Target consultation back in 2015. The consultation considered the government's latest population and household projections which subsequently, led to the revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment update 2016 Volume II which increased Stevenage housing need in line with the latest projections. This identified an increase of 300 dwellings taking the total need to 7,600 for the Local Plan 2011 – 2031.

Since 2016, new data has been released which underpins the affordable housing need figures and more recently, the introduction of a new type of affordable housing 'First Homes'.

As a starting point deciding whether to undertake a Full Local Plan Review or a Partial Review of the Local Plan, the continuing adequacy of the 7,600 homes requirement was re-assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 standard method for calculating housing need.

A revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was undertaken to enable the Council to ascertain the type and tenure of housing required to support the Council's housing need, in conjunction with an assessment of the impact of First Homes.

The SHMA 2023 identified, an overall need for Market and Affordable Dwellings (including affordable home ownership products) by property size in Stevenage 2022-31. The minimum need for wheelchair adapted and adaptable homes was identified as being 250 dwellings or 4.9% of the total housing need. The overall figure includes a need to provide 2,114 affordable dwellings of which, 312 dwellings relate to households aspiring to home ownership.

SHMA 2023 Key Points

- Projections concluded an affordable housing increase of 11% above the current policy requirement.
- Families with dependent children represent 60% of the overall household growth up to 2031. Single persons represent 27% of the overall household growth up to 2031.
- A significant growth in those aged over 65 years in Stevenage¹ concluding that planning for older peoples housing should form an important part of the overall housing mix.

¹ from growth in this area the number of households likely to need wheelchair adapted housing is likely to increase by 250 households over the 9-year period so the population aged under 60 years is projected to fall.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is a technical paper?

Technical papers provide additional information to help explain how policies in the Local Plan have been developed.

What does this technical paper cover?

This paper covers housing, in terms of both need and supply and should be read in conjunction with the Stevenage Draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

What are the key evidence studies?

The following studies should be read alongside this technical paper:

- Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update (ORS, 2023)
- Stevenage Borough Council Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2023 (ORS, 2023)
- SBC Five Year Housing Land Supply Update May 2024
- Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2022 and update 2024
- Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan and CIL Review Viability Assessment (Aspinall Verdi, October 2024)

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan was adopted on 22 May 2019. The Council is required to review the Local Plan 5 years post adoption. It was agreed there should be a two-stage process to reviewing the Local Plan. Stage 1: Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, Stage 2: Local Plan – Full Review. Early evidence gathering was undertaken in 2022 which confirmed the current Local Plan has a sufficient supply of land to meet housing need up to the end of the plan period 2031.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides a comprehensive analysis of the local housing needs in Stevenage, highlighting critical data and projections to guide policy and planning decisions. The assessment underscores the pressing demand for affordable housing, identifies key demographic trends, and evaluates the current housing stock's adequacy in meeting future requirements.

Furthermore, the housing and economic need assessment guides Councils in how to assess their housing needs. This is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes required in Stevenage².

² Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2a-001-20190220

What is the key purpose of this paper?

The key purpose of this paper is to provide the housing evidence which supports the Local Plan Review. Key points are as follows:

- Maintains a sufficient supply of land to meet housing need up to the end of the plan period 2031.
- Provides support for the development management policies updated in the Local Plan Partial Review and Update.
- Show that a 5 year housing land supply to be maintained

2.0 HOUSING AND POPULATION

- 2.1 In 2015, the SHMA concluded the total housing need required for Stevenage was 7,300 new homes. The figure was later revised in the SHMA 2016 to take into account updated household projections which led to a revised housing need total of 7,600 to be adopted in the Local Plan 2019.
- 2.2 Both the 2016 and the latest SHMA 2023 assessments are joint studies, commissioned with North Hertfordshire Council (NHC).
- 2.3 As in the previous assessment, the SHMA 2023 considered the size, type and tenure of homes that are for the period 2011 – 2031 for both authorities. This included the housing needs of different groups, including affordable housing. The SHMA 2023 further draws on the policy implications for First Homes which was introduced in May 2021 and assesses the current level of affordable housing need.
- 2.4 The 2021 Census data released in June 2022 estimated the population of Stevenage at 89,500. This is an increase of more than 5,100 (6%) in the total population since the last Census 2011.
- 2.5 On 1 May 2024, the Council recorded 2,644 new homes had been completed since the start of the plan period. Against the housing requirement of the Local Plan 2019, this left a residual requirement of 4,956 new homes to be developed up to the end of the plan period 2031.
- 2.6 However, since the adoption of the Stevenage Local Plan 2019, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)³ provide that where a Local Plan is more than five years old, the 5 year housing land supply will be measured against the area's local housing need (LHN) calculated using the standard method.

³ Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 68-005-20190722

3.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2023

Housing Need

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023⁴ sets out several housing requirements for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).

Paragraph 60 of the NPPF states:

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

- 3.2 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF goes on to set out how to determine the minimum number of homes needed stating:

strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area

- 3.3 Establishing the housing need in Stevenage, by size, type, and tenure of need for different groups in Stevenage must, therefore be assessed and reflected in the Stevenage Local Plan Policies⁵.

In order to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites Paragraph 69 of the NPPF states:

Planning policies should identify a supply of:

a) specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption, and

b) specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for the subsequent years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the remaining plan period.

- 3.4 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁶ provide that where a local plan is more than five years old, **the 5 year housing land supply will be measured against the area's local housing need (LHN) calculated using the standard method.**

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669a25e9a3c2a28abb50d2b4/NPPF_December_2023.pdf

⁵ NPPF Paragraph 63 states These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care, and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes

- 3.5 The PPG goes on to provide that when preparing a Local Plan, the standard method identifies the minimum uplift that is required and takes into account past under-delivery:

The affordability adjustment is applied to take account of past under-delivery. The standard method identifies the minimum uplift that will be required and therefore it is not a requirement to specifically address under-delivery separately.

Where an alternative approach to the standard method is used, past under delivery should be taken into account⁷.

- 3.6 Where the Local Plan sets out an allowance for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply Paragraph 72 states:

Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

- 3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 goes on to include the requirement to maintain a supply and delivery of homes needed. Paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that:

Strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should monitor their deliverable land supply against their housing requirement, as set out in adopted strategic policies.

- 3.8 Paragraph 76 set out how local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites

Local Planning Authorities are not required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision making purposes if the following criteria are met:

- a) *their adopted plan is less than five years old; and*
- b) *that adopted plan identified at least a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time that its examination concluded.*

- 3.9 Paragraph 77 of the NPPF set out that in all other circumstances:

local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide either a minimum of five years' worth of housing.

⁶ Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 68-005-20190722

⁷ Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 2a-011-20190220

3.10 As set out in Planning Practice guidance⁸

a 5 year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time of the conclusion of its examination is one of the criteria under paragraph 76 of the National Planning Policy Framework which a plan must meet in order for a local authority to not be required to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply for the purposes of decision-making.

When identifying a supply of sites through this process, local planning authorities will need to apply a 20% buffer where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 85% of the requirement.

3.11 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Annex 2 provides a definition of 'deliverable':

To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years. In particular:

- a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within 5 years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).*
- b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within 5 years.*

3.12 Paragraph 008 of Planning Practice Guidance specifies that during the Local Plan process the inspector examining the plan will test the evidence to ensure the 5 year housing land supply identified is sound. Therefore, if a local planning authority cannot demonstrate enough supply, including the appropriate buffer, the presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply, as set out in paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework.

⁸ Paragraph: 059 Reference ID: 68-058-20240205

Housing Delivery

- 3.13 In regard to the delivery of homes the Housing Delivery Test measures the net homes delivered in Stevenage against the homes required. This is published annually by the Secretary of State.
- 3.14 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF sets out where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that a Local Planning Authority has fallen below the housing requirement over the previous three years, the following policy consequences apply:
- a) *where delivery falls below 95% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years;*
 - b) *where delivery falls below 85% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should include a buffer of 20% to their identified supply of specific deliverable sites as set out in paragraph 77 of this framework, in addition to the requirement for an action plan.*
 - c) *where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, in addition to the requirements for an action plan and 20% buffer.*

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION 2024

4.1 In July 2024 the Government published its consultation⁹ on the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”). As well as a number of key policy changes, the focus guides towards economic growth and the delivery of new homes. The overall objective is to deliver 1.5 million new homes in England over the next five years. This technical paper focuses on housing in particular; however, the main proposed changes to the NPPF can be summarised as follows:

