



Wiltshire Local Plan

Housing Delivery Paper incl. trajectories 2023

September 2023

Wiltshire Council

Housing Delivery

Introduction

This document addresses three questions:

1. How the plan makes provision for housing development – what are the different sources of land supply

The Plan contains several development proposals for residential development, but these are just one source from where new homes will be built over the plan period 2020 to 2038. This document describes the different ways housing will be provided.

2. How the plan ensures a sufficient rate and scale of housing over the plan period

The National Planning Policy Framework places a considerable importance on housebuilders having a steady supply of deliverable sites for development over the plan period. The plan must have a degree of contingency and flexibility.

3. How planning can help to provide for the various types of housing needs, including for affordable housing

Equally important to delivering the number of new homes needed over the plan period, the Plan must also provide for different housing needs. Much is left to the market and house builders to determine and the role of the plan is to ensure a good range of sites in locations that can provide a mix and choice of dwelling types.

A main task of the plan is, however, is to contribute to the supply of affordable homes in the tenures sought by local communities, whether rented, shared equity or first homes. A significant proportion of housing needs over the plan period will also be needed to meet specialist types of dwelling, such as those for the elderly and disabled.

Sources of housing land supply

- 1.1 National planning policy requires the council to manage the release of land for housing development to maintain a continuous supply of land for house building (see section on 'Managing housing land supply' below). This section sets out the sources of housing land supply and summarises the evidence on which they are based.
- 1.2 Since the plan period is from 2020 a number of homes have already been built. A proportion of the land needed to meet housing needs already has planning permission or has been identified in allocations in existing plans, including neighbourhood plans.

These existing commitments are kept under review to check they can still be relied upon. Policies contain measures that plan the remaining homes that need to be planned for; the 'residual requirement'.

- 1.3 The total housing requirement over the whole plan period 2020 to 2038, 36,740 dwellings is set out in Policy 1. The residual requirement for the County is under half this amount, approximately 14,780 dwellings.
- 1.4 The Plan makes provision for these new homes using the following sources, beginning with those that deliver with certainty in the shorter term through to those with the ability to deliver later in the plan period.

Site allocations

- 1.5 Policies identify a site area on the policies map within which new homes will be built. A policy attached to each site allocation describes the approximate number of dwellings they accommodate. A policy will also often include other uses. The policy will also set out requirements for supporting infrastructure, mitigation measures as well as design and layout.
- 1.6 The plan also sets out the anticipated rate of development and contains a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. Ideally, most site allocations can commence within 5 years (and are termed 'deliverable'). Other, generally larger sites are more complex and will take more time (and are termed 'developable' sites). The council monitors progress in building out sites which have permission.
- 1.7 Site allocations are the result of a site selection methodology¹. Opportunities for development are put forward by landowners and house builders for consideration known as the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and the Plan has selected sites from this source only after they have been subject to sustainability appraisal², public consultation and assessment against community priorities ('place shaping priorities').

Windfall and small sites

- 1.8 A significant component of housing land supply is not identified by the plan, either because it was not known about when the plan was prepared (windfall) or is too small for it to be considered (sites of less than 10 dwellings). An overall contribution from both these sources of supply can be difficult to predict; in particular, large windfall sites.

¹ Site Selection Methodology Paper, Wiltshire Council (September 2023)

² Wiltshire Local Plan Review Sustainability Main Report, Wiltshire Council (September 2023)

- 1.9 Evidence shows larger windfall sites occur perhaps once or twice per settlement, if at all over a plan period, for example, by the redevelopment of large industrial sites. It is not possible to say that there will be a steady supply of opportunities, making an estimate based on past performance, and count on an allowance in the future. This is the case looking at a Main Settlement and also across the County as a whole. No explicit allowance for new homes is made from this source.
- 1.10 There is, however, strong evidence to show that there is a steady and predictable supply of new homes from windfall on small sites of less than ten dwellings at main settlements. Additional homes result from the conversion of buildings, sub-division and small-scale opportunities and redevelopment. Evidence gathered over the years of recording housing completions shows it is consistent and it can be calculated at a main settlement level. This supports the possibility of relying on an allowance for new homes from this source (set out in the chapter on windfall in the Housing Land Supply Statement³).
- 1.11 In the past, supply from both larger windfall and small sites (to whatever level that transpires) has been treated as an element of unplanned contingency. Describing a land supply starts from a position of not relying on any assumptions of homes being delivered from these sources. Fully meeting scales of housing growth proposed for each Principal Settlement and Market Town on site allocations, provides certainty that scales of growth will be achieved and best supports the national objective of boosting housing supply⁴.
- 1.12 The plan, however, recognises that at some main settlements the supply of greenfield sites is either severely limited (for example because of Green Belt designation) or the release of land needs to be managed particularly carefully, minimising its use so not to harm the overall sensitive character and setting to a settlement.
- 1.13 This responds to evidence gathered through the formulation of the revised spatial strategy and the site selection process. An emerging spatial strategy⁵ recognised that even at a high level some main settlements were more constrained than others and scales of growth were adjusted accordingly. These judgments were consulted on in 2021 and were broadly supported.
- 1.14 Further, more detailed, consideration of the land coming forward at each stage of the site selection methodology then demonstrated the particular sensitivity of the following settlements for the reasons set out in Figure 1:

Figure 1: constrained main settlements

Settlement	Constraints to outward urban expansion

³ Housing Land Supply Statement (HLSS) Appendix 5, Wiltshire Council (May 2023)

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 60, MHCLG (July 2021)

⁵ [Wiltshire Local Plan: Emerging Spatial Strategy, Wiltshire Council \(January 2021\)](#)

Corsham	AONB, Biodiversity and Heritage
Devizes	AONB, topography and landscape setting
Malmesbury	Historic landscape setting, flood risk and AONB
Amesbury	Archaeological potential, World Heritage Site
Salisbury	Landscape setting, archaeological potential
Marlborough	Landscape setting, topography and AONB
Bradford on Avon	Green Belt

- 1.15 At these ‘constrained settlements’ scales of growth were moderated as much as possible, but even so each one has a level of growth proposed that must balance with the need to help each community thrive and work toward local priorities.
- 1.16 Scales of growth, however, will be met factoring explicitly a forecast contribution of homes built on small sites of less than ten dwellings. This gives added protection to the character and setting of these settlements by ensuring site allocations on greenfield land, are minimised and only released when necessary.
- 1.17 However, at other less constrained settlements, where there is a greater emphasis on growth, a more generous supply of land for housing development helps to ensure that new homes are provided across the County at a sufficient scale and rate.
- 1.18 The combined total of new dwellings at these other less constrained settlements provides a sizeable contingency that supplements identified land supply. A ‘one size fits all’ approach would significantly increase a reliance upon unidentified small sites; a reliance on windfall that would detract from the need to plan positively to ensure a sufficient rate and scale of housing delivery where it is needed, meeting the needs of groups with specific housing requirements and that meets with the national objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
- 1.19 Singling out those settlements that are constrained is a judgement on the balance between the three strands of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) toward the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment selecting where greater safeguards are needed and where consequently the release of greenfield sites merits the most prudent management.

