# Factsheet

## Affordable Housing and Planning Policy

Wiltshire Community-Led Housing is an independent support service for organisations who want to learn more about Community-Led Housing in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Delivered by:

Community First · Wiltshire Community Land Trust

www.wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk

## Affordable Housing

Many people are under the misconception that affordable housing is not for them. In reality, it exists for a wide range of different people. Affordable housing refers to homes which are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. They include:

- Social rented housing which are homes let at around 60% of the local market rents.
- Affordable rented housing which means homes let at up to 80% of the local market rents.
- Intermediate housing i.e. shared ownership, shared equity and discounted market sale.

When eligibility is determined, local incomes and local house prices are taken into consideration. If a household has an income of less than £80,000 per annum, they could qualify for intermediate affordable housing options.

For households with a joint income of less than £60,000 per annum, they could qualify for both rented and home ownership affordable housing options.

## Local Planning Policy - Wiltshire Core Strategy

Wiltshire Council has several policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy to enable the delivery of affordable housing. The key policies within the strategy are summarised below.

### Core Policy 43

Sets out when affordable housing provision is required in Wiltshire. It considers evidence of local housing need, the mix of housing tenure and, where appropriate, the viability of the development.

It states:

- On sites with 10 or more dwellings, or on sites with between 5 and 9 units on sites of 0.5ha or more, 30-40% of the homes on the site must be affordable housing.
- A typical split between the tenures of the affordable homes would be 60% rented homes and 40% shared ownership.

### Core Policy 44

This policy considers Rural Exception Sites. These are plots of land that aren't defined within the Council's settlement strategy and those that are defined as Local Service Centres and large or small villages are considered to be Rural Exception Sites. This policy allows housing for local need to be developed, solely for affordable housing. Conditions are attached which include, but are not limited to:

- There must be clear community support.
- The homes must meet an identified and genuine housing need.
- There can be a maximum of 10 homes per site.
- The scale and type of homes is appropriate to the nature of the settlement and will respect the character and setting of that settlement.

## Local Planning Policy - Swindon Borough Council Local Plan 2026

The Swindon Borough Council Local Plan (2026) contains key policies relevant to the delivery of Community-Le Housing and includes:

### Policy H5A - Rural Exception Sites

Housing development to meet local affordable housing needs may be permitted outside defined rural settlement boundaries where it can be demonstrated that:

- There are no other suitable sites within the settlement boundary.
- The housing shall remain affordable in perpetuity to all people with a local connection.
- There is evidence of a local need, through the Council's strategic Housing Market Assessment and/or a Local Needs Survey.

This is in addition to other demonstrable factors surrounding the design principles and agreement with the landowner of the site.

Other key policies include Policy HA2 - Affordable Housing and Part 5 of the Plan which relates to delivering sustainable growth and change.

Please note, the information is correct at the time of reviewing this factsheet in January 2025. However a new Plan for Swindon Borough Council is currently in development.

## Glossary of Terms

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| **Affordable Rented Housing** | Homes where the rent is set at either a social rent or affordable rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents. The landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme and it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative housing provision. |
| **Homes for purchase at discounted market rate** | Homes that are sold at a discount of at least 20% below market value. Purchasers have to meet qualifying criteria set by the Local Authority. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households. |
| **Entry level housing** | Housing that provides entry-level homes which are suitable for first time buyers (or equivalent or those looking to rent.) |
| **Housing register** | A register of people seeking housing in a Local Council administrative area. It may include both those who are in affordable housing need and those who are not eligible for affordable housing, but who are still seeking housing in the local authority area (this is known as the open market register. |
| **Local housing need** | The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach. |

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| **Shared equity housing** | A home purchased with a small deposit (usually 5%) and a low or no cost equity loan of up to 20% of the purchase price, with the remainder paid by a mortgage |
| **Shared ownership housing** | A home purchased through a housing association where a share of the home is bought (between 25% and 75%) and affordable rent is paid on the rest. Additional shares can be purchased subsequently. |
| **Social rented housing** | Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and registered providers, for which guideline target rents are set nationally. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental agreements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England. |