- To make the standard method for assessing housing needs mandatory, which will require Councils to plan for identified housing need for the area.
- To reverse the December 2023 changes to the NPPF which are seen as detrimental to housing supply.
- A new standard method and calculation to ensure local plans support the Government’s commitment of 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament.
- Broadening of the existing definition of brownfield land, setting a strengthened expectation that applications on brownfield land will be approved and that plans should promote an uplift in density of development in urban areas.
- To increase certainty about brownfield development through the introduction of a ‘Brownfield Passport’ within urban settlements. These will include bold proposals that provide far greater clarity as to the principle, scale, and form of brownfield development to lower the risk, cost and uncertainty associated with securing planning permissions.
- To identify “Grey Belt” land in Green Belt, which is to be brought forward into the planning system through both plan and decision making, to meet development needs.
- To improve the operation of ‘the presumption’ in favour of sustainable development, to ensure it acts an effective failsafe to support housing supply, by clarifying the circumstances in which it applies; and, introducing new safeguards, to make clear that its application cannot justify poor quality development.
- Delivering affordable, well-designed homes, with new “golden rules” for land released in the Green Belt to ensure it delivers in the public interest.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

- To make wider changes to ensure that local planning authorities are able to prioritise the types of affordable homes their communities need on all housing development and that the planning system supports a more diverse housebuilding sector.
 - To support economic growth in key sectors, aligned with the Government's industrial strategy and future local growth plans, including laboratories, giga factories, datacentres, digital economies and freight and logistics – given their importance to our economic future.
 - To deliver community needs to support society and the creation of healthy places; and
 - To support clean energy and the environment, including through support for onshore wind and renewables.
- 4.2 The draft NPPF proposes the insertion of a new paragraph 62 to make clear that Local Planning Authorities should use the mandatory standard method to assessing housing needs which include a revised calculation method based on the past three years delivery.
- 4.3 Under the new revision, Local Authorities would be able to justify a lower housing requirement than the standard method figure on the basis of local constraints on land and delivery.
- 4.4 Under the current NPPF (published December 2023) Local Authorities with an up-to-date local plan are given some protection in that, if their local plan is less than 5 years old they need to demonstrate a four year housing land supply figure and not one for five years. This does not apply to Stevenage as the adopted local plan is now over 5 years old. The Council continues to publish its 5 year land supply¹⁰.
- 4.5 The proposed changes will reinstate the requirement to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply at all times, regardless of local plan status and whether or not a Council has delivered an oversupply of housing. This is deemed necessary in order for the Government to achieve its ambitious target of delivering 1.5 million homes over the next 5 year¹¹.
- 4.6 The NPPF (2023) also removed the requirement to apply a 5% buffer on top of all 5 year land supply calculations. Again here, Stevenage continued to apply a 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market, more recently due to the under delivery of housing a 20% buffer has been applied in line with the HDT results¹².

¹⁰ <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/monitoring/five-year-housing-land-supply-update-may-2024-pdf.pdf>

¹¹ The proposed changes to the "presumption in favour" will, however, add explicit reference to the need to consider locational and design policies, as well as policies relating to the delivery for affordable housing, when the presumption is engaged. This is in order to provide some safeguards for decision making.

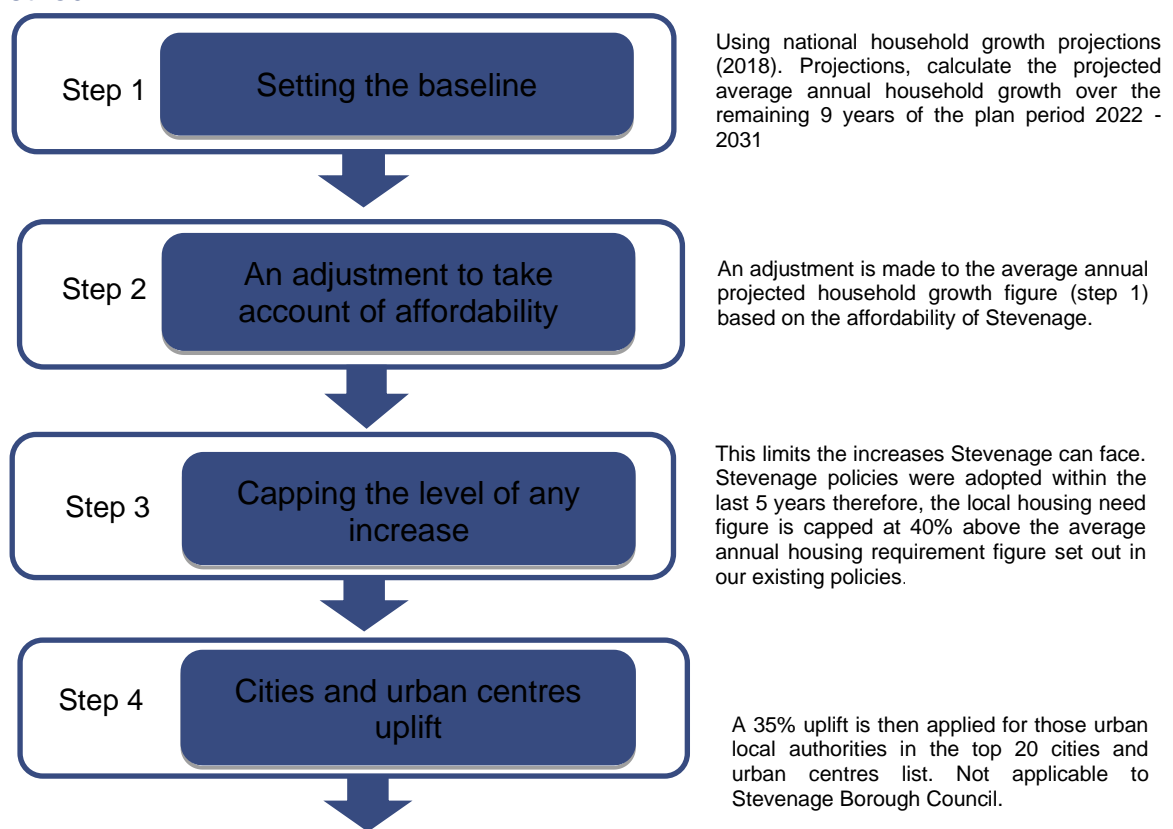
¹² The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of: a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.

- 4.7 Under the currently proposed transitional arrangements for the revised NPPF, the Stevenage Local Plan Partial Review and Update having reached Regulation 19 publication stage, with a gap of no more than 200 dwellings per annum (498 – 380 = 118) between the adopted requirement and the new standard methodology requirement can continue to examination under the NPPF 2023.

5.0 WHAT IS THE STANDARD METHOD FOR ASSESSING LOCAL HOUSING NEED?

- 5.1 In order to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects strategic policy-making authorities to follow the standard method for assessing local housing need, unless it is felt that circumstances warrant an alternative approach. However, authorities can expect this to be scrutinised more closely.

How is a minimum annual local housing need figure calculated using the standard method?¹³



The total number of net additional dwellings to be provided over the plan period, both in the market and affordable sectors

¹³ Projections are trend-based – that is, they carry forward past demographic trends. Accordingly, they may be adjusted to take account of factors that are not captured by those trends, including past undersupply, market signals and future job growth. Point 2.10 PAS <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/objectively-assessed-need-9fb.pdf>. Projection of household numbers are derived from ONS.

A New Standard Method for Assessing Housing Needs

5.2 As discussed earlier in this paper the Government published its consultation on the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) in July 2024. Part of the proposed changes include a new standard method for calculating housing need. The new standard method would replace the four step approach highlighted in paragraph 2.6 to calculate housing need (LHN) using a simpler process as set out below:

- a) This sets the baseline at a percentage of existing housing stock levels (0.8% of existing housing stock), rather than using national household growth projections. On average, housing stock has grown nationally by 0.89% over the last 10 years. The proposal is designed to provide a stable baseline that drives a level of delivery proportionate to existing size of settlements, rebalancing the national distribution to better reflect the growth ambitions across the Midlands and North;
- b) A top up to the baseline by focusing on those areas that are facing the greatest affordability pressures. However, the proposed new standard method uses a stronger affordability multiplier (for every 1% above the ratio 4:1, the multiplier increases to 0.6%) to increase this baseline in proportion to price pressures; and
- c) Removes arbitrary caps (under the current method, numbers are capped at 40% above either previous local plan figure or the projection derived baseline) and additions so that the approach is driven by an objective assessment of need.
- d) Removes the urban uplift for 20 major towns and cities.

What would the changes mean for Stevenage Local Plan Partial Review and Update?

- 5.3 As discussed in the summary above, the Stevenage Local Plan 2019 sets out the Council's local housing need requirement of 7,600 homes over the plan period. This equates to **380** homes per annum.
- 5.4 The previous housing need requirement of 380 homes per annum over the plan period will, using the Local Housing Need (LHN) increase to **470** homes per annum.
- 5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 proposal would further see this increase to 498 homes per annum¹⁴.

