Ringmer

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

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Quality information

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List of acronyms used in the text:

HMA	Housing Market Area
HNA	Housing Needs Assessment
HRF	Housing Requirement Figure (the total number of homes the NA is expected to plan for, usually supplied by local planning authorities)
HLIN	Housing Learning and Improvement Network
HRP	Household Reference Person
LA	Local Authority
LDC	Lewes District Council
LHN	Local Housing Need
LHNA	Local Housing Needs Assessment
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Area
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government
MSOA	Middle Layer Super Output Area
NA	Neighbourhood (Plan) Area
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OA	Output Area
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRS	Private Rented Sector
RPC	Ringmer Parish Council
RQ	Research Question
SDNP	South Downs National Park
SDNPA	South Downs National Park Authority
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
VOA	Valuation Office Agency

1. Executive Summary

1.1.1. Ringmer is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the District of Lewes. The NA boundary covers the area administered by Ringmer Parish Council.

1.1.2. The 2021 Census recorded 4,769 individuals, 2,024 households, and 2,112 dwellings in Ringmer, indicating an increase of 121 people, 36 households, and 88 dwellings since the 2011 Census. This tallies with Parish records of delivery between 2011 and 2021.

1.1.3. There has been some development in Ringmer in recent years, although the exact number of new dwellings is uncertain, due to discrepancies in different data sources. While no completions figure have been shared by the local authority at this time, parish monitoring indicates delivery of 329 net new homes 2011-2024. Further comparison of 2023 Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data with the 2011 Census would indicate an increase of 366 dwellings between 2011 and 2023, although this number is likely to be higher than actual delivery due to the area covered by VOA data being larger than the NA. Lewes Core Strategy sets out the planned level of growth for Ringmer and Broyle Side as 385 units 2030. A high-level planning applications search shows permission or outline approval for four major residential schemes between 2018-2024 with a total of 335 units.

1.1.4. Regarding recent affordable housing approvals, the Lewes District Authority Monitoring report 2022-23 shows that between 2018-2023, 26% of total permissions were for affordable housing, and the four major schemes examined in our planning applications search 2018-2024 show that 33% of units on these schemes were permitted as affordable housing.

1.1.5. This Executive Summary details the conclusions of each chapter of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), addressing each of the themes agreed with the Ringmer Parish Council at the outset of the research.

1.1.6. Data from the 2021 Census is continuing to be released. At present, the available data covers population, households, tenure, and dwelling stock characteristics. Some data from the Census 2021 at the localised level is not yet available, as well as some data comparing numerous variables. As such, this HNA will draw on the latest available data from the 2021 Census where possible and will also continue to use other data sets, including 2011 Census, Valuation Office Agency data, and ONS projections where necessary to build up evidence at the neighbourhood level.

1.1.7. This HNA has been undertaken in line with the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [1] and practice guidance [2] as published in December 2024, during the time of writing this HNA.

[1] National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024
[2] Housing and economic needs assessment - GOV.UK published in December 2024

1.2. Conclusions – Affordability and Affordable Housing

Current tenure profile

1.2.1. Ringmer's current tenure profile is formed predominantly of home-owners, making up around 76% of households, followed by private and social renters, accounting for 14% and 9% of households respectively. Only 0.8% of households live in shared ownership homes. Ringmer has a higher percentage of home owners and a lower percentage of social and private renters than the District as a whole, with these differences even more pronounced compared to national levels.

1.2.2. Over the intercensal period, the proportion of owner occupation and private renting in Ringmer has remained roughly the same, increasing by 3.8 and 1.5% respectively, but the size of the social rented sector has declined more significantly, by 10%. Shared ownership also declined, even more considerably by 19%. However, this is partially due to a smaller sample size, of only 21-17 dwellings.

Affordability

1.2.3. Between 2014 and 2023 average house prices in Ringmer have been relatively volatile, with a number of peaks and troughs, leading to an overall significant increase of £173,500 (63%). This is considerably more than the national average increase of 45% during the same period. The housing type for which prices increased most were semi-detached homes, which incidentally make up the majority of the Ringmer housing stock, and which constitute the second most expensive type of housing.

1.2.4. The average total annual household income in Ringmer was £46,000 in 2020 (the most recent year for this data), while the gross lower quartile income for a single earner was £15,335 or £30,670 for dual income households across Lewes District (this data is not available for smaller areas). Dual lower quartile income households therefore earned significantly less than average income households, which is not uncommon.

1.2.5. Comparing these local income levels with the cost of different tenures indicates that affordability is very poor in the NA. All tenures, except affordable and social rent, and shared ownership at the lowest percentage (10%), are unaffordable to those on average incomes. Households with two lower quartile earners can only afford affordable and social rents, and households with access to only a single lower quartile income cannot afford any of the tenures without recourse to benefits. It is also worth bearing in mind that a large proportion of local households living in and moving to the NA are older person (as explored later in our report), relying largely on existing wealth and equity from previously owned properties, rather than on incomes to afford new housing, which also influences affordability. However, there is no data available on this type of pre-existing wealth for the Neighbourhood area at the time of writing our HNA.

1.2.6. There is a fairly large household income bracket in Ringmer which would be able to afford to rent privately but not home ownership (earning between around £56,000 - £95,786 a year). However, this “can rent can’t buy” income bracket is significantly above average incomes for Ringmer. This means that affordable home ownership

products are less likely to be useful in the NA in extending the possibility of home ownership to average earning residents, except for shared ownership at 10%.

The need for Affordable Housing

1.2.7. The quantity of Affordable Housing needed in Ringmer can be estimated by pro-rating the needs figures from the very recent 2023 LHNA produced for Lewes District. The resulting estimated need for affordable housing is 19 units per year (377 over the 20-year Neighbourhood Plan period 2020-2040):

- 8 units of affordable rented housing per year (or 162 over the plan period), and
- 11 units of affordable housing for sale per year (215 over the plan period),

1.2.8. While the estimated need for affordable home ownership is greater, affordable and social rented tenures still clearly fulfil a vital role in Ringmer, and most discounted home ownership options are not affordable to those on average incomes and below. Therefore, meeting the more urgent need for social and affordable rented units should be prioritised where possible, particularly if affordable housing delivery is limited.

1.2.9. Taking this affordability and supply picture into account, along with local and national planning policy, the guideline tenure split within Affordable Housing for Ringmer is proposed to be 75% Affordable Housing for rent and 25% Affordable Housing for sale, in line with the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan. Where delivery is likely to be constrained, affordable and social rented tenures should always be delivered as a priority.

Affordable Housing policy

1.2.10. As explained in Chapter 2 of our HNA, Lewes District Council is currently unable to provide a housing requirement for Ringmer, due to the stage of progress of their emerging Local Plan. The number of dwellings to be accommodated within the NA by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period will be confirmed in due course by the local authority, once the emerging Local Plan process is at the appropriate stage. It is therefore not appropriate for AECOM to provide an alternative or indicative requirement figure for Ringmer at this point in time.

1.2.11. Looking back at the currently adopted Local Plan and past allocations of growth to the NA, it is possible to observe that the NA accommodated approximately 14% of housing growth units allocated in Local Plan Part 1; and 7% of the growth requirement and 12% of allocations in Local Plan Part 2. The emerging Lewes Local Plan sets out a projected housing requirement range across the plan area of between 5,412 - 9,365 units between 2020-2040.

1.2.12. If the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan affordable housing target of 40% were achieved on every site and if all units were delivered, the levels of growth required as a minimum to meet the estimated affordable housing needs of Ringmer would be 940 housing units overall.

1.2.13. This could be achieved through a combination of allocations in the Local Plan and in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. If resulting housing delivery is below this level, or if affordable housing is delivered at below 40%, meeting the more urgent and acute

need for affordable rented housing should be prioritised wherever possible, and other avenues of delivering affordable housing should be explored in discussion with the local authority. While affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are a number of other, more proactive routes available for its provision. This can for instance include the use of neighbourhood development orders, identification of exception sites, or the development of community land trusts, which are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

1.3. Conclusions – Type and Size

The current housing mix

1.3.1. With regards to the current dwelling type mix, Ringmer is currently characterised by an un-balanced mix of homes, skewed towards larger semi-detached and detached dwellings forming the two most common dwelling types representing 46 and 31% of the dwelling stock respectively. Less dense dwelling types, such as terraces, and flats are significantly less common at 16 and 8%. Ringmer's housing stock is less diverse than that of the District and country as a whole in terms of type, and this lack of variety negatively affects both choice and affordability in the NA.

1.3.2. Housing provision in Ringmer is also similarly tilted towards larger size dwellings with 3-bedroom homes making up nearly half of all dwellings, followed by 4 or more bedroom homes making up over a quarter. Smaller one and two bedroom dwellings make up a low share of 5% and 21% respectively, which is again demonstrating less variety than across the District or England as a whole.

1.3.3. Over the intercensal period the size mix in Ringmer appears to have remained largely unchanged, due to the small number of additions to the stock showing. The only minor changes observed show a further increase in the skew towards larger 3 and 4 bedroom units, with only limited delivery of smaller units. This means that the lack of diversity in the stock is not being sufficient addressed by new development in the NA at present. However, the way that 2021 Census dwelling type and size data was collected makes comparison between 2011 and 2021 difficult.

Population characteristics

1.3.4. Ringmer's current demographic profile is aging more significantly even than across the District and country, where an aging population can also be observed. The greatest share of the population is composed of the 45-64 age group and 65-84 age group representing 26% and 27% of the population respectively. Between the 2011 and 2021 censuses there has been a significant increase in the number of persons in the two oldest age groups, aged 85+ and 65+ in Ringmer, which grew by a significant 30% and 26% respectively while all the other age groups declined both in number as well as in their percentage share of the total population, excepting a very small increase of under 5% in the number of children aged 0-14.

1.3.5. At present, the NA has a majority of couple and family households (67%), but still with a sizable proportion of one person households (28%), which is nevertheless lower

than for the District as a whole (31%). Within these groups, Ringmer has higher than average shares of older couples and families (a category that has grown by a very significant 45% since the 2011 Census) and older single person households (which has grown by a less significant 13% during the same time). Other households, such as co-living projects and flat shares, make up 4-6% in the NA and across the District and country.

1.3.6. Analysis of over-and under-occupation in Ringmer shows a significant issue of under-occupation the NA. 82% of households have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, with 50% having two or more. This is particularly the case for families aged over 66, single persons over 66, and couples with no children, of whom 81%, 56%, and 77% respectively under-occupy their property. There are very few households with too few bedrooms, and they are exclusively occupied by younger families with dependent children.

Future population and size needs

1.3.7. Household projections reveal that oldest households aged 65+ are expected to increase by 67% by the end of the Plan Period. The youngest households aged under 24 are projected to decline by 16%, and the middle age group of households aged 25-64 is projected to remain roughly the same. The oldest households are projected to make up over half of total households by the end of the plan period in 2040.

1.3.8. Combining these household projections with dwelling size patterns gives an indication of what size of new dwellings might be needed by the end of the Plan Period. Our modelling recommends that all new units should have either one or two bedrooms (with the model specifying that 35% of additional units should have 1-bedroom, while the majority of 65% should have two bedrooms, although the Neighbourhood Plan may not wish to be specific about this split). No new units of three or more bedrooms are required, due to the significantly skewed current size mix. Greater variety will be required to improve both choice and affordability in the NA's housing market.

1.3.9. Smaller market and affordable units are needed to attract and retain younger households struggling to afford to live in Ringmer at present, including some provision of mid-sized affordable rented units for families. Smaller market and affordable units should also be built specifically to provide appropriate, accessible accommodation for the increasing numbers of older households in the NA, including those with equity looking to downsize, and those struggling to afford current accommodation in Ringmer.

1.3.10. It is important to remember that other factors should also be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the NA or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors. However, due to the very skewed current mix and extensive lack of affordability in the NA at present, the future mix should ideally not deviate too far from our recommendations, to promote greater balance in future.

1.4. Conclusions – Specialist Housing for Older People

Current and projected older population and specialist accommodation

1.4.1. There are currently estimated to be around 780 individuals aged 75 or over in Ringmer, based on the 2021 Census, representing 16.4% of the total population. There are three schemes of specialist accommodation in the NA at present, according to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel search tool. These offer a total of 102 accommodation units, which is close to the national average provision per population. All of the 102 units are age exclusive / retirement housing, and thus classified as sheltered housing rather than housing offering extra care. The majority (70%) of the existing units are for private leasehold ownership, and the remaining 30% are socially rented.

1.4.2. The vast majority (87%) of households across Lewes District aged 55-75 in 2011 (and therefore likely to reach the 75+ bracket by 2040) are owner occupiers, and most of the remainder rent from a social landlord (10%). 3% are private renters. This is important because those currently owning will require specialist accommodation for market purchase, being largely ineligible for subsidised housing, while those in private or social rent will need to rely on subsidised rented housing because they are unlikely to have the funds to buy.

Projected demographic change and need for specialist housing

1.4.3. The 75+ population of the NA is projected to increase to 1,261 people over the Neighbourhood Plan period, to become 23% of the population in 2040. As established in the previous chapter, Ringmer has an older population than the District as a whole, which is likely to grow as a proportion of the total in the coming years, unless new development attracts a replacement population of younger families.

1.4.4. The growth in the existing older population, which, rather than the total, is the focus of the estimates of need here, should be converted into households because some older people will be cohabiting in old age. The projected household growth to 2036 among those aged 75+ in Ringmer is 339.

1.4.5. The potential need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people can be estimated by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the NA. This can be sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research and assumptions.

1.4.6. The two Ringmer specific estimates suggest a range of 121-141 specialist accommodation units might be required during the Plan period. These estimates are based on the projected growth of the older population, thereby assuming that today's older households are already well accommodated. If this is found not to be the case, it would justify aspiring to exceed the range identified here.

1.4.7. Our AECOM HNA estimates are also broken down by tenure and level of support required. Broadly, 16-36% of the total need is for affordable accommodation, while the remaining 64-84% is required for market purchase. This chimes with the higher propensity of older households to be homeowners. Around 60-72% of the need is found to be for sheltered housing with limited support rather than additional care

arrangements. The potential need for care and nursing home beds in Ringmer to 2040 can be roughly estimated at 53 additional bedspaces.

1.4.8. Ringmer is deemed a suitable location for further specialist housing development for people who do not want to leave their immediate surroundings and social networks when their housing needs change in old age. However, it may not be considered prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families, and others important to maintaining a balanced and vibrant community. The HNA evidence can be used to support specialist housing development but does not make that obligatory. How far to promote this is a choice for the Parish Council and wider community.

Accessibility and adaptability

1.4.9. It is currently unclear whether further major specialist supply is likely to be built in Ringmer, based on a planning application search at the time of writing this HNA. Depending on whether there is likely to be additional specialist supply during the Plan period, an alternative or additional avenue to the provision of additional specialist homes is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability required of new development with Lewes District Council.

1.4.10. The currently emerging Lewes Local Plan proposes a requirement that appears appropriate to the aging population in Ringmer, for 100% of new homes to be built to Category M4(2) accessibility standards. We recommend that the Parish Council support this requirement with the evidence in this HNA, in case the requirement is challenged as the Local Plan progresses. No further policy action is required in the Neighbourhood Plan on this subject, unless it looks likely that this requirement will not be adopted as part of the emerging Local Plan.

2. Context

2.1. Local context

2.1.1. Ringmer is a Neighbourhood Area (NA) located in the District of Lewes in East Sussex. The NA boundary is synonymous with the parish boundary and was designated in 2012 by the two local planning authorities responsible for the NA. These are Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The whole of the NA lies within Lewes District and about 20% of the NA's land falls within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). For that latter area, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the local planning authority, while for the remaining majority, Lewes District Council is the local planning authority. The latter area contains the majority of housing and proposed development in the NA.

2.1.2. Ringmer already has a Neighbourhood Plan in place, which was 'made' (adopted) in 2016. This has a Plan period of 2010-2030, to coincide with that of the Lewes Local Plan (part 1), also adopted in 2016. SDNPA adopted their South Downs Local Plan in July 2019, with a plan period of 2014-2033 and are due to start consultation on an upcoming Local Plan revision in January 2025.

2.1.3. Lewes District Council are, at the time of writing, also working on producing a new Lewes Local Plan, to cover the period 2020-2040. A new Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan is presently in production, with the same 20-year plan period as the new Local Plan. The evidence supplied in this report will look forward to both plans' end date of 2040 but, where possible, will also provide annualised figures which can be extrapolated to a different term, in case the Neighbourhood Plan period changes.

2.1.4. The NA lies in the East of Lewes District, and to the East of the town of Lewes itself. Ringmer village is considered a 'top-tier settlement' in the settlement hierarchy of the Lewes emerging Local Plan, as the largest village in the Local Plan area (note that this is based on the draft Plan at the time of writing but may change as the Local Plan evolves). Together with Broyleside, Ringmer village constitutes the settlement core of the NA. The NA also includes some other smaller rural hamlets and single farm settlements, including Upper Wellingham, Ashton Green, Norlington, Little Norlington and Shortgate.

2.1.5. Ringmer village accommodates a number of shops and services serving the wider area, including a health centre, pharmacy, private dentist, vet, garage, a church, community hall, pub, children's centre, primary and nursery school, and an Academy offering secondary school education for children aged 11-16. There are no local shops or services in the Broyleside, excepting an agricultural supplier. The more rural parts of the parish include two further pubs, a garden centre, a petrol station with a convenience store, and a builders' supply retailer. The NA is also home to numerous statutory and locally listed buildings, two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, as well as a nature reserve, and wildlife habitats and corridors.

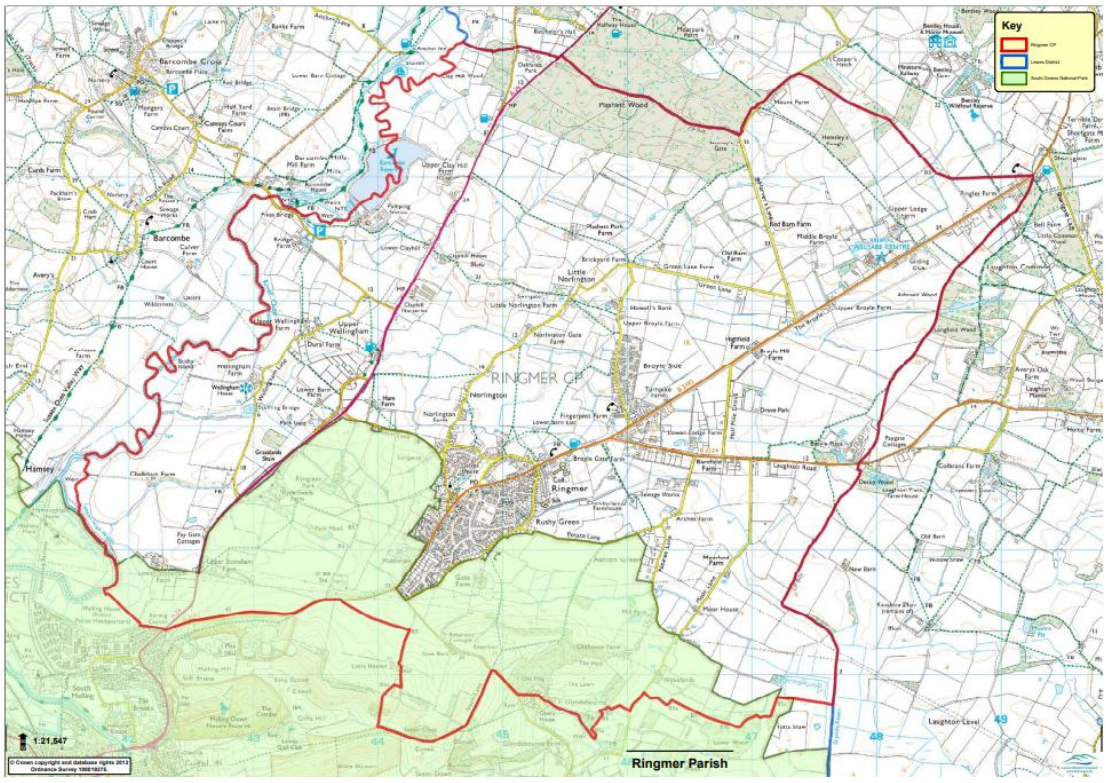
2.1.6. Private car travel is the main form of transport to, from, and within the NA. There is no railway station in the NA. The nearest train stations are at Lewes and Glynde. The NA

benefits from a regular Brighton-Lewes-Ringmer-Hailsham-Eastbourne bus service, but bus connections to other destinations are limited to a small number of school buses.

2.2. The NA boundary and key statistics

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

Figure 2-1: Map of the Ringmer Neighbourhood Area



Source: Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority [3]

2.2.2. At the time of the 2011 Census the NA was home to 4,648 residents, formed into 1,988 households and occupying 2,024 dwellings. The 2021 Census indicates population growth of around 121 individuals (or 3%) since 2011, recording a total of 4,769 residents, 2,024 households, and 2,112 dwellings. The average household size has also increased very slightly, from 2.34 to 2.36 persons per household.

2.2.3. While no completions figure have been shared by the local authority, a look at the Lewes District Authority Monitoring Report 2022-23 shows that between 2018 and 2023, 27 units have been granted permission on sites in the NA allocated in the NP, and 18 units on non-allocated sites. A further useful piece of information, in the absence of local authority commitments figures, comes from a high-level AECOM planning applications search on the Lewes District Council website[4]. This shows

[3] Available at Microsoft Word - Ringmer Designation Notice.doc (lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)
[4] Search Results

permission or outline approvals for four major residential schemes 2018-2024 with a total of 335 units.

2.2.4. Finally, while when comparing the number of dwellings in the 2011 Census with the number of dwellings in the 2021 Census, this only indicates an increase of 88 dwellings, from 2,024 to 2,112, parish monitoring data indicates an increase of 329 net new homes 2011-2024, and a comparison of the 2011 Census with 2023 Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data indicates an increase of 366 dwellings (from 2,024 to 2,390, although the latter data is likely to overestimate delivery due to the larger geography covered by the VOA data compared to the NA boundary). When examining data on recent planning approvals, it appears that much of recent delivery took place in 2021-2024, and this is why these numbers are not captured in the 2021 Census. Further information shared by the Parish Council also indicates 480 unimplemented planning permissions in the NA.

2.3. The housing market area context

2.3.1. Whilst this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) focuses on Ringmer NA it is important to keep in mind that neighbourhoods are not self-contained housing market areas. Housing market areas are usually wider than local authority areas and often stretch across a number of Districts or boroughs. This is because housing market areas are inherently linked to the labour market, employment patterns, and travel to work areas.

2.3.2. In the case of Ringmer, the NA sits within a Greater Brighton Housing Market Area, covering Lewes District, as well and other local authority areas in both East and West Sussex. This market area was most recently reviewed in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) undertaken by AECOM in 2023[5] and centres on Brighton. Note that this LHNA is likely to require an update in due course, to take account of latest national policy changes[6]. However, as latest proposed National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes are promised as imminent but not yet unconfirmed at the time of writing, this update is unlikely to take place prior to the Ringmer HNA being finalised.

2.3.3. The concept of the housing market area means that when households who live in the authorities within that market area move home, the vast majority move within this geography, for various reasons including differences in affordability. However, the housing market area also has migration links to other neighbouring areas, including Eastbourne, Wealden, and North Wessex. Moreover, there is a natural net flow of people from London to the market area, looking for more affordable accommodation, sometimes still commuting out for work; or in search of a suitable retirement location. There is also natural out-migration from Lewes District, for instance of younger people seeking more extensive education and employment opportunities. If further information was required on in- and out-migration into and out of the Neighbourhood

[5] Available at Lewes Local Housing Needs Assessment - 2023 (3).pdf
[6] Details of the consultation on changes to the NPPF are available at Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK but it is as yet unconfirmed what the outcome of this consultation will be and when the NPPF will be published.