Reserve sites

- 1.20 Sites are identified on the policies map and proposed for new homes taking on a specific role as 'reserve sites'. They will only be released for development should for any reason other allocations be delayed or the contribution from small sites fail to materialise and they are required to maintain the land supply requirements set by national policy.
- 1.21 Reserve sites, like site allocations, are a result of the site selection process. They are only proposed at main settlements.
- 1.22 A policy of the Plan sets out precisely in what circumstances and under what conditions a reserve site may obtain planning permission. This is explained in more detail in the section below 'managing housing land supply'.

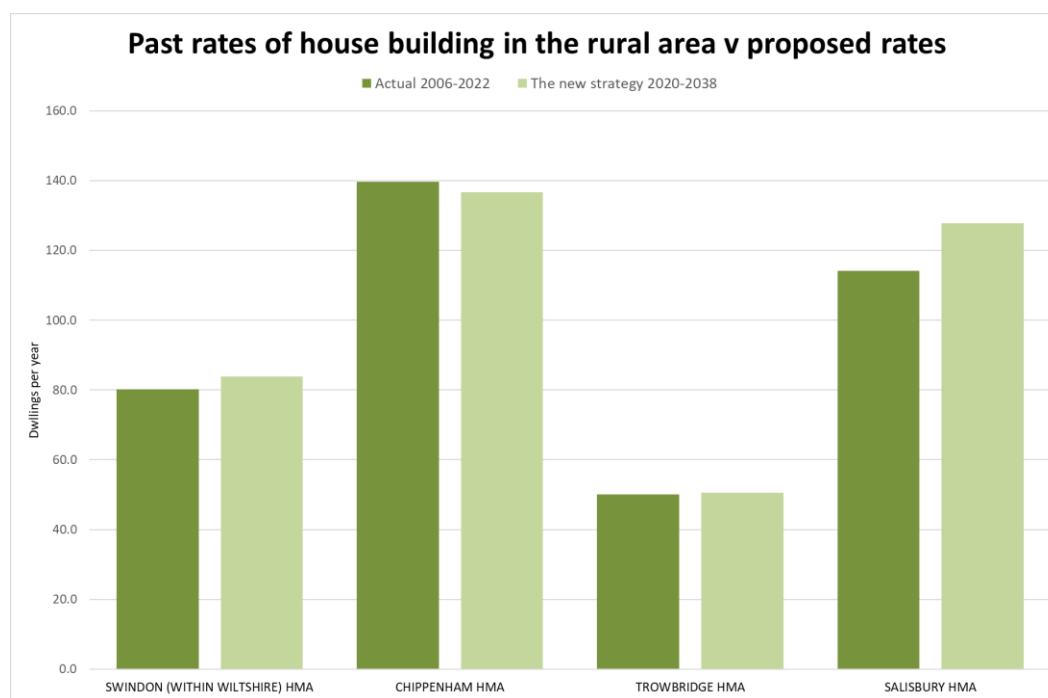
Neighbourhood planning

- 1.23 National planning policy encourages communities to develop their own local vision for their area and prepare neighbourhood plans. This includes planning positively to meet local housing needs and by allocating sites for new homes within them. By their nature neighbourhood plans are 'non-strategic' but nevertheless contribute to achieving the strategic objective of providing sufficient homes.
- 1.24 Nevertheless, neighbourhood planning will be a source for new homes that contribute to land supply. Plan preparation has taken a pragmatic approach to their role.
- 1.25 Where a Town, City or Parish Council is preparing or reviewing a neighbourhood plan for a main settlement alongside the Local Plan and where it is established that they intend to allocate sites for new homes, then it is sensible to take account of it contributing to meeting a scale of growth when selecting sites for the Local Plan. When forecasting and managing housing land supply, although possible to forecast contributions from these neighbourhood plans, emerging site allocations are not included. So, for instance, they are not an element of the housing land supply unless and until a neighbourhood plan is made and there is a site allocation that is part of the development plan.
- 1.26 Many neighbourhood plans that are 'made' have been in the rural area. Any allocations that these contain are including in existing commitments. The preparation and review of neighbourhood plans in the rural area will also produce more site allocations for new homes, but where and how many homes has not been estimated or counted toward housing land supply. How housing in the rural area is treated as a source and contribution to new homes is considered in the following chapter.

The Rural area

- 1.27 A significant proportion of new homes are built in the rural area, the majority at Local Service Centres and Large Villages. Planning permissions for housing development in the rural area will supplement supply. In addition, neighbourhood plans will identify sites for housing geared to meeting identified local needs.
- 1.28 The Plan has policies that support the important role played by Local Service Centres and Large Villages because of the services and facilities they each provide to their community and surrounding rural area. It does not allocate sites for housing development in the rural area.
- 1.29 As a source of housing land supply, an estimate is made of how many homes will be built over the plan period based on past performance, informed by the revised spatial strategy. Levels are formulated as part of revising the spatial strategy since they take account of forecast housing need for each Housing Market Area and are informed by data on past completion rates, which is evidence collected as a part of preparing Housing Land Supply Statements (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Past and proposed rates of house building in the rural area



Future Urban Extensions (Broad Locations for Growth)

- 1.30 Area strategies also include proposals to consider future urban extensions at Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge. This allows for a lengthy lead into co-ordinating major infrastructure and giving certainty to where future growth will take place.

- 1.31 Further work on these areas will define precisely where and what exact scale, type, mix and form of development these may deliver. Master planning, as work progresses, will enable sections or potentially the whole of these areas to be added to land supply. Site specific policies will present the result of this work in development plan documents, such as a revised version of this Plan.
- 1.32 Additional urban extensions are therefore intended to be delivered toward the end of the plan period and beyond its end date. They provide additional assurance that land supply is secure and offer flexibility over the medium term to adjust supply to meet higher scales of growth should evidence shift or supply needs to be supplemented.

Area of search

- 1.33 An Area of search is shown on the key diagram within which a new settlement may be proposed in the future, subject to more detailed work as a part of a future review of this plan. Like its location, the size of a possible settlement would need to be determined too. If a new settlement is needed, building will commence toward the end of the plan period and construction would continue beyond 2038. In terms of estimated housing land supply and matching it to forecast need, an estimate is made of how many homes would be built before 2038 taking account the planning process and necessary lead in times to construction of around a decade.

Managing housing land supply

- 2.1 This section describes how each source of housing land supply is treated so enough land is provided to meet strategic requirements.

A sufficient scale of land

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 23) states that:

“Strategic policies should provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period, in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should include planning for and allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area.”

- 2.3 The number of new homes needed over the plan period has been objectively assessed. A housing requirement for the plan period and how it is to be distributed across Wiltshire is described in a revised spatial strategy⁶
- 2.4 In summary, Policy 2 proposes an additional 36,740 homes over the plan period 2020 to 2038 stepped in three phases. This strategic requirement corresponds to the

⁶ Revising the Spatial Strategy, Wiltshire Council (September 2023)

objectively assessed need. The total requirement is first distributed to four housing markets areas (HMAs) that sub-divide the County. Then it is distributed again to provide scales of growth within the HMAs for each of their main settlements and the rural area.