	A	B	C	D
Local Authority	Current Method 2023	Proposed Method 2024 / 2025	Average Annual Net additions (2020/21-2022/23)	Percentage change between current method & proposed method
Stevenage	470	498	120	5.93%

Figure 1. Outcome of the proposed revised method

¹⁴ <https://lshmapping.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=af9349a165ad4efcb6c41b9ea97804e9>

5.6 The new proposed calculation would be as follows:

Stevenage Baseline Housing Stock 38,161 (0.8% of 38,161 = 305.29)

5.7 The second step looks at affordability.

5.8 The SHMA 2023 assesses house prices in Stevenage between 2001 - 2022 and concludes house prices in Stevenage have broadly mirrored changes in England as a whole, though being higher than England as a whole. In general, new build properties are more expensive than existing dwellings, with the exception of two-bedroom properties in Stevenage.

5.9 In terms of weekly housing costs, open market ownership for each property size is the most expensive in terms of weekly costs, followed by Shared Ownership at 50% and 40%, Build to Rent and then median private rent.

5.10 The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 uses the affordability ratios¹⁵ as follows:

Local Authority	Current outcome of standard method 2023	Existing housing requirement	Peak delivery since 2001	Affordability ratio in 2021	Affordability ratio in 2022
Stevenage	470	380	690	8.41	8.41

Figure 2. Stevenage affordability ratios

5.11 This means that, full-time employees in Stevenage could expect to spend around 8.4 times their annual earnings to buy a home in Stevenage.

5.12 These metrics are colour coded to show, at a glance, whether the current outcome of the method is higher – signifying a positive increase in housing need – or lower. For Stevenage house prices are more than four times higher than earnings.

Baseline adjustment 4.1% + 0.6 % for every 1% above the 4.1%

Stevenage affordability ratio (8.41 – 4.1 baseline) = 4.31%

This would mean Stevenage would need to apply a 2.4% adjustment upwards

Step a (305.29) + Step b (2.4%) = 312.61 rounded up to 313 units per annum.

¹⁵ Improving affordability ratios should not mask near-record highs in much of England | Turley 2023

- 5.13 Step three requires the removal of arbitrary caps (under the current method, numbers are capped at 40% above previous local plan figure).
- 5.14 The requirement to remove the urban uplift does not apply to Stevenage.

Local Authority Name	Current Method	Proposed Method	Average Annual Net additions (2020/21-2022/23)
Stevenage	470	498	120

Figure 3. Outcome of the proposed revised method

6.0 MODELLING HOUSING NEED

6.1 Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 states that:

Strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The outcome of the standard method is an advisory starting-point for establishing a housing requirement for the area

6.2 Given that the Local Housing Need is informed by the standard method in national planning guidance, the role of the SHMA 2023 is to identify the extent to which the housing size and tenure to be provided remains up to date.

6.3 The SHMA 2023 identifies the following:

- An affordable housing increase of 11% above the current policy requirement
- Families with dependent children represent 60% of the overall household growth up to 2031
- Single persons represent 27% of the overall household growth up to 2031
- A significant growth in those aged over 65 years in Stevenage¹⁶ concluding that planning for older peoples housing should form an important part of the overall housing mix.

6.4 Based on detailed analysis of the past trends and current estimates of households considered to be in housing need, the SHMA 2023 concluded that the current unmet need for affordable housing totals 1,612 households. This is made up of households in Stevenage that are currently living in unsuitable housing and are unable to afford their own housing.

6.5 Of these households, 802 currently occupy affordable housing that does not meet the households' current needs, mainly due to the number of bedrooms. There is, therefore, a current net need from **810** households in Stevenage (1,612 less 802 = 810) that currently need affordable housing and do not currently occupy affordable housing.

6.6 In addition to those who cannot currently afford market housing, the SHMA 2023 also considers those households which arise in the future. The assessment concludes there is an additional 110 households annually needing affordable housing in Stevenage. This totals **990** over the period 2022 – 2031.

¹⁶ from growth in this area the number of households likely to need wheelchair adapted housing is likely to increase by 250 households over the 9-year period so the population aged under 60 years is projected to fall.

- 6.7 The SHMA 2023 further identifies that there is an additional need for households that can afford market rents but aspire to home ownership.
- 6.8 Neither the National Planning Policy Framework nor Planning Practice Guidance identify any affordability criteria should be applied to those households who aspire to home ownership but cannot afford to buy their own home.
- 6.9 The SHMA 2023, assesses affordability for those households in paragraph 6.7 based on sufficient income and savings to purchase an open market property. These households are likely to form an effective demand. This totals 312 households
- 6.10 Therefore, the total overall need for affordable housing 2022 – 2031 in Stevenage totals (810 + 990 households unable to afford rent or own market housing + 312 households that aspire to home ownership).

Figure 4: Overall need for Affordable Housing 2022-31 in Stevenage by property size

Stevenage	Affordable Housing Need Households unable to afford	Affordable Housing Need Households aspiring to home ownership	Affordable Housing (Households)
1 bedroom	94	103	197
2 bedrooms	442	125	567
3 bedrooms	993	84	1,077
4+ bedrooms	272	-	272
TOTAL HOUSING NEED	1,802	312	2,114

7.0 MAINTAINING HOUSING SUPPLY AND DELIVERY

Affordable Housing Supply

- 7.1 This next section of the paper demonstrates the Council’s affordable housing supply over the next 5 years.
- 7.2 Currently the Five-Year Land Supply includes the provision of a number of affordable housing units. Figure 5 below illustrates a more recent forecast for affordable housing delivery 2011 – 2031. At present, the Council can demonstrate a delivery of 601 affordable units between 2024 to 2031.

Figure 5. Affordable housing delivery 2011 – 2031

Deliverable Housing	No. of homes	Comments
Total Number of Affordable Units Dwellings for Sites with Detailed Planning Permission	376	NPPF Part A
Total Number of Dwellings for Sites with Outline Permission	225	NPPF Part B
Total Identified Supply 2024- 2031	601	
Total Delivered April 2022 – March 2024	141	Smartherts
Total Required 2011 – 2031 based on SHMA 2023 (including 312 who aspire to home ownership)	2114	
Total Shortfall	1372	

- 7.3 To date, the Council has progressed a number of its own affordable housing schemes as follows:
- HO1/9 - 18/00398/FPM phase 1 of Kenilworth Close has delivered 118 affordable homes in 2024.
 - HO1/4 - 21/00944/FPM Dunn Close - work is currently under construction for 27 affordable units and completion is expected in 2025.
 - HO1/3 - 22/00437/FPM Burwell Road Neighbourhood Centre Work has begun on the delivery of 20 new affordable units. These are additional units to the scheme already delivered at Burwell Road under 17/00586/FPM.
 - HO1/18 - 23/00954/FPM - The Oval neighbourhood centre proposal include replacement accommodation for 91 units affordable housing units. Subject to securing grant funding and the resolution to grant subject to S106 agreement.

- 22/00963/FPM - Brent Court Garages scheuled to deliver 96 affordable units within the 5 year period.
- 24/00064/FPM Ellis avenue – resolution to grant subject to S106 agreement scheduled to deliver 11 affordable units.
- 23/00226/FP - Valley Way, 22/00465/FP - Colestrete and 23/00615/FP - Stirling Close in Stevenage – these are 3 individual plots programmed to deliver 3 affordable units.
- 24/00058/FPM - Land at Redcar Drive - resolution to grant subject to s.106. include the retention of 12 affordable units.

7.4 Since 2015, the Council has delivered 497 affordable properties either through new build or open market acquisition. Of those, approximately 28 have received funding through other sources than Right To Build receipts.

7.5 The Council also welcomes the latest Right to Buy changes by Central Government, however, whilst the Council has greater flexibility in terms of its spend, the actual level of receipts the Council anticipate receiving is due to reduce as a result of the reduction in discount available to tenants. As a result, the Council is likely to diversify its funding streams, as evidenced by our successful bids for grant at Brent Court Garages from the Affordable Homes Programme.

7.6 In addition to the Council's own schemes and other forecast affordable housing coming forward over the next 5 years the Council will still need to provide **1372** units over the remaining plan period in order to meet local need.

8.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS

Projected Population Age Profile

8.1 This section assesses future population projections in Stevenage. Figure 6 below highlights the Population projections 2022-31 by 5-year age cohort for Stevenage (Source: ONS 2018 based sub-national).

Figure 6. Population projections 2022-31 by 5-year age cohort.