Plan area, a survey of recently sold housing may provide a possible addition to the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base.

2.3.4. At the neighbourhood scale it is therefore not possible to be definitive about "local" housing need and demand. This is because neighbourhoods, including Ringmer, are closely linked to other areas. In the case of Ringmer, changes in housing need, demand, or supply in settlements nearby is also likely to impact on the neighbourhood. In Ringmer, significant housing demand pressures on Brighton, Lewes, and further afield, including from London, will impact on demand locally, which is an experience shared by most of the wider South East. The constraints on building in the South Downs National Park add a further layer of complexity, putting more pressure on existing settlements, particularly those on the edge of the SDNP, and those with access to local amenities making them more sustainable locations for growth than other more sensitive or more remote locations. As Ringmer hosts a significant number of amenities, services, and employment opportunities, the case for locating housing near these is rational, and will have the added effect of supporting their continued future. Other top tier settlements with access to employment and / or services in Lewes have also been identified in relation to growth sites by the adopted and emerging Local Plans, including Newhaven, Seaford, Peacehaven & Telscombe, Newick, as well as key transport hubs. Ringmer has further been identified in the Lewes emerging Local Plan as a well-performing employment location which may be suitable for intensification and/or expansion, delivering more local employment, and thus likely to support more housing.

2.3.5. In summary, Ringmer functions within a wider strategic area. As well as fostering good working relationships with the local planning authority (Lewes District Council), it is therefore useful to think about the *role* of the neighbourhood within the wider area and its natural migration dynamics. This HNA can provide evidence to understand this role and the specific features of the neighbourhood within this wider context. Neighbourhood Plans can have a significant impact in shaping their neighbourhoods, enhancing the positive role the neighbourhood plays within the wider housing market, or developing policies to change entrenched patterns and improve housing outcomes in the neighbourhood and wider area.

2.4. Planning policy context

2.4.1. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic development plan policies.[7] The strategic development plan context in the case of Ringmer is relatively complex.

2.4.2. The relevant adopted statutory development plan for the majority of Ringmer (the approximately 80% of the NA which lie outside the SDNP) currently includes the following:

[7] A description of the Basic Conditions of Neighbourhood Planning is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum

- Saved policies from the Lewes Local Plan (adopted in 2003), although none of them are directly relevant to our study[8];
- The Lewes Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 (adopted in 2016)[9] –a Joint Core Strategy with SDNPA with a plan period of 2010 - 2030;
- Lewes Local Plan Part 2: Site allocations and development management policies (adopted in 2020)[10]; and
- The made Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan 2010-2030[11].

2.4.3. The adopted South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033[12] (SDLP, adopted in 2019) covers those 20% of Ringmer NA that are located in the SDNP. However, the majority of housing and planned growth are located in the area planned for by Lewes District Council. Therefore, the Local Plan for Lewes has been given more emphasis in our HNA's policy context.

2.4.4. Lewes District Council are currently in the process of reviewing their Local Plan but are presently only at Regulation 18 stage, with only policy intentions and no draft policies, no preferred growth options nor allocations published at present.

2.4.5. The SDNPA are in an even earlier stage of Local Plan review and have no draft plan published at present, although consultation on a proposed Local Plan revision are due to commence imminently (anticipated for 20 January 2025) at the time of writing our HNA. Therefore, for the purposes of this HNA, we deem it most appropriate to have primary regard to the adopted development plan policies, until more detail is known on the emerging Local Plan. However, where Lewes District Council intentions as regards housing growth policy is known, this is also mentioned in our report and taken into account as and where this is appropriate.

2.4.6. A detailed breakdown of the adopted development plan policies and emerging planning policy intentions relevant to housing need is provided in Appendix B. Here, it is worth summarising the most important points of the adopted and emerging development plans:

- The overall local authority wide housing requirement is defined as follows:
    - Adopted Lewes Core Strategy Table 5 sets out the planned level of growth for Ringmer and Broyle Side as 385 units 2030.
    - Adopted Lewes Local Plan Part 2 Tables 2-5 set out a residual housing requirement outside the National Park of 1,660 units 2020-2030, and planned growth in Ringmer & Broyle Side of 215 units allocated in the

[8] Available at Lewes District Local Plan 2003 saved policies - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils; Policies PT6, PT9, PT10, PT11, PT12, PT13, PT18, PT19 and PT20 still remain part of the development plan for the District
[9] Available at Lewes Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
[10] Available at Lewes Local Plan Part 2: Site allocations and development management policies - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
[11] Available at "Ringmer to 2030"
[12] Available at South Downs Local Plan and Policies Map 2014-2033 - South Downs National Park Authority

Local Plan, 183 units identified in a made Neighbourhood Plan, and 32 units as residual growth required to 2030.

  - Adopted SDLP Strategic Policy SD26 identifies 4,750 net additional homes 2014-2033; and
  - Lewes emerging Local Plan sets out a range for the projected housing requirement to fall between approximately 5,412 (271dpa) and 9,365 (468dpa) 2020-2040.

- Ringmer village is designated in the settlement hierarchy as a
  - Rural Service Centre in the Settlement Hierarchy of the adopted joint Core Strategy (table 2 and paragraph 6.89), which identifies it as the most sustainable location for growth outside of the District centres (towns such as Newhaven and Lewes) where most of the growth is concentrated; and
  - as a “top tier settlement” and “rural service centre” in the emerging Lewes Local Plan Strategic Policy SDS2 & Figure 16.

    (Note that the SDLP does not comment on Ringmer in relation to a settlement hierarchy)
- New dwellings are expected to deliver affordable housing as follows:
  - 40% affordable housing on sites of 10+ homes, and with a stepped target of 25-38% for smaller sites, in the adopted joint Core Strategy Core Policy 1;
  - 50% affordable on sites of 11+ homes and with a stepped target of 0-40% on smaller sites, in the adopted SDLP Strategic Policy SD28; and as
  - 40% affordable in the emerging Lewes Local Plan Strategic Policy intention H1.
- The suggested tenure mix within Affordable Housing is:
  - 75% affordable rent versus 25% intermediate/shared ownership in adopted Joint Core Strategy Core Policy 1;
  - 75% affordable rent versus 25% affordable housing for sale in adopted SDLP Strategic Policy SD28; and
  - 75% rented versus 25% affordable ownership in the emerging Lewes Local Plan Strategic Policy intention H3.
- Emerging Lewes Local Plan Policy intention H2 sets out an expectation that all new homes will be built to Category M4(2) accessibility standards (with no target on this subject in either of the adopted plans).

2.5. Quantity of housing to provide

2.5.1. The NPPF 2024 (paragraphs 69 and 70) requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to provide neighbourhood groups with a definitive or an indicative number of houses to plan for over the Neighbourhood Plan period upon request.

2.5.2. Lewes District Council have not yet fulfilled that requirement at present, due to the stage of progress of their emerging Local Plan. The number of dwellings to be accommodated within the NA by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period will be confirmed in due course, once the emerging Local Plan process is at the appropriate stage. The Local Development Scheme[13] sets out that the Regulation 19 draft Plan is expected imminently, in Winter 2024. The Parish Council has similarly been led to expect publication in late 2024 or early 2025. It is therefore not appropriate for AECOM to provide an alternative or indicative requirement figure for Ringmer at this point in time, as this would in prejudge the emerging Local Plan.

2.5.3. It is nevertheless possible to set out some broad parameters which are useful to consider in the meantime, in relation to likely future housing requirements:

- Adopted Lewes Local Plan Part 1 set out planned housing growth of 1,660 in the Plan and 1,250 through Neighbourhood Plans (total 2,910), with 215 in Ringmer and Broyle Side through the Plan and 183 through the Neighbourhood Plan (total of 398), making the NA the location for approximately 14% of growth in Local Plan Part 1;
- Based on the number of permitted dwellings in the pipeline as part of major schemes in the NA, parish monitoring information indicating delivery of 329 net additional units 2011-2024, and 2023 VOA data, it appears that the majority of these allocations have since been permitted and many of them delivered recently. Further information shared by the Parish Council also indicates a further 480 unimplemented planning permissions in the NA;
- Adopted Lewes Local Plan Part 2 sets out a residual housing requirement outside the National Park of 432 units 2020-2030, of which 32 units (7%) were to be identified as a requirement for Ringmer and Broyle Side and of which 50 units (12%) were allocated in the NA, which is the highest number allocated anywhere in Local Plan Part 2;
- Lewes emerging Local Plan sets out a range for the projected housing requirement to fall approximately between 5,412 - 9,365 for 2020-2040;
- The presence of the South Downs National Park significantly restricts growth in Lewes District, particularly along the boundary, including in the coastal towns of Peacehaven, Newhaven, and Seaford;
- The Spatial development strategy of the emerging Local Plan, in line with national policy, is to focus growth in sustainable locations, particularly brownfield land within existing settlements;

[13] Available at Local Development Scheme - Appendix 1

- Lewes emerging Local Plan describes Ringmer as a “top tier settlement” and “rural service centre” in its settlement hierarchy, as well as a significant employment location; and
- Ringmer is identified in the emerging Plan figure 9 as a potential location for development, with a significant area marked on the map as having potential for growth.

2.5.4. We recommend that the neighbourhood group continue to engage with the LPA to confirm the final housing figure for the Neighbourhood Plan once Lewes District Council’s emerging plan is more advanced.

3. Objectives and approach

3.1. Objectives

3.1.1. This HNA is structured according to a number of themes or topics that were agreed at the outset of the research with the Ringmer Parish Council. These themes are broadly aligned with the kinds of housing policy areas available to neighbourhood plans, and each forms a distinct chapter of this report. The sub-sections below give a brief overview of the objectives of each chapter.

Affordability and Affordable Housing

3.1.2. Neighbourhood plans may include policies that influence the scale of Affordable Housing provision and the mix of different tenures and products provided through new housing development.

3.1.3. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish the existing **tenure** of homes within the NA at present (owner occupied, private rented, social/affordable rented, shared ownership);
- To examine the **affordability** of different tenures by considering house prices, rents, local incomes and earnings; and
- To estimate the scale of **need** for Affordable Housing, including the need for those who cannot afford to rent and those who cannot afford to buy.

3.1.4. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is likely that other supporting evidence may be needed, for example on viability. Local Plans typically include policies on Affordable Housing and whilst the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with these strategic policies, there is scope for Neighbourhood Plan policies to adopt some local variety where this is supported by the evidence.

Type and Size

3.1.5. It is common for neighbourhood plans to include policies that influence what form new housing should take in terms of type and size. This requires evidence of what local people need.

3.1.6. The focus of this chapter is to identify relevant trends and potential gaps in the market that can be used to justify planning policies. It has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish what **mix** of housing exists in the NA at present;
- To describe relevant characteristics of the local **population**; and
- To look to the **future**, considering how the population is likely to evolve and what mix of homes would be most appropriate to build.

3.1.7. In addition to the direction of travel revealed by statistics, a variety of reasons sit behind people's housing choices that are less easy to predict, including wealth, accessibility requirements and personal preference. The evidence in this section provides a starting point for developing and justifying planning policies but does not provide definitive recommendations as it may be appropriate to take into account other factors and site specific circumstances.

Specialist Housing for Older People

3.1.8. It may be appropriate for neighbourhood plans in areas with aging populations to include policies relating to specialist housing for older persons.

3.1.9. This chapter supplements the demographic evidence relating to Type and Size, including the potential demand for downsizing, to consider the quantity and characteristics of need for housing for older people with some form of additional care. Its approach is as follows:

- To review the **current provision** of specialist housing in the NA;
- To estimate the **potential demand** for this form of accommodation with reference to the projected growth in the older population and current rates of mobility limitation; and
- To discuss the potential for meeting this need through adaptations to the mainstream stock and other **additional considerations**.

3.1.10. This element of the HNA recognises that the majority of older people will live in the mainstream housing stock and that there is no single way to meet their needs. It may also be inappropriate to focus excessively on the needs of one group or to promote a specialist scheme in a location that lacks adequate services. These issues will be drawn out.

3.2. Approach

3.2.1. This HNA assesses a range of evidence to ensure its findings are robust for the purposes of developing policy at the neighbourhood plan level. This includes data from the 2021 and 2011 Censuses and a range of other data sources, including:

- ONS population and household projections for future years;
- Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data on the current stock of housing;
- Land Registry data on prices paid for housing within the local market;
- Rental prices from Rightmove;
- Local Authority housing waiting list data; and
- The Lewes Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) 2023[14].

3.2.2. Data from the 2021 Census continues to be released. At present, the available data covers population, households, tenure, and dwelling stock characteristics. Some data

[14] Available at Lewes Local Housing Needs Assessment - 2023 (3).pdf

at the localised level, including for parishes, and some datasets which compare numerous variables, has not yet been made available. As such, this HNA draws on the latest available data from the 2021 Census where possible and will also continue to use other data sets, including 2011 Census, Valuation Office Agency data, and ONS projections to build up evidence at the neighbourhood level.

4. Affordability and Affordable Housing

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. Neighbourhood plans may include policies that influence the scale of Affordable Housing provision and the mix of different tenures and products provided through new housing development.

4.1.2. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish the existing **tenure** of homes within the NA at present (owner occupied, private rented, social/affordable rented, shared ownership);
- To examine the **affordability** of different tenures by considering house prices, rents, local incomes and earnings; and
- To estimate the scale of **need** for Affordable Housing, including the need for those who cannot afford to rent and those who cannot afford to buy.

4.1.3. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it is likely that other supporting evidence may be needed, for example on viability. Local Plans typically include policies on Affordable Housing and whilst the Neighbourhood Plan must conform with these policies, there is scope for Neighbourhood Plan policies to adopt some local variety where this is supported by the evidence.

4.1.4. This HNA has been undertaken in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (published 2024).

4.2. Definitions

4.2.1. This section uses a range of technical terms which are useful to define at the outset:

- **Tenure** refers to the way a household occupies their home. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of tenure: market housing (such as homes available to purchase outright or rent from a private landlord) and Affordable Housing (including subsidised products like social rent and shared ownership).
- **Affordability** refers to the relationship between the cost of housing to buy or rent and the incomes and earnings of households.
- The definition of **Affordable Housing** is set out in the NPPF 2024 (Annex 2) as 'Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market…' We refer to Affordable Housing, with capital letters, to denote the specific tenures that are classified as affordable in the NPPF (Annex 2). A relatively less expensive home for market sale may be affordable but it is not a form of Affordable Housing.
- A range of affordable home ownership products are included in the Government's definition of Affordable Housing, to meet the needs of those aspiring to own a home. This includes discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership (shared ownership, rent to buy etc) which are defined in Annex 2. First Homes are also part of the range of affordable home ownership products,

but the definition of First Homes and policy is covered in a Ministerial Statement (2021) and not defined in Annex 2.[15]

4.3. Current tenure profile

4.3.1. The current tenure profile is a key feature of the Neighbourhood Area (NA). Patterns of home ownership, private renting and affordable/social renting reflect demographic characteristics including age (with older households more likely to own their own homes), and patterns of income and wealth which influence whether households can afford to rent or buy and whether they need subsidy to access housing.

4.3.2. Table 4-1 presents data on tenure in Ringmer compared with Lewes District and England from the 2021 Census.

4.3.3. The majority of households in Ringmer are owner occupiers (76%), followed by private renters (14%) and social renters (9%). This is relatively similar to the profile across Lewes District, except that across the District as a whole, there are slightly more renters (primarily private renters) and fewer owner occupiers. Proportions at a national level show even less owner occupation and more private and social renting.

4.3.4. Notice that Shared Ownership, as a form of tenure, only represents 1% of households nationally, and a similar proportion of 0.9 and 0.8% in the District and NA respectively. This is due to its more recent introduction and low provisions and take-up of this form of accommodation.

Table 4-1: Tenure (households) in Ringmer and comparator geographies, 2021

Tenure	Ringmer	Lewes District	England
Owned	76.4%	71.1%	61.3%
Shared ownership	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%
Social rented	9.2%	10.9%	17.1%
Private rented	13.6%	17.0%	20.6%

Sources: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

4.3.5. It is also worth comparing how the tenure mix has changed in the last ten years, using the 2011 Census (see Table 4-2). Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, the proportion of owner occupation and private renting in Ringmer has remained roughly the same, increasing only slightly. Some more significant percentage decreases could be observed in the affordable sector. However, it is worth noting that in absolute terms, the decline in shared ownership is only marginal (from 21 to 17 properties), and only looks more significant in percentage terms due to a small sample size. The change in absolute terms of the social rented sector is more significant, with a decrease of 21 households, from 207 to 186.

[15] The shape that the new First Homes product will take is set out in a Ministerial Statement issued in May 2021, available here: https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48. The relevant update to PPG is available here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#contents.

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

Tenure	2011	2021	% Change
Owned	1,489	1,546	3.8%
Shared ownership	21	17	-19.0%
Social rented	207	186	-10.1%
Private rented	271	275	1.5%

Sources: Census 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

4.4. Affordability

House prices

4.4.1. House prices provide an indication of the level of demand for homes within an area. The relationship between house prices and incomes determines whether housing is affordable to local households and, to a large extent, what tenure, type and size of home they occupy. Changes in affordability over time can indicate pressures in the housing market. As such, it is useful for the evidence base for plans to examine trends in prices and consider what this reveals about the local housing market.

4.4.2. Figure 4-1 looks at the average and lower quartile house prices in Ringmer, based on sales price data published by the Land Registry. It shows that between 2014 and 2023, mean house prices in the NA (the average, where the sum of all house price values is divided by the total number of sales) have been relatively volatile, with a number of peaks and troughs, and an overall quite substantial increase of 63% or £173,500. This is more than the average national price increase of 45% during the same time period

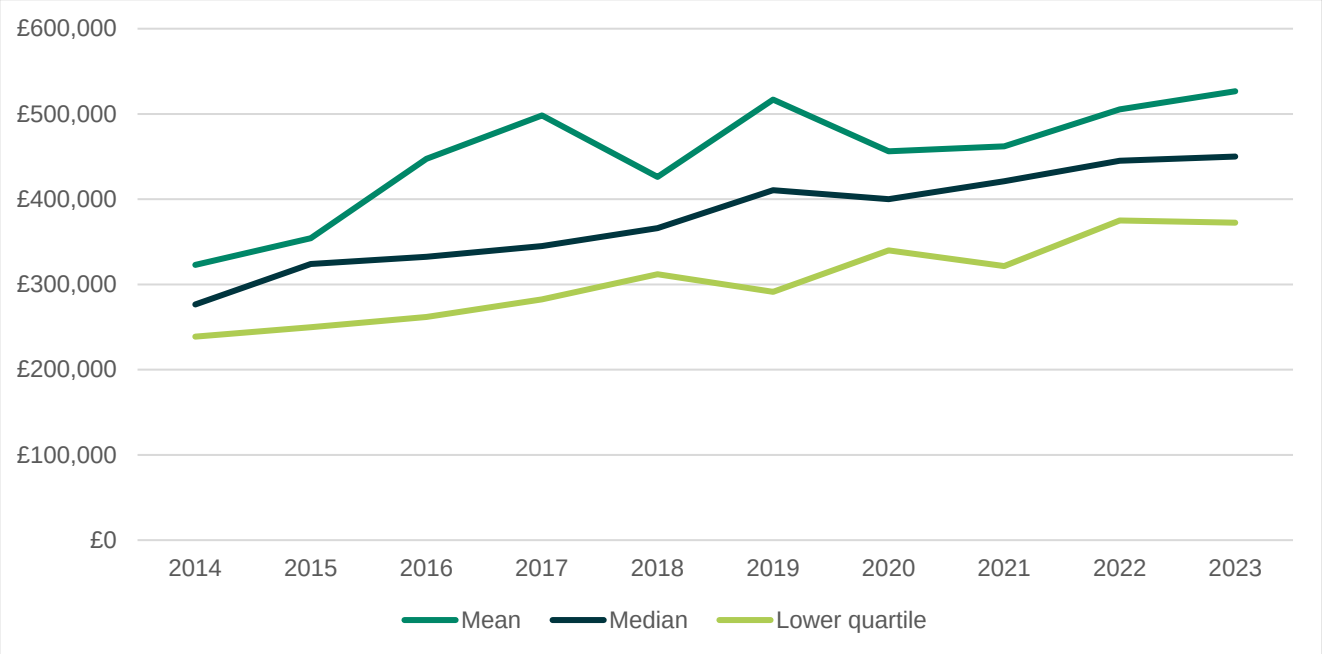
4.4.3. The recent peaks in mean house prices in Ringmer were in 2017 and 2019, with significant dips in 2018 and 2020-2021. However, it is worth noting that the mean also looks volatile due to the smaller sample size, with only 834 sales recorded across the NA over the 2014-2023 period.

4.4.4. A slightly more steady increase with less extensive fluctuations could be observed in the median average. The median house price is the middle number when the data is sorted from smallest to largest. Overall, median prices rose by the same percentage as the mean (63%). Furthermore, because the mean captures the average of all the house prices, both high and low, the few outlying data points on the high end cause the mean to increase, making it higher than the median.

4.4.5. The lower quartile is the middle figure of the lowest 50% of prices and a good representation of entry-level housing. The lower quartile average house price in Ringmer in 2023 was £133,750, having increased by 56% (£133,750) since 2014. This is a substantial rate of increase, which is nevertheless lower than the increases seen in the mean and median prices. This shows that there have been some outliers at the upper end of the house price scale, which have risen more substantially during this time period, compared to the prices at the lower end of the scale.

4.4.6. The mean house price for Lewes District as a whole in 2023 was £488,266, which is a marginal 7% (£38,340) lower than the Ringmer mean of £526,606 in the same year. This again shows that there is a proportionately slightly higher percentage of particularly expensive homes in Ringmer, which increase the mean average for the NA, compared to the average for the District as a whole. This also chimes with the fact that there is a higher proportion of larger homes in the NA compared to the District as a whole (this is explored in more detail in our Type and Size chapter).

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



Source: Land Registry PPD

4.4.7. Table 4-3 breaks down house prices by type, presenting the median within each type. It shows that between 2014 and 2023 the greatest increase was in semi-detached homes (which incidentally make up the majority of the Ringmer housing stock), at 61%. Semi-detached homes remained the second most expensive type of housing locally, following detached homes as the most expensive. The prices for detached homes grew at a more modest 22% and prices for flats actually fell by 14% during the same period. Average prices for terraces grew by 54% during the same time period.

4.4.8. There is also some year-on-year fluctuation in house prices within each of the housing types (although less so for semi-detached homes). This is likely caused by the fact that the annual average by type is derived from a smaller sample size within each category. This means that variations in characteristics outside of type (such as the size, location, and condition of dwelling) can have a greater impact on the average. This data ought to thus be approached with caution.

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

Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Growth
Detached	£472,475	£442,500	£409,500	£447,000	£575,000	£559,000	£500,000	£529,500	£619,000	£577,500	22.2%
Semi-detached	£273,000	£325,000	£335,000	£336,500	£366,750	£364,000	£376,250	£399,500	£430,000	£440,000	61.2%
Terraced	£250,000	£250,000	£272,475	£285,000	£295,000	£290,000	£395,998	£320,000	£355,750	£384,000	53.6%

Flats	£187,000	£182,000	£211,000	£212,000	£219,250	£200,000	£200,000	£220,000	£220,000	£160,000	-14.4%
All Types	£276,500	£324,000	£332,500	£345,000	£366,000	£410,498	£400,000	£421,000	£445,000	£450,000	62.7%

Source: Land Registry PPD

Income

4.4.9. Household incomes determine the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market, and consequently the level of need for affordable housing products. Two sources of data are used to examine household incomes in the NA.