- 2.5 The Plan identifies a land supply for approximately 35,965 dwellings to meet an assessed need of 36,738 (Opinion Research Services (ORS)). It is distributed as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Assessed Need and Total Identified Supply by HMA

Housing Market Area	Assessed Need	Total Identified Supply⁷
Chippenham	13,626	14,490
Salisbury	11,016	9,390
Swindon	3,456	3,415
Trowbridge	8,640	8,670
TOTAL	36,738	35,965

- 2.6 The distribution reflects how constraints and prospects for growth vary around the County in accordance with evidence gathered in the formulation of the spatial strategy. The figures show provision below forecast need in the Salisbury HMA but there is an approach and contingency to ensure overall needs are met.
- 2.7 The provision for housing is, however, not all capable of being developed at the point the Plan is adopted. Neither is it sensible that it should since additional infrastructure, mitigation and all the services necessary to support housing developments needs to be provided.
- 2.8 As a general guide the implied rate of house building to meet forecast need is just over 2,000 homes a year. From the provision for over 35,000 homes, the Plan must start with a good supply of land capable of being developed immediately or very soon and then show how further land for development that is not currently capable, has no planning consent or a site allocation will come forward and supplement that supply as progress is made through the plan period.

⁷ Identified housing supply is the total of all sources of housing land supply excluding broad locations for growth and the Area of search that are subject to a future development plan.

- 2.9 In this regard, the NPPF (paragraph 68) goes on to say:
- “...Planning policies should identify a supply of:
specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period; and
specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.”*
- 2.10 Further, paragraph 74 indicates that the Council should also:
- “... identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies.”*
- 2.11 The Plan has a total provision from the following sources. Figure 4 shows the broad timescales for delivery and role of each source in relation to the NPPF requirements.

Figure 4: supply and timescales against NPPF requirements

Source of supply	No of Dwellings ⁸	NPPF Timing		
		Deliverable (1-5 years)	Deliverable/ developable (1-5 years and 6-10)	Developable (11 plus years)
Completions and Existing Commitments ⁹	21,975	Deliverable (1-5 years)	Deliverable/ developable (1-5 years and 6-10)	Developable (11 plus years)
Local Plan allocations	8,870			
Small windfall sites (at constrained settlements)	930			
Neighbourhood planning (at main settlements)	630			
The rural area	3,180			
Reserve sites	380			
TOTAL IDENTIFIED SUPPLY	35,965			
Future Urban Extensions (Including area of search)				

2.12 Estimates for the number of homes delivered from small sites of less than ten dwellings and from neighbourhood planning are deliberately conservative. The total for neighbourhood plan area designation requirements for main settlements set by the plan is just under 2,000 dwellings. From this total, this version of the Plan relies on a contribution of much less than half (630 dwellings) only from those plans actively being prepared and under review currently known to be allocating sites. The contribution from small sites of less than ten dwellings derives solely from an estimate for the total from constrained settlements only (930 dwellings). The contribution likely from other main settlements, provides an additional number that by itself ensures overall needs will be met.

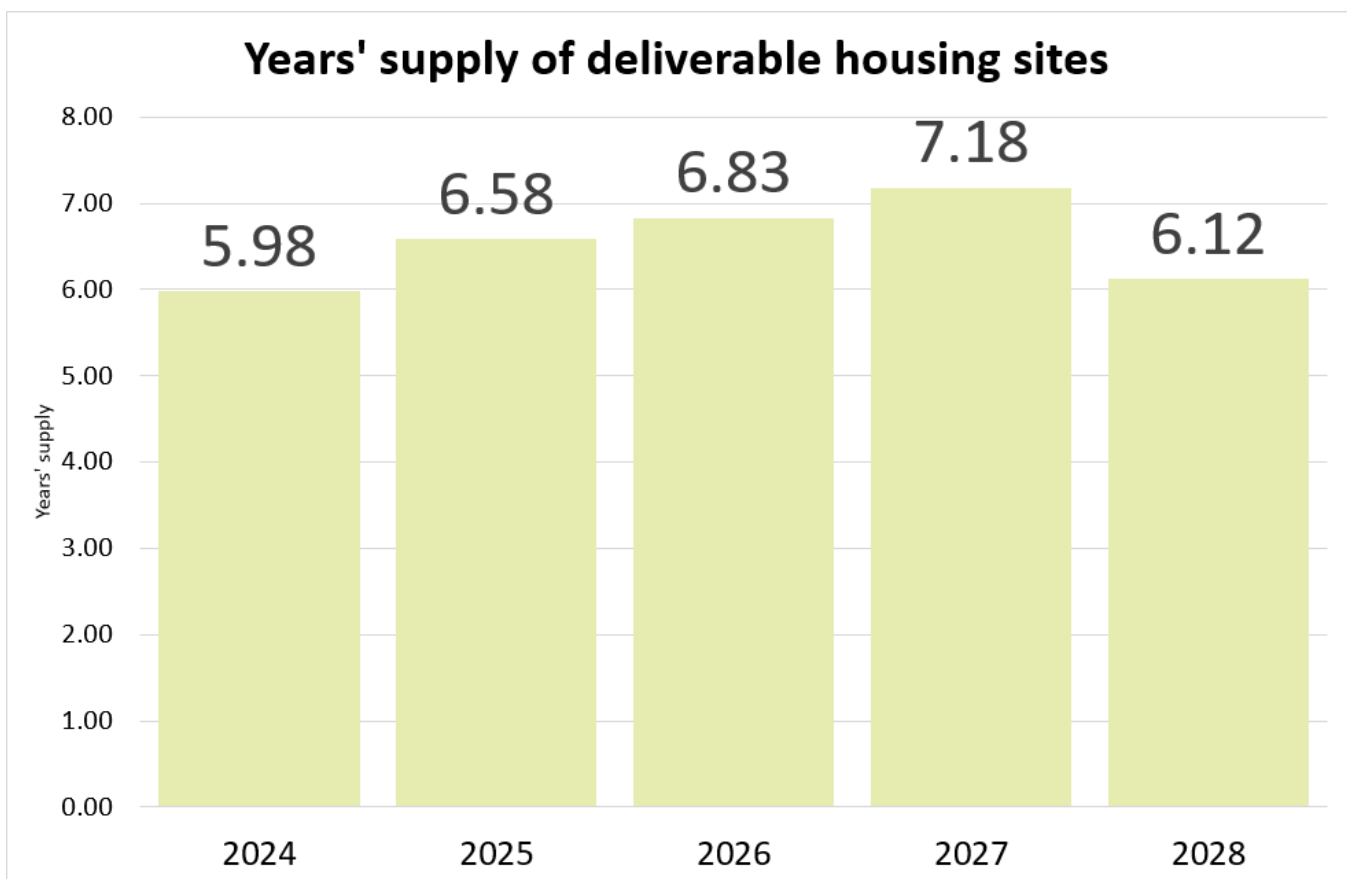
⁸ Totals have been rounded

⁹ Number of dwellings from completions (2020-22), all existing commitments at 1 April 2022 and major development since 1 April 2022 up to 31 May 2023 plus significant new permissions and existing development plan allocations (including neighbourhood plans)