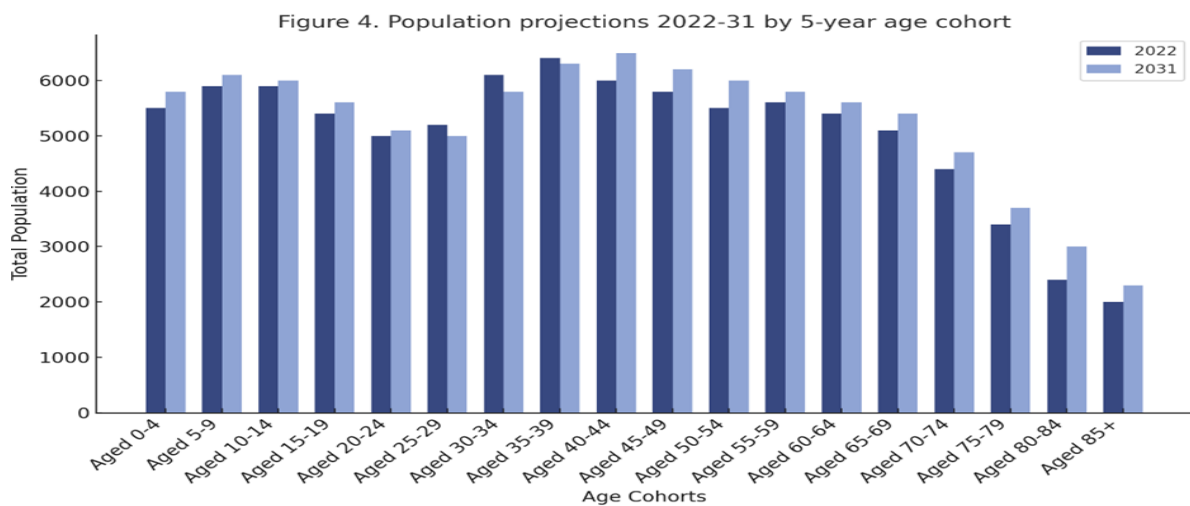
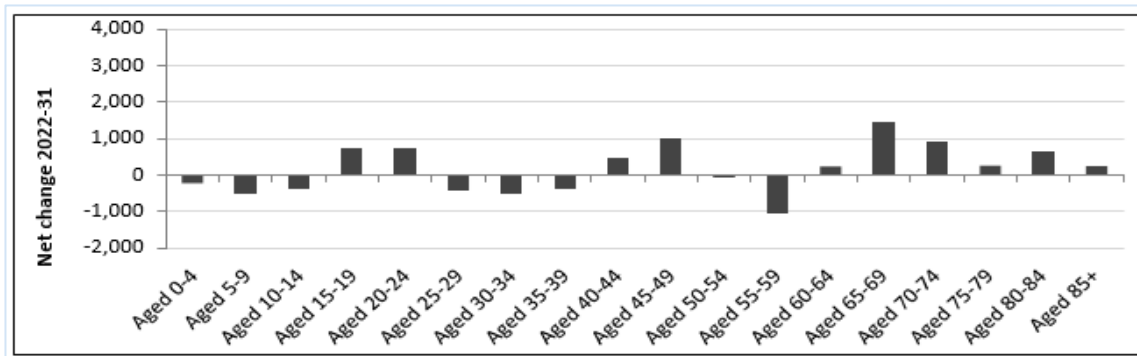


Figure 7. below reveals with a total projected population growth of 3,245 population aged under 60 years is projected to fall.



Projected Household Types and Housing Mix

8.2 Based on trend-based projections in Stevenage, families with dependent children represent 60% of the overall household growth up to 2031, while single person households represent 27% of growth. Further results conclude that, Stevenage can expect to see a fall in couples without dependent children over the next 9 years. However, there is a significant growth in those aged over 65 years in Stevenage.

8.3 Noting the above, 27% further growth is projected in Stevenage under 'other households' this includes but is not limited to multi-generation living, student households and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This projection accounts for a high share in the overall growth in Stevenage. However, this is likely to include many adults living at home with their parents.

Figure 8. sets out an overall need for market and affordable dwellings by property size and type.

	Unable to afford market rents	Unable to afford market ownership but able to afford First Homes with a 50% discount, but not a 30% discount	Unable to afford market ownership but able to afford First Homes with a 30% discount	Affordable Housing	Total Market Housing	Total Housing
1 bedroom	94	8	108	210	503	713
2 bedrooms	444	19	121	584	607	1,191
3 bedrooms	997	94	-	1,091	1,779	2,871
4+ bedrooms	274	-	-	274	197	471
DWELLINGS	1,810	76	274	2,160	3,086	5,246
Dwellings to Reconcile Population and Households	-	-	-	-	29	29
LHN	1,810	76	274	2,160	3,115	5,275

9.0 Local Plan Policy HO7 and HO8

- 9.1 Stevenage affordable housing Policy HO7 requires the following contribution:
- 25% affordable housing contribution on new homes on previously developed sites
 - 30% contribution on new homes elsewhere
- 9.2 The affordable housing provided needs to be appropriate to the mix of homes required for the future housing in Stevenage.
- 9.3 Furthermore, Local Plan Policy HO8 requires at least 70% of units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing Team.
- 9.4 The Local Plan 2019 sets out that in the event of a significant rise in house prices, or any other changes which materially affect the costs of development over an extended period of time, the Council will update the viability evidence through the partial review of the Local Plan 2019 to determine whether the target levels of affordable housing remain appropriate.
- 9.5 The SHMA 2023 recommends an increase in Policy HO7 to 41% based on local housing tenure need.
- 9.6 As part of the Local Plan Partial Review, Stevenage Borough Council commissioned a viability assessment in 2024 to test the viability of affordable housing against the relevant levels as set out in Policy HO7, at a tenure split of 70% affordable rent; 25% First Homes and 5% intermediate / shared ownership.
- 9.7 The viability assessment reviewed the policy requirements proposed in the Local Plan Partial Review & Update as well as the increased output for the Community Levy Rates. These policies will impose a direct cost to development and have been reflected in the appraisals.
- 9.8 The Local Plan Partial Review & Update promotes climate change issues, with a number of new policies setting requirements on energy efficiency, carbon reduction, water efficiency, energy infrastructure, green roofs / walls and sustainable drainage (amongst others).
- 9.9 As noted in the viability study, the combined costs of the updated policy requirements and CIL contributions will need to be balanced to ensure that development within Stevenage remains viable and deliverable.

- 9.10 The viability results show the majority of allocations and sites provided by the Council are viable with the updated policy requirements sought by the Local Plan Partial Review & Update the Council.
- 9.11 The assessment suggests the Council can increase the affordable housing Policy HO7 to 40%, in line with the SHMA 2023 recommendations. However, as highlighted in the viability study not all sites would prove to be viable with a 40% affordable housing contribution.
- 9.12 To reflect the viability study, the Council proposes a contribution increase of 10% on new homes built on greenfield sites. This means Stevenage affordable housing Policy HO7 will require a 40% contribution on greenfield sites.
- 9.13 The Council maintains a 25% contribution on previously developed land. All sites within the Council's constrained administrative area which are likely to be deliverable are already allocated and, therefore, there is no scope to increase the provision of affordable housing within the Borough other than maximising the percentage contribution under Policy HO7.

10.0 NEEDS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS

Older Persons and Adapted Homes

- 10.1 Given the UK population is ageing, and people can expect to live longer healthier lives the importance of planning for housing that is suitable to meet their needs is key. With that, the SHMA 2023 looks to identify the type of future demand for older persons housing.
- 10.2 The NPPF paragraph 63 requires that when establishing housing need, the size, type, and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. This should include older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care, and care homes).
- 10.3 This reflects a specific concern identified by the Government that they are prioritising sufficient housing supply for an ageing population and in this context specifically support the provision of housing for older people.
- 10.4 Planning policy guidance defines specialist accommodation for older people as:
- Retirement living or sheltered housing (also referred to as Housing with Support): This 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.
 - Extra care housing (also referred to as Enhanced Sheltered) or housing-with-care: This 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 known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.
 - Residential care homes and nursing homes: These have 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.

- 10.5 The SHMA 2023 uses the Housing Learning and Improvement Network model (Housing LIN) SHOP resource pack methodology (2012) to apply a population forecast and then applies a benchmark need for housing types per thousand people aged 75+).
- 10.6 The population projections underlying the Local Housing Need figure for Stevenage show a substantial increase in the older population during the period 2022-2031. The population aged 75+ is likely to increase by around 7,131 persons in Stevenage based on providing the number of homes needed to meet the local housing need.

Figure 9. Projected population aged 75+ for Stevenage (Source: LHN dwelling-led population projections)

	75-84	85+	TOTAL
2022	4,733	2,138	6,871
2031	5,756	2,463	8,219
CHANGE	+1,022	+325	+1,348

Figure 10. Existing Stock of Specialist Older Person Housing for Stevenage (Source: EAC 2015)

Property Type	Owned	Rented	TOTAL
Housing with support	84	1,039	1,123
Housing with care	0	95	95
TOTAL	84	1,134	1,218

Figure 11. Demand for Older Person Housing in Stevenage based on Housing LIN Toolkit

		Rate per 1,000 persons aged 75+	Gross need 2022	Existing supply	Unmet need in 2022	Additional need 2022-31	Overall need
Sheltered Housing	Owned	120	825	84	+741	+162	+902
	Rented	60	412	1,039	-627	+81	-546
Extra Care	Owned	40	275	0	+275	+54	+329
	Rented	31	213	95	+118	+42	+160
TOTAL		251	1,725	1,218	507	+338	+845

- 10.7 The SHMA 2023 identifies that if current rates of provision were to continue, a further 238 specialist older person dwellings would be required in Stevenage. However, using aspirational national models the figure could be as high as 845 units in Stevenage. Therefore, there is a very wide range of potential levels of need for specialist older person housing.