4.4.10. The first source is ONS's estimates of incomes in small areas. This is locally specific but limited to the overall average income (i.e. it does not provide the average income of lower earners). The average total household income locally was £46,000 in 2020 (the most recent year for this dataset). Discussion about the area to which this data applies is provided in Appendix A.

4.4.11. The second source is ONS's annual estimates of UK employee earnings. This provides lower quartile average earnings (i.e. the income of the lowest 25% of earners). However, it is only available at the Local Authority level. It also relates to individual earnings. While this is an accurate representation of household incomes where there is only one earner, it does not represent household income where there are two or more people earning. The gross individual lower quartile annual earnings for Lewes District were £15,335 in 2023. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £30,670.

4.4.12. It is immediately clear from this data that there is a considerable gap between the spending power of average earning households and those earning the lowest 25% of incomes, particularly where the household in question has only one earner.

Affordability Thresholds

4.4.13. To gain a clearer understanding of local affordability, it is useful to understand what levels of income are required to afford different tenures. This is done using 'affordability thresholds'. This is the estimated amount of annual income required to cover the cost of rent or a mortgage given local housing prices.

4.4.14. AECOM has determined thresholds for the income required in Ringmer to buy a home in the open market (average and entry-level prices), and the income required to afford to rent privately and the range of Affordable Housing tenures as set out in the NPPF. These calculations are detailed and discussed in more detail in Appendix C.

4.4.15. The key assumptions made in assessing the affordability of different tenures are explained alongside the calculations, but it is worth noting here that we have assumed that the maximum percentage of household income that should be spent on rent is 30% and that mortgage financing will be offered at a maximum of 3.5 times household income. These are standard assumptions across housing needs assessments at neighbourhood and local authority scale although different approaches are sometimes taken and a case can be made for alternatives. This is discussed in more detail at the start of Appendix C.

4.4.16. Table 4-4 summarises the estimated cost of each tenure, the annual income required to support these costs within the NA, and whether local incomes are sufficient. The 'income required' column assumes the household already has access to a deposit (which we have assumed to be 10% of the value to be purchased) but does not reflect the possibility that households may already hold equity from an existing property. Although these factors may be crucial to whether housing will be affordable, they are highly dependent on individual circumstances that cannot be anticipated here.

Table 4-4: Affordability thresholds in Ringmer (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £46,000	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £15,335	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £30,670
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£405,000	-	£115,714	No	No	No
Estimated NA New Build Entry-Level House Price	£364,951	-	£104,272	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£335,250	-	£95,786	No	No	No
LA New Build Median House Price	£386,996	-	£110,570	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£23,700	£79,000	No	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£16,800	£56,000	No	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£255,466	-	£72,990	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£218,971	-	£62,563	No	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£182,476	-	£52,136	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£182,476	£5,069	£69,032	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£91,238	£7,603	£51,412	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£36,495	£9,124	£40,840	Yes	No	No
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£8,685	£28,948	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£4,789	£15,962	Yes	No	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

4.4.17. Before considering each tenure category in turn, it is important to stress that these affordability thresholds have been calculated to give an indication of the costs of various tenures to inform Neighbourhood Plan policy choices. These figures rely on existing data and assumptions, and it is not possible to estimate every possible permutation. The income figures also disguise a large degree of variation. For simplicity the analysis below speaks in terms of tenure products being 'affordable' or 'not affordable' for different groups, but individual circumstances and the location, condition and other factors of specific properties in each category have a large impact. These conclusions should therefore be interpreted flexibly.

Market housing for purchase and rent

4.4.18. Thinking about housing for purchase on the open market, it appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an income of £115,714, more than two and a half times the annual average household income of £46,000.

4.4.19. Private renting is also out of reach to local average income households, even for entry-level properties. Affordability might be improved if households are able or willing to dedicate a larger proportion of their incomes to rental costs, although this has repercussions for other quality of life aspects and cannot be assumed to suit all individuals' circumstances.

Affordable home ownership

4.4.20. There is a fairly large household income bracket in Ringmer which would be able to afford to rent privately but not home ownership. They would roughly include earnings between around £56,000 per year (at which point entry-level rents become affordable) and £95,786 (at which point entry-level market sale homes become affordable). This 'can rent, can't buy' cohort may benefit from the range of affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership. However, it is worth noting that in the case of Ringmer, this income bracket lies significantly above the average household income, and therefore affordable home ownership options are unlikely to extend home ownership to those on average (or lower) incomes in the NA.

4.4.21. First Homes are to be offered at a discount of at least 30% on equivalent market prices (i.e. new build, entry-level properties). Local authorities and neighbourhood plan qualifying bodies will have discretion to increase the discount on First Homes to 40% or 50% where there is evidence to suggest this is appropriate. Note that the emerging Lewes Local Plan Strategic Policy H3: Affordable Housing proposed a 50% discount.

4.4.22. This report has estimated the income required to afford First Homes and tested the implications of 30%, 40% and 50% discount levels. None of these discounts would be affordable in Ringmer to households with average incomes or below, due to the high cost of housing for private sale, which even a 50% discount would not be affordable to average income households. Whilst First Homes would extend home ownership to some households currently unable to afford, its usefulness as a useful product for meeting the needs of many in the NA who cannot compete in the private housing market for sale is limited.

4.4.23. It is also important to note that this evidence based on affordability does not provide a complete picture: evidence about the financial viability of development is also relevant. The question is whether demanding higher discount levels on First Homes will create a financial burden on developers that leads them to argue either that the discount level is not feasible or that the total amount of Affordable Housing may need to be decreased. This could effectively sacrifice the provision of affordable rented housing to provide a more attractive First Homes product. In Ringmer particularly, this would not be a beneficial option, as house prices are so high compared to average incomes, and affordable renting offers the only tenures affordable to those on average

incomes or below. The issue of development viability is a specialist matter involving analysis of land values and build costs that is outside the scope of this assessment. If the Ringmer Parish Council were intent on setting a higher First Homes discount level than that set at District level, further discussions with the LPA would be necessary. However, AECOM do not advise that this would be a positive step towards meeting the most urgent needs in Ringmer.

4.4.24. Shared ownership appears to be not much more affordable than First Homes in the NA and is broadly accessible to the same groups. Government has recently announced that the minimum equity share for shared ownership will fall to 10% of the property value, and this is proposed in the emerging Lewes Local Plan Strategic Policy H3.[16] If this was delivered in the NA, it would make shared ownership possible to access for those on average incomes (although not those on lower quartile incomes). While the income threshold for a 10% equity shared ownership home is lower, this product may not necessarily be more attractive than the alternatives (such as shared ownership at higher equity shares and First Homes) for those who can afford them (i.e. those with above average incomes).

4.4.25. Rent to Buy provides households with the option to rent at a discount whilst saving for a deposit to buy their property within a set period (usually within 7 years). The income required to access Rent to Buy is assumed to be the same as that required to afford market rents (which are not affordable on average incomes in Ringmer). However, affordability to local households would also depend on how rents are set. If Rent to Buy is offered at a discount to *entry level* rents, this would expand this route to home ownership to an extent. However, this would still not benefit those of average incomes or below in Ringmer. Discounts on *average* rents would make Rent to Buy even less affordable, in terms of the household income required, comparable to First Homes and Shared Ownership. For some households, the availability of a deposit rather than income level per se is the key barrier to accessing home ownership. Rent to Buy may therefore offer a useful product to meet the needs of some limited households in this way.

4.4.26. The three affordable home ownership products discussed above need to also be considered in relation to what they offer occupants in the long term beyond simply being affordable to access or not:

- First Homes allow for a greater ownership stake in the property, enabling occupiers to benefit from price appreciation over time. Monthly outgoings are also limited to mortgage costs alone, which tend to be cheaper than renting.
- Shared ownership at high equity shares performs a similar function to First Homes, but there are additional costs associated with the rented portion.
- Shared ownership at low equity shares can usually be accessed by lower earning households (than First Homes) and requires a smaller deposit. However, this is a potentially less attractive route to eventual ownership because monthly outgoings

[16] The previous minimum equity share was 25%. This change took effect from 28 June 2021 and transitional arrangements are in place for planning policy documents that are prepared during the implementation timeframe. Changes are also introduced to make the process of staircasing to full ownership more gradual with lower minimum increments of 1%. The ministerial statement confirming and detailing the changes is available here: https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48.

remain high. The occupant has to pay a significant monthly rent as well as service charges and other costs, so it can be harder for them to save funds to buy out a greater share in the property over time.

- Rent to Buy requires no deposit, thereby benefitting those with sufficient incomes but low savings. It is more attractive than renting but results in a much slower accumulation of the funds that can provide an eventual route to ownership than the other tenures discussed above.

Social and Affordable rented housing

4.4.27. Affordable rents set out in the table above are substantially below market rents. Whilst affordable rents can be set at up to 80% of market rents, in many locations Registered Providers (housing associations) set them to ensure that they are affordable to those claiming housing benefit, i.e. at or below Local Housing Allowance levels. This means that they are in practice below 80% of market levels. It certainly appears to be the case in Ringmer that more than a 20% discount is involved, as affordable rent offers a 50% discount on entry-level market rents and a 65% discount on average market rents at present.

4.4.28. Affordable rented housing is generally affordable to households with two lower earners in Ringmer, depending on their household size (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). However, households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered on the basis of their income only, including the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.

4.4.29. The NPPF 2024 makes explicit reference of the need to set out the proportion of Social Rented homes needed as part of the Affordable Housing to be delivered in a local authority area (paragraph 64, NPPF)[17].

4.4.30. Social Rents are cheaper than Affordable Rents and, in theory, would leave households on lower earnings better off and better able to afford their other living costs, such as food and fuel etc. This is particularly the case for households who are supported by Housing Benefit and subject to the overall benefit cap since their benefit income is limited by the cap and they may not be able to claim enough to cover the Affordable Rent.

4.4.31. Where households are supported by housing benefit and not affected by benefit caps, the difference in the cost of Affordable and Social rents may be irrelevant as the level of housing benefit flexes according to the rent. This means that these households may be no better off in social rented accommodation because they receive a lower rate of housing benefit to cover their rent.

4.4.32. Households who are not supported by benefits, for example those whose earnings are higher and making them ineligible for benefits, would clearly benefit by the lower Social Rent levels because it would reduce their outgoings. However, these households are less likely to be in acute need on housing waiting lists. Rather, this

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scenario might apply to those already living in Social Rented housing where their financial circumstances have improved.

4.4.33. On balance, the relative need for Social Rented homes versus Affordable Rented homes is a complex area because of the interaction of benefits, rents and earnings. AECOM suggests that the local authority is best placed to assess what proportion of Affordable Housing should be provided as Social Rent, drawing on their waiting list data and more detailed evidence in LHNAs. If the neighbourhood group wishes to develop localized policy in this area, this will be best achieved through liaison with the LPA (and local housing officers) as well as local registered providers.

4.5. Estimates of the need for Affordable Housing

4.5.1. This section estimates the need for Affordable Housing, which should be considered separately for affordable rented housing and affordable routes to ownership. The appropriate approach taken is based on the evidence available at Local Authority and NA scale.

Evidence in the Lewes Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA)

4.5.2. An LHNA was undertaken for Lewes District Council in May 2023. The study estimates the need for affordable housing, drawing on information from the local authority's Waiting List, CORE lettings data, data on prices and rents, household incomes, and demographic projections, in line with the requirements of national planning policy and PPG guidance.

4.5.3. The LHNA estimates that there is a need for 170 affordable rented homes each year in Lewes District over the 20-year plan period to meet the needs of households that are unable to afford to rent privately. These households are typically in acute housing need and are unable to meet their needs in the market.

4.5.4. Within the authority area, it is additionally estimated that there are 225 households each year who are able to afford market rents but are unable to access home ownership. These households are typically living in the private rented sector and would prefer to own their own home but cannot afford to buy in the open market.

4.5.5. Taken together, these estimates suggest the need for 395 affordable homes per annum over the plan period in the District as a whole.

4.5.6. If we prorate this need to the population of Ringmer (which constitutes 4.77% of the District's population on the basis of the 2021 Census), this results in the following estimate:

- 8 units needed of affordable rented housing per year (or 162 over a 20-year Neighbourhood Plan period 2020-2040), and
- 11 units needed of affordable housing for sale per year (215 over the plan period),
- Producing a total need for 19 units of affordable housing per year in Ringmer (377 over the plan period).

4.5.7. It is worth noting that pro-rating District level estimates of affordable housing need to an area such as Ringmer, which is rural but has significant affordability issues, presents a number of problems in practice. In one way, the Local Authority level figures are likely to include higher needs from urban areas where there is a larger social housing stock and larger numbers of households living in private rented homes on housing benefit. Both of these factors tend to generate higher needs. By contrast, in rural parishes like Ringmer, the lower level of provision of social housing means there is less need generated from households already living in the sector. Similarly, households who may need social housing often move away to areas where their needs are more likely to be met (either because there is social housing available or more private rented housing). On the other hand, Ringmer has a significant affordability problem, with all forms of private housing, including private renting of entry-level units, unaffordable on local incomes. This may mean that need for affordable renting may be proportionately higher, and more urgent, in Ringmer than in certain other parts of the District. Taken together, this means it is difficult to identify need for social/affordable rented housing within Ringmer exactly. However, the above estimates should offer a reasonable starting point.

4.5.8. In the case of Ringmer, there is also at present no additional information which could help to make this estimate more reliable, as the more detailed housing evidence for the Local Plan is currently still emerging, no recent household survey results are available to AECOM at the time of writing, and the local authority has not provided locally specific housing waiting list data for the NA on request. AECOM understand that the Parish Council intends to conduct a neighbourhood survey in future, which we would encourage, in order to supplement the evidence in this HNA.

4.6. Affordable Housing policies in Neighbourhood Plans

4.6.1. This section outlines a common Neighbourhood Plan policy level around the tenure mix of affordable housing, provides a recommendation, and summarises relevant considerations.

Application of Local Plan policies

4.6.2. Lewes District Council's adopted Core Policy 1 and emerging Lewes Local Plan policy intention H1 on this subject require 40% of all new housing to be affordable. The SDLP sets a target of 50%. Unfortunately, Lewes District Council has not been able to share NA-specific completions figures with AECOM at the time of writing. However, looking at the Lewes District Authority Monitoring report 2022-23 can give an indication. This states that on allocated sites, between 2018-2023, only 7 affordable units were granted permission out of 27 units delivered on allocated sites in total, so 26%. Information shared with AECOM by the Parish Council in turn indicates 104 affordable homes being delivered 2011-2024, out of a total of 329 net additional units. This would indicate affordable delivery of around 32%.

4.6.3. A high-level search of recent permissions and outline permissions approvals for four major residential schemes 2018-2024 gives further information. These four major residential schemes were permitted for the delivery of 110 of their total 335 units as

affordable housing (averaging out as 33% of total units permitted) (see Table 4-5 below). Considering that major schemes are likely to be permitted with greater affordable housing percentages than smaller schemes, and considering that delivery is likely to fall short of permissions, it appears that the affordable housing policy target of 40% is not usually met on sites in the NA.

Table 4-5: Recent permissions and outline permissions approvals for four major residential schemes 2018-2024

Major Residential Scheme Name and Number	Permission Type & Year	Housing Units Permitted	Affordable Units Permitted (% of total)
Averys Nurseries Uckfield Road Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5RU Ref. No: LW/24/0343 / PP-12990972 / LW/20/0011	Reserved Matters Approval in 2024 on existing outline approval on appeal APPEAL/22/0032	53	5 units (10%)
Land North Of Lewes Road Ringmer (The Green Man) Ref. No: LW/23/0752 / PP-12592090	Amendment in 2024 to existing permission in	95	38 units (40%)
Caburn Field Anchor Field Ringmer East Sussex Ref. No: LW/18/0808 / PP-07236479	Permission in 2018	77	23 units (30%)
Land North Of Chapters Bishops Lane Ringmer East Sussex Ref. No: LW/18/0331 / PP-6815895 / LW/14/0127	Reserved Matters Approval in 2018 following Outline Permission LW/14/0127 in 2014	110	44 (40%)
Total		**335**	**110 (33%)**

4.6.4. The overall proportion of housing that must be affordable is not an area of policy that a Neighbourhood Plan can usually influence, but it is worth emphasizing that the HNA finds there to be robust evidence of need for Affordable Housing in the NA, and every

effort should be made to maximise delivery where viable. Changing or influencing the overall proportion of housing that must be affordable is uncommon in Neighbourhood Plans and would demand a high standard of evidence to depart from the Local Plan. If this is of interest, it should first be discussed with the LPA to ensure their support and to determine what additional evidence (e.g. about development viability) would be needed.

4.6.5. How the Affordable Housing that comes forward through mainstream development sites should be broken down into specific tenures (i.e. the balance between rented tenures and routes to home ownership) is set out in the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan and the adopted SDLP as 75% affordable rented versus 25% affordable housing for sale.

Affordable Housing at Neighbourhood level

4.6.6. The HNA can provide more localised evidence and this may be used to support Neighbourhood Plan policies. This section suggests an Affordable Housing tenure mix that might be suitable for Ringmer on the basis of identified housing need and a range of other considerations detailed in Appendix D.

4.6.7. This indicative mix is chiefly a response to the expectation that the delivery of Affordable Housing will be lower than the needs identified here. In this context, affordable rented tenures should be prioritised, particularly in light of the fact that none of the other tenures are affordable in the NA on average local incomes. The Local Plan guideline mix of 75% rented to 25% ownership appears to offer a suitable benchmark, which also complies with the various minimum requirements mandated nationally.

4.6.8. First Homes is a less affordable option locally than Shared Ownership. Neither are affordable on average local incomes, excepting Shared Ownership with a 10% share. Since the changes to the NPPF in December 2024, National Government no longer requires that a minimum of 25% of all Affordable Housing secured through developer contributions are to be provided as First Homes. Considering this change in government policy, and considering that First Homes provision would displace slightly more affordable shared ownership options, we do not recommend that First Homes is included in the recommended tenure mix. While in the interests of diversity and maximising choice, a percentage could be allocated to First Homes to represent another form of affordable housing for sale, this would displace urgently needed affordable housing for rent, so we would recommend against this. Rent to Buy also does not feature in the recommended mix for the same reason, and because it was considered the least affordable tenure locally, compared to potential higher discounts on shared ownership or First Homes.

4.6.9. AECOM suggest an indicative mix of 75% affordable / social rent, 25% shared ownership, 0% discounted market sale or First Homes, and 0% rent to buy. This is because First Homes and Rent to Buy are unaffordable at local income levels while shared ownership at 10% extends home ownership a little more widely than the alternatives.

4.6.10. The NPPF 2024 makes explicit reference of the need to set out the proportion of Social Rented homes needed as part of the Affordable Housing to be delivered in a local authority area (paragraph 64, NPPF)[18].

4.6.11. On balance, the relative need for Social Rented homes versus Affordable Rented homes is a complex area because of the interaction of benefits, rents and earnings. AECOM suggests that the local authority is best placed to assess what proportion of Affordable Housing should be provided as Social Rent, drawing on their waiting list data, housing benefit data, more detailed evidence in LHNAs and viability assessments. If the neighbourhood group wishes to develop localized policy in this area, this will be best achieved through liaison with the LPA (and local housing officers) as well as local registered providers.

4.6.12. Where the Ringmer Parish Council wish to develop policy that deviates from that outlined in the Local Plan, especially as national Government policy has changed since the Local Plan was published, either by differing from the headline split between renting and ownership or by specifying a greater level of detail around sub-tenures, it is important that they liaise with Lewes District Council to determine what additional evidence (notably about development viability) may be needed, and to ensure that any departures from the local or national policy context have their support, in light of local evidence.

4.7. Conclusions- Affordability and Affordable Housing

Current tenure profile

4.7.1. Ringmer's current tenure profile is formed predominantly of home-owners, making up around 76% of households, followed by private and social renters, accounting for 14% and 9% of households respectively. Only 0.8% of households live in shared ownership homes. Ringmer has a higher percentage of home owners and a lower percentage of social and private renters than the District as a whole, with these differences even more pronounced compared to national levels.

4.7.2. Over the intercensal period, the proportion of owner occupation and private renting in Ringmer has remained roughly the same, increasing by 3.8 and 1.5% respectively, but the size of the social rented sector has declined more significantly, by 10%. Shared ownership also declined, even more considerably by 19%. However, this is partially due to a smaller sample size, of only 21-17 dwellings.

Affordability

4.7.3. Between 2014 and 2023 average house prices in Ringmer have been relatively volatile, with a number of peaks and troughs, leading to an overall significant increase of £173,500 (63%). This is considerably more than the national average increase of 45% during the same period. The housing type for which prices increased most were semi-detached homes, which incidentally make up the majority of the Ringmer housing stock, and which constitute the second most expensive type of housing.

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4.7.4. The average total annual household income in Ringmer was £46,000 in 2020 (the most recent year for this data), while the gross lower quartile income for a single earner was £15,335 or £30,670 for dual income households across Lewes District (this data is not available for smaller areas). Dual lower quartile income households therefore earned significantly less than average income households, which is not uncommon.

4.7.5. Comparing these local income levels with the cost of different tenures indicates that affordability is very poor in the NA. All tenures, except affordable and social rent, and shared ownership at the lowest percentage (10%), are unaffordable to those on average incomes. Households with two lower quartile earners can only afford affordable and social rents, and households with access to only a single lower quartile income cannot afford any of the tenures without recourse to benefits.

4.7.6. There is a fairly large household income bracket in Ringmer which would be able to afford to rent privately but not home ownership (earning between around £56,000 - £95,786 a year). However, this “can rent can’t buy” income bracket is significantly above average incomes for Ringmer. This means that affordable home ownership products are less likely to be useful in the NA in extending the possibility of home ownership to average earning residents, except for shared ownership at 10%.

The need for Affordable Housing

4.7.7. The quantity of Affordable Housing needed in Ringmer can be estimated by pro-rating the needs figures from the very recent 2023 LHNA produced for Lewes District. The resulting estimated need for affordable housing is 19 units per year (377 over the 20-year Neighbourhood Plan period 2020-2040):

- 8 units of affordable rented housing per year (or 162 over the plan period), and
- 11 units of affordable housing for sale per year (215 over the plan period),

4.7.8. While the estimated need for affordable home ownership is greater, affordable and social rented tenures still clearly fulfil a vital role in Ringmer, and most discounted home ownership options are not affordable to those on average incomes and below. Therefore, meeting the more urgent need for social and affordable rented units should be prioritised where possible, particularly if affordable housing delivery is limited.

4.7.9. Taking this affordability and supply picture into account, along with local and national planning policy, the guideline tenure split within Affordable Housing for Ringmer is proposed to be 75% Affordable Housing for rent and 25% Affordable Housing for sale, in line with the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan (with the 25% affordable home ownership delivering First Homes, unless Lewes District Council supports a case for deviating from the national government requirement for First Homes, or if this is dropped). Where delivery is likely to be constrained, affordable and social rented tenures should always be delivered as a priority.

