



# Housing

## The Amount and Distribution of Housing

- 3.1** The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8) proposes housing provision for Nottinghamshire of 2,450 dwellings a year over the period 2001 to 2021. The level of housing proposed is lower than the 1996 Structure Plan, but higher than that indicated by the continuation of current migration trends. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 3 indicates that a very strong justification would be required for the Structure Plan to put forward a different figure from that proposed by the RSS.
- 3.2** The RSS figure equates to 49,000 dwellings over the Plan period. Nottingham is identified in RSS as one of the drivers for growth in the '3 Cities' Sub-Area. On the other hand, regeneration priorities in the 'Northern' Sub-Area affect the West and North-West Sub-Area. There needs to be recognition of the emphasis on each Sub-Area when considering the balance of housing in the Plan.
- 3.3** The 'Plan Monitor and Manage' approach recommended by Government requires that an estimate of the extent of dwelling supply is made before provision is set at District level. This potential supply is therefore a context in providing for the RSS requirement. In a similar way demographic trends, and the reasons for them, have to be taken into account when considering the distribution of housing.

## Urban Capacity and the Supply of Housing

### Current Supply

- 3.4** Estimates have been made of the number of dwellings already likely to come forward over the whole Plan period without any further policy intervention, to give a nominal minimum level of provision. After allowing for completions since April 2001, these comprise:
- dwellings which have planning permission;
  - estimates of urban capacity as far as they are incorporated in draft local plans; and
  - other local plan housing allocations which are on previously developed land.

## Future Sources

- 3.5** In order to assess the total level of housing supply, estimates have also been made of supply from two further categories:
- further urban capacity to 2021, based on capacity estimates and consideration of likely continued trends;<sup>2</sup>
  - local plan allocations which are on greenfield land.
- 3.6** At April 2002 these totals were as follows:
- current supply, i.e. nominal minimum level of provision 31,421;
  - allocations on greenfield land 9,395.
- 3.7** Including all these supply elements up to 2021 would give around 53,000 - 57,000 dwellings, or 44,000 - 48,000 if greenfield allocations are excluded.

## Demographic Trends

- 3.8** Recent trends have shown out-migration, principally from West and North-West Nottinghamshire, but also from parts of South Nottinghamshire. These trends need to be reversed, both to aid regeneration in West and North West Nottinghamshire, and to plan for the required housing growth in South Nottinghamshire to support economy-led growth and prevent increased levels of commuting from outside the Sub-Area.
- 3.9** RSS policies indicate that development should be concentrated in the larger urban areas. Recent trends resulting from economic growth in the South Nottinghamshire Sub-Area indicate the need and justification for housing levels in the Sub-Area which indicate a proportionally higher level of anticipated growth than the other Sub-Areas.

### **POLICY 3/1 SCALE OF HOUSING PROVISION**

Provision shall be made in local plans/development plan documents for 49,000<sup>3</sup> dwellings over the Plan period, made up of:

- a) 37,000 in South Nottinghamshire Sub-Area;
- b) 6,500 in West and North-West Nottinghamshire Sub-Area; and
- c) 5,500 in East Nottinghamshire Sub-Area.

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<sup>2</sup> This is estimated to total between 13,300 dwellings and more than 17,000 dwellings if all potential previously developed land were included (principally located in West & North-West Nottinghamshire).

<sup>3</sup> Note that all references to dwelling numbers in this chapter relate to the net increase in dwellings.

## South Nottinghamshire

- 3.10** The continuation of recent migration trends in South Nottinghamshire would result in a requirement figure below 30,000 dwellings, but it is not considered realistic to allow only for growth to continue at this low level. House building in recent years has been lower than anticipated in the 1996 Structure Plan partly because the local plan review process in the Sub-Area has proved to be much slower than expectations in 1996. This has only partly been compensated for by increased house building in Nottingham City, concentrated in the City Centre. Whilst these factors have reduced the level of greenfield development, it has almost certainly led to more people commuting greater distances into the City.
- 3.11** Increased levels of urban capacity will accommodate economy-driven growth in line with RSS, and will allow for some reduction in 'greenfield' land allocations which remain from 1996 Structure Plan targets. It is considered necessary to continue with housing levels above those associated with the 1996 Structure Plan migration assumptions in order to support this economic growth. This would indicate a housing level somewhere between 35,000 and 38,000. As this is close to the capacity (including greenfield allocations) currently identified, it is proposed not to increase the level of greenfield development above current commitments, and to give scope for a reduction, due to the possibility of further urban capacity being identified. This level would be 3,000-5,000 higher than continuing the house building rates of 1991-2002.