- 10.8 It is worth pointing out that the model also assumes Older People will aspire to these types of specialist housing in the future. While demand for some types of housing is already in a decline, it leaves scope for newer types of housing provision which may suite changing aspirations. This raises the importance of¹⁷ providing more suitable accommodation to allow residents to live in their own home for as long as reasonably possible. This reduces the cost implications associated with managing more intensive residential care often necessitated by those in general housing no longer being able to live independently. ¹⁸
- 10.9 In practice, the level of delivery identified is likely to be unachievable given that it represents almost half of the overall local housing need based on the standard method. However, it is important to recognise that the provision of dedicated older person housing schemes will form an important part of the overall housing mix.
- 10.10 The Viability Assessment 2024 confirms ‘older persons’ accommodation is less viable than general needs accommodation due to the higher marketing costs, longer sales periods, reduced building efficiency and higher base build costs. The appraisals have shown that older persons’ housing is unviable with the Council’s affordable housing Policy HO7 at 30% on greenfield / 25% on brownfield, and all fixed policy costs sought in the Partial Review & Update and Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 10.11 The assessment recommends the Council may need to be more flexible in their approach to affordable housing and policy contributions on this type of accommodation.
- 10.12 To date, the Council has secured development for a 72 bed residential care home on Land West of Stevenage and Planning Permission 23/00954/FPM for the Oval neighbourhood centre which proposal includes replacement accommodation for the construction of 91 dwellings and shared communal facilities for Independent Living.

Housing for People with Disabilities

- 10.13 In addition to the SHMA 2023, the Stevenage Private Sector Stock Condition report uses the national English Housing Survey together with data about relative levels of limiting long term illness and disability in Stevenage to estimate the number of households likely to require adaptations or needing to move to a more suitable home in the housing market area.
- 10.14 The Government’s reform of Health and Adult Social Care is underpinned by a principle of sustaining people at home for as long as possible. In July 2022, the government issued their response to a consultation ran in 2020 on the future of accessibility standards.

¹⁷ National strategy emphasises Older People being able to remain in their own homes for as long as possible rather than specialist provision, so future need may, again, be overstated.

¹⁸ Previously, local authorities were required to assess the need to M4(2) accessible homes in their local area and develop policies to deliver these the properties. The government are now proposing that all homes be delivered to M4(2) standard.

10.15 Three standards are covered:

- M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings – Mandatory, broadly about accessibility to ALL properties
- M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings – Optional, similar to Lifetime Homes
- M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings – Optional, equivalent to wheelchair accessible standard.

10.16 In July 2022, the Government issued their response to a consultation ran in 2020 on the future of accessibility standards. Paragraph 73 of the response concluded that:

Government proposes that the most appropriate way forward is to mandate the current M4(2) (Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum standard for all new homes – option 2 in the consultation. M4(1) will apply by exception only, where M4(2) is impractical and unachievable (as detailed below). Subject to a further consultation on the draft technical details, we will implement this change in due course with a change to building regulations¹⁹.

10.17 The Government are now proposing that all homes be delivered to M4(2) standard and therefore this evidence is no longer required but an assessment is still required for M4(3) which covers wheelchair adapted and adaptable homes.

10.18 Furthermore, Paragraph 74 states that:

M4(3) (Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings) would continue as now where there is a local planning policy in place in which a need has been identified and evidenced. Local authorities will need to continue to tailor the supply of wheelchair user dwellings to local demand.

10.19 Amongst those households where it does affect housing needs, 3,000 households are already living in a suitable home (having moved or made adaptations) in Stevenage. This leaves 304 households needing adaptations to their current home and 326 households needing to move to a more suitable home. The 326 households needing to move represent an existing unmet need either for M4(2) housing or, given that some may actually be wheelchair users, for M4(3) housing.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes/outcome/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes-summary-of-consultation-responses-and-government-response#government-response>.

10.20 As well as considering the current need for adapted homes, it is also necessary to consider how new needs will arise in the future and in what age ranges the need will arise.

Figure 12. illustrates households with a long-term illness or disability in Stevenage in 2021 by effect on housing need.

	TOTAL
Households with one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness or disability	11,369
Does not affect their housing need	8,019
Current home suitable for needs	2,707
Current home requires adaptation	318
Need to move to a more suitable home	326
Total households where a limiting long-term illness or disability affects their	3,351

10.21 Data from the Census shows that there were around 11,000 households living in Stevenage in 2022 containing one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness or disability. For the vast majority of this group, their limiting long-term condition has no impact upon their health needs or has already been addressed through adaptations within their existing homes. However, some households either need to move from their current home to an adapted one or need to adapt their current home. Of this group, around 304 households need adaptations to their current home and **326** households need to move to a more suitable home. A further group of over 1,500 households will require to either adapt their home or move to an adapted dwelling before 2031.

Housing for Wheelchair Users

10.22 The Council has considered the need for housing for wheelchair users. The evidence²⁰ provides an assessment of wheelchair accessible housing as a future need.

10.23 Building Regulations for M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings state that reasonable provision should be made for people to gain access to and use the facilities of the dwelling²¹ and that:

“The provision made must be sufficient to - (a) allow simple adaptation of the dwelling to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs, or; (b) to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs.” (Page 23)

²⁰ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2023

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-regulations-guide-to-available-disability-data>.

10.24 The SHMA 2023 identifies the proportion of households in Stevenage likely to have a wheelchair user by the age of the household representative and considers population projections and health demographics of Stevenage. Figure 13 analysis is broken down by house type and age of household:

Figure 13. Age of Household by housing type

Housing Type	Age of Household Representative							
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Stevenage								
Market housing	< 0.1%	0.4%	1.0%	1.6%	3.0%	4.0%	6.1%	9.7%
Affordable housing	0.3%	2.1%	3.0%	6.1%	6.1%	10.3%	12.8%	20.7%

10.25 Using this data above, we can see a significant proportion of growth comes from households 65+ and overall, the number of households likely to need wheelchair adapted housing in Stevenage is likely to increase by 250 households over the 9-year period. This is **4.9%** of the total housing need in Stevenage to be built to M4(3) standard. This would suggest a need for a minimum of 5% of new dwellings to be built to M4(3) standard, but ideally a higher figure to allow for more choice in the market.

10.26 Following conclusions of the Viability Assessment 2024, the Local Plan Review and Partial Update, sets a target for Policy HO11 of 10% of dwellings within major residential developments to which Part M of the Building Regulations applies should comply with optional standard M4(3)(b) for wheelchair user dwellings, with a further 40% complying with optional standard M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings.

The Private Rented Sector

- 10.27 Consistent with national trends, Stevenage has seen a sharp growth in the private rented sector.
- 10.28 Growth in the sector seems likely to continue, driven by a combination of demand and supply factors:
- Increasing demand from more households;
 - Recent reductions in incomes (in real terms);
 - Affordability of owner occupation reducing;
 - Changing bank lending practices;
 - The impact of inheritance and the difficulties involved in selling properties;
 - Pensions reform: pension drawdowns invested in Buy to Loan (BTL) property.
- 10.29 On this basis, the number of households renting privately could double again over the next twenty years in Stevenage. With many households residing in the private rented sector who aspire to home ownership, lower cost market sale properties could be provided for this group and would help reduce the size of the private rented sector.
- 10.30 However, delivering low-cost market homes (First Homes) or other affordable to own properties could impact upon viability. Consequently, the affordable to own properties could displace affordable to rent properties, which would see the private rented sector continue to grow.
- 10.31 As set out in paragraph 9.6 – 9.10 the Viability Assessment 2024, confirm the combined costs of the Local Plan Partial Review and Update policy requirements and CIL contributions will need to be balanced to ensure that development within Stevenage remains viable and deliverable.

People Wishing to Build Their Own Homes

10.32 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act defines self-build and custom-build housing as:

“the building or completion by individuals, associations of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals... [but] does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.”

10.33 Stevenage have put arrangements in place to comply with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act²², including providing a self-build and custom housebuilding register²³.

Figure 14. Total number of registered applicants 2016 to October 2024

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register and Plot Provision	Oct 2016	Oct 2017	Oct 2018	Oct 2019	Oct 2020	Oct 2022	Oct 2023
	Oct 2017	Oct 2018	Oct 2019	Oct 2020	Oct 2021	Oct 2023	Oct 2024
New applicants on the register	3	6	1	2	2	0	1
Total number on register - registrations	4	10	11	12	14	14	7
Planning permissions for serviced plots granted	0	0	0	0	0	4	8

10.34 Policy SP7 requires 1% of all new homes on large urban extensions to be self-build.

10.35 Since October 2022, the Council has worked proactively with house builders in Stevenage to increase the number of serviced plots available. Data shows a total of 12 serviced plots available between October 2022 and October 2024. This includes 8 plots scheduled for delivery as part of the Council’s strategic site North Stevenage. The Council further expect Land West of Stevenage to provide self-build plots as part of the development over the next 5 years.