Affordable Housing policy

4.7.10. As explained in Chapter 2 of our HNA, Lewes District Council is currently unable to provide a housing requirement for Ringmer, due to the stage of progress of their

emerging Local Plan. The number of dwellings to be accommodated within the NA by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period will be confirmed in due course, once the emerging Local Plan process is at the appropriate stage. It is therefore not appropriate for AECOM to provide an alternative or indicative requirement figure for Ringmer at this point in time.

4.7.11. Looking back at the currently adopted Local Plan and past allocations of growth to the NA, it is possible to observe that the NA accommodated approximately 14% of housing growth units allocated in Local Plan Part 1; and 7% of the growth requirement and 12% of allocations in Local Plan Part 2. The emerging Lewes Local Plan sets out a projected housing requirement range across the plan area of between 5,412 - 9,365 units between 2020-2040.

4.7.12. If the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan affordable housing target of 40% were achieved on every site, and if all units were delivered, the levels of growth required as a minimum to meet the estimated affordable housing needs of Ringmer would be a minimum of 940 housing units overall.

4.7.13. This could be achieved through a combination of allocations in the Local Plan and in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. If resulting housing delivery is below this level, or if affordable housing is delivered at below 40%, meeting the more urgent and acute need for affordable rented housing should be prioritised wherever possible, and other avenues of delivering affordable housing should be explored in discussion with the local authority. While affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are a number of other, more proactive routes available for its provision. This can for instance include the use of neighbourhood development orders, identification of exception sites, or the development of community land trusts, which are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

5. Type and Size

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. It is common for neighbourhood plans to include policies that influence what form new housing should take in terms of type and size. This requires evidence of what local people need.

5.1.2. This can be done using statistics to identify relevant trends and potential gaps in the market. That is the focus of this chapter of the HNA. The evidence gathered here can be used to justify planning policies either on its own or in combination with any future survey results expressing the specific wants and concerns of local residents. It will also build up a picture of the population and existing range of homes that may provide useful context for the neighbourhood plan.

5.1.3. This chapter has three aims, each given its own sub-section:

- To establish what **mix** of housing exists in the NA at present;
- To describe characteristics of the local **population** that are relevant to housing need; and
- To look to the **future**, considering how the population is likely to evolve and what mix of homes would be most appropriate to build.

5.1.4. It is important to keep in mind that housing need is not an exact science. To get from a set of facts about the population to an ideal mix of homes requires making assumptions. For example, there are clear patterns about what size of home families tend to live in at different stages of life. However, a variety of other reasons sit behind people's housing choices that are less easy to predict, including wealth, accessibility requirements and personal preference. Some trends can also change rapidly over time, such as the increasing preference for home working.

5.1.5. The conclusions and recommendations given here are therefore not definitive. Rather, they are what the statistics suggest future needs will look like based on current trends. This is sufficient for justifying planning policies, but it is also appropriate to take into account other factors and evidence if desired.

Definitions

- **Dwelling type**: whether a home is detached, semi-detached, terraced, a flat, bungalow or other type. Which a household chooses to occupy tends to be more about wealth and preference than a specific need.
- **Dwelling size**: how many rooms or bedrooms a home contains. While this could also mean floor area or number of storeys, the number of bedrooms is most reliably recorded in housing statistics. Bedroom numbers are also closely linked to family size and life stage.
- **Household**: a unit of people who live together, commonly a family, couple or single person. Not all dwellings contain a household, including properties that are

vacant and second homes, so the number of dwellings and the number of households in an area is usually different.

- **Household composition**: the specific combination of adults and children who form a household. The Census offers a number of categories, for example distinguishing between families with children who are dependent or non-dependent (i.e. adults). 'Other' households in the Census include house-sharers, groups of students, and multi-family households.
- **Household life stage**: the age of the lead member of a household – usually the oldest adult, or what used to be called the 'head of household'. Life stage is correlated with dwelling size as well as wealth.
- **Housing mix**: the range of home sizes and types in an area.
- **Over- and under-occupancy**: the degree to which the size and composition of a household lines up with the number of bedrooms in their home. If there are more bedrooms than the household would be expected to need, the home is considered under-occupied, and vice versa.

5.2. The current housing mix

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

Dwelling type

5.2.2. Table 5-1 below shows that Ringmer's mix of dwelling sizes is significantly skewed towards larger semi-detached and detached dwellings, forming by far the two most common dwelling types (46% and 31% respectively). Terraces and flats (generally the two denser forms of housing) are less common in the NA, representing only 16% and 8% of the local dwelling stock each. This demonstrates that there is a lack of variety in the mix of housing types available, limiting choice and also likely playing a part in the poor affordability situation in the NA (discussed in the previous chapter of our HNA).

5.2.3. It is also difficult to highlight meaningful changes and differences in recent years because of a change in the way the Census counts properties. In 2011 the total aligned with the number of dwellings; in 2021, certain datasets including those on dwelling type align with the number of households instead. Because some dwellings are not occupied by a household (vacant or second homes for instance), some of this 2021 data tends to slightly undercount the number of dwellings, particularly in areas with a number of second homes present, and therefore gives a (likely false) impression here that the total number of dwellings in Ringmer have only increased by two units, when other 2021 Census datasets actually show an increase in 88 dwellings over the same time period 2011-2021. When comparing to the 2023 Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data to the 2011 Census, this indicates an increase in 366 dwellings 2011-2023, although some of these dwellings may have been completed after the 2021 Census and therefore will not have been picked up, and also VOA data is likely to overestimate delivery due to discrepancies in the geographies covered. Parish

monitoring data indicates delivery of 329 net additional units 2011-2024, with the majority of these delivered after 2021.

5.2.4. Another issue encountered when comparing different sets of data on housing type is that the Census divides dwellings into a standard set of categories that does not include bungalows (i.e. a detached bungalow will be counted only as a detached house, and so forth). It is therefore useful to refer to Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, which is based on council tax reporting and is in other respects less precise, but which does separate out bungalows as a separate category. VOA counts 380 bungalows in Ringmer in 2023. This represents 16% of all homes. Bungalows make up a lower proportion in the NA than across wider Lewes District (21%), but a higher proportion than nationally (9%). Bungalows tend to appeal to older households and those with mobility limitations, so this element of Ringmer's housing stock may be linked to the age profile of the population, considered later in this chapter. However, bungalows also have the downside of a larger land-take per housing unit and per size of dwelling than other dwelling types, and are not the only housing type appropriate for accommodating older residents or those with mobility limitations (i.e. flats with level access and lifts etc).

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

Type	Ringmer	Lewes District	England
Detached	30.6%	35.0%	22.9%
Semi-detached	46.0%	27.3%	31.5%
Terrace	15.7%	18.1%	23.0%
Flat	7.5%	18.8%	22.2%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.2.5. Table 5-2 looks at the change between the 2011 and 2021. However, due to the issues with the Census 2021 dataset on dwelling type, as explained above, it is not possible to meaningfully compare the 2021 and 2011 type mix at this scale. Unfortunately, no completions details were received from Lewes District Council, and neither the Lewes District AMR, nor recent major permissions examined, included details on the housing type mix of the units recently permitted in Ringmer and so can't provide any further detail.

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

Type	2011	%	2021	%
Detached	604	29.8%	619	30.6%
Semi-detached	944	46.6%	932	46.0%
Terrace	305	15.1%	318	15.7%
Flat	164	8.1%	152	7.5%
Total	2,024		2,026	

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

Dwelling size

5.2.6. Table 5-3 below presents the current housing mix in terms of size compared to the wider local authority and country. As with the dwelling type mix discussed above, the

size mix again shows a significant skew towards larger sizes. This is consistent with the skew towards less dense dwelling types observed. Ringmer has significantly more homes with 3, or 4 or more bedrooms (48 and 26% respectively) than the District (38 and 23%) or England as a whole (40 and 21%). Smaller dwellings make up a lower proportion. Units with two bedrooms make up 21% of the supply. The percentage of one bed units is particularly low in Ringmer (5% compared to 11% across the District and 12% nationally).

5.2.7. Note that while the totals in the type and size tables show a slight discrepancy, this is not an error in our calculations, but due to a discrepancy in how Census data was recorded in 2011 versus in 2021 (see paragraph 5.2.3 above). This discrepancy means that it is not possible to meaningfully compare type with size mixes, particularly in Ringmer, where this appears to be particularly pronounced. In addition to the issue with the 2021 Census data, the data also indicates the presence of a proportion of homes (around 2-4% of total stock, or 36-88 dwellings in total in 2011-2021) which are likely to be vacant or used as second homes. When considered together with the poor affordability picture presented in the previous chapter of our HNA, the latter fact may form part of the reason for the local affordability picture. A neighbourhood survey may shed further light on this situation.

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

Number of bedrooms	Ringmer	Lewes District	England
1	4.6%	10.9%	11.6%
2	21.0%	28.5%	27.3%
3	48.0%	38.0%	40.0%
4+	26.4%	22.7%	21.1%

Source: Census 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.2.8. Table 5-4 shows changes in size mix between 2011 and 2021. Similarly to the dwelling type mix discussed above, there have been only minimal apparent changes between the two Censuses. The main change appears to be a slight increase in the prevalence of the larger units, which were already predominant in 2011. This, as the prevalence of less dense housing types (detached and semi-detached homes) discussed above, has implications for the lack of choice and affordability observed.

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

Number of bedrooms	2011	%	2021	%
1	95	4.8%	93	4.6%
2	458	23.0%	426	21.0%
3	941	47.3%	971	48.0%
4+	494	24.8%	534	26.4%
Total	1,988		2,024	

Source: ONS 2021 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.2.9. Unfortunately, the latest Authority Monitoring Report does not include details of the size mix in recent completions in Ringmer. A high-level search of recent permissions and outline permissions approvals for four major residential schemes 2018-2024 nevertheless provides some information. The mix of these four schemes (see Table

5-5 below) were permitted with a mix of sizes primarily focused on 3 bed dwellings (34%), followed closely by 2 and 4 bed dwellings (29 and 21% respectively), but very few of the smallest and largest 1 and 5 bed dwellings (15% and 1% each).

5.2.10. While not all development that is permitted is always delivered, and also major development may tend to have a different mix compared to smaller developments, this still gives an indication that new development is likely to introduce some smaller 2 bedroom dwellings, but very few 1 bed units. The majority of its delivery appears to be focused on 3-4 bed dwellings, which our research shows already make up the majority of the stock in the NA. Recent permissions will thereby help to expand and vary supply to a minor extent, but in a very limited way. Interestingly, several of the committee reports of the schemes listed below mention that there is no market in Ringmer for 1 bed units. However, we would recommend treating these types of statements with caution, considering that 28% of Ringmer households are single person households, and this is likely to increase, including numerous older persons who may wish to downsize to free up family housing (for more detail see our next section below, as well as our following chapter), and that there is a considerable affordability challenge in the NA (see our previous chapter).

Table 5-5: Recent permissions and outline permissions approvals for four major residential schemes 2018-2024

Major Residential Scheme Name and Number	Permission Type & Year	Housing Units	Size Mix
Averys Nurseries Uckfield Road Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5RU Ref. No: LW/24/0343 / PP-12990972 / LW/20/0011	Reserved Matters Approval in 2024 on existing outline approval on appeal APPEAL/22/0032	53	6 x 1 bed flats; 9 x 2 bed dwellings; 26 x 3 bed dwellings; 12 x 4 bed dwellings,
Land North Of Lewes Road Ringmer (The Green Man) Ref. No: LW/23/0752 / PP-12592090	Amendment in 2024 to existing permission in	95	18 x 1 bed flats 14 x 2 bed flats 9 x 2 bed dwellings 31 x 3 bed dwellings 23 x 4 bed dwellings
Caburn Field Anchor Field Ringmer East Sussex Ref. No: LW/18/0808 / PP-07236479	Permission in 2018	77	10 x 2 bed flats, 25 x 2 bed houses, 33 x 3 bed houses, 9 x 4 bed houses

Land North Of Chapters Bishops Lane Ringmer East Sussex Ref. No: LW/18/0331 / PP-6815895 / LW/14/0127	Reserved Matters Approval in 2018 following Outline Permission LW/14/0127 in 2014	110	16 x 1 bed dwellings, 40 x 2 bed dwellings, 24 x 3 bed dwellings, 25 x 4 bed dwellings, and 5 x 5 bed dwellings
Total		**335**	**50 (15%) x 1 bed,** **97 (29%) x 2 bed,** **114 (34%) x 3 bed,** **69 (21%) x 4 bed, and** **5 (1%) x 5 bed units.**

5.3. Population characteristics

5.3.1. This section examines key characteristics of the local population that have a bearing on what housing might be needed in future years. Where available, recent data is used. However, for some information it is necessary to fall back on the 2011 Census.

Age

5.3.2. Table 5-6 shows the most recent age structure of the NA population, alongside 2011 Census figures. This shows that Ringmer's population has been aging significantly. The proportion of those under 64 has fallen, with the largest decline (of 12-13%) in the proportion of younger adults aged 15-24 and 24-44. At the same time the proportion of those over 65 has increased, with the largest proportionate rise in those aged 85 and over (30%), while the population aged 65-84 has increased by an almost equally high 26%. At the same time the population has only grown very marginally, by 121 individuals.

Table 5-6: Age structure of Ringmer, 2011 and 2021

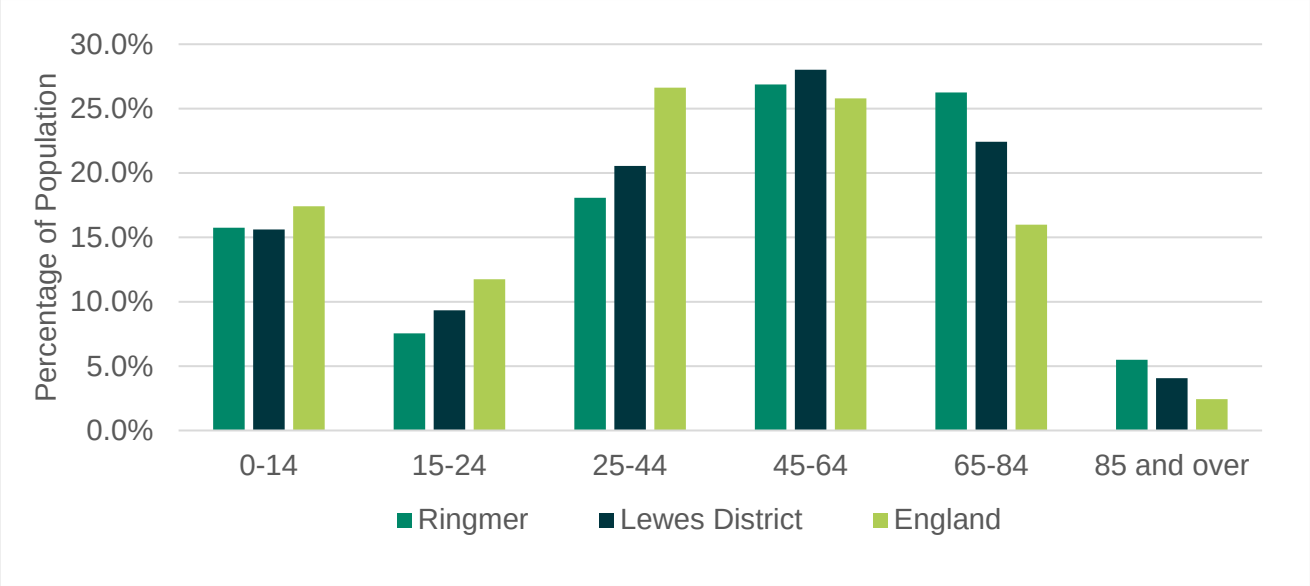
Age group	2011 (Census)		2021 (Census)		Change
0-14	717	15.4%	751	15.7%	4.7%
15-24	414	8.9%	360	7.5%	-13.0%
25-44	981	21.1%	862	18.1%	-12.1%
45-64	1,341	28.9%	1,282	26.9%	-4.4%
65-84	994	21.4%	1,252	26.3%	26.0%
85 and over	201	4.3%	262	5.5%	30.3%
Total	4,648	100.0%	4,769	100.0%	2.6%

Source: ONS 2011, ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.3.3. For context, it is useful to look at the NA's population structure alongside that of the District and country. Figure 5-1 (using 2021 Census data) shows that the population

proportion under 45 is significantly lower in Ringmer than across Lewes District and England as a whole. In the age bracket of 45-64 the differences are less pronounced. In the oldest age brackets of 65 and above, Ringmer has a significantly higher population proportion than seen across the District and nationally. Therefore, while an aging population has been observed across the country, the age profile of the NA is skewed more than average towards the older sections of the population.

Figure 5-1: Age structure in Ringmer, 2021



Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

Household composition and occupancy

5.3.4. Household composition (the combination and relationships of adults and children in a dwelling) is an important factor in the kinds of housing needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Table 5-7 shows that Ringmer has a slightly lower proportion of single-person households than the District and country, and a correspondingly higher proportion of family households.

5.3.5. Within these groups, Ringmer has higher than average shares of older couples and families (a category that has grown by a very significant 45% since the 2011 Census) and older single person households (a category which has also grown, but less significantly by 13%) and a slightly lower share of other single person households and of households other than couples, families, and single persons (such as co-living projects, flat shares etc). The proportion of households with dependent and non-dependent children are relatively similar in the NA compared to the rest of the District and country.

Table 5-7: Household composition, Ringmer and comparator geographies, 2021

Household composition		Ringmer	Lewes District	England
One person household	**Total**	**28.1%**	**31.0%**	**30.1%**
	Aged 66 and over	19.7%	17.9%	12.8%
	Other	8.4%	13.1%	17.3%
One family only	**Total**	**67.4%**	**63.5%**	**63.1%**
	All aged 66 and over	19.7%	13.1%	9.2%
	With no children	16.3%	16.8%	16.8%
	With dependent children	24.5%	23.4%	25.8%
	With non-dependent children[19]	9.2%	9.9%	10.5%
Other household types	**Total**	**4.4%**	**5.5%**	**6.9%**

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.3.6. The tendency of households to over- or under-occupy their homes is another relevant consideration to the future housing size needs of the NA. A person is considered to under-occupy their home when there are more bedrooms in their home than a family of their size and composition would normally be expected to need. This is expressed as an occupancy rating of +1 or +2, indicating that there is one surplus bedroom or at least two surplus bedrooms respectively. Over-occupancy works in the same way, with a rating of -1 indicating at least one bedroom too few.

5.3.7. Table 5-8 shows that a third of households have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, and a staggering 50% have at least two more. This means that 82% of households in Ringmer under-occupy their home, which is extremely high, resulting from the large proportion of older households, together with the predominance of less dense, larger housing types and sizes in the NA. This suggests that the NA's larger housing is not necessarily being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or by older people who have not chosen or been able to move to properties more appropriate to their household size.

5.3.8. There are very few households with too few bedrooms for the size of the occupying households, however these are exclusively occupied by families with children. This makes sense, considering that those households who are constrained in terms of affording living space are unlikely to be able to afford to live in the NA. This demonstrates a level of acute housing need within the NA amongst these family households.

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

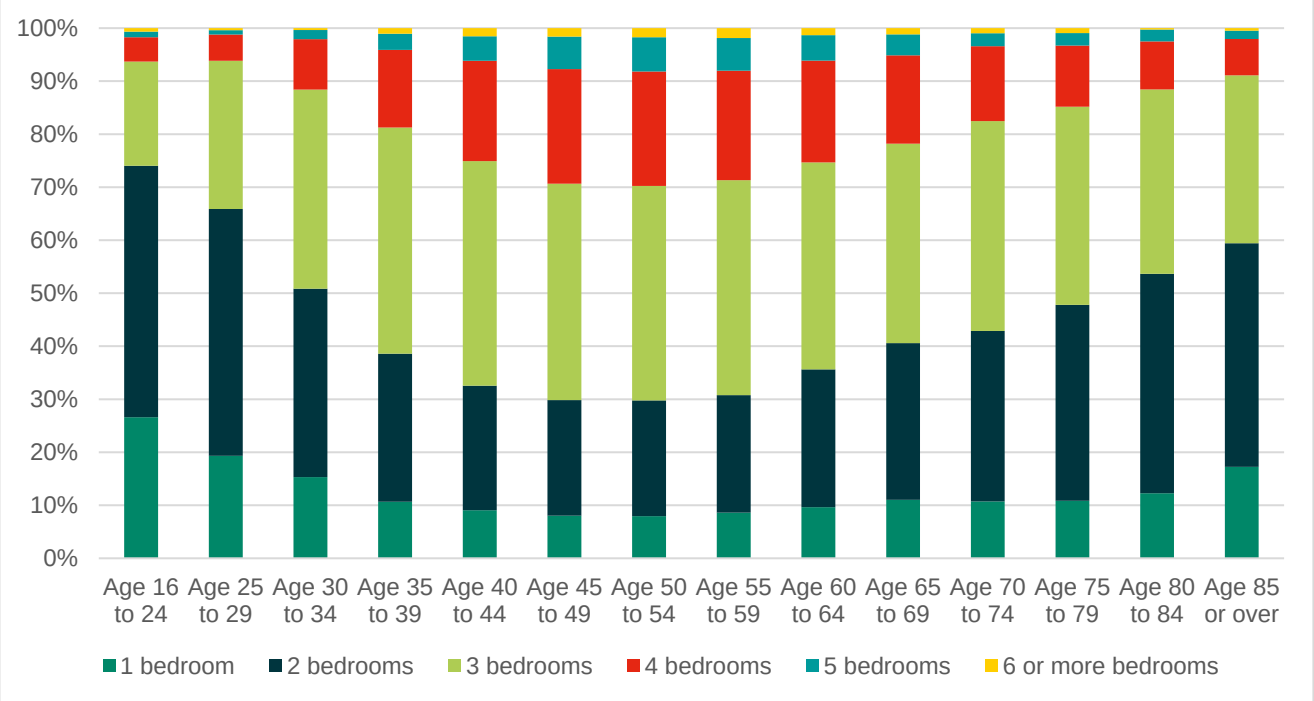
Table 5-8: Occupancy rating by age in Ringmer, 2021

Household type	+2 rating	+1 rating	0 rating	-1 rating
Family 66+	80.7%	17.2%	2.0%	0.0%
Single person 66+	56.2%	33.0%	10.8%	0.0%
Family under 66 - no children	77.1%	19.3%	3.6%	0.0%
Family under 66 - dependent children	20.2%	42.7%	34.5%	2.6%
Family under 66 - adult children	21.2%	50.8%	25.9%	2.1%
Single person under 66	51.5%	30.4%	18.1%	0.0%
All households	50.0%	32.0%	16.9%	1.2%

Source: ONS 2021, AECOM Calculations

5.3.9. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the life stage of households is strongly correlated with the size of home they tend to occupy. Figure 5-2 sets out this relationship for Lewes in 2011 (because this data is not available at smaller scales). The graph shows how the youngest households tend to occupy the smallest dwellings, before rapidly taking up larger homes as their families expand, and then more gradually downsizing to smaller homes again as they age (although the oldest households do not tend to return to living in units as small as the youngest households).

Figure 5-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size in Lewes District, 2011



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.4. Future population and size needs

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

Age

5.4.2. The result of applying Local Authority level household projections to the age profile of Ringmer households in 2011 is shown in Table 5-9. This makes clear that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with a marked decline in the youngest households aged under 24 (by 16%), relatively steady numbers of all the household groups aged 25-64, and a very high increase in the number of households aged 65 and over (by 67%). These oldest households are projected to make up over half of the total households by the end of the plan period in 2040.