## West and North-West Nottinghamshire

- 3.12** Assessments of urban capacity show that potential supply for residential development in the Sub-Area far exceeds what is considered to be achievable, well above current migration trends. A high level of 'discounting' from urban capacity totals has therefore been assumed beyond 2011. This, together with some de-allocation of greenfield sites, reduces provision to what is considered to be a more realistic level. While high levels of housing completions are evident, there is still significant out-migration.
- 3.13** If the housing market in the Sub-Area responds to renewal/regeneration initiatives, provision above JSP levels might be achieved by developing sites on previously developed land. Whilst higher levels of housing development might thus occur in the longer term, additional greenfield sites should not be allocated. The situation should be monitored closely to identify evidence of regeneration.

## East Nottinghamshire

- 3.14** Unlike West and North-West Nottinghamshire, the results of urban capacity studies are not affected by low demand. The estimated capacity, excluding greenfield allocations, amounts to around 5,900 dwellings. This would allow for growth in line with recent trends, which have been high, but do not respect the RSS strategy of concentrating development. Provision needs to be lower than, but close to this nominal capacity level to allow for a balanced distribution of housing across the Plan area. This implies that housebuilding rates in the Sub-Area will be lower than in the past.

## Conclusion

- 3.15** Housing levels in Policy 3/1 have been established in the light of the latest urban capacity study results, and high but realistic assessment of potential beyond the period of those studies. The level of greenfield development in this later period will be lower than at present. Monitoring may show that higher levels of development than those planned have taken place in areas in need of regeneration. It is possible that RSS annual housing levels may be exceeded. However, if this were to happen, the development will take place where there is greater capacity on previously developed urban land, and where the regeneration aims of RSS will be supported.
- 3.16** Policy 3/1 sets out overall dwelling figures for each Sub-Area. In delivering this amount of housing, local authorities will be expected to implement the sequential approach as set out in PPG3 and RSS in a rigorous manner, in order to reduce the amount of greenfield land outside urban areas that is developed.

### **POLICY 3/2 SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SUB-AREA**

Provision shall be made in local plans/development plan documents for 37,000 dwellings over the Plan period. Dwellings are distributed as follows:

District	Total dwellings
Ashfield (part)	3,200
Broxtowe	4,200
Gedling	5,000
Newark and Sherwood (part)	500
Nottingham	18,500
Rushcliffe	5,600

- 3.17** The dwelling totals included in the Table are drawn from the latest available local plan figures, and the assessment of urban capacity carried out by the City and District Councils. They exclude any housing provided specifically for students.
- 3.18** A study to re-assess the suitability of undeveloped identified sites has been carried out in South Nottinghamshire, to establish a sustainable sequential approach to development across the Sub-Area. This intends to ensure that the distribution of such sites is according to sustainability criteria which are not constrained by District boundaries. This has guided the distribution of housing in Policy 3/2.

### **POLICY 3/3 WEST AND NORTH-WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SUB-AREA**

Provision shall be made in local plans/development plan documents for 6,500 dwellings over the Plan period. Dwellings are distributed as follows:

District	Total dwellings
Ashfield (part)	2,100
Bassetlaw (part)	600
Mansfield	3,000
Newark and Sherwood (part)	800

- 3.19 Below Sub-Area level, outstanding greenfield allocations need to be balanced against the future assessment of urban capacity from Mansfield and Bassetlaw districts, in the context of the strategic level of provision. A critical review of housing allocations should be undertaken, especially those in less sustainable locations, and on greenfield sites.
- 3.20 It is recognised that the District Councils in the Sub-Area consider that housing allocations should provide for some new housing of a higher quality than the market currently provides. Nevertheless, the level of allocations outside urban areas, owing to the significant levels of previously developed land, and opportunities for housing renewal, is expected to be minimal.

**POLICY 3/4 EAST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SUB-AREA**

Provision shall be made in local plans/development plan documents for 5,500 dwellings over the Plan period. Dwellings are distributed as follows:

District	Total dwellings
Bassetlaw (part)	1,200
Newark and Sherwood (part)	4,300

- 3.21 There are high levels of greenfield allocations in East Bassetlaw, and these should be reviewed in the light of the Bassetlaw urban capacity study. In Newark and Sherwood there is a significant amount of greenfield land identified as urban capacity. Because in Newark and Sherwood the bulk of commitments are in the form of sites with planning permission, development plan documents will need to address how building rates are maintained over the whole Structure Plan period.