10.36 However, the level of interest has tailed off significantly since the register was introduced. As of October 2024 there are a total of 7 applicants on Part 1 of the self-build register.

²² Housing and Planning Act 2016

²³ Planning Practice Guidance, ID: 67-003-20190722

10.37 This means the Council needs to deliver 33 self build homes up to the end of the Local Plan period to 2031. Over the 5 year period this equates to a total of 28 units.

10.38 In line with Policy SP7 the Council is required to deliver a further 21 units up to 2031 and 16 units over the next 5 years..

11.0 FIRST HOMES

- 11.1 The Government have placed an emphasis on households that cannot afford to own their home, reflecting concerns that the proportion of owner occupiers has reduced nationally over the last ten to fifteen years.
- 11.2 First Homes was introduced in May 2021 as a specific form of discounted market sale housing. Critically, First Homes fall under the definition of 'affordable housing' as established in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out that where a need for affordable housing is identified, policies should specify the type of affordable housing required.
- 11.3 The SHMA 2023 identifies that there is an additional need from households that can afford market rents but aspire to home ownership.
- 11.4 Under the existing NPPF, First Homes are presently the Government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations (i.e., S106 agreements).

Policy Issues for First Homes

- 11.5 The SHMA 2023 concludes that house prices are below the £250,000 price cap for 1 and 2-bedroom First Homes in Stevenage with a 30% discount. It would require a 50% discount to allow for 3-bedroom properties under First Homes. However, a 50% discount would impact wider viability.
- 11.6 The SHMA 2023 noted that potentially far more households would aspire to own their own home while being able to afford private rent, but lack income or savings to access First Homes. If a suitably priced Rent to Buy, or Shared Ownership product can be developed then they may move from a market need for private rent to an affordable housing need.
- 11.7 Whilst it will be a policy decision as to how much of the additional need for affordable homeownership from households able to afford market rent should be provided, the SHMA 2023 advises it would seem appropriate to only plan for the needs of those **312 households** in Stevenage likely to form an effective demand.

11.8 Based on the evidence of demand for First Homes (14.75%) the tenure mix for affordable housing under Policy HO7 of the Local Plan Partial Review and Update the tenure mix will be as follows:

- 25% First Homes
- 70% Rent
- 5% the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing team

11.9 The Council conclude First Homes will be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value in line with the SHMA 2023 recommendations along with the 'Eligibility Criteria' which will be reflected in the Stevenage Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.

12.0 FIVE YEAR LAND SUPPLY

- 12.1 As part of maintaining our affordable and market housing needs during the duration of the Local Plan, the Council is required to identify deliverable housing sites for the next five years 2024 – 2029).
- 12.2 A 5 year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time of the conclusion of its examination is one of the criteria under paragraph 76 of the National Planning Policy Framework which a plan must meet in order for a local authority to not be required to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply for the purposes of decision-making.
- 12.3 In order to determine the number of sites likely to come forward as windfall delivery, the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Update June 2015 (SHLAA) set out that since the start of the plan period 2011, an average of 20 net dwellings per year had been completed. Residential garden development was excluded from these calculations.
- 12.4 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 72 states:
- Where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the strategic housing land availability assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.*
- 12.5 A review was undertaken of the average number of windfall sites completed since the start of the adopted Local Plan 2019. Historic windfall delivery rates during 01 April 2019 – 31 March 2024 show the Council has delivered 631 dwellings on windfall sites. This is significantly higher than the adopted Local Plan 2019 allowance of 20 units per annum.
- 12.6 As set out earlier, the Stevenage Local Plan is now over 5 years old. The Local Plan Partial Review and Update will be assessed against a new target of **3,290** homes up to the end of the Local Plan period 2031.

Annualised requirement – 3,290 target includes

$7 \text{ years} \times 470 = 3,948 + (20\% \text{ buffer over the remaining } 7 \text{ years plan period } 2024 - 2031)$

- 12.7 The total 5 year housing land supply requirement is 2,820 as follows:

Annualised requirement – 2,350 target includes

$5 \text{ years} \times 470 = 2,350 + 20\% \text{ buffer} = 2,820$

- 12.8 The Council's 5 year land supply in Appendix A show the Council can demonstrate a supply over the next 5 years **(8.29 years)** to meet future demand. This includes a windfall allowance of 20 units per annum. However, recent evidence suggests 20 units is below the historic windfall housing delivery between 2019 – 2024.
- 12.9 Data taken from the Council Council's shared database SMARTHerts demonstrate during the period April 2019 to May 2024 the Council's windfall housing commitments totalled 1,323. The expected future windfall housing commitments show that during the period October 2024 to March 2031 the Council's windfall housing commitments total 3,034 units.
- 12.10 This means during the next five years, the housing delivery on windfall sites is capable of increasing significantly above 20 units per annum.
- 12.11 Appendix B sets out how delivery will be achieved, reflects the timing of the delivery of larger and more complex sites in Stevenage, and the impact on the rate and quantum of housing delivery.
- 12.12 The trajectory also demonstrates a supply of 1,651 new homes beyond the 5 year land supply. However, Appendix B does not take into account new planning commitments granted beyond November 2024.
- 12.13 In order to ascertain past trends on housing commitments, the Council undertook a review of housing commitments granted between the adoption of the Local Plan 2019 up to May 2024 when the plan reached 5 years old.
- 12.14 Data taken from the Councils shared monitoring database SMARTHerts demonstrate, during the 5 year period, the Council's windfall housing commitments totalled 1,323.
- 12.15 Given the Council's windfall completion rates set out in paragraph 11.8 achieved over 600 new homes, the result provides some indication of what could likely be secured in addition to the existing supply.
- 12.16 The Local Plan includes a number of key projects with forecast completions in phases from late 2025. Land North of Stevenage is expected to start to deliver completions from 2025 onwards. West of Stevenage, SG1: Phase 1, Matalan Unit B-C and Land at Lytton Way are expected deliver completions from 2026 onwards. Phase 2 of SG1 and West Stevenage are expected to start delivering completions from late 2027. On the 13 November 2024 Land to the West of Stevenage for 1500 homes was granted detailed planning permission for 390 new homes of which 117 are to be affordable.

12.17 There are also certain areas of Stevenage that are not suitable for re-development due to the its built form being mainly two-storey terraced houses. To densify these areas for large development would be seen as harmful. For this reason, the Council has focussed on growth in the town centre, neighbourhood centres and greenfield sites.

12.18 Collectively these larger, complex sites will deliver an increase in the annual average delivery rates than that seen in the early part of the plan period.

Root Causes of earlier under delivery

12.19 As set out in the Council's Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2022 and May 2024 provide additional root causes of under delivery in Stevenage during the early part of the plan period are as follows:

- A low level of applications were submitted in 2019 when the Council held the Examination in Public for the emerging Local Plan.
- The Council remains dependent on several large strategic sites to meet its housing targets.
- Larger developments require extended lead times to finalise and agree on planning obligations, especially when aiming for high-quality standards.
- The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing delivery and the economic uncertainty from 2020 to 2022 led to developers being more cautious about advancing projects during that time.
- Housing completions by private developers in the borough mean the Council must rely on developers' build-out rates, which are often aligned with market demand rather than the Council's housing targets.
- The affordability of homes for purchase was a significant issue relative to the average income in Stevenage during 2020-2022.
- The housing market faced increasing uncertainty in 2022 as interest rates were set to rise. Typically, higher interest rates cause house prices to drop to balance monthly payments, which not only affects mortgaged properties but also reduces the number of potential buyers during uncertain periods. This shift led developers to focus on market conditions rather than the Council's housing targets.