Table 5-9: Projected age of households, Ringmer, 2011 - 2040

Year	24 and under	25 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 64	65 and over
2011	9	129	663	409	778
2040	8	132	637	433	1,298
% change 2011-2040	-16%	3%	-4%	6%	67%

Source: AECOM Calculations

5.4.3. The demographic change discussed above can be translated into an 'ideal' mix of dwelling sizes. This is achieved through a model that maps the dwelling size preferences by life stage shown earlier (in Figure 5-2) onto the projected age profile for the NA in Table 5-9 immediately above. The resulting 'ideal' future mix of dwelling sizes can then be compared to the current stock of housing to identify how future development might best fill the gaps.

5.4.4. This approach has limitations, in that it embeds existing size preferences and does not anticipate changes in what people want from their homes. As such, it is appropriate for the results to be taken as a baseline scenario only, in terms of what would occur if current trends persisted. It may well be the intention of the community to intervene to produce a different outcome more in line with their interpretation of emerging trends and their place- and community-shaping objectives. Layering these factors on top of the indicative picture provided by this model is appropriate for the purpose of drafting neighbourhood plan policies.

5.4.5. The result of this exercise is presented in Table 5-10. It suggests that Ringmer's new stock should ideally be focused primarily on the smaller, 1- and 2-bedroom dwellings (35% and 65% respectively, based on our modelling, although the Neighbourhood Plan may not wish to be that specific) that are lacking from the current supply, which is skewed towards larger and less dense housing sizes and types. No additions of larger dwellings are required in line with this modelling. This is not because these size categories are not important to meeting need, but because they already make up more than the recommended proportion of local housing, even if no further larger units are built. The suggested, more diverse housing mix for the end of the plan period in 2040 is more balanced than the current mix, offering more choice and also promoting an improvement in affordability.

Table 5-10: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2040, Ringmer

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2011)	Suggested mix (2040)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix	Indicative policy range
1	4.6%	11.1%	34.7%	30-40%
2	21.0%	30.9%	65.3%	60-70%
3	48.0%	38.1%	0.0%	0-10%
4+	26.4%	19.9%	0.0%	0-10%

Source: AECOM Calculations

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

- The size mix proposed for the District in the Lewes LHNA suggests prioritisation of mid-sized homes (2-3 bedrooms, with 36-38% each), but with continued provision of smaller and larger dwellings (12-14% respectively) to meet changing demographic needs, although this is said to vary by tenure, with market housing generally needing to be larger and affordable housing smaller across the District. This is different from the conclusions we have drawn above, as the wider District housing mix presently is more balanced than that observed in Ringmer specifically, which is extremely skewed towards larger units.
- Diversifying the housing size mix for Ringmer would help to improve both choice and affordability. The preceding chapter found that affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the NA. While the provision of Affordable Housing (subsidised tenure products) is one way to combat this, another is to ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type, and density for local budgets. Smaller units are cheaper and also appeal to different types of households, particularly those first entering the housing market, and those looking to downsize. Both groups are likely to be important to Ringmer, both in accommodating the aging population and in attracting and retaining younger households.
- To best meet the needs of the growing cohort of older households expected to be present by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period, it should be considered whether the existing options in Ringmer are well tailored to future older people's requirements in terms of space, flexibility, quality, location and accessibility.
- Greater variety should be sought within the smaller and mid-sized homes that are built in future to attract both newly forming households on lower budgets and older households with equity from their existing larger homes. While the number of bedrooms required may be similar, other preferences and levels of purchasing power could be very different. Suitable smaller units for downsizers (for instance, built barrier free and with ground floor entry or lifts) should help to encourage those currently under-occupying their home to downsize to free up family sized housing for larger households. More on this subject is discussed in the following Chapter of our HNA.

- As mentioned earlier in our report, a household survey may also be helpful in future, to help supplement the results of our modelling with information on the preferences of local residents. This could for instance explore the sizes and types of downsizer properties sought by those who would consider downsizing over the plan period. However, it is worth bearing in mind when interpreting future survey results, that survey results are often coloured by respondents' knowledge only of the limited solutions currently available (i.e. residents may be more familiar with bungalows as downsizer accommodation, if there are currently few other high-quality solutions available, such as purpose built, accessible flats, which would involve a lower land-take than bungalows). Views will also be skewed towards those who have time to complete the survey (with working age and younger residents less likely to respond). Finally, the survey can only capture the views of those already living in Ringmer, but not of those households who would like to live there but are currently unable to, due to a lack of diversity and affordability in the current housing stock. Therefore, survey results should be considered carefully, and together with other relevant evidence.

Tenure

5.4.7. The recommendations discussed immediately above apply to all housing in the NA over the Neighbourhood Plan period. This is considered proportionate for devising policy at a neighbourhood scale. However, in practice different size mixes may be appropriate for market housing and affordable housing, as explored by the Lewes LHNA. While this distinction may not be appropriate to make in Neighbourhood Plan policy, since Local Authorities tend to define the precise mix of Affordable Housing required on applicable sites, it is worth thinking through the factors at play.

5.4.8. Generally speaking, the size mix needed within affordable tenures, particularly affordable and social rent, is smaller than the size mix of market housing. This is because there tend to be higher proportions of single people and couples in need of affordable rented housing, and they are likely to be eligible only for 1 or 2 bedroom properties. In contrast, people buying their own homes tend to want more space than they technically 'need', such as spare rooms for guests, home working or other uses. This fact is established in the data on under-occupancy presented earlier in this chapter.

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

- The relevant LHNA for the Local Authority, Lewes District, which sets out the projected need by size within each tenure over the long-term. In the case of Lewes, the LHNA indicates that one bed homes across the District are primarily required for affordable rented tenures, while larger units of 3 or more beds are primarily required for market housing. However, this is less relevant to Ringmer, which already has such a substantial stock of larger market housing units, and a more significant shortage in both smaller units of all tenures, and of affordable housing in general.

- The waiting list for affordable rented housing, kept by the Local Authority, which unfortunately was not made available to AECOM by Lewes District Council during the writing of this HNA. This would normally provide a more current snapshot of the size needs of applicant households for affordable housing. As this changes over time, individual planning applications can be decided in ways that meet evolving needs. In the case of Ringmer, we recommend that the Parish Council seeks further contact with the Local Authority, to ascertain further information on the Waiting List for Ringmer as the new Neighbourhood Plan evolves.
- Finally, as mentioned above, any relevant household survey or consultation work in the NA can also highlight any specific gaps in the market within particular segments of the population in the future.

5.4.10. To summarise, the overall size mix recommendation presented above applies generally to all new housing in the NA. In Ringmer, a weighting of different tenures towards different housing sizes is not appropriate. Rather, the focus of new, smaller units needed should be on the types of households likely to need new homes in the NA in future, i.e.:

- Smaller market and affordable units to attract and retain younger households struggling to afford to live in Ringmer at present, including some provision of mid-sized affordable rented units for families; and
- Smaller market and affordable units to provide appropriate, accessible accommodation for the increasing numbers of older households in the NA, including those with equity looking to downsize, and those struggling to afford current accommodation in Ringmer.

Type

5.4.11. Planning policy also tends to be less prescriptive about the mix of dwelling types that are needed than the mix of home sizes. This is because the choice to occupy a terraced rather than a detached home, for example, is primarily a matter of wealth, personal preference, and the amount of outdoor space or other features sought than ‘need’ in the strict sense. This stands in contrast to the matter of dwelling size, where it can be more clearly established that a household with a certain number of members, closely correlated with age, requires a particular number of bedrooms.

5.4.12. The key distinctions when it comes to dwelling type are between flats and houses and, to a lesser extent, bungalows, each of which tend to appeal to occupants with different life circumstances. However, it remains difficult to generalise about this, particularly when drawing on demographic evidence.

5.4.13. The benefits of delivering a certain blend of dwelling types are more closely related to affordability, which is clearly established as an issue in Ringmer, and which favours more dense options (e.g. terraces and flats). This imperative to improve affordability is often in conflict with matters of character, which in rural areas tend to favour lower density options that blend in with the existing built environment. This is particularly relevant in the case of flats, a large block of which may not be a welcome proposition

in the NA. That said, it is possible to deliver flats in the form of low-rise maisonettes that resemble terraces from street level, which can counter this issue.

5.4.14. In summary, there is a balance to be struck between, on the one hand, improving affordability and choice in the market by encouraging flats and terraces, and, on the other hand, preserving the distinctive character and other features that residents like about the NA today. How far the Neighbourhood Plan should guide on this issue, and in what direction, is a policy decision for the Ringmer Parish Council and community to consider.

5.5. Conclusions- Type and Size

The current housing mix

5.5.1. With regards to the current dwelling type mix, Ringmer is currently characterised by an un-balanced mix of homes, skewed towards larger semi-detached and detached dwellings forming the two most common dwelling types representing 46 and 31% of the dwelling stock respectively. Less dense dwelling types, such as terraces, and flats are significantly less common at 16 and 8%. Ringmer's housing stock is less diverse than that of the District and country as a whole in terms of type, and this lack of variety negatively affects both choice and affordability in the NA.

5.5.2. Housing provision in Ringmer is also similarly tilted towards larger size dwellings with 3-bedroom homes making up nearly half of all dwellings, followed by 4 or more bedroom homes making up over a quarter. Smaller one and two bedroom dwellings make up a low share of 5% and 21% respectively, which is again demonstrating less variety than across the District or England as a whole.

5.5.3. Over the intercensal period the size mix in Ringmer appears to have remained largely unchanged, due to the small number of additions to the stock showing. The only minor changes observed show a further increase in the skew towards larger 3 and 4 bedroom units, with only limited delivery of smaller units. This means that the lack of diversity in the stock is not being sufficient addressed by new development in the NA at present. However, the way that 2021 Census dwelling type and size data was collected makes comparison between 2011 and 2021 difficult.

Population characteristics

5.5.4. Ringmer's current demographic profile is aging more significantly even than across the District and country, where an aging population can also be observed. The greatest share of the population is composed of the 45-64 age group and 65-84 age group representing 26% and 27% of the population respectively. Between the 2011 and 2021 censuses there has been a significant increase in the number of persons in the two oldest age groups, aged 85+ and 65+ in Ringmer, which grew by a significant 30% and 26% respectively while all the other age groups declined both in number as well as in their percentage share of the total population, excepting a very small increase of under 5% in the number of children aged 0-14.

5.5.5. At present, the NA has a majority of couple and family households (67%), but still with a sizable proportion of one person households (28%), which is nevertheless lower than for the District as a whole (31%). Within these groups, Ringmer has higher than

average shares of older couples and families (a category that has grown by a very significant 45% since the 2011 Census) and older single person households (which has grown by a less significant 13% during the same time). Other households, such as co-living projects and flat shares, make up 4-6% in the NA and across the District and country.

5.5.6. Analysis of over-and under-occupation in Ringmer shows a significant issue of under-occupation the NA. 82% of households have at least one more bedroom than they would be expected to need, with 50% having two or more. This is particularly the case for families aged over 66, single persons over 66, and couples with no children, of whom 81%, 56%, and 77% respectively under-occupy their property. There are very few households with too few bedrooms, and they are exclusively occupied by younger families with dependent children.

Future population and size needs

5.5.7. Household projections reveal that oldest households aged 65+ are expected to increase by 67% by the end of the Plan Period. The youngest households aged under 24 are projected to decline by 16%, and the middle age group of households aged 25-64 is projected to remain roughly the same. The oldest households are projected to make up over half of total households by the end of the plan period in 2040.

5.5.8. Combining these household projections with dwelling size patterns gives an indication of what size of new dwellings might be needed by the end of the Plan Period. Our modelling recommends that all new units should have either one or two bedrooms (with the model specifying that 35% of additional units should have 1-bedroom, while the majority of 65% should have two bedrooms, although the Neighbourhood Plan may not wish to be specific about this split). No new units of three or more bedrooms are required, due to the significantly skewed current size mix. Greater variety will be required to improve both choice and affordability in the NA's housing market.

5.5.9. Smaller market and affordable units are needed to attract and retain younger households struggling to afford to live in Ringmer at present, including some provision of mid-sized affordable rented units for families. Smaller market and affordable units should also be built specifically to provide appropriate, accessible accommodation for the increasing numbers of older households in the NA, including those with equity looking to downsize, and those struggling to afford current accommodation in Ringmer.

5.5.10. It is important to remember that other factors should also be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the NA or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors. However, due to the very skewed current mix and extensive lack of affordability in the NA at present, the future mix should ideally not deviate too far from our recommendations, to promote greater balance in future.

6. Specialist housing for older people

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. It is relatively common for neighbourhood plans in areas with aging populations to include policies relating to specialist housing for older people. This chapter considers in detail the specialist housing needs of older people in Ringmer. It focuses on specialist forms of provision while recognising that the majority of older people will live in the mainstream housing stock. The approach is as follows:

- To review the **current provision** of specialist housing in the NA;
- To estimate the **potential demand** for this form of accommodation with reference to the projected growth in the older population and current rates of mobility limitation; and
- To discuss the potential for meeting this need through adaptations to the mainstream stock and other **additional considerations**.

6.1.2. Because of the wide variation in the level of support needed, as well as the financial capabilities of those affected, the estimates of need presented here should be viewed with caution, as an idea of the broad scale of potential need rather than an obligatory target that must be met.

6.1.3. It is important to note that the need for housing for particular groups of people may well exceed, or be proportionally high in relation to, the total housing need or requirement. This is because the needs of particular groups will often be calculated having consideration to the whole population of an area as opposed to the projected new households which form the baseline for estimating housing need overall.[20]

6.1.4. This study covers the need for housing, i.e. buildings that the planning system classifies as Use Class C3 (private dwellings).[21] Residences that fall into Use Class C2 (institutions including prisons, boarding schools and some care homes for older people) are largely beyond the scope of this research. However, it is possible to estimate the likely high-level need for residential and nursing care over the Neighbourhood Plan period.

6.1.5. The distinction between care homes for older people that fall into use class C2 and those where accommodation is counted as C3 is blurred. As such, the findings of this chapter may justify the provision of extra-care C3 housing and/or C2 care home units, but it is not possible to state definitively how much of each would be required. C3 specialist accommodation is typically self-contained with its own front door, made available on an individual basis with support provided in the home or not at all if the resident does not require it, and offered for sale or rent on the open market.

[20] See Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 2a-017-20190220, at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments)
[21] For a full description of Planning Use Classes, please refer to https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

Definitions

- **Older people:** people over retirement age, ranging from the active newly retired to the very frail elderly. Their housing needs tend to encompass accessible and adaptable general needs housing as well as the full spectrum of retirement and specialised housing offering additional care.
- **Specialist housing for older people:** a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups. This could include residential institutions, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services.
- **Sheltered Housing[22]:** self-contained flats or bungalows where all the residents are older people. Schemes on the whole provide independent, self-contained homes, either to rent or buy. Properties in most schemes have features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on, as well as being linked to an emergency alarm service. Some will be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, guest flats and gardens.
- **Extra Care Housing:** housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required. Residents are able to live independently with 24-hour access to support services and staff, and meals are often also available. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.
- **Category M4(2):** accessible and adaptable dwellings.
- **Category M4(3):** wheelchair user dwellings.

6.2. Specialist housing for older people

6.2.1. There is a total of 102 units in three schemes of specialist accommodation for older people in the NA at present. The majority (two schemes with a total of 71 units) are leasehold units for market purchase, and the remaining scheme offers 31 social rent units for those in financial need. All of the schemes are described as retirement housing or age exclusive housing, rather than ExtraCare provision. This means that the specialist accommodation in Ringmer presently does not provide any elements of onsite care and would thus not be suitable for certain older residents, depending on their requirements. Further details of the existing accommodation are provided in Appendix E.

6.2.2. The 2021 Census indicates that at this time there were 780 individuals aged 75 or over in Ringmer. This suggests that current provision is in the region of 130 units per

[22] See http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx

1,000 of the 75+ population (a common measure of specialist housing supply)[23]. It is relevant to note that the national average provision across England is 136 units per 1,000 of the 75+ population[24], so specialist provision in the NA is close to the national average.

Demographic characteristics

6.2.3. The starting point for estimating the need for specialist housing for older people is to project how the overall number of older people in Ringmer is likely to change in future. This is calculated by extrapolating population projections from the ONS Sub-National Population Projections for Lewes. The results are set out in Table 6-1. The 75+ population in the NA is projected to increase by 62% to 2040, from 480 to 1,261 people, increasing from 16% to 23% as a share of the total population.

6.2.4. A key assumption for the estimate given at the end of this section is that the older people living in the NA currently are already suitably accommodated, either because they occupy the existing stock of specialist accommodation, have made appropriate adaptations to their own homes or do not require support or adaptations. This is unlikely to be completely true, but it is not possible to determine how many such individuals are inadequately housed without evidence from a household survey (which itself may not give a complete picture). As such, the growth in the older population rather than the total at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period is the key output of this calculation. Information from a future household survey may supplement this information.

Table 6-1: Modelled projection of older population in Ringmer by end of Plan period

	2021		2040	
Age group	Ringmer	Lewes	Ringmer	Lewes
All ages	4,769	99,909	5,410	113,335
75+	780	13,071	1,261	21,136
%	16.4%	13.1%	23.3%	18.6%

Source: ONS SNPP 2020, AECOM Calculations

6.2.5. The next step is to consider the need for different tenures of dwelling for older people. It is assumed that those currently occupying their own home will wish to do so for as long as practicably possible in future, even where downsizing or moving into specialist accommodation. Equally, those who currently rent, either in the private or social sectors, are projected to need affordable rented specialist accommodation.

6.2.6. The 2011 55-75 age bracket is considered the best proxy for the group likely to fall into need for specialist accommodation during the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2040. The top row in Table 6-2 outlines the tenure mix among households aged 55-

[23] This is the result of dividing 1,000 by the over 75s population figure of 780 in Ringmer, and then multiplying the result by the NA's specialist stock figure of 102.
[24] Table 22, 'More Choice Greater Voice' (2008), published by Housing LIN for CLG (now MHCLG) and the Care Services Improvement Partnership

75 at Local Authority level, which indicates that owner occupation is by far the dominant tenure among this age group across the wider District, of which the majority in this age group own outright, likely aiming to have paid off most or all of their mortgage by retirement age. Most of those who continue to rent in this age group are reliant on subsidised social rented housing.

6.2.7. The expected growth in the 75+ population in the NA is 481 additional individuals by the end of the plan period. This can be converted into 339 households based on the average number of people per household aged 75+ at Local Authority scale. Multiplying this figure by the percentages of 55-75 year olds occupying each tenure gives a breakdown of which tenures Ringmer households are likely to need in 2040, and is shown in the bottom row of Table 6-2.

Table 6-2: Tenure of households aged 55-75 in Lewes (2011) and projected aged 75+ in Ringmer (2040)

	All owned	Owned outright	Owned (mortgage) or Shared Ownership	All Rented	Social rented	Private rented	Living rent free
Lewes (2011 mix)	87.0%	61.2%	25.9%	13.0%	10.3%	2.5%	0.2%
Ringmer (2040)	295	207	88	44	35	8	1

Source: Census 2011

6.2.8. It is also important to consider rates of disability by tenure. The tendency for people in rented housing to have higher disability levels is well established. It arises partly because people with more limiting disabilities tend to have lower incomes. It also reflects the fact that as people develop support and care needs they may find that the only suitable and affordable option to them is available in the social rented sector. Table E-2 in Appendix E presents this data for Ringmer from the 2011 Census.

Future needs for specialist accommodation and adaptations

6.2.9. Based on the evidence outlined above, the number of households falling into potential need for specialist accommodation over the Neighbourhood Plan period is calculated to be 141.

6.2.10. AECOM's modelling, summarised in Table 6-3, is based on the assumption that those whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot may need housing with care (e.g. extra care housing, with significant on-site services, including potentially medical services), while those with their day to day activities limited only a little may simply need adaptations to their existing homes, or alternatively sheltered or retirement living that can provide some degree of oversight or additional services. However, it is important to note that, even those people who have high support or care needs can often be supported to live in their own homes. This is frequently reflected in policy of local authorities, with explicit aim to reduce the need to commission increasing numbers of care home beds.

6.2.11. This is also the case in Ringmer, where Lewes District Council's (responsible for housing, and provider of retirement accommodation for social rent)[25] and East Sussex Country Council's (responsible for adults social care and health)[26] approach is to enable people to stay living independently in their own homes where possible, with appropriate support.

6.2.12. The vast majority (84%) of the need in Ringmer is for specialist housing for market sale rather than for affordable tenures. This reflects the high rate of ownership among people expected to enter the 75+ age bracket during the Neighbourhood Plan period. However, this does not quite align with the tenures of existing stock, which are weighted more in favour of affordable tenures, with 30% of stock being available for social rent and 70% for leasehold ownership.

6.2.13. The existing stock also lacks Extra Care options (housing with on-site care provision) entirely. This could be a good reason to adjust the balance of new specialist accommodation to provide more such options to redress this balance, rather than the split suggested by the model here, which is weighted slightly more in favour of retirement housing without care (the model suggests that 59% of need is for specialist housing without care and 41% with care).

6.2.14. The Parish Council may also wish to undertake some engagement with local residents or those with a known interest in living in Ringmer, to explore why residents, particularly older households, might be looking to move to a new property in Ringmer (either from outside or from an existing property in the NA). Reasons may include that their home no longer meets their needs; that they wish to downsize; or that they need accommodation with level access, a lift, or an element of care; that they wish to live nearer to family or local service, in an area where it is easy to walk to amenities (i.e. not too far or too hilly), or nearer to public transport. Many older people seeking to move in other locations, particularly in smaller rural settlements with relatively homogenous housing stock, when surveyed tend to report that they are not able to move despite wanting to, as there is limited appropriate choices available locally. A household survey could also explore what type of properties are sought, in terms of features, facilities, care offer, tenures, sizes, and locations.

Table 6-3: AECOM estimate of specialist housing for older people need in Ringmer by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	11	46	**57**
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	12	72	**84**
Total	**23**	**118**	**141**

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

[25] Retirement housing - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
[26] Adult social care and health | East Sussex County Council

6.2.15. It is worth comparing these findings with the recommendations of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (HLIN), one of the simplest and widely used models estimating the housing needs of older people. HLIN calculations

6.2.16. TaE-3 in Appendix E reproduces the key assumptions of HLIN's Strategic Housing for Older People (SHOP) toolkit. Applying those assumptions to the growth in the older population of Ringmer results in a total of 121 specialist dwellings that might be required to the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. This is set out in Table 6-4. Again the split is roughly similar with: 72% of need for housing without care and 28% for housing with care; and 64% of need for market and 36% for affordable provision.

Table 6-4: HLIN estimate of specialist housing for older people need in Ringmer by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Housing with care	15	19	**34**
Adaptations, sheltered, or retirement living	29	58	**87**
Total	**44**	**77**	**121**

Source: Housing LIN, AECOM calculations

Further considerations

6.2.17. The above estimates suggest that potential need for specialist accommodation could be in the range of 121-141 units over the Neighbourhood Plan period. However, it may not be possible or appropriate to deliver this scale of new accommodation. It is proportionally high in relation to the recent levels of overall growth allocated and delivered in the NA. However, even if future housing delivery is constrained, as older households (over 65) are projected to make up over half of total households by the end of the plan period in 2040, it does not seem unreasonable that specialist accommodation may make up a reasonable percentage of new total development.

6.2.18. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this specialist accommodation need is estimated purely on the basis of modelling projected local needs, without considering the wider role of Ringmer in the local housing market. This is likely, like many places, to see some influx of more varied population, including younger households, which will help to promote a more balanced population profile and help to retain local services such as schools. Specialist accommodation should also not necessarily be prioritised to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, particularly in Ringmer where affordability appears to be so challenging.