'Five year housing land supply'

- 2.13 Current planning permissions and allocations in previous plans (existing commitments) constitute the main part of the five year housing land supply of deliverable housing sites in the year the plan is expected to be adopted (2024). From this point many of the Plan's site allocations will also begin to contribute. The supply will also include a contribution from windfall sites. However, some of the larger site allocations in the Plan will have lead-in times of several years, beyond five.
- 2.14 At adoption of the Plan, estimates are that there will be a supply of 5.98 years' worth of deliverable sites measured against the phased requirement as set out in the Plan (Policy 2, Delivery Strategy). For subsequent years, the anticipated number of years' supply will be as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Anticipated number of years' housing land supply (Phase 1, Policy 2)



Maintaining a five-year housing land supply – years 1 to 10

- 2.15 This deliverable supply will be supplemented by additional land from other sources as years pass, maintaining a five year housing land supply over the first decade of the plan period.
- 2.16 Once the plan is adopted, site allocations will progress through the planning process and gain planning permission. These sites will add to the deliverable supply.

Neighbourhood planning

- 2.17 Neighbourhood plans are estimated to deliver approximately 600 further homes. As modest non-strategic development plan allocations they can be considered capable of construction within the first ten years of the plan period.
- 2.18 It should be emphasised that this is a contribution solely from a limited number of neighbourhood plans for main settlements being prepared in tandem with the preparation of the Local Plan Review¹⁰ and only those where the neighbourhood planning group is known to be allocating land for development.
- 2.19 It should be stressed that this does not cover all main settlements. Other main settlements will also prepare or review neighbourhood plans and allocate further land, but when and what amount of housing they may plan for is not certain at this stage. No estimate has been added to housing provision for what further contribution these will make to housing supply.

The rural area

- 2.20 New homes in the rural area are a significant component of land supply. In accordance with the spatial strategy, it is estimated in excess of three thousand dwellings will be accommodated, largely corresponding to past rates of house building. Just over half of this forecast can be expected to be built in the ten years from plan adoption.
- 2.21 The Plan provides neighbourhood area designation housing requirements by a housing figure for each designated Large Village and Local Service Centre¹¹. Neighbourhood planning in the rural area, in general conformity with the Local Plan Review, will therefore take forward housing delivery at the smaller scale of individual rural communities.

Reserve Sites

- 2.22 Development of reserve sites will be permitted only if the overall supply of deliverable sites falls below 5 years as assessed by an annual Housing Land Supply Statement¹². A planning application in such circumstances will also need to commit to early delivery as a part of a Planning Performance Agreement with the Council. This is clearly justified since their purpose is to remedy a current shortfall.
- 2.23 The Council monitors housing land supply. It publishes an annual Housing Land Supply Statement recording construction, planning permission and the supply of specific deliverable sites. It takes account of the results of the Housing Delivery Test.

¹⁰ Wiltshire Local Plan Review - Submission version, Wiltshire Council (September 2023)

¹¹ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 66, MHCLG (July 2021)

¹² Housing Land Supply Statement (HLSS) is published annually and available on the Wiltshire Council website

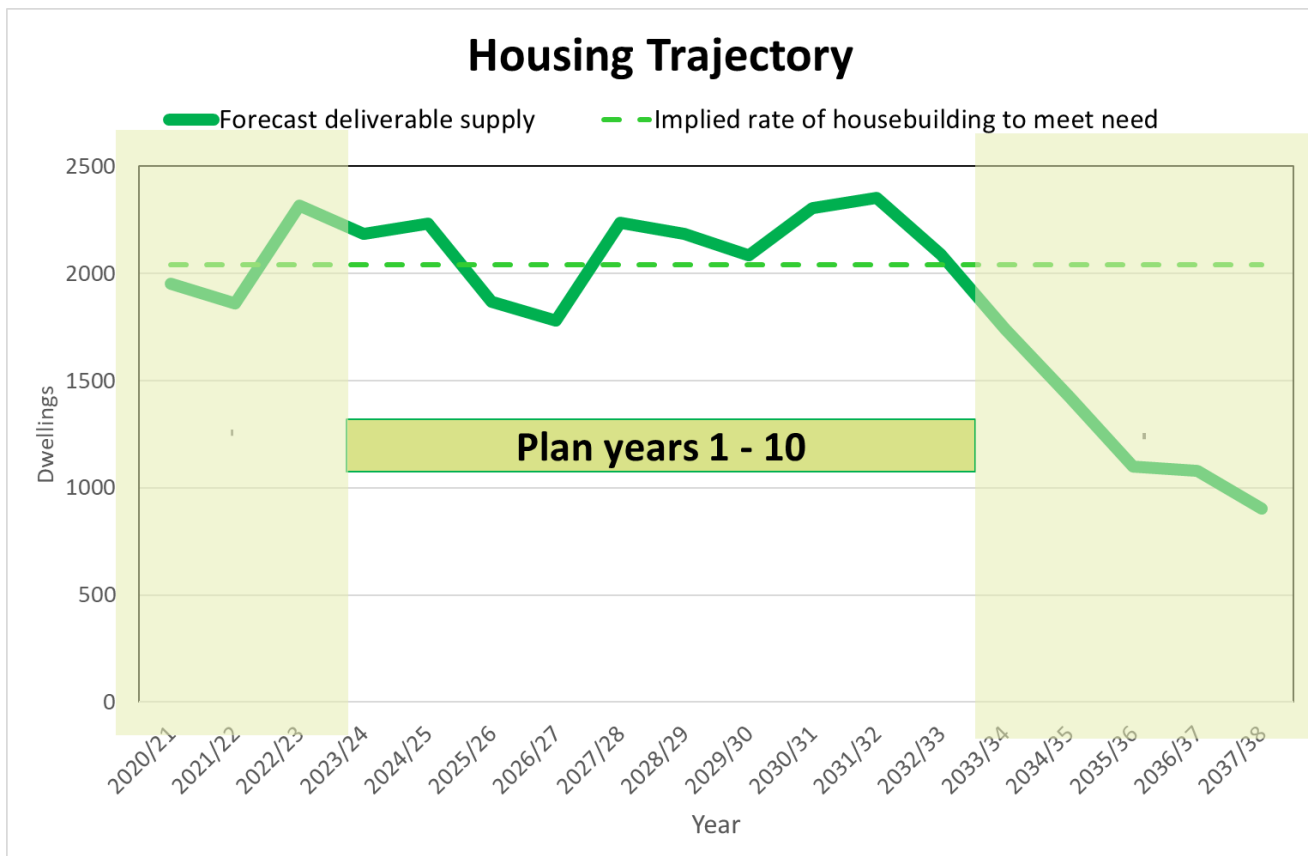
- 2.24 Reserve sites therefore provide a modest supply of potentially deliverable sites as a buffer that can, if necessary, be moved forward from later, in accordance with advice contained in the NPPF¹³.
- 2.25 Reserve sites combined could accommodate just under 400 dwellings, but it is not envisaged that reserve sites will be drawn upon because of the way supply will be supplemented amply from other sources (see below). It is nevertheless worthwhile retaining a contingency as part of the Plan to avoid ‘planning by appeal’ and the considerable uncertainty that involves.