- 12.20 As part of the latest measures to address future delivery the Council is looking to submit a number of sites forward to the “New Homes Accelerator Programme” in order to help boost delivery; however, there is no guarantee there would be follow up or Government Support in relation to these sites²⁴.
- 12.21 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) introduced by Central Government is an annual measurement of whether local authorities are delivering sufficient houses to meet their identified housing needs. This looks at the past three years of housing delivery measured against the last three years housing delivery requirement. Prior to the Local Plan Partial Review and Update Stevenage’s housing target was 1,140 homes over a three year period equal to 380 units each year. As set out in paragraph 5.4 the annual housing need figure has now increased (470 per annum) and will be measured against the NPPF standard method 2023.
- 12.22 Our housing trajectory (Appendix C) shows that the Council has sufficient deliverable sites to meet the LHN assessed under the standard method.
- 12.23 Appendix D sets out details of sites identified in the Local Plan 2019 which are developable but not deliverable.
- 12.24 To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within 5 years. In particular:
- b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within 5 years.*
- 12.25 Developable sites are defined in the NPPF as sites which are in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. The Viability Assessment 2024 tested each site in Appendix D against the Local Plan Partial Review and Update policies that will impose a direct cost to development and which is reflected in the appraisals, including the following:
- Policy HO7 - Affordable housing
 - Policy SP5 & Policy SP12 - Biodiversity net gain
 - Policy SP5 – Infrastructure contributions, including S1064
 - Policy HO11 - Housing accessibility standards M4(2) and M4(3)(b)
 - Policy CC3 - Water efficiency
 - Policy CC1 – Energy efficiency
 - Policy FP1 – Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)
 - Policy NH5b – Tree-lined streets

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-homes-accelerator-programme>

12.26 Affordable housing has been tested at the relevant levels set out in Policy HO7, at a tenure split of 70% affordable rent; 25% First Homes and 5% intermediate / shared ownership.

12.27 The prospects of delivery of the developable sites has been assessed as follows:

Prospects for future development within 5 Years	Number of dwellings
Good	0
Moderate	1780
Difficult	245
TOTAL	2025

12.28 Sites estimated to be moderately capable of delivery over the next 5 years total 1780 dwellings and 245 on sites considered to be 'difficult' to develop. The Council has excluded all such sites from its deliverable supply, but there is a reasonable prospect that at least some will contribute to supply during the remainder of the plan period.

Appendix A

FIVE YEAR HOUSING SUPPLY CALCULATION

5 Year Housing Supply 2024 – 2029

Standard Method for Calculating Housing Need		
Five Year Housing Supply Calculation		
A.	Objectively Assessed Need (dwellings per year)	470
B.	Local Plan Period (Years) April 2024 - 31 March 2031	7
C.	Adopted Housing Target 2011-2031 (A x B)	3290
D.	Completions 1 Apr 2024 – 31 Mar 2025	0
E.	Target 1 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2024	4940
F.	Shortfall against target at 31 Mar 2024 (E – D)	0
G.	Target 1 Apr 2024 – 31 Mar 2029	2350
H.	Surplus / Shortfall to be delivered in 5yr period (F / 5)	0
I.	Buffer to be applied (20%) based on 2022 consequence	20%
J.	Total 5yr requirement ((G + H) + I)	2820
K.	Dwellings for sites under construction	1595
L.	Dwellings granted permission or prior approval	1627
M.	Dwellings granted outline permission or subject to S106	1292
N.	Other dwellings considered 'deliverable'	50
O.	Dwellings from Windfall sites	100
P.	Total deliverable dwellings (supply) 1 Apr 2024 – 31 Mar 2029 (K + L + M + N + O)	4664
Q.	Surplus of dwellings (P – J)	1,844
R.	Total Years Housing Supply ((P / J) x 5)	8.29

Appendix B

TOTAL SUPPLY OF DELIVERABLE HOUSING IDENTIFIED

Total supply of deliverable housing identified October 2024. Totals include a 50% deduction for permissions under 10 units.

Total supply of deliverable housing identified	October 2024
Total Number of Dwellings for Sites Under Construction	1,595
Total Number of Dwellings for Sites with Detailed Planning Permission	1,575
Total Number of Dwellings for Sites with Prior Notification	52
Total Number of Dwellings for Sites with Outline Permission	1,292
Total Number of Dwellings for other 'Deliverable' Sites	50
Total Number of Dwellings for Windfall Sites	100
Total Identified Supply	4,644

Housing delivery 2024 - 2031

Monitoring year ending...	Affordable units	2024-2029					Total	2030-2031						
		2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029		2029/2030	2030/2031	2031/2032	2032/2033	2033/2034	2034/2035	
Sites with detailed planning permission	496 AF	16	373	670	390	168	1,617	30						
Sites with prior notification		0	49	8	0	0	57							
Sites with outline permission / subject to s106	450 AF	0	89	180	390	635	1,294	180	180	180	349	242	490	
Sites under construction	92 AF	140	600	431	232	192	1595							
'Deliverable' housing sites		0	0	0	0	50	50							
Outstanding C2 Developments		2	5	0	0	0	7							
Windfall Allowance		20	20	20	20	20	100							
		178	1,136	1,309	1,032	1,065	4,720	210	180	180	349	242	490	
50% deducted from permissions proposing under 10 units		56						1261						
Total 4720 - 56 = 4664														

Housing trajectory 2024 - 2031

A	B	C	D	E	F	H
Plan years	Annual Housing requirement	Buffer each year (20%)	Total Annual housing (B+C)	Total housing to be delivered including windfall allowance (20 dwellings per year)	Land Supply Year	Total supply delivered – housing need (+ exceeds need)
2024 - 2025	470	94	564	178	1	-386
2025 - 2026	470	94	564	1136	2	+186
2026 - 2027	470	94	564	1309	3	+931
2027 - 2028	470	94	564	1032	4	+1399
2028 - 2029	470	94	564	1065	5	+1900
2029 - 2030	470			210		
2030 - 2031	470			180		
2031 - 2032				180		
2032 -2033				349		
2033 - 2034				242		
2034 - 2035				490		
5 year land supply (01 April 2024 – 31 st March 2029)				4664		

Appendix C – Sites with detailed planning permission

Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Affordable units	Land types	2024-2029					2030-2031		
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2030	2031	
Planning Permission	Sites with detailed planning permission										
06/00301/FP	11 Walkern Road (Pond Close), Stevenage	12		PDL			6	6			
21/00709/FP	69 Whitney Drive, Stevenage, SG1 4BH	1		PDL		1					
21/01229/FP	Land Adjacent To 81 Turpins Rise, Stevenage, SG2 8QZ	2	Amenity Land								
22/00266/NMA	12, Hollyshaws, Stevenage, SG2 8NZ	1		PDL							
22/00287/FP	14 Penn Road, Stevenage, SG1 1HY	4		PDL			4				
22/00343/FP	11, Manor View, Stevenage, SG2 8PD	4		PDL			3 units gained				
22/00344/FP	22 Greydells Road, Stevenage, SG1 3NJ	3		PDL			3				
22/00465/FP	37 Colestrete, Stevenage, SG1 1RB	1	Garden development				1				
22/00982/FP	14 North Road	7		PDL			3	4			
22/00688/FP	35, Rookwood Drive, Stevenage, SG2 8PH	1	Garden development			1					
22/00826/FP	2-8 Queensway, Stevenage, SG1 1BS	2		PDL		2					
22/00864/FP	17 Fox Road, Stevenage, SG1 1JD	1	Garden development			1					
21/00704/RM	MKG Motor Group Ltd, Chells Way, Stevenage, SG2 0LZ	9		PDL							
21/00819/FP	29 - 31 Orchard Road, Stevenage, SG1 3HE	7		PDL			7				
21/01002/FPM	Unit 11, The Forum Centre, The Forum, Town Centre, Stevenage, SG1 1ES	224	Affordable (224 Btr). Unlikely to come forward	PDL							
21/00944/FPM	HO1/4: Dunn Close garage court	1	6 AF units classified as dwellings. 21 units divide by 1.8 = 12 units + 6 = 18 units	PDL			18				
21/00819/FP	29-31 Orchard Road	7		PDL		7					
19/00743/FPM	SG1: Phase 1 (AKA Plot A) + Phase 1K	760	6 AF	PDL			264	397	99		
16/00482/FM Spd by 20/00624/FPM	Six Hills House	64		PDL			20	20	24		
22/00437/FPM	HO1/3: Burwell Road NC 10A and 10B Burwell Road	20	20 Affordable flats	PDL					18		
23/00719/FP	30 Whitesmead Road, Stevenage, SG1 3JZ	1		PDL			1				
23/00186/FP	23 Essex Road	5	4 Net units	PDL				4			
23/00226/FP	203 Valley Way	1	Garden development					1			
23/00266/FP	2 Benstede	1	Garden development					1			
23/00298/FP	Tarrant Court, Ingleside Drive	2		PDL			2				
23/00238/FP	Land adj. to 73 Pankhurst Crescent	1		PDL			1				
23/00889/FP	33 Julians Road	6		PDL				6			
23/00908/FP	Garages G001 - G026, Hydeau Way	4		PDL				4			
23/00945/FP	Symonds Lodge, Symonds Green Lane	1		PDL			1				
23/00966/FP	Land to the rear of 48, 49 and 50 Conifer Walk,	2	Garden development					2			
23/00432/FP	11 Highstreet	1		PDL				1			
23/00472/CP	Land Between 146 & 225 Hopton Road	1	Garden development					1			
24/00376/RM	Garage Block 31 - 49 Spring Drive Stevenage Herts SG2 8AZ	3		PDL				3			
23/00517/FP	108 High Street Stevenage Herts SG1 3DW	1		PDL			1				
24/00259/FP	2 Benstede Stevenage Herts SG2 8JL	1		PDL				1			
24/00409/FP	30 High Street Stevenage Herts SG1 3AU	1		PDL				1			
24/00447/FP	110 Ely Close Stevenage	1		PDL				1			
22/00377/FPM	Stewart House	21		PDL			10	11			
24/00047/FPM	Walpole Court	24	6 AF	PDL				24			
24/00058/FPM	Land at Redcar Drive, Stevenage	38	12 AF	PDL					38		
22/00966/FPM	224-230 Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage	57		PDL				20	37		
22/00806/RMM	HO3: Land North of Stevenage (Phase 1D)	115	102					85	30		
23/00890/RMM	HO3: Land North of Stevenage (Phase 2)	442	138				23	168	83	138	
	Subtotal	1,860	284 AF				16	373	670	390	168
90 units (under 10 units) - 50% = 45 units to be deducted from total							2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Based on past experience, SBC assumes 50% delivery							16	373	670	390	168
							Total 1,617 - 45 = 1572				