6.2.19. In addition, specialist housing for older people should only be provided in sustainable, accessible locations that offer services and facilities, public transport options, and the necessary workforce of carers and others.

6.2.20. Alongside the need for specialist housing to be provided in accessible locations, another important requirement is for cost effectiveness and economies of scale. This can be achieved by serving the specialist older persons housing needs arising from a

number of different locations and/or Neighbourhood Areas from a single, centralised point (i.e. what is sometimes referred to as a 'hub-and-spoke' model).

6.2.21. It is considered that Ringmer is, in broad terms, a suitable location for specialist accommodation on the basis of the accessibility criteria and the considerations of cost-effectiveness above. As such, there is potential for such accommodation to be provided within the Neighbourhood Area (while noting there is no specific requirement or obligation to do so if there is potential to meet need arising from Ringmer in other suitable locations near to but outside the Plan area boundaries). It is also worth bearing in mind that Ringmer itself, due to its characteristics, is more appropriate as a location for older persons housing than many of the smaller surrounding settlements and rural area and therefore may accommodate more than the need generated by the NA only. Equally there are other areas than Ringmer, which are better serviced and connected via public transport, such as central Lewes. Thus it is difficult to know the exact amount of persons housing that will appropriately be located in Ringmer.

6.2.22. It is also important to emphasise that the potential need for specialist housing for older people overlaps with the need for care home bedspaces and the need for adaptations to mainstream housing. These topics are considered in the sections below.

6.3. Care homes

6.3.1. Residential and nursing care homes are not defined as housing because they do not provide self-contained accommodation where an older person can live independently. Care home accommodation is defined as institutional accommodation rather than housing.

6.3.2. However, residents of care homes may be similar in terms of their care and support needs as those living in specialist housing, or even mainstream housing with appropriate care and support delivered in their homes. There may be some scope for older people who would otherwise have been accommodated in care homes to meet their needs within specialist or mainstream housing if sufficient appropriate accommodation and support can be provided. Nevertheless, there is likely to be continued need for care home accommodation to meet more acute and severe needs, and to offer choice to some older people and their families about how they are cared for and supported.

6.3.3. Given the overlap between people who might enter care home accommodation and those who might take up specialist housing or care and support in their own home if available, estimates of the future need for care home accommodation, as with estimates of the need for specialist housing above, are uncertain and depend on both local and national policies, delivery, and the appetite of private developers.

6.3.4. AECOM has estimated the likely need for care home accommodation over the plan period, based on the HLIN SHOP toolkit prevalence rates for residential and nursing care homes for older people (aged 75+). This estimate applied the prevalence rates in the 'More Choice, Greater Voice' 2008 report which informed the development of the HLIN toolkit. This report suggested that 65 residential care beds per 1,000 people aged 75+ was an appropriate rate. For nursing care beds this is an extra 45 care beds

per 1,000 people aged 75+. Based on these rates, applied to the growth in the older population for consistency with the calculations above, it is estimated that in 2040 there would be a need for an additional 31 residential care beds and 22 nursing care beds in the NA, totaling a need of 53 additional beds, on top of the current supply in Ringmer (118 beds, with 56 beds currently provided in care homes without nursing, and 62 beds in a care home with nursing provision - see Appendix E Table E-4 for more detail).

6.3.5. It is important to note that as these estimates relate to care homes (or the population in institutions) rather than independent housing, these figures are in addition to the overall need for housing in the NA. However, as discussed in this section, some of the need for care home beds might be met by independent housing accommodation and vice versa.

6.4. The Role of Mainstream Housing

6.4.1. The majority of older people live in mainstream housing and will continue to do so all of their lives. Based on the estimated number of older people and the tally of the existing stock in Appendix E, around 82% of the Ringmer population aged 75 and over is likely to live in the mainstream housing stock[27].

6.4.2. It is not possible to be precise about how well older people are accommodated within mainstream housing, in terms of whether their accommodation in suitable to their needs and whether adequate care or support is provided within the home when they need.

6.4.3. While Ringmer already appears to have an average supply of specialist housing units, and an above average supply of care home beds, given that there appear to be no major applications in the pipeline for new specialist accommodation in Ringmer at present[28], there may well not be a large volume of additional specialist supply during the Neighbourhood Plan period. Given also that the proportion of older persons in Ringmer is high and rising, another key avenue to addressing their future accommodation needs is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability in new development in general with Lewes District Council, in order to encourage accessibility standards in the emerging Local Plan.

[27] There were 780 over 75s living in Ringmer in 2021. There are currently 102 units of C3 specialist housing in the NA (specialist housing units for older people, as opposed to care home beds). We can therefore assume that approximately 102 older persons are accommodated in this specialist housing (we do not have information on how many specialist units are vacant or occupied by couples rather than single older persons, or what number of people living in specialist housing and care homes will be under the age of 75). There are a further 118 C2 care home beds, therefore offering accommodation to a further estimated 118 persons. Together this means that around 220 persons over 75 (28%) are likely living in specialist C2 and C3 older persons accommodation, leaving 560 older persons (82%) living in mainstream housing.

[28] Based on Lewes District Council Planning Application Search as at December 2024 - Search Results

6.4.4. It is relatively common for Local Plans to require that all or a majority of new housing meets Category M4(2) standards in response to the demographic shifts being observed nationwide. Government is considering mandating M4(2) on newly erected dwellings[29], although changes to Building Regulations have not yet been made.

6.4.5. The current emerging Local Plan policy intention H4 proposes to support independent and supported living schemes and care home accommodation in Rural Service Centres and Service Villages, where applicants contribute to the provision of demand led public transport services to support residents' independence. Emerging Local Plan policy H2 further proposes to require that all new homes will meet Building Regulations M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable' standard as minimum, unless impractical, unachievable or unviable due to site specific circumstances. The evidence gathered here may support the Ringmer Parish Council in approaching the LPA to support, encourage and evidence the need for policy intention H4, should it get challenged at Regulation 19 consultation or later in Examination in Public. It is unclear whether Neighbourhood Plans can set their own requirements for the application of the national standards of adaptability and accessibility for new housing. Therefore, discussions with and support of the LPA are advised as the best route of action, if this is a key priority, as it is likely to be in Ringmer, based on its demographic profile.

6.4.6. The proportion of new housing that might accommodate those using wheelchairs is harder to define at small scales. Typically, at Local Authority scale, this might be set with reference to the proportion of Affordable Housing applicants in the Local Authority area falling into this category or to wider data from surveys and other sources where available. The Lewes adopted and emerging Local Plans do not set specific targets for the proportion of new housing that might be required to meet national standards for wheelchair users (Category M4(3)).

6.4.7. Across England as a whole, 0.6 of the population use a wheelchair all of the time, and 3% of the population use a wheelchair part of the time. As a crude estimate, these percentages can eventually be applied to the housing requirement for the NA, once this is received from the local authority. The result will suggest the approximate number of dwellings that might be encouraged to be wheelchair friendly or adaptable over the Neighbourhood Plan period. It is worth noting that these national figures are for all age categories, not just older persons, although it is likely that a significant proportion of households using a wheelchair will be older persons.

6.5. Conclusions- Specialist Housing for Older People

Current and projected older population and specialist accommodation

6.5.1. There are currently estimated to be around 780 individuals aged 75 or over in Ringmer, based on the 2021 Census, representing 16.4% of the total population. There are three schemes of specialist accommodation in the NA at present, according to the Elderly Accommodation Counsel search tool. These offer a total of 102

[29] See Raising accessibility standards for new homes: summary of consultation responses and government response - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

accommodation units, which is close to the national average provision per population. All of the 102 units are age exclusive / retirement housing, and thus classified as sheltered housing rather than housing offering extra care. The majority (70%) of the existing units are for private leasehold ownership, and the remaining 30% are socially rented.

6.5.2. The vast majority (87%) of households across Lewes District aged 55-75 in 2011 (and therefore likely to reach the 75+ bracket by 2040) are owner occupiers, and most of the remainder rent from a social landlord (10%). 3% are private renters. This is important because those currently owning will require specialist accommodation for market purchase, being largely ineligible for subsidised housing, while those in private or social rent will need to rely on subsidised rented housing because they are unlikely to have the funds to buy.

Projected demographic change and need for specialist housing

6.5.3. The 75+ population of the NA is projected to increase to 1,261 people over the Neighbourhood Plan period, to become 23% of the population in 2040. As established in the previous chapter, Ringmer has an older population than the District as a whole, which is likely to grow as a proportion of the total in the coming years, unless new development attracts a replacement population of younger families.

6.5.4. The growth in the existing older population, which, rather than the total, is the focus of the estimates of need here, should be converted into households because some older people will be cohabiting in old age. The projected household growth to 2036 among those aged 75+ in Ringmer is 339.

6.5.5. The potential need for specialist housing with some form of additional care for older people can be estimated by bringing together data on population projections, rates of disability, and what tenure of housing the current 55-75 cohort occupy in the NA. This can be sense-checked using a toolkit based on national research and assumptions.

6.5.6. The two Ringmer specific estimates suggest a range of 121-141 specialist accommodation units might be required during the Plan period. These estimates are based on the projected growth of the older population, thereby assuming that today's older households are already well accommodated. If this is found not to be the case, it would justify aspiring to exceed the range identified here.

6.5.7. Our AECOM HNA estimates are also broken down by tenure and level of support required. Broadly, 16-36% of the total need is for affordable accommodation, while the remaining 64-84% is required for market purchase. This chimes with the higher propensity of older households to be homeowners. Around 60-72% of the need is found to be for sheltered housing with limited support rather than additional care arrangements. The potential need for care and nursing home beds in Ringmer to 2040 can be roughly estimated at 53 additional bedspaces.

6.5.8. Ringmer is deemed a suitable location for further specialist housing development for people who do not want to leave their immediate surroundings and social networks when their housing needs change in old age. However, it may not be considered prudent to prioritise the potential demand from older people to the exclusion of other groups, such as those in need of Affordable Housing, young families, and others

important to maintaining a balanced and vibrant community. The HNA evidence can be used to support specialist housing development but does not make that obligatory. How far to promote this is a choice for the Parish Council and wider community.

Accessibility and adaptability

6.5.9. It is currently unclear whether further major specialist supply is likely to be built in Ringmer, based on a planning application search at the time of writing this HNA. Depending on whether there is likely to be additional specialist supply during the Plan period, an alternative or additional avenue to the provision of additional specialist homes is to discuss the standards of accessibility and adaptability required of new development with Lewes District Council.

6.5.10. The currently emerging Lewes Local Plan proposes a requirement that appears appropriate to the aging population in Ringmer, for 100% of new homes to be built to Category M4(2) accessibility standards. We recommend that the Parish Council support this requirement with the evidence in this HNA, in case the requirement is challenged as the Local Plan progresses. No further policy action is required in the Neighbourhood Plan on this subject, unless it looks likely that this requirement will not be adopted as part of the emerging Local Plan.

7. Next Steps

7.1. Recommendations for next steps

7.1.1. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide Ringmer Parish Council with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the neighbourhood planners should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Lewes District Council with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, bearing the following in mind:

- All Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, but in particular Condition E, which is the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan;
- The views of Lewes District Council;
- The views of local residents (including potentially through a household survey);
- The views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers and estate agents; and
- The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by Lewes District Council.

7.1.2. This assessment has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data, national guidance and other relevant and available information current at the time of writing.

7.1.3. Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that the Ringmer Parish Council should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the Government, Lewes District Council or any other relevant party and review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained. This is particularly relevant to Ringmer at this point in time, as both the Local Authority and national government have promised to publish a new Local Plan and new National Planning Policy Framework imminently.

7.1.4. At the same time, monitoring on-going demographic or other trends over the Neighbourhood Plan period will help ensure the continued relevance and credibility of its policies.

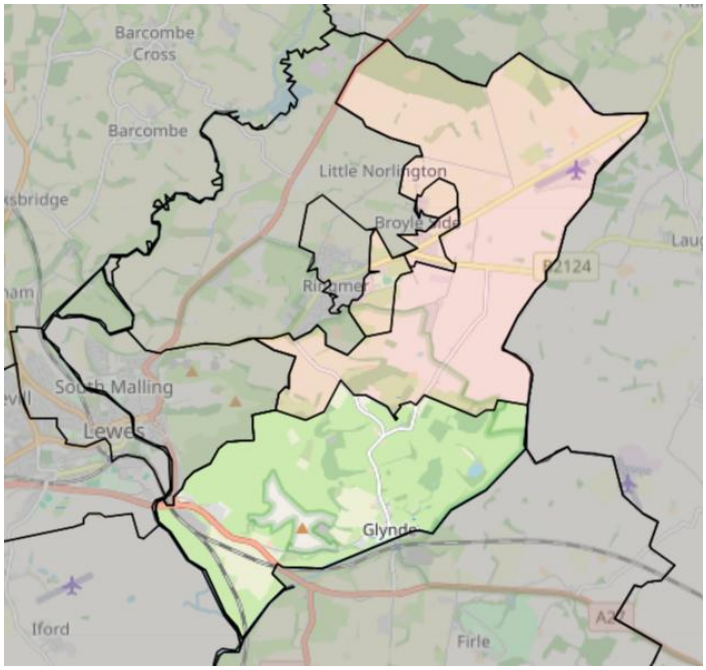
Appendix A : Assessment geography

A.1 For Census purposes, the whole of England is divided into statistical units of similar population size called Output Areas (OAs) and their larger equivalents. OAs are the smallest units. They make up Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which in turn make up Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs). The NA and parish equates to the following combination of LSOAs and OAs:

- LSOA E01021055
- LSOA E01021056
- Part of LSOA E01021054, made up of
    - OA E00106929,
    - OA E00106932,
    - OA E00106933, and
    - OA E00106937.

A.2 Note that the two LSOAs listed first are entirely within the NA. The four OAs listed after this make up part of a third LSOA (E01021054), together with a fifth OA located outside the NA. The fifth OA, which is located outside the NA, appears more rural and less populous.

Figure A-1: Map of four OAs selected (shaded in pink)



Source: NOMIS

A.3 Many other datasets besides the Census itself make use of OAs, but not necessarily down to the same level of detail. For example, Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data, which can be used to understand the type and size mix of housing, is only available down to the scale of LSOAs. As explained above, the fifth OA (located outside of the

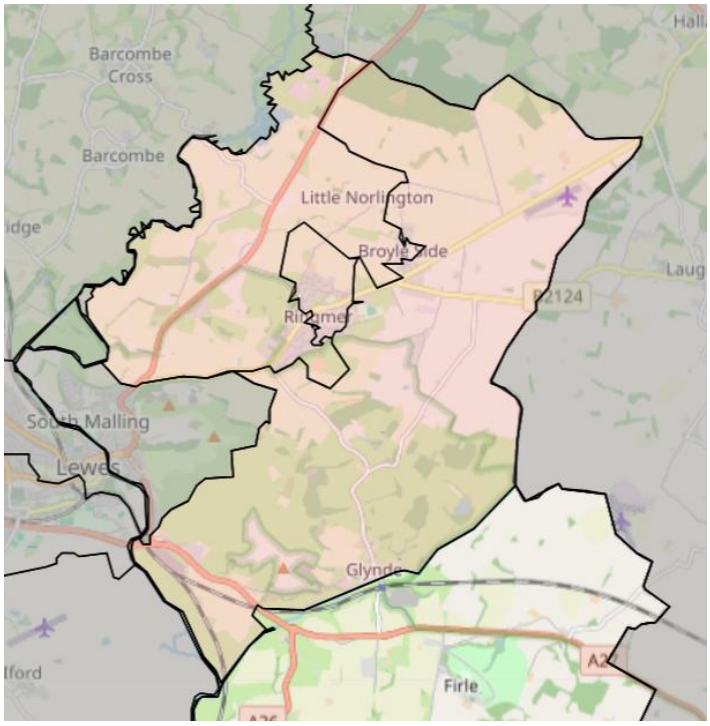
NA) making up part of the third LSOA E01021054 is more rural, and thus has less impact on the LSOA's data.

A.4 Therefore, all three LSOAs in full are considered a reasonable proxy to use for data which is only available at LSOA rather than OA level, such as VOA data.

A.5 Therefore, the most relevant combination of LSOAs in this case, which will need to be used as a proxy for the NA where necessary, is:

- LSOA E01021055
- LSOA E01021056 and
- LSOA E01021054.

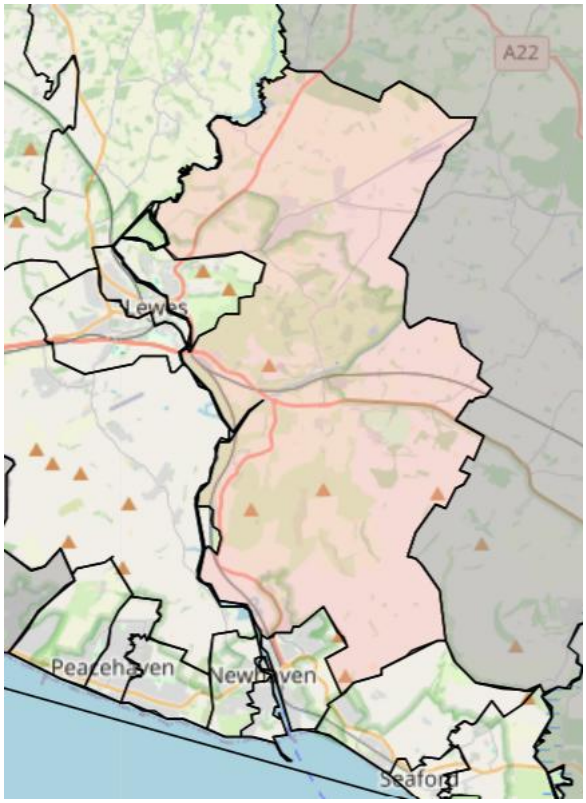
Figure A-2: Map of LSOA for VOA Data



Source: NOMIS

A.6 Finally, as noted in the analysis of affordability in the main body of the report, household income data for small areas is only provided down to the scale of MSOAs. The relevant MSOA, in which the NA is located and which will need to serve as a proxy for it, is E02004382.

Figure A-3: Map of MSOA for Income Data



Source: NOMIS

Appendix B : Local Plan context

Policies in the adopted Local Plan

B.1 The current statutory development plan for those parts of Ringmer outside the SDNP includes the following:

- Saved policies from the Lewes Local Plan (adopted in 2003), although none of them are directly relevant to our study[30];
- The Lewes Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 (adopted in 2016)[31] – This is a Joint Core Strategy with SDNPA with a plan period of 2010 - 2030;
- Lewes Local Plan Part 2: Site allocations and development management policies (adopted in 2020)[32]; and
- The made Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan 2010-2030[33].

B.2 Table B-1 below summarises adopted Lewes development plan policies that are relevant to housing need and delivery in Ringmer.

Table B-1: Summary of relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan for Lewes District Council

Source	Policy	Provisions
Joint Core Strategy 2010-2030 – Local Plan Part 1	**Spatial Policy 1** - Provision of housing and employment land	Minimum 6,900 net additional dwellings are to be provided in the joint plan area (345 net additional dwellings per annum). (Table 4 accompanying the policy sets out the split between the area in and outside of the National Park:

	(A) Total requirement	**(B)** Already developed in the plan period (April 2010 – April 2013)	**(C)** Units permitted, but not yet implemented (includes units under construction)	**(D)** Units considered deliverable having made sufficient progress through the planning process[17]	(E) Unimplemented Local Plan allocations for housing[18].	Residual requirement to plan for (A – B, C, D & E)
Housing (within the National Park)	Plan – wide requirement: 6,900	220	142	0	0	Plan – wide requirement: 4,322
Housing (outside of the National Park)		800	1131	183	102	

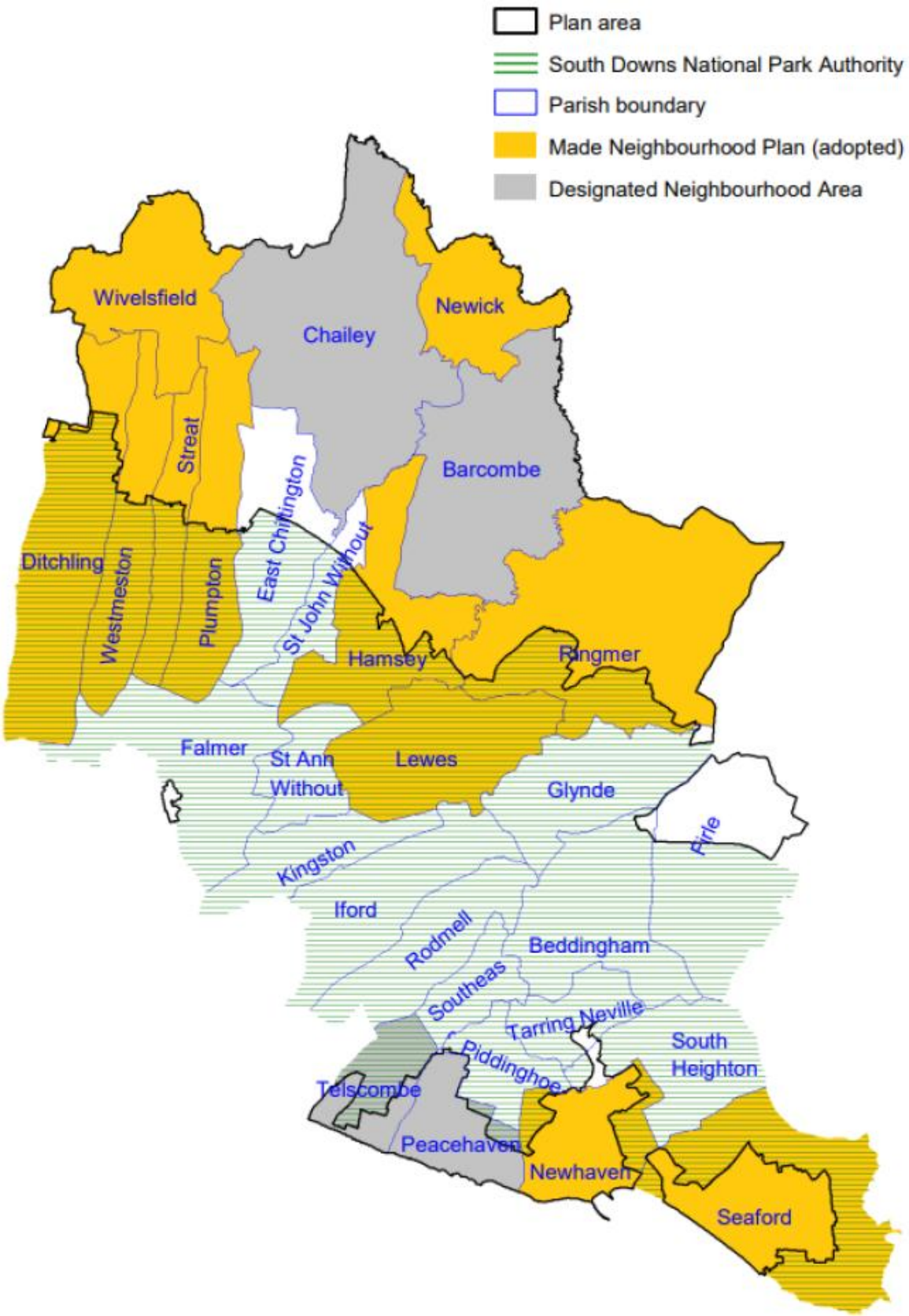
[30] Available at Lewes District Local Plan 2003 saved policies - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils; Policies PT6, PT9, PT10, PT11, PT12, PT13, PT18, PT19 and PT20 still remain part of the development plan for the District
[31] Available at Lewes Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
[32] Available at Lewes Local Plan Part 2: Site allocations and development management policies - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
[33] "Ringmer to 2030"