Conclusion

- 2.26 The figure below shows a current forecast of dwelling completions each year over the plan period. This derives solely from sources that can be quantified at the point of adoption (existing commitments, site allocations and a modest allowance for windfall). Housing completions ebb and flow, but the chart line shows even this limited definition of supply generally meeting the average rate of house building implied by the plan requirement until about 2033.
- 2.27 The graph in Figure 6 shows the baseline ‘deliverable’ supply on to which supply will be added, but it already shows that supply roughly matches the implied rate housebuilding necessary to meet housing requirements. A reasonable forecast of what additional supply will come from other sources (the rural area and neighbourhood planning) suggests that housing completions should at least match housing need over the first ten years of the plan period.
- 2.28 Reserve sites are available as a contingency if required.

¹³ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 74, MHCLG (July 2021)

Figure 6: housing trajectory years 1-10 following Plan adoption.



Maintaining a five-year housing land supply - beyond 10 years

- 2.29 The trajectory above, based solely on current data, inevitably shows that the supply of land, and therefore dwelling completions, start to trail away early into the next decade. Forecasts of five-year housing land supply for these years also becomes increasingly difficult and unrealistic.
- 2.30 By the end of 2030, at the latest, it can be envisaged that a further iteration of the Plan or a supplementary plan will be adopted that will contribute to supply with additional sites.

Future urban extensions (Broad Locations for Growth)

- 2.31 This version of the Plan however already establishes the intention to consider three urban extensions (at Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge) where further significant development, including new homes can be delivered. This step allows detailed work to commence ahead of time. They will be large and therefore complex sites that will take time to get to construction and commencement allows for the long lead in times these schemes require. In terms of housing delivery, they provide assurance that housing land supply will have significant additions looking beyond and toward the end of the plan period.

- 2.32 Development will only be permitted under the auspices of a new or revised development plan document. In effect they will be brought forward by future rounds of plan-making. What and when further rounds of plan-making take place will be decided by the Council's programme of plan preparation, its Local Development Scheme.

Area of Search

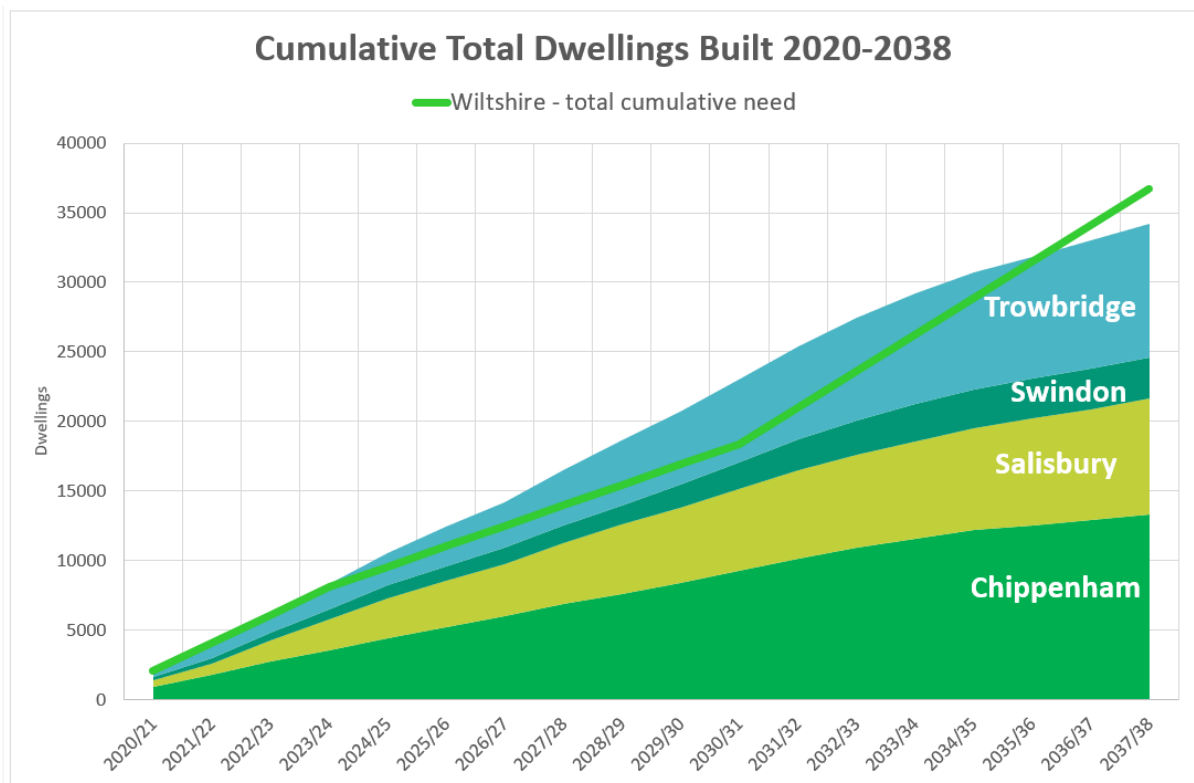
- 2.33 By contrast to elsewhere in the County, there is uncertainty surrounding both the locations and scale of growth that can be supported in the Salisbury HMA¹⁴.
- 2.34 The revised spatial strategy imposes a phased approach to housing delivery in the Salisbury HMA. Slower rates than that implied to meet forecast need are proposed in the first seven years from 2024. Higher rates are possible and envisaged for the remaining seven years at the end of the plan.
- 2.35 Rates are curtailed in the first phase (from 2024 to 2031) because mitigation to protect the River Avon is uncertain and a precautionary approach is to moderate development pressures. Higher rates later in the plan period assumes protection measures for the river are in place and limited land supply is resolved supported by proposals for a potential new settlement.
- 2.36 However, the approach also allows flexibility, for example, if either of these issues cannot be resolved, a future iteration may then set a lower requirement that replaces the current one.
- 2.37 A decision to proceed or not with a new community to resolve a shortfall of suitable land will therefore be an outcome of work on a future iteration of the Plan.
- 2.38 For plan making purposes, the Revised Spatial Strategy makes provision for approximately 1,600 dwellings, should it proceed. It is not relied upon to make any significant contribution to housing supply in the plan period and just a notional 300 dwellings approximately are assumed built by 2038.

Conclusion

- 2.39 Each part of the County's contribution to meeting housing requirements is shown in Figure 7 and it shows a shortfall of approximately 1,800 dwellings against the housing requirement. Again, this estimate is based solely on current forecast supply. This is a conservative estimate and it will be supplemented by dwellings from other sources over the plan period. Consequently, it is not considered likely that a shortfall will materialise.