**POLICY 3/5 ENSURING URBAN REGENERATION**

Local plans/development plan documents will include policies to manage the release of land for housing in two phases.

The first phase will include sites within urban areas, together with other sites which can be justified for early release on policy grounds.

The second phase will include allocations on the edge of, or outside of, urban areas, unless there is demonstrable reason for these to be included in the first phase.

The release of the second phase of housing sites will be dependent on the completion of 85% of the total number of dwellings on first phase sites. Any additional windfall sites granted planning permission will be added to the first phase allocations before this assessment is carried out. In South Nottinghamshire, the release will depend on this 85% level being achieved in the Sub-Area as a whole.

- 3.22** The release of housing land needs to be phased to ensure brownfield sites are developed before greenfield sites, and the regeneration aims for the urban areas of Nottinghamshire can be achieved. In South Nottinghamshire, the approach needs to be applied across the Sub-Area as a whole, to ensure the release of greenfield sites is linked to the housing requirement and regeneration needs of the Sub-Area, and not simply related to conditions within a single District.
- 3.23** When allocating housing land, first phase sites should include sites within urban areas, which can most benefit from:
- close proximity to jobs and services;
  - good public transport provision, including cycling and walking routes;
  - use of previously developed land;
  - higher housing density.
- 3.24** Allocated sites considered to be in less sustainable locations should not be released until it can be shown that more sustainable allocations have been substantially developed. If such sites can be shown to be required in the longer term they may be included in a later phase. Monitoring of rates of development will allow a regular review of phasing policy.
- 3.25** In order to provide for housing needs at the beginning of the Plan period, and to meet projected housing need, a minimum of 60%<sup>4</sup> of a District's housing requirement should be included in the first phase.
- 3.26** Exceptionally, sites not within urban areas can be included in the first phase, for instance if infrastructure requirements are so significant that planning permission is required to ensure their timely delivery, or if development of a particular site is key to ensuring other policy aims are achieved. These exceptions will require very clear justification. An example could be where a District has insufficient sites within its urban areas to meet the 60% of housing requirement; in these instances more sustainable edge of urban area sites could be included in the first phase.
- 3.27** The release of the second phase of housing land will be dependent on a review of completions on first phase allocated sites, plus any additional windfall sites<sup>5</sup> that come forward during the course of the first phase, demonstrating that a minimum of 85%<sup>6</sup> of dwellings on such sites are completed. This review will be undertaken annually. The inclusion of windfall sites is to ensure that, if additional urban capacity comes forward, the release of the second phase sites will be deferred. This assessment will also take account of the ability of remaining commitments to maintain the build rates required to meet Structure Plan targets.
- 3.28** The policy will be implemented in the context of the housing provision figures in Policies 3/1 to 3/4 - i.e. it should not lead to the release of Phase 2 sites if the Structure Plan provision for the relevant Local Plan area has already been exceeded.

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<sup>4</sup> This figure is taken as it is the Government's target for brownfield land.

<sup>5</sup> In this context, "windfall sites" means any sites of 10 or more dwellings which are granted permission which have not previously been allocated in local plans/development plan documents.

<sup>6</sup> The figure of 85% of completions on all sites has been chosen to ensure that no one site (or small number of sites) could be held back from development to delay the second phase, and thus artificially restrict the supply of housing.

- 3.29** This assessment will be informed by annual monitoring of rates of development. In South Nottinghamshire this assessment will be undertaken on a Sub-Area wide basis, with the second phase being released only when the trigger level has been reached for the whole of South Nottinghamshire.
- 3.30** Annual monitoring will also be used to check that Policy 3/5 is not frustrating necessary housing provision, as provided for in Policies 3/1 to 3/4, because of low rates of development on sites in the first phase. If this were found to be occurring, the local planning authorities would be expected to release appropriate second phase sites.
- 3.31** In South Nottinghamshire, greenfield sites already identified in local plans but not yet developed have been assessed using sustainability criteria. Local Planning Authorities should be guided by this assessment when assigning sites to particular phases in development plan documents.
- 3.32** Limited housing development in rural areas, in response to identified local need, should not be subject to phasing restrictions. Affordable housing built as a result of a rural exceptions policy as outlined in PPG3 will form an addition to identified provision.

## NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 3.33** New housing development can help to encourage social inclusion by ensuring that there is provision to meet the variety of needs within the community. The opportunity to achieve balanced communities can be maximized through the provision of a choice of house types, size and affordability within housing sites. The success of housing developments is also dependent on fostering a sense of place through the use of design to create an attractive and safe environment with access to local facilities by a choice of means of transport. This would make a positive contribution towards achieving the aims of PPG3.
- 3.34** To this end it is expected that local plans and local development documents will aim to make all new housing development:
- create good quality, safe environments;
  - provide a wide range of house types, size and affordability to help secure mixed and balanced communities; and
  - maximise opportunities for the use of public transport, walking, cycling and access to a wide range of services and facilities.

## **POLICY 3/6 RURAL HOUSING**

In and adjoining larger villages, identified in local plans/development plan documents, provision may be made for limited housing development, particularly through the re-use of previously developed land, which would:

- a) meet local needs, including affordable housing, that will help secure a mixed and balanced community; and
- b) support local services, where this would assist in maintaining the role of the village as a self-contained community; and/or
- c) aid the regeneration of former mining villages.

The scale of development will be related to the existing level of infrastructure, range of community facilities and job opportunities, availability of public transport, and existing character of the village.

In and adjoining other villages, new housing will be restricted to small-scale development targeted to meet local needs, including affordable housing.

- 3.35** The level of existing commitments, and the availability of previously developed land, means there is no requirement to make further provision for housing through the expansion of villages.
- 3.36** However, in accordance with paragraph 70 of PPG3 'Housing', some additional housing in villages may be appropriate to support local services and/or to meet local needs, including affordable housing, which will help to secure a mixed and balanced community. RSS states that development plan documents should identify 'settlements or groups of settlements, which are accessible to the rural population, as the preferred location outside of market towns, for local needs housing including affordable housing and the provision and retention of most other services'.
- 3.37** There may be a need for regeneration in some of the larger villages in the Plan Area, particularly those which have suffered from the decline in the mining industry. In areas of high housing demand, there may be a lack of affordable housing to meet local needs. In these villages, it may be appropriate to plan for a limited amount of housing development, particularly where it would support local services.
- 3.38** In smaller villages, new housing should be limited to meeting the local needs of that settlement. Development should be of a scale and type necessary to secure a mixed and balanced community. The definition of 'local needs' is a matter for interpretation by local planning authorities, preferably informed by a local housing need assessment. It could involve the provision of affordable housing or of particular types of housing for specific groups, e.g. the elderly, single people or other small households.

### POLICY 3/7 ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Local plans/development plan documents shall make provision, through policies or proposals, for the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers, in the light of identified need, whether through local needs assessments, other information available to the planning authority, or assessments undertaken at regional or sub-regional level. The provision will be in accordance with relevant guidance.

- 3.39** National policy with regard to Gypsies and travellers is currently under review. The Government has published a draft Circular<sup>7</sup> to give guidance on planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites. This Circular is directed principally at regional planning and development plan documents. However, the Joint Structure Plan will need to fulfil the requirements of the draft Circular (once issued) and ensure that any policy is flexible enough to accommodate a changing regulatory framework.
- 3.40** The draft Circular requires regional planning bodies to maintain an up-to-date assessment of housing needs in their areas, which inform the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs). The RSSs will identify pitch requirements, making an assessment based on work with stakeholders, including local authorities and Gypsy and Traveller organisations. The local planning authorities must then make provision for sites in their development plan documents (DPDs) to ensure that needs identified in the RSS are met. As the draft Circular notes, the process of assessing regional housing needs and translating these needs in the Regional Spatial Strategy has not yet started. There is no other current formal assessment of need relating to the whole Plan Area.
- 3.41** There may be assessments of need available to local planning authorities, and the draft Circular states that these should be used when establishing a level of need. Thus policies must also recognise that any proposal for a site, whether it comes from a private or local authority source, should be based upon identified need. Proposals will also need to be considered in the context of the other policies of the Plan.
- 3.42** The draft Circular also advises that local authorities are required to identify specific sites and also lay down criteria for granting planning consent. These must be “fair, reasonable, realistic and effective criteria for suitable locations”; good practice for criteria is indicated in an annex. The draft Circular notes the possibility of local planning authorities in rural areas placing a “rural exception policy” in their local development documents (LDDs). Criteria-based policies in LDDs for location of Gypsy and Traveller sites should not impose a blanket ban on establishing sites in green belts.

<sup>7</sup> “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites Consultation Paper” December 2004 ODPM