<table>
<tr><th>Source</th><th>Policy</th><th>Provisions</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Spatial Policy 2 – Distribution of Housing</td><td>3,597 net additional dwellings are required (subtracting completions, commitments, windfall site allowance and rural exception sites allowance), which will be distributed to:
- Strategic allocations, including 110 net additional units on Land to north of Bishops Lane, Ringmer; and
- Planned housing growth at different settlements including minimum 215 net additional units at Ringmer & Broyle Side; and
- About 200 net additional units in locations which were left to be determined in either the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, SDLP, or Neighbourhood Plans.
For settlements not listed by name, new housing will be limited to affordable housing to meet local need on exception sites and currently unidentified infill developments within the planning boundary
(Note that Ringmer and Broadside are the only settlements in the NA with a planning boundary).</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Spatial Policy 6 – Land north of Bishops Lane, Ringmer</td><td>4.4 ha. allocated for residential development of approx. 110 dwellings subject to listed criteria.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Core Policy 1 – Affordable Housing</td><td>1. District wide target of 40% affordable housing, including affordable rented and intermediate housing, sought for developments of 10+ dwellings.
For developments of less than 10 units the stepped target & thresholds below are applied:
<table><tr><th colspan="2">Affordable Housing Target/Threshold</th></tr><tr><th>Scheme size (Units)</th><th>Affordable housing (Units)</th></tr><tr><td>1 - 2</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>3 - 4</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>5 - 7</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>8 - 9</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>10+</td><td>40%</td></tr></table>2. Affordable housing requirement may exceptionally be determined on a site-by-site basis where justified by market and/or site conditions.
Target levels are expected to be provided by all developments of 3 + (net) units (including conversions, subdivisions) unless the LPA is satisfied by robust financial viability evidence.
3. Guideline affordable housing tenure split is 75% affordable rented and 25% intermediate (shared ownership).</td></tr>
</table>

Source	Policy	Provisions
	Core Policy 2 – Housing Type, Mix and Density	Housing developments (market & affordable) are expected to: 1. Provide a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet identified local need, based on best available evidence, to generally include 1- and 2-bed homes for single person households / couples with no dependents. Account will also need to be given to the existing character and housing mix of the vicinity and, where appropriate, setting, purpose, and duty of the SDNP. 2. Provide accommodation to help meet diverse/changing needs of the community including appropriate for the ageing population and disabled residents. 3. Reflecting context incuding character and needs in the locality, to achieve densities in the region of 20-30 dwellings per hectare for villages. Higher or lower densities may be justified by the specific site character / context. Densities on allocated sites are indicated in allocation.
	Table 2 and paragraph 6.89	Rural Service Centre in the Settlement Hierarchy of the adopted joint Core Strategy table 2, which identifies Ringmer as the most sustainable location for growth outside o the District centres (towns such as Newhaven and Lewes), where most of the growth is concentrated;
Lewes Local Plan Part 2 (LLP2) 2020-2030: Site allocations and development	Tables 2, 3 & 5	Table 2 sets out a residual requirement outside the National Park of 1,660 units. Table 3 sets out the planned level of growth Ringmer & Broyle Side, with 215 units as SP2 Planned Housing Growth, 183 units as growth identified in a made Neighbourhood Plan, and 32 units as residual housing growth to be identified. Table 5 states that 50 additional units are allocated to Ringmer and Broyle Side by LPP2 (see allocation below).
	Policy RG01 - Caburn Field	Land at Caburn Field (1.91ha) as shown on figure 10 below, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 90 net additional dwellings (note, as explained in paragraph 2.125 of the plan, that this meets the shortfall of 32 units and provides an additional 18 units over the minimum of 215 net additional dwellings. This thus represents an uplift of 50 over and above the 'saved' 2003 housing site allocation).

Source: Lewes Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2

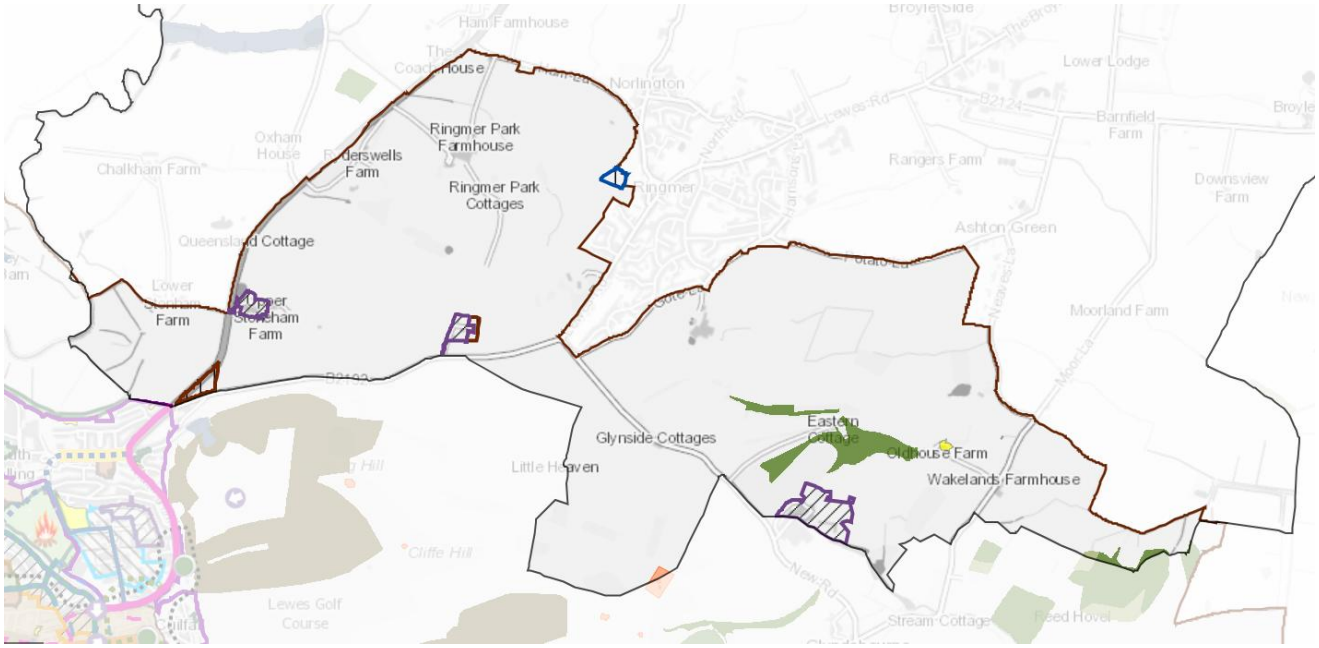
Figure 7-1: Lewes Local Plan Part 2 Plan Area, including Ringmer NA



Source: Lewes Local Plan Part 2: Site allocations and development management policies (2020)

B.3 The South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 (SDLP, adopted in 2019) covers those parts of Ringmer NA (approximately 20%) that are located in the SDNP.

Figure 7-2: Snapshot from the SDLP Individual Area (inset) map for Ringmer, outlining the portion of the NA which is located in the SDNP (remainder faded out)



Source: SDLP adopted in 2019

B.4 Table B-2 below summarises adopted SDLP policies that are relevant to housing need and delivery in Ringmer.

Table B-2: Summary of relevant policies in the adopted SDLP

Policy	Provisions
Core Policy SD3 – Major Development	Planning permission will be refused for major developments in the National Park except in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest, based on a number of criteria, in terms of need for, cost of, and detrimental effects of development.
Strategic Policy SD25: Development Strategy	The principle of development within a list of settlements (not including Ringmer), will be supported, provided that development meets a number of criteria. Exceptionally, development will be permitted outside of settlement boundaries, where it complies with relevant policies in the Plan, responds to the context of the relevant broad area or river corridor, and: a) It is allocated or safeguarded for the proposed use in the Plan; or b) There is an essential need for a countryside location; or c) Is community infrastructure with a proven local need; or d) It is an appropriate reuse of a previously developed site, excepting residential gardens, and conserves and enhances the Park's special qualities.
Strategic Policy SD26: Supply of Homes	The National Park Authority will make overall provision for approximately 4,750 net additional homes over a 19-year period 2014-2033 through: i) development of strategic sites and allocation of

<table>
<tr><th>Policy</th><th>Provisions</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>housing land in the Plan and NDPs; ii) implementation of planning permissions; and iii) windfall.
(Note that there are no allocations in this Plan for Ringmer)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic Policy SD27: Mix of Homes</td><td>Requires a balanced mix of housing to meet projected local need.
a) Affordable housing in a market housing scheme should provide this mix: 1 bedroom dwellings: 35%; 2: 35%; 3: 25%; 4+: 5%.
b) Market housing should provide this mix: 1 bedroom dwellings: at least 10%; 2: at least 40%; 3: at least 40%; 4+: up to 10%.
An alternative mix will be permitted if there is robust evidence of local housing need or site-specific considerations in line with National Park Purpose 1 to justify this.
Development proposals will be permitted for residential development that provides flexible and adaptable accommodation to meet the needs of people who are less mobile, or have adult homecare requirements.
Development proposals of 5+ homes will be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that evidence of local need for older people’s or specialist housing is reflected in the types of homes proposed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic Policy SD28: Affordable Homes</td><td>Proposals should maximise delivery of affordable housing to meet local need and as minimum: a) On sites with capacity of 11+ homes, 50% minimum to be affordable on site, of which minimum 75% to be affordable rented. b) On sites with capacity of 3-10 homes:
<table><tr><td>3 homes</td><td>Meaningful financial contribution, to be negotiated case-by-case</td></tr><tr><td>4 – 5 homes</td><td>1 affordable home</td></tr><tr><td>6 – 7 homes</td><td>2 affordable homes, at least 1 of which is a rented affordable tenure</td></tr><tr><td>8 homes</td><td>3 affordable homes, at least 1 of which is a rented affordable tenure</td></tr><tr><td>9 homes</td><td>3 affordable homes, at least 2 of which is a rented affordable tenure</td></tr><tr><td>10 homes</td><td>4 affordable homes, at least 2 of which is a rented affordable tenure</td></tr></table>Schemes with 4-10 dwellings will provide affordable on-site except in exceptional circumstances.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic Policy SD29: Rural Exception Sites</td><td>100% affordable housing schemes outside of settlement boundaries need to provide:
a) Affordable housing in perpetuity;
b) The site selection process has to consider all reasonable options, (e.g. re. landscape, ecosystem services and overall sustainability);</td></tr>
</table>

Policy	Provisions
	c) The scale and location relates well to the existing settlement and landscape character; and d) It is shown that effective community engagement has fed into the design, layout and dwelling types. Size, type, and tenure of affordable homes for each proposal will be based on robust and up-to-date evidence of local need.

Source: SDLP adopted in 2019

Policies in the emerging local plan

B.5 The SDNPA have begun work on reviewing the South Downs Local Plan to make sure it is up to date and addresses important issues including nature recovery, climate change and supporting local communities to thrive. However, no draft is available yet of this emerging new Local Plan.

B.6 Lewes District Council are further advanced in their emerging Plan preparation. The emerging new Lewes Local Plan to 2040 is intended to replace the current statutory development plan for those parts of Lewes outside the SDNP. A Regulation 18 consultation Plan was published in the Autumn of 2023, called "Towards a Local Plan spatial strategy and policies directions"[34]. This contains some high-level draft policy directions, but no preferred growth options nor draft allocations.

B.7 It is worth pointing out that these are not draft policies and are still evolving and may or may not change substantially before they are adopted. A more detailed Regulation 19 draft Local Plan, with draft policies, is expected in late 2024 – early 2025 at the time of writing, and should not be prejudged by any of the contents of this HNA.

B.8 Table B-3 below summarises emerging Local Plan Regulation 18 draft policies that are relevant to housing need and delivery in Ringmer.

Table B-3: Summary of policy directions in the emerging Lewes Local Plan to 2040

Policy Direction	Provisions
Strategic Policy SDS1: A Spatial Development Strategy Approach & Figure 9	Seeks to direct development to sustainable locations, often brownfield land within existing settlements.

[34] Local Plan Spatial Strategy.pdf

Policy Direction	Provisions
	A potential approach to spatial development is illustrated in Figure 9 **Figure 9: Spatial Development Approach** 
Strategic Policy SDS2: Settlement Hierarchy & Figure 16	Ringmer is described as a “top tier settlement” and “rural service centre” in the settlement hierarchy, in line with a Settlement Hierarchy Review conducted in 2023.
Strategic Policy H1: Meeting Housing Needs	The policy will set a target of achieving 40% affordable housing contributions; On sites of 100+ dwellings, plots to accommodate 5% of total dwellings will be made available as self build or custom build plots. Sites at Rural Service Centres (e.g. Ringmer) should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
Policy H2: Suitable Homes for All	The policy will require that the market element of residential schemes on sites of 0.5ha+ / 10+ dwellings will include more two bedroom homes than other sizes of dwelling, subject to viability, or a mix that reflects the needs of the surrounding community. All new homes will be required to meet Building Regulations M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable’ standard as minimum, unless impractical, unachievable or unviable due to site specific circumstances.
Strategic Policy H3: Affordable Housing	Sites providing 10-99 homes are required to provide minimum 25% of homes as affordable housing on site. Further contributions commensurate with 40% target (H1 above) may be made on site or paid as commuted sum. Sites providing 100+ homes a required to provide minimum 30% of homes as affordable housing on site. Further contributions commensurate with 40% target (H1) may be made on site or paid as commuted sum.

Policy Direction	Provisions
	Where viability assessment at application stage supports less than 40%, scheme viability is subject to review over course of the build out. Tenure and house size mix for affordable housing reflecting the most up to date local housing needs evidence and national policy requirements will be expected. Delivery of homes for social and affordable rent will be prioritised over the delivery of homes for affordable ownership. Delivery of homes for social rent will be prioritised over the delivery of homes for affordable rent. A tenure mix of 75% rented (60% social rent & 15% affordable rent) and 25% affordable ownership is proposed. Discounted affordable home ownership products should be offered with sufficient discount that they are affordable to households with median incomes as determined by most up to date housing needs evidence. At present, it will require First Homes to be offered at 50% discount. Shared home ownership products will need to be offered with a range of initial share purchases from 10%. Where Rent to Buy homes are offered, these will form part of the affordable rent contribution. Housing waiting lists will be used to determine specific requirements for the affordable element of the scheme to be delivered on site, including bedroom sizes. These may include clusters of two bedroom flats or houses to meet the needs of vulnerable people, care home accommodation, delivery of M4(3)(a) wheelchair adaptable accommodation or M4(3)(b) wheelchair accessible accommodation. All major residential development will be expected to contribute to meeting affordable housing needs. Where a development consists of Build to Rent homes, the affordable housing contribution will consist of homes offered at Affordable Private Rent with a minimum discount of 20% on market rents inclusive of service charges, secured through agreement with the council. Where a development consists of C2 residential accommodation, the affordable tenure mix will consist of predominantly accommodation for social rent (precise mix will be negotiated with the council with regard to evidence from housing waiting lists).
Policy H4: Specialist Accommodation for Vulnerable People	Independent and supported living schemes and care home accommodation will be supported in Rural Service Centres and Service Villages where applicants contribute to the provision of demand led public transport services to support residents' independence.

Policy Direction	Provisions
	Note no target is set for provision of these types of homes.
Policy H5: New Residential Development in the Countryside	Residential development on sites closely related to existing settlements outside of defined settlement boundaries for the delivery of affordable housing are supported for: • Rural exceptions sites, • First Home exception sites, and • Single plots for self builders.

Source: Towards a Local Plan spatial strategy and policies directions (Regulation 18 Consultation)

Appendix C : Affordability calculations

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

Market housing

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

Market sales

C.3 The starting point for calculating the affordability of a dwelling for sale from the perspective of a specific household is the loan to income ratio which most mortgage companies are prepared to agree. This ratio is conservatively estimated to be 3.5. In practice this can be highly variable. Multipliers up to 4.5 or even above 5 times income increasingly available, although the actual average in practice tends to be lower, particularly where applicants are dual earning. The Financial Conduct Authority uses 3.5 or more as its standard assumption for single applicants and 2.75 or more for dual applicants.

C.4 To produce a more accurate assessment of affordability, the savings required for a deposit should be taken into account in addition to the costs of servicing a mortgage. However, unlike for incomes, data is not available for the savings available to households in Ringmer, and the precise deposit a mortgage provider will require of any buyer will be determined by their individual circumstances and the state of the mortgage market. An assumption is therefore made that a 10% purchase deposit is required and is available to the prospective buyer. In reality it is possible that the cost of the deposit is a greater barrier to home ownership than the mortgage costs.

C.5 The calculation for the purchase threshold for market housing is as follows:

- Value of a median NA house price (2023) = £450,000;
- Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £45,000;
- Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £405,000;
- Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £115,714.

C.6 The purchase threshold for an entry-level dwelling is a better representation of affordability to those with lower incomes or savings, such as first-time buyers. To determine this threshold, the same calculation is repeated but with reference to the lower quartile rather than the median house price. The lower quartile average in 2023 was £372,500, and the purchase threshold is therefore £95,786.

C.7 It is also worth assessing the purchase threshold for new build homes, since this most closely represents the cost of the new housing that will come forward in future. Land Registry records shows insufficient sales of new build properties in the NA in 2023 to provide a robust enough sample size to determine an accurate average for the cost

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

C.8 Therefore, an estimate has been calculated by determining the uplift between all house prices in 2023 across Lewes and new build house prices in 2023 in the same area. This percentage uplift (or 'new build premium' – in the case of Lewes this is 8.9% across different types of housing) is then applied to the 2023 lower quartile house price in the NA to give an estimated NA new build entry-level house price of £405,502 and purchase threshold of £104,272. It is clear from looking at these three purchase thresholds that they result in rather similar (high) purchase threshold to afford a new home in Ringmer, be this a median average, entry-level, and new build entry-level home.

C.9 In order to further provide a comparison with the wider local authority area, it is helpful to also look at the cost of new build housing across Lewes District in 2023. The median cost of new build dwellings in Lewes District was £429,995, with a purchase threshold of £110,570, which again is not dissimilar for the Ringmer thresholds calculated above.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

C.10 It is assumed here that rented housing is affordable if the annual rent does not exceed 30% of the household's gross annual income. The percentage of income to be spent on rent before the property is considered affordable varies considerably for individuals, and it is increasingly common for households to dedicate a larger proportion of their earnings to rent. When considering affordability it is considered good practice to be conservative, and the 30% benchmark is used as ONS's current standard assumption.

C.11 This is an important assumption because it is possible that a household will be able to afford tenures that are deemed not affordable in this report if they are willing or able to dedicate a higher proportion of their income to housing costs. It is becoming increasingly necessary for households to do so. However, for the purpose of planning it is considered more appropriate to use this conservative lower benchmark for affordability on the understanding that additional households may be willing or able to access housing this way than to use a higher benchmark which assumes that all households can afford to do so when their individual circumstances may well prevent it.

C.12 The property website Rightmove shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Area. According to Rightmove, there were five properties for rent (listed as available or recently let) in the NA at the time of search in October 2024, with an average monthly rent of £1,975. There was only one two-bed properties listed, as well as a lower cost three-be property, which together were taken to represent the entry level rental cost in Ringmer, at £1,400 per calendar month. The higher value average of £1,975 was calculated by excluding the two-bed unit and taking the median

of the other four units in the sample. These are not significant samples but deemed sufficient for this exercise, and more appropriate than using the proxy rents from a wider area.

C.13 The calculation for the private rent income threshold for entry-level (2 bedroom) dwellings is as follows:

- Annual rent = £1,400 x 12 = £16,800;
- Multiplied by 3.33 (so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent) = income threshold of £56,000.

C.14 The calculation is repeated for the overall average to give an income threshold of £79,000.

Affordable Housing

C.15 There are a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the NPPF 2023: social rent and affordable rent, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. The First Homes product was introduced in 2021 but is still not yet included in the NPPF (although a new NPPF is expected imminently at the time of writing this HNA). Each of the affordable housing tenures are considered below.

Social rent

C.16 Rents in socially rented properties reflect a formula based on property values and average earnings in each area, resulting in substantial discounts to market rents. As such, this tenure is suitable for the needs of those on the lowest incomes and is subject to strict eligibility criteria.

C.17 To determine social rent levels, 2021 data and statistical return from Homes England is used. This data is only available at Local Authority scale so must act as a proxy for Ringmer. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and local authorities and is presented for Lewes District in Table C-1.

C.18 To determine the income needed, it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent. This is an assumption only for what might generally make housing affordable or unaffordable. It is unrelated to the eligibility criteria of Affordable Housing policy at Local Authority level. The overall average across all property sizes is taken forward as the income threshold for social rent.

Table C-1: Social rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average social rent per week	£63.99	£75.51	£89.95	£107.16	£92.09
Annual average	£3,327	£3,927	£4,677	£5,572	£4,789
Income needed	£11,092	£13,088	£15,591	£18,574	£15,962

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

Affordable rent

C.19 Affordable rent is controlled at no more than 80% of the local market rent. However, registered providers who own and manage affordable rented housing may also apply a cap to the rent to ensure that it is affordable to those on housing benefit (where under Universal Credit the total received in all benefits to working age households is £20,000).

C.20 Even a 20% discount on the market rent may not be sufficient to ensure that households can afford this tenure, particularly when they are dependent on benefits. Registered Providers in some areas have applied caps to larger properties where the higher rents would make them unaffordable to families under Universal Credit. This may mean that the rents are actually 50-60% of market levels rather than 80%.

C.21 Data on the most realistic local affordable rent costs is obtained from the same source as social rent levels for Lewes District. Again it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent, and the overall average is taken forward.

C.22 Comparing this result with the average entry level annual private rent above (at £16,800) indicates that average affordable rents in the NA (at £8,685) are actually closer to 50% of market rates than the maximum of 80%, a feature that is necessary to make them achievable to those in need. However, it is also worth noting that, as mentioned above, the sample used for private renting in the NA is very small. This firstly makes the comparison less reliable. Secondly this also signifies that it is likely to be relatively difficult to access entry level private rented accommodation in Ringmer as an alternative to social renting, and thirdly, that the apparently very limited supply may be driving up private rents for the few available units, although this is merely an observation rather than proven causality. It may equally be the case that there are few units made available due to a lack of local demand for private renting.

Table C-2: Affordable rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average affordable rent per week	£135.87	£171.84	£209.38	£248.76	£167.01
Annual average	£7,065	£8,936	£10,888	£12,936	£8,685
Income needed	£23,551	£29,786	£36,293	£43,118	£28,948

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

Affordable home ownership

C.23 Affordable home ownership tenures include products for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. The three most widely available are discounted market housing (a subset of which is the First Homes product), shared ownership, and Rent to Buy. These are considered in turn below.

Discounted Market Sale/ First Homes

C.24 Discounted market sale homes are affordable home ownership products which offer a discount of at least 20% on market values.

C.25 First Homes should be available to buy with a minimum discount of 30% below their full market value (i.e. the value of an equivalent new home);

- The discount level can be set higher than 30% – at 40% or 50% – where this can be suitably evidenced. The setting and justifying of discount levels can happen at neighbourhood as well as local authority scale;
- After the discount is applied the initial sale price must not exceed £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London), and lower caps can be set locally;
- Purchasers must be first-time buyers with an income less than £80,000 (or £90,000 in Greater London), and First Homes can be prioritised for local people and/or key workers;
- They will be subject to legal restrictions ensuring the discount is retained for future occupants, and renting out or sub-letting will not normally be permitted;
- In addition to setting the discount level, local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups can apply additional criteria, such as a lower income cap, local connection test or prioritisation for key workers through adopted plans, emerging policy or Supplementary Planning Documents.