¹⁴ Revising the Spatial Strategy - Evidence Paper, Wiltshire Council (September 2023)

Figure 7: cumulative total dwellings 2020-2038 by HMA and cumulative need



2.40 The potential for a serious shortfall arises beyond ten years into the plan period and is connected to meeting forecast needs for the Salisbury HMA. A new settlement, if it proceeds, will only ever make a minor contribution to meeting needs in the period to 2038 and slower than needed rates of housing building are necessary to protect the water quality of the River Avon, whilst comprehensive and effective mitigation can be developed.

2.41 These are significant constraints taking time to resolve. In contrast to elsewhere, it is uncertain what the content of future plans should be, notably regarding what scales of growth that will be appropriate, because so much depends upon what detailed possibilities there are for a new settlement and what level of success can be achieved with mitigation for the effects of development on the River Avon.

2.42 Looking at the period beyond ten years from adoption, it is reasonable to envisage that fresh development plan documents (such as a review of this Plan) will be in place ahead of time to guide further development and allocate additional sites for new homes.

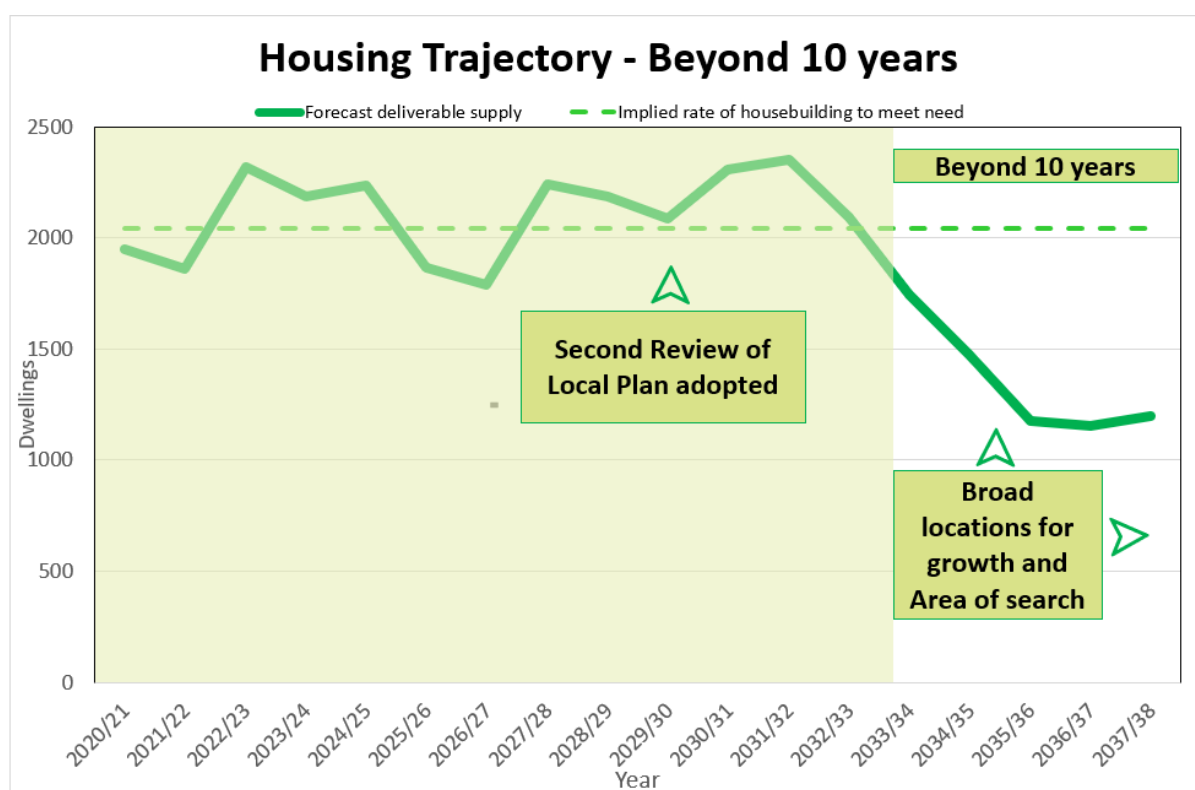
2.43 Reserve sites may at this stage be considered for unfettered site allocation.

2.44 Work on broad locations for growth (at Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge) will become detailed proposals in the course of plan review. These avenues by themselves

would, if necessary, avert any possibility of an overall shortfall toward the last five years of the plan period.

- 2.45 Broad locations for growth and the area of search are part of the plan looking beyond 2038. Earlier development could help to meet a shortfall in the south of the County but they would also need to be individually justified on their own merits in so far as there was local demand, infrastructure and prospects for growth that supported their development.
- 2.46 In effect, one or more Broad Locations for Growth and the area of search has a potential role as a contingency for under delivery in the Salisbury HMA. If needed, they would provide homes until there are longer term remedies and plans in place.

Figure 8: housing trajectory years beyond 10 years after Plan adoption.



Meeting housing needs

- 3.1 As well as an amount of additional dwellings, the Plan must also provide types of homes for different housing needs. Much is left to the market and house builders to determine, and the role of the plan is to ensure a good range of sites in locations that can provide a mix and choice of dwelling types. However, within the context of providing for a sufficient scale and rate of housing development, NPPF (paragraph 62) also says:

"...the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to,

those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)."

- 3.2 Consultants (Opinion Research Services (ORS)) were commissioned to prepare a Wiltshire Housing Needs Assessment to assist in providing up to date evidence to inform the review of housing policies. Their findings have been published alongside this document and provide the detail that this section summarises.
- 3.3 The work carried out by ORS was supplemented by other evidence. Two main sources were the housing register and the Wiltshire Independent Living Strategy (2022-2027).
- 3.4 The latter aims to maximise the independence, choice and control for people with a mental health condition, learning disability and/or autism spectrum disorder in Wiltshire by providing the right accommodation and support in the right place at the right time.
- 3.5 The housing register provides a measure and form of identified need at a point in time down to a parish level.
- 3.6 Key points of evidence emerged that have informed the review of policies. This document focusses on three areas that relate to:
- Providing affordable homes
 - Meeting housing needs by a mix of dwelling types
 - Meeting the needs of vulnerable and older people

Affordable housing

- 3.7 ORS forecast that around 10,450 households will need affordable housing over the Plan period. This is approximately 28% of the forecast total housing need. It includes the following components:
- 5,180 households unable to afford Affordable Rent without Housing Benefit,
 - 1,880 households who can afford Affordable Rent without Housing Benefit, but unable to afford market rents, and
 - 3,390 households who aspire to home ownership and require some form of discounted home ownership.
- 3.8 There is a need for:
- Social rented housing: 5,247 dwellings (14.7%) for households unable to afford affordable rent
 - Affordable Rented housing: 1,908 dwellings (5.4%) for households that can afford affordable rent but unable to afford market rent

- Affordable home ownership: 3,588 dwellings (10.1%), for households that can afford market rent but aspire to homeownership and have reasonable prospect of being able to afford this
- An allowance for residential institutions within the total housing need is 1,469 dwellings and represents over 2,640 bedspaces.

- 3.9 The ORS report does not propose a policy target for affordable housing suggesting that further work is needed to establish the appropriate policy target. A target needs to sustain the viability of delivering affordable homes by private sector house builders.
- 3.10 The ONS median workplace affordability ratio, the ratio of house prices to incomes, has risen steadily. From 2003 to 2021 it rose from 7.76 to 10.32, a rise in excess of 30%.
- 3.11 A target proportion of dwellings that are affordable should reasonably be as high as is realistically possible. The Wiltshire Core Strategy contains two tiers of target of 30% and 40%. The lower rate operates in areas where a higher proportion would not be viable because of the economics of provision.
- 3.12 More up to date evidence now justifies a single target level of 40% throughout the County. Detailed work¹⁵ shows that on some complex and more difficult brownfield sites, more redevelopment schemes that are considerably more costly may not be capable of supporting complying with the relevant target, but elsewhere, on greenfield sites, development will.
- 3.13 The target is generally applied to all planning applications of ten or more dwellings or on sites half a hectare or more.
- 3.14 In designated rural areas, however, the target applies on sites of five or more dwellings or half a hectare or more. This reflects requirements set out in the NPPF¹⁶. Rural areas are formally designated through a process separate to the Local Plan. The Council intends to extend areas designated in the County.
- 3.15 Tenure will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis to reflect the nature of the development and local needs. The current tenure mix used as starting point for an agreement is 65% Social Rent, 10% Shared Ownership, 25% First Homes.
- 3.16 This reflects evidence showing that shared ownership remains an important product for those not eligible for rented housing and not able to afford First Homes product. The Council currently focusses on providing Affordable rent properties (60% discount on market rents). Government and Homes England are understood to be pressing for more social rent properties to be provided (80% discount on market rents).

¹⁵ Local Plan Viability Assessment, Urba and Porter Planning Associates (2023)

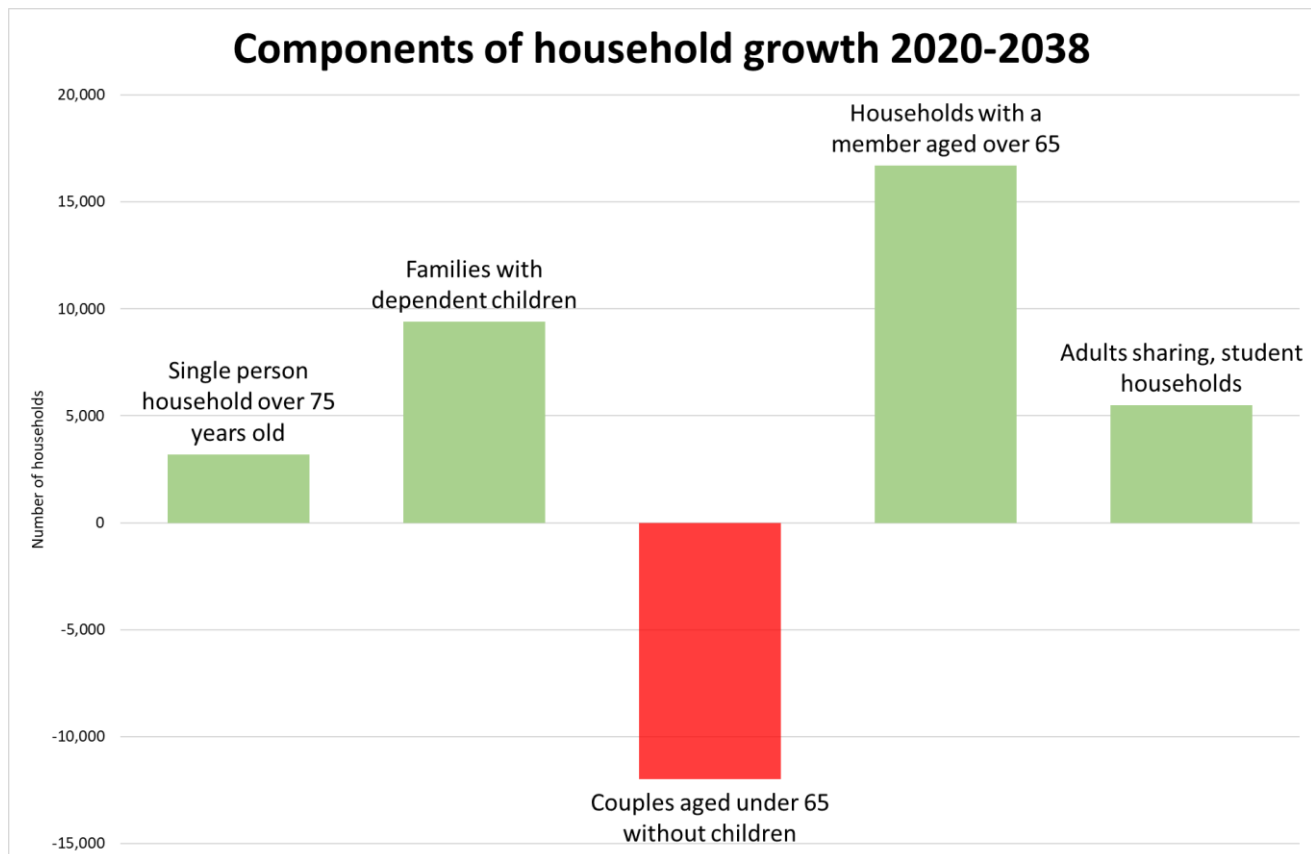
¹⁶ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 63-65, MHCLG (July 2021)

3.17 Sites with 10 or more affordable Housing units will be expected to distribute affordable housing across the whole site in small clusters unless otherwise required.

Mix of dwelling types

3.18 Household growth can be characterised by a combination of forecast changes over the plan period. Some of the significant changes are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Components of household growth 2020-2038



3.19 Single person households are 14% of the overall household growth: an increase of 3,200, with all the growth in the over 75 years category.

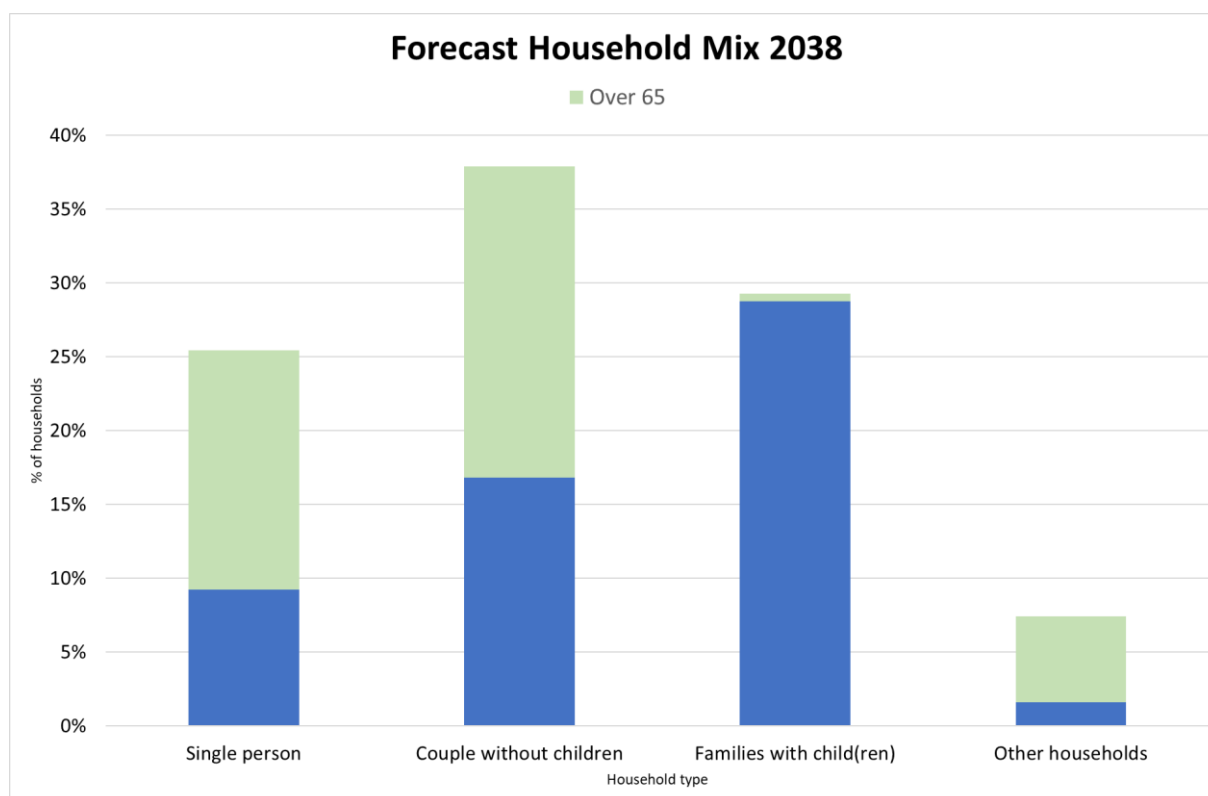
3.20 Families with dependent children make up over 40% of the overall household growth: an increase of 9,400 households.

3.21 Couples aged under 65 without dependent children are projected to fall by almost 12,000 households, but an increase of over 16,700 households with a household representative aged over 65.

3.22 Multi-person households are predicted to increase by 5,500. These are households that have unrelated adults sharing, such as student households, multi-family households and households of one family and other unrelated adults.

- 3.23 A good a mix of housing types as possible on any site is essential to creating mixed and balanced communities. It is also important that a variety of sites translates into a good choice of different house types and at an array of locations.
- 3.24 In general terms, the mix of house types provided on a site should mirror the forecast mix of households in the community and meet so meet housing needs. ORS have carried out a forecast and the mix is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Forecast household mix by 2038



- 3.25 This mix will be the starting point for discussions with those promoting housing schemes. Variations from this mix will need to be justified with relevant evidence. This may be local evidence of specific local needs in the community (evidenced, for instance, by a housing needs survey). A particular location may merit an emphasis upon a particular housing type (for example, short and level access to the town centre suggests meeting the needs of the elderly). The current local stock of homes around a site may have an imbalance that it could be helpful to address. The costs of construction and economics of a site might lead to a mix being adjusted to help ensure viability.
- 3.26 Since the Wiltshire Core Strategy was being prepared the Government has introduced Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)¹⁷.

¹⁷ Technical housing standards- nationally described space standard, Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2015)

- 3.27 A national minimum space standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the gross internal floor area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. However, these can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need and where the viability of the development is not compromised.
- 3.28 The Council examined a number of developments granted permission in recent years and measured how they perform against the main criteria within the NDSS Gross Internal Area, bedroom floorspace and bedroom widths. This identified a significant number of new build development schemes fell short of at least one NDSS requirement. There is a need to remedy this situation and assessment has established that viability is not compromised.
- 3.29 Since the Local Housing Needs Assessment has highlighted population projections showing a substantial increase in the older population in Wiltshire, consequently there is a need to provide housing with enhanced accessibility and adaptability (M4(2)) and wheelchair accessible housing (M4(3)).
- 3.30 The English Housing Survey explores the number of households which contain someone with a limiting long-term illness or disability which impacts their housing need. The work carried out by ORS has taken forward this information and with local data established a proportion of households in Wiltshire likely to have a wheelchair user in both market and affordable housing sectors.
- 3.31 ORS conclude that:

"If we apply these proportions to the population and household data for the area then we can identify the net change in the number of households with a wheelchair user over the period 2020 to 2038. (Figure 54). Using this approach we calculate the number of households likely to need wheelchair adapted housing is likely to increase by 2,550 over the 18-year period. This amounts to 7% of the dwelling target over the same time period, so would suggest a need for 7% of new dwellings to be built to M4(3) standard." (Paragraph 6.49)

Homes will be built to M4(3) standards of the Building Regulation provide wheelchair accessible house designs. Applying these conclusions, a minimum of 7% of homes to be built to M4(3) standards on all sites Vulnerable and Older People.

- 3.32 The County will see a significant increase in its elderly population. Population projections underlying the Local Housing Need figure for Wiltshire show a substantial increase in the older population during the period 2021-2038. The population aged 75+ is likely to increase by around 32,920 persons. ORS also advise that there is already a shortfall in the provision of housing for elderly people. Their analysis then goes on to identify a future need for over 15,000 specialist older person additional housing units

over the plan period, such as sheltered housing and extra care homes¹⁸. Whilst such a figure is unachievable it shows that dedicated older person housing schemes must form an important part of overall housing mix, as shown above.

- 3.33 The policy approach contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports the provision of housing to meet the needs of older and vulnerable people. Accommodation should be provided in the Principal Settlements and Market Towns where there is good access to services and facilities. Accommodation on the edge of Principal Settlements and Market Towns is allowed subject to meeting criteria.
- 3.34 The general approach was confirmed as appropriate by stakeholder discussions. The County's rural nature makes it harder to meet needs properly; close to amenities and, if public transport is possible, without it being too expensive. Rural locations can lead to isolation. Care homes, for example, needed to be brought more into the local community and not away from amenities. For the disabled, the focus for independent living, whilst on the larger main settlements, is essentially to fully fulfil the aim of enabling people to live in their community.
- 3.35 What did emerge from stakeholder discussions was a better demand for more specialist accommodation. The different types of care needing to be recognised; more complex care homes, needs such as dementia care and other nursing specialisms. Given the marked increase in need and existing shortfall it is reasonable for the Plan to extend its leverage on new development to require developers to demonstrate how their proposals respond to the needs of an ageing population and for proposals in Principal Settlements and Market Towns to consider including specialist accommodation for older people.
- 3.36 The policy approach in the Core Strategy supports the provision of housing for vulnerable people. Accommodation should be provided in the Principal Settlements and Market Towns where there is good access to services and facilities. Accommodation on the edge of Principal Settlements and Market Towns is allowed subject to meeting criteria.
- 3.37 The general approach was confirmed as appropriate by stakeholder discussions. What did emerge was in some circumstances there is a need to cluster housing in some groups of no more than 6.

¹⁸ Wiltshire Local Housing Needs Assessment Volume 2, Opinion Research Services (February 2023) - Figure 46