Sites with prior approval

Monitoring year ending...	Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Land types	2024-2029					2030-2031	
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2030	2031
Sites with prior notification										
21/00820/CPA	Bank House, Primett Road, Stevenage, SG1 3EE	24	PDL		24					
21/00843/CPA	50, High Street, Stevenage, SG1 3EF	2 (not likely to come forward)	PDL							
23/00578/CPA	62 - 80 Queensway And Forum Chambers, Town Centre, Stevenage, SG1 1EE	23	PDL		23					
24/00575/CPA	14 The Grange High Street Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 3WA	1	PDL		1					
24/00403/CPA	31A Queensway Town Centre Stevenage Herts SG1 1DA	8	PDL			8				
23/00038/CPA	166A High Street	1	PDL		1					
	Subtotal	24		0	49	8	0	0		
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029		
				0	49	8	0	0		
				Total 57 - 5 = 52						
10 units (under 10 units) - 50% = 5 units to be deducted from total										

Site with outline / subject to S106

	Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)		Land types	2024-2029					2030-2031		2032	2033	2034	2035
					2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2030	2031				
Planning Permission	Sites with outline permission / subject to s106														
21/00356/FPM	HO2: Land West of Stevenage - Phase 1	390	450 AF units on overall scheme (117 in Phase 1)	Greenfield sites outside urban area		89	180	121							
	SG1 - Phase 2 (Plot B)	172		PDL				34	138						
22/00965/FPM	HO1/15: Shephall view 230 Bedwell Crescent (Shephall View) 24 -	57		Greenfield sites outside urban area					57						
21/01283/FPM	North Car Park, Six Hills Way (Land adj to Six Hills House)	94		PDL											
22/00963/FPM	Brent Court	96		PDL					96						
	HO2: Land West of Stevenage - Phases 2-4	110		Greenfield sites outside urban area				59	180	180	180	180	177	100	54
19/00743/FPM	SG1 Phase 3 (Plots F & G)	185		PDL											
	SG1 Phase 4 (C, E and H)	750		PDL									172	142	436
HO1/18	HO1/18: The Oval neighbourhood centre	264		PDL				100	164						
24/00196/OP	Land To South Of Chantry Farm Old Chantry Lane Todds Green	5		Greenfield sites outside urban area				5							
23/00502/FPM	58 - 90 Queensway & Forum Chambers	71		PDL				71							
Subtotal		2,346	225		0	89	180	390	635	180	180	180	349	242	490
					0										
					2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029						
					0	89	180	390	635						
					Total 1294 - 2 = 1292										

Sites under construction

Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Affordable units	Land Type	2024-2029					2030-2031	
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2030	2031
Planning Permission	Sites under construction									
17/00846/FP	12 Park Place, Town Centre, Stevenage, SG1 1DP	9		PDL					9	
18/00234/FP	Boots High Street	6		PDL		6				
20/00736/FPM	HO1/9: The Bragbury Centre, Kenilworth Close, Stevenage, SG2 8TB	169	118 AF - 65 remaining to be built	PDL	10	30	50			
13/00599/FP	Land Between, 7A And 11 North Road, Stevenage,	1		PDL				1		
19/00463/FP	Land Adjacent To, 21 Whomerley Road, Stevenage,	1		PDL		1				
21/01366/FPM	Stamford House, Primett Road, Stevenage, SG1 3EE	11		PDL			11			
22/00695/FP	12, High Street, Stevenage, SG1 3EJ	1		PDL			1			
22/00982/FP	14, North Road, Stevenage, SG1 4AL	7		PDL			6			
20/00643/RMM	Matalan Unit B-C, Danestrete, Stevenage	526		PDL		143	100	100	183	
22/00684/FP	Land adj, 12 Lower Sean, Stevenage, SG2 9XN	1		Garden development	1					
20/00624/FPM	North Park Corner of, Six Hills Way And London Road, Stevenage, SG1 1ST	64		PDL			35	29		
21/00847/FP	HO1/2 Car Park Bragbury End Sports Ground, Aston Lane, Stevenage	5		PDL			5			
19/00474/FPM	Land To The West Of Lytton Way	576	52 AF	PDL		264	210	102		
21/00971/FPM	Courtlands, Todds Green, Stevenage, SG1 2JE	17		PDL		7	10			
21/00328/FP	4, Shackleton Spring, Stevenage, SG2 9DF	1		PDL		1				
21/00057/FP	Land Between Watercress Close Coopers Close And Walnut Tree Close SG2 9TN	2		Greenfield site inside urban area		2				
23/00526/RMM	HO3: Land North of Stevenage (Phase 1A-C)	243		Greenfield site outside urban area	98	145				
20/00682/FPM	Land to W of A1 (M) and, South Of Stevenage Road, Todds Green	133	40 AF	Greenfield site outside urban area	31					
23/00637/FP	Land opposite 25 and 26 St.Albans Drive	3		Public amenity space			3			
23/00615/FP	Land Adjacent To 68 Stirling Close	1		Garden development		1				
Subtotal		1,777	92 AF		140	600	431	232	192	

2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
140	600	431	232	192
Total 1595				

Deliverable housing sites

	Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Land types	2024-2029					2030-2031	
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2030	2031
Planning Permission	'Deliverable' housing sites									
	HO1/6: Former Pin Green School playing field	50	Greenfield sites within urban area					50		
	Subtotal	50		0	0	0	0	50		
				2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029		
				0	0	0	0	50		
				Total 50						

Outstanding C2 development

Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Land types	2023-2028					2029-2031			
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2029	2030	2031	
Planning Permission	Outstanding C2 Developments										
20/00226/FP	112 High Street, Stevenage, SG1 3DW	1	PDL		1						
20/00599/FP	14, Brick Kiln Road, Stevenage, SG1 2NH	1	PDL		1						
21/01359/FP	201, Chertsey Rise, Stevenage, SG2 9JF	1	PDL		1						
22/00154/FP	185 Jessop Road, Stevenage, SG1 5LR	1	PDL	1							
23/00762/FP	Oak Lodge, Rectory Lane, Stevenage		PDL		2						
22/00154/FP	185 Jessop Road, Stevenage, SG1 5LR	1	PDL	1							
Subtotal	5			2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 units (under 10 units) - 50% = 4 units to be deducted from total											
Based on past experience, SBC assumes 50% delivery											
				2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027			
				2	5	0	0	0			
				Total 7							

Windfall allowance

Monitoring year ending...	Site Total (net)	Land types	2023-2028					2029-2031			
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2029	2030	2031	
Windfall Allowance											
	100										
Subtotal			20	20	20	20	20				
			2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028				
			0	20	20	20	20				
			Total	100							

Appendix D

Developable sites not including in 5 year land supply

Remaining Housing Allocations						
Reference	Sites	Dwelling capacity (net)	Land types	Viability Results 2024	Prospects for future development	Deliverable / Developable
HO1/1	Bedwell Crescent neighbourhood centre	45	PDL	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO1/6	Former Pin Green school playing field	42	Greenfield sites within urban area	Viable against new policies	Difficult	Developable
HO1/7	Fry Road day nursery	6	PDL	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO1/8	Ken Brown car showroom	36	PDL	Viable against new policies	Difficult	Developable
HO1/11	Land West of North Road (Rugby Club)	149	Greenfield site outside urban area	Viable against new policies	Difficult	Developable
HO1/12	Marymead neighbourhood centre	60	PDL	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO1/13	Scout hut, Drakes Drive	18	PDL	Viable against new policies	Difficult	Developable
HO1/14	Shephall Centre and adj. amenity land	34	Greenfield site within urban area	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO1/16	The Glebe neighbourhood centre	35	PDL	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO1/17	The Hyde neighbourhood centre	50	PDL	Viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
HO4	South East of Stevenage	550	Greenfield site outside urban area	Marginally viable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
TC4	Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area	1000	PDL	Unviable against new policies	Moderate	Developable
Total Remaining Dwelling Capacity		2025				