C.26 The starting point for considering whether Discounted Market Sale / First Homes are affordable is the estimated cost of new build entry-level housing in the NA noted above of £405,502 (although, as explained above again due to a small sample in the NA, this was a proxy calculated by applying the local authority level 'new build premium' uplift to the 2023 NA lower quartile house price).

C.27 For the minimum discount of 30% the purchase threshold can be calculated as follows:

- Value of a new home (estimated NA new build entry-level) = £405,502;
- Discounted by 30% = £283,851;
- Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £28,385;
- Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £255,466;
- Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £72,990.

C.28 The income thresholds analysis in the Affordability and Affordable Housing chapter also compares local incomes with the costs of a 40% and 50% discounted First Home. This would require an income threshold of £62,563 and £52,136 respectively.

C.29 All of the income thresholds calculated here for First Homes are below the cap of £80,000 above which households are not eligible. However, it is also worth noting that the discounted price for a 30% discounted First Home in Ringmer (at 283,851) would likely be above the £250,000 upper price threshold for a First Home and would thus fail to meet government criteria. This would mean that a greater discount is likely justified for First Homes in the NA (a minimum of 40% - which chimes with the 50% discount proposed in the emerging Lewes Local Plan), or alternatively developers would need to bring the price down, or smaller or lower value properties would need

to be delivered than our assumed benchmark (which used the average local lower quartile price home to represent an entry-level home).

C.30 Note that discounted market sale homes may be unviable to develop if the discounted price is close to (or below) build costs. Build costs vary across the country but as an illustration, the build cost for a 2 bedroom home (assuming 70 sq. m and a build cost of £1,750 per sq. m35) would be around £122,500. This cost excludes any land value or developer profit. However, this would not appear to be an issue in Ringmer, even at the highest level of discount.

C.31 Table C-3 shows the discount required for market homes to be affordable to the three income groups. The cost of a typical discount market sale property / First Home is calculated using an estimate for new build entry-level housing in the NA. However, it is worth thinking about these properties in relation to the cost of new build prices in the wider area, as well as median and entry-level existing prices locally to get a more complete picture, particularly as the NA figure is based on a proxy value. The discount levels required for these alternative benchmarks are given below. Note that all of these are above 50%.

Table C-3: Discount on sale price required for households to afford

House price benchmark	Mean household income	Single LQ earner	Dual LQ earning household
NA median house price	60%	87%	73%
NA estimated new build entry-level house price	56%	85%	71%
NA entry-level house price	52%	84%	68%
LA median new build house price	58%	86%	72%

Source: Land Registry PPD; ONS MSOA total household income

Shared ownership

C.32 Shared ownership involves the purchaser buying an initial share in a property, typically of between 25% and 75% (but now set at a minimum of 10%, which is proposed in the emerging Lewes Local Plan as a starting point) and paying rent on the share retained by the provider. Shared ownership is flexible in two respects, in the share which can be purchased and in the rent payable on the share retained by the provider. Both of these are variable. The share owned by the occupant can be increased over time through a process known as 'staircasing'.

C.33 In exceptional circumstances (for example, as a result of financial difficulties, and where the alternative is repossession), and at the discretion of the provider, shared owners may staircase down, thereby reducing the share they own. Shared equity is available to first-time buyers, people who have owned a home previously and council

[35] It is estimated that in 2022, build costs for a house are between £1,750 and £3,000 per square metre - https://urbanistarchitecture.co.uk/cost-to-build-a-house-uk/

and housing association tenants with a good credit rating whose annual household income does not exceed £80,000.

C.34 To determine the affordability of shared ownership, calculations are again based on the estimated costs of new build housing as discussed above. The deposit available to the prospective purchaser is assumed to be 10% of the value of the dwelling, and the standard loan to income ratio of 3.5 is used to calculate the income required to obtain a mortgage. The rental component is estimated at 2.5% of the value of the remaining (unsold) portion of the price. The income required to cover the rental component of the dwelling is based on the assumption that a household spends no more than 30% of the income on rent (as for the income threshold for the private rental sector).

C.35 The affordability threshold for a 25% equity share is calculated as follows:

- A 25% equity share of £405,502 is £101,375;
- A 10% deposit of £10,138 is deducted, leaving a mortgage value of £91,238;
- This is divided by the loan to value ratio of 3.5 to give a purchase threshold of £26,068;
- Rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £304,126;
- The estimated annual rent at 2.5% of the unsold value is £7,603;
- This requires an income of £25,344 (annual rent multiplied by 3.33 so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent).
- The total income required is £51,412 (£26,068 plus £25,344).

C.36 The same calculation is repeated for equity shares of 10% and 50% producing affordability thresholds of £40,840 and £69,032 respectively. Note that all of these income thresholds are below the £80,000 cap for eligible households.

Rent to Buy

C.37 Rent to Buy is a relatively new and less common tenure, which through subsidy allows the occupant to save a portion of their rent, which is intended to be used to build up a deposit to eventually purchase the home. It is therefore estimated to cost the same as private rents – the difference being that the occupant builds up savings with a portion of the rent.

Appendix D : Affordable Housing need and policy

Affordable housing policy

D.1 The following table reviews the relevant factors in developing a policy on the Affordable Housing tenure mix, which inform the recommendation given in the main body of the report.

Table D-3: Wider considerations in developing Affordable Housing mix policy

Consideration	Local Evidence
A. **Evidence of need for Affordable Housing**: The need for affordable rent and affordable home ownership is not directly equivalent: the former expresses the identified need of a group with acute needs and no alternative options; the latter expresses potential demand from a group who are generally adequately housed in rented accommodation and may not be able to afford the deposit to transition to ownership.	This HNA suggests, on the basis of pro-rating the Lewes District LHNA, that the NA requires around 8 units of affordable rented housing and 10 units of affordable home ownership homes per annum over the Neighbourhood Plan period. This would total to 377 affordable units over the plan period, split into 162 units affordable rented and 215 units affordable housing for sale over the 20 years. Both forms of Affordable Housing appear to be valuable in meeting the needs of people on various incomes. The relationship between these figures suggests that more affordable home ownership units are required than affordable rented units. However, the analysis in our HNA indicates that all forms of affordable housing for sale are not actually affordable on local incomes. This leads us to a recommendation that affordable rented housing should be prioritised over affordable home ownership, despite there potentially being a sizable demand from those who would seek home ownership in the NA.
B. **Can Affordable Housing needs be met in full?** How far the more urgently needed affordable rented housing should be prioritised in the tenure mix depends on the quantity of overall housing delivery expected.	If the Local Plan target of 40% (in the adopted and emerging Lewes Local Plan, which covers the majority of the NA) were achieved on every site, overall housing delivery would need to be over 940 units, in order to meet identified affordable housing needs. If housing delivery is below this level, or if a lot

	of development falls under the threshold for requiring 40% affordable housing delivery, meeting the more urgent and acute need for rented housing should be prioritised.
C. **Government policy (e.g. NPPF) requirements**: There is no required tenure mix set out in national policy (NPPF 2024) but local authorities are required to set out the minimum proportion of Social Rented housing needed in their areas as part of their Affordable Housing requirements.	Implicit prioritization of Social Rented homes within Affordable Housing policy at the nation level but local authorities have flexibility to set out the proportion needed in their areas. Local Plan tenure mix provides the starting point.
D. **Local Plan policy**:	The adopted and emerging Local Plan seeks a tenure split of 75% affordable rent and 25% affordable home ownership.
E. **Viability**:	HNAs cannot take into consideration the factors which affect viability in the neighbourhood area or at the site-specific level. Viability issues are recognised in the Local Plan and it is acknowledged that this may affect the provision of affordable housing, the mix of tenures provided and the discounts that can be sought on affordable home ownership properties.
F. **Funding**: The availability of funding to support the delivery of different forms of Affordable Housing may also influence what it is appropriate to provide at a particular point in time or on any one site.	The Ringmer Parish Council may wish to keep this in mind so that it can take up any opportunities to secure funding if they become available.
G. **Existing tenure mix in Ringmer**: The current stock of homes in an area, in terms of balance between ownership, rented and affordable provision may be a consideration in the mix of tenures provided on new development sites.	Based on the 2021 Census, Ringmer has 186 social / affordable rented units, and 17 affordable units for sale / shared ownership units, making up 9.2% and 0.8% of total households at present. These figures have declined since the 2011 Census, both in absolute and percentage terms, indicating that there is a limited (lower than across Lewes and England as a whole) and declining stock of affordable housing available to rent or buy in the NA.

H. **Views of registered providers**:	It is not within the scope of this HNA to investigate whether it would be viable for housing associations (registered providers) to deliver and manage affordable rented homes in the NA. The funding arrangements available to housing associations will determine rent levels.
I. Wider policy objectives:	Ringmer Parish Council may wish to take account of broader policy objectives for Ringmer and/or the wider District. These could include, but are not restricted to, policies to attract and retain younger households, families or working age people to the NA. These wider considerations may influence the mix of Affordable Housing provided.

Appendix E : Specialist housing for older people

Background data tables

Table E-1: Existing specialist housing supply, Ringmer

(Noting that these are all located in Ringmer village, and that there are no specialist housing schemes in Broyleside, Upper Wellingham, Ashton Green, Norlington, Little Norlington, or Shortgate).

	Name	Description	Dwellings	Tenure	Type
1	Delves House	56 x 1- and 2-bedroom flats	56	Leasehold	Retirement Housing
2	Mill Road & Close	1 x studio bungalow 14 x 1 bed bungalow 15 x 2-bed bungalow	31	Rent (social landlord)	Retirement Housing
3	Vicarage Close	15 x 1- and 2-bedroom flats	15	Leasehold	Age Exclusive Housing

Source: http://www.housingcare.org

Table E-2: Tenure and mobility limitations of those aged 65+ in Ringmer, 2011 (65+ is the closest proxy for 75+ in this data)

Tenure	Day-to-day activities limited a lot		Day-to-day activities limited a little		Day-to-day activities not limited	
All categories	1,145	197	17.2%	283	24.7%	665
Owned Total	967	151	15.6%	235	24.3%	581
Owned outright	903	142	15.7%	219	24.3%	542
Owned (mortgage) or shared ownership	64	9	14.1%	16	25.0%	39
Rented Total	178	46	25.8%	48	27.0%	84
Social rented	109	29	26.6%	35	32.1%	45
Private rented or living rent free	69	17	24.6%	13	18.8%	39

Source: DC3408EW Health status

HLIN calculations

Table E-3: Recommended provision of specialist housing for older people from the HLIN SHOP toolkit

FORM OF PROVISION	ESTIMATE OF DEMAND PER THOUSAND OF THE RELEVANT 75+ POPULATION
Conventional sheltered housing to rent	60
Leasehold sheltered housing	120
Enhanced sheltered housing (divided 50:50 between that for rent and that for sale)[36]	20
Extra care housing for rent	15
Extra care housing for sale	30
Housing based provision for dementia	6

Source: Housing LIN SHOP Toolkit

E.1 As Table 6-4 in the main report shows, Ringmer is forecast to see an increase of 481 individuals aged 75+ by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. According to the HLIN tool, this translates into a total need for 121 units, as follows:

- Conventional sheltered housing to rent = 60 x .481 (481/1,000) = 29
- Leasehold sheltered housing = 120 x .481 = 58
- Enhanced sheltered housing (divided 50:50 between that for rent and that for sale) = 20 x .481 = 10
- Extra care housing for rent = 15 x .481 = 7
- Extra care housing for sale = 30 x .481 = 14
- Housing based provision for dementia = 6 x .481 = 3

Care Homes

Table E-4: Existing care home supply, Ringmer

	Name	Description	Beds	Type
1	Holm Lodge Residential Home	26 en suite single rooms	26	Care Home
2	Lime Tree House Residential Care Home	30 en suite single rooms	30	Care Home
3	Parris Lawn	62 en suite single rooms	62	Care Home with Nursing

Source: http://www.housingcare.org

Appendix F : Housing Needs Assessment Glossary

Adoption

This refers to the final confirmation of a local plan by a local planning authority.

Affordability

The terms ‘affordability’ and ‘affordable housing’ have different meanings. ‘Affordability’ is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. ‘Affordable housing’ refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

Affordability Ratio

Assessing affordability involves comparing housing costs against the ability to pay. The ratio between lower quartile house prices and the lower quartile income or earnings can be used to assess the relative affordability of housing. The Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Governments publishes quarterly the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local authority (LQAR) as well as median house price to median earnings by local authority (MAR) e.g. income = £25,000, house price = £200,000. House price: income ratio = £200,000/£25,000 = 8, (the house price is 8 times income).

Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Social Rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

b) Other affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). The national rent regime is the regime under which the social rents of tenants of social housing are set, with particular reference to the Guide to Social Rent Reforms (March 2001) and the Rent Influencing Regime Guidance (October 2001). Local market rents are calculated using the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) approved valuation methods[36].

Age-Restricted General Market Housing

A type of housing which is generally for people aged 55 and over and active older people. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Annual Monitoring Report

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

Basic Conditions

The Basic Conditions are the legal tests that are considered at the examination stage of neighbourhood development plans. They need to be met before a plan can progress to referendum.

Backlog need

The backlog need constitutes those households who are eligible for Affordable Housing, on account of homelessness, over-crowding, concealment or affordability, but who are yet to be offered a home suited to their needs.

Bedroom Standard[37]

The bedroom standard is a measure of occupancy (whether a property is overcrowded or under-occupied, based on the number of bedrooms in a property and the type of household in residence). The Census overcrowding data is based on occupancy rating (overcrowding by

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

[37] See https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report

number of rooms not including bathrooms and hallways). This tends to produce higher levels of overcrowding/ under occupation. A detailed definition of the standard is given in the Glossary of the EHS Household Report.

Co-living

Co-living denotes people who do not have family ties sharing either a self-contained dwelling (i.e., a 'house share') or new development akin to student housing in which people have a bedroom and bathroom to themselves, but share living and kitchen space with others. In co-living schemes each individual represents a separate 'household'.

Community-led developments (NPPF definition)

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

Community Right to Build Order

A community right to build order is a special kind of neighbourhood development order, granting planning permission for small community development schemes, such as housing or new community facilities. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare community right to build orders. The NPPF 2024 specifically defines it as follows: An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a sitespecific development proposal or classes of development.

Concealed Families (Census definition)[38]

The 2011 Census defined a concealed family as one with young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents, older couples living with an adult child and their family or unrelated families sharing a household. A single person cannot be a concealed family; therefore one older parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family; the latter are reported in an ONS analysis on increasing numbers of young adults living with parents.

Equity Loans/Shared Equity

An equity loan which acts as a second charge on a property. For example, a household buys a £200,000 property with a 10% equity loan (£20,000). They pay a small amount for the loan and when the property is sold e.g. for £250,000 the lender receives 10% of the sale cost

[38] See http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_350282.pdf

(£25,000). Some equity loans were available for the purchase of existing stock. The current scheme is to assist people to buy new build.

Extra Care Housing or Housing-With-Care

Housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Fair Share

'Fair share' is an approach to determining housing need within a given geographical area based on a proportional split according to the size of the area, the number of homes in it, or its population.

First Homes

First Homes is another form of discounted market housing which will provide a discount of at least 30% on the price of new homes, introduced in 2021. These homes are available to first time buyers as a priority but other households will be eligible depending on agreed criteria. A more detailed explanation of First Homes and its implications is provided in the main body of the HNA.

Habitable Rooms

The number of habitable rooms in a home is the total number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets and halls.

Household Reference Person (HRP)

The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the head of the household. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

Housing Market Area

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate.

Housing Need (NPPG 2024 definition)

Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the minimum number of homes needed in an area. Assessing housing need is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes need to be planned for. It should be undertaken separately from assessing land availability, establishing a housing requirement figure and preparing policies to address this such as site allocations.

Housing Needs Assessment

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is an assessment of housing needs at the Neighbourhood Area level.

Housing Products

Housing products simply refers to different types of housing as they are produced by developers of various kinds (including councils and housing associations). Housing products usually refers to specific tenures and types of new build housing.

Housing Requirement (NPPF 2024 Definition)

The housing requirement is the minimum number of homes that a plan seeks to provide during the plan period. Once local housing need has been assessed, as set out in this guidance, authorities should then make an assessment of the amount of new homes that can be provided in their area. This should be justified by evidence on land availability, constraints on development and any other relevant matters.

Housing Size (Census Definition)

Housing size can be referred to either in terms of the number of bedrooms in a home (a bedroom is defined as any room that was intended to be used as a bedroom when the property was built, any rooms permanently converted for use as bedrooms); or in terms of the number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between more than one household, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

Housing Type (Census Definition)

This refers to the type of accommodation used or available for use by an individual household (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced including end of terraced, and flats). Flats are broken down into those in a purpose-built block of flats, in parts of a converted or shared house, or in a commercial building.

Housing Tenure (Census Definition)

Tenure provides information about whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, combines this with information about the type of landlord who owns or manages the accommodation.

Income Threshold

Income thresholds are derived as a result of the annualisation of the monthly rental cost and then asserting this cost should not exceed 35% of annual household income.

Intercensal Period

This means the period between the last two Censuses, i.e. between years 2001 and 2011.

Intermediate Housing

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low-cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Life Stage modelling

Life Stage modelling is forecasting need for dwellings of different sizes by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period on the basis of changes in the distribution of household types and key age brackets (life stages) within the NA. Given the shared behavioural patterns associated with these metrics, they provide a helpful way of understanding and predicting future community need. This data is not available at neighbourhood level so LPA level data is employed on the basis of the NA falling within its defined Housing Market Area.

Life-time Homes

Dwellings constructed to make them more flexible, convenient adaptable and accessible than most 'normal' houses, usually according to the Lifetime Homes Standard, 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost: http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/. Lifetime Homes standards have been broadly wrapped up into the M4(2) optional building regulations standards which relate to accessibility and adaptability of dwellings.

Life-time Neighbourhoods

Lifetime neighbourhoods extend the principles of Lifetime Homes into the wider neighbourhood to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way to be as inclusive as possible and designed to address the needs of older people, for example providing more greenery and more walkable, better connected places.

Local Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need (NPPF definition)

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

Local Planning Authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the District Council, London Borough Council, County Council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority or the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Plan

This is the plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies form part of the Local Plan and are known as 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs).

Lower Quartile

The bottom 25% value, i.e. of all the properties sold, 25% were cheaper than this value and 75% were more expensive. The lower quartile price is used as an entry level price and is the recommended level used to evaluate affordability; for example for first time buyers.

Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Lower Quartile Household Incomes and Lower Quartile House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on relatively low incomes.

Market Housing

Market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.

Mean (Average)

The mean or the average is, mathematically, the sum of all values divided by the total number of values. This is the more commonly used "average" measure as it includes all values, unlike the median.

Median

The middle value, i.e. of all the properties sold, half were cheaper and half were more expensive. This is sometimes used instead of the mean average as it is not subject to skew by very large or very small statistical outliers.

Median Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Median Household Incomes and Median House Prices and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on middle-range incomes.

Mortgage Ratio

The mortgage ratio is the ratio of mortgage value to income which is typically deemed acceptable by banks. Approximately 75% of all mortgage lending ratios fell below 4 in recent years[39], i.e. the total value of the mortgage was less than 4 times the annual income of the person who was granted the mortgage.

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)

An NDO will grant planning permission for a particular type of development in a particular area. This could be either a particular development, or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). A number of types of development will be excluded from NDOs, however. These are minerals and waste development, types of development that, regardless of scale, always need Environmental Impact Assessment, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Neighbourhood plan

A plan prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Older People

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to very frail older people, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Output Area/Lower Super Output Area/Middle Super Output Area

An output area is the lowest level of geography for publishing statistics, and is the core geography from which statistics for other geographies are built. Output areas were created for England and Wales from the 2001 Census data, by grouping a number of households and populations together so that each output area's population is roughly the same. 175,434 output areas were created from the 2001 Census data, each containing a minimum of 100 persons with an average of 300 persons. Lower Super Output Areas consist of higher geographies of between 1,000-1,500 persons (made up of a number of individual Output Areas) and Middle Super Output Areas are higher than this, containing between 5,000 and 7,200 people, and made up of individual Lower Layer Super Output Areas. Some statistics are only available down to Middle Layer Super Output Area level, meaning that they are not available for individual Output Areas or parishes.

Overcrowding

[39] See https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/

There is no single agreed definition of overcrowding, however, utilising the Government's bedroom standard, overcrowding is deemed to be in households where there is more than one person in the household per room (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, halls and storage areas). As such, a home with one bedroom and one living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

Planning Condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Purchase Threshold

Purchase thresholds are calculated by netting 10% off the entry house price to reflect purchase deposit. The resulting cost is divided by 4 to reflect the standard household income requirement to access mortgage products.

Proportionate and Robust Evidence

Proportionate and robust evidence is evidence which is deemed appropriate in scale, scope and depth for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, sufficient so as to meet the Basic Conditions, as well as robust enough to withstand legal challenge. It is referred to a number of times in the PPG and its definition and interpretation relies on the judgement of professionals such as Neighbourhood Plan Examiners.

Private Rented

The Census tenure private rented includes a range of different living situations in practice, such as private rented/ other including households living "rent free". Around 20% of the private rented sector are in this category, which will have included some benefit claimants whose housing benefit at the time was paid directly to their landlord. This could mean people whose rent is paid by their employer, including some people in the armed forces. Some housing association tenants may also have been counted as living in the private rented sector because of confusion about what a housing association is.

Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing

Housing for older people which usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes

Housing for older people comprising of individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include

support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Rightsizing

Households who wish to move into a property that is a more appropriate size for their needs can be said to be rightsizing. This is often used to refer to older households who may be living in large family homes but whose children have left, and who intend to rightsize to a smaller dwelling. The popularity of this trend is debatable as ties to existing communities and the home itself may outweigh issues of space. Other factors, including wealth, health, status and family circumstance also need to be taken into consideration, and it should not be assumed that all older households in large dwellings wish to rightsize.

Rural Exception Sites

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable dwellings without grant funding.

Shared Ownership

Housing where a purchaser part buys and part rents from a housing association or local authority. Typical purchase share is between 25% and 75% (though this was lowered in 2021 to a minimum of 10%), and buyers are encouraged to buy the largest share they can afford. Generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available. There may be an opportunity to rent at intermediate rent level before purchasing a share in order to save/increase the deposit level

Sheltered Housing[40]

Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bedroomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden.

[40] See http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the Neighbourhood Plan period. SHLAAs are sometimes also called LAAs (Land Availability Assessments) or HELAAs (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments) so as to integrate the need to balance assessed housing and economic needs as described below.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPPF Definition)

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to assess their housing needs under the 2012 version of the NPPF, usually across administrative boundaries to encompass the whole housing market area. The NPPF makes clear that SHMAs should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Sometimes SHMAs are combined with Economic Development Needs Assessments to create documents known as HEDNAs (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments).

Specialist Housing for Older People

Specialist housing for Older People, sometimes known as specialist accommodation for older people, encompasses a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (usually 55+ or 65+). This could include residential institutions, sometimes known as care homes, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services. This housing can be provided in a range of tenures (often on a rented or leasehold basis).

Social Rented Housing

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.[41]

[41] See http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing