Chapter Nine – Size and Type of Housing Required

9.1 Affordable Housing Requirements by Size

9.1.1 An important aim of this study, reflecting the SHMA guidance and current planning policy guidance, was to provide more evidence on the size composition of needs relative to existing supply. It is clear that issues of size mix are important considerations in negotiations over planning agreements. The type of housing is also an issue, in particular the balance between flats and houses and related issues of density.

Breaking down need by size

9.1.2 The Zonal model uses a combination of locally-sourced data, with some data from wider national sources, to estimate the size mix of the main component flows of new demand/need, backlog need, and relet supply. While the basic affordability model is designed to focus on three size groups (1, 2 and 3+ bedrooms), for this study it has been enhanced to distinguish two further sub-groups: 2 Bedroom accommodation suitable for families with children, and demands from this group; and 4-Bedroom accommodation and larger households. The following analysis relates specifically to social rented housing; the size requirements of households able to afford intermediate housing are discussed later in this chapter.

9.1.3 Table 9.1 shows the results of this analysis at local authority level averaged over the period 2009-2021. It appears that there is a significant annual surplus of lettings of 2 Bedroom Non Family suitable accommodation in Bristol and smaller surpluses in Mendip and West Wilts. The net need for family-suitable 2 Bedroom is substantial in all authorities. There also appears to be a sizeable need for 4 Bedroom as well as 3-Bedroom accommodation in all of the WoE authorities.

Table 9.1: Size Mix Analysis of Social Rented Net Need by Local Authority, average 2009-2021

Local Authority	Soc Rent 1 bed No pa	Soc Rent 2 bed flats No pa	Soc Rent 2 bed houses No pa	Soc Rent 3 bed houses No pa	Soc Rent 4+ bed houses No pa
B&NES	264	8	226	133	65
Bristol	505	-227	265	133	149
North Som	263	69	155	156	51
South Glos	176	57	279	161	74
Mendip	130	-10	93	66	31
West Wilts	254	10	88	87	32
WoE Total	1591	-92	1106	736	401
Percentages	**Soc Rent 1 bed %**	**Soc Rent 2 bed flats %**	**Soc Rent 2 bed houses %**	**Soc Rent 3 bed %**	**Soc Rent 4+ bed %**
B&NES	37.9	1.2	32.5	19.1	9.3
Bristol	48.0	-	25.2	12.6	14.2
North Som	37.9	9.9	22.3	22.4	7.4
South Glos	23.6	7.6	37.3	21.6	9.9
Mendip	40.6	-	29.1	20.6	9.7
West Wilts	53.9	2.1	18.7	18.5	6.8
West of England	41.5	-	28.8	19.2	10.5

Source: Zonal level affordability and needs model. (Information contained in Standard Local Authority Tables). Note: Oversupply has been treated as nil, positive needs total 100%. Note: The net need identified here is not the same as the net need figure identified in Chapter 4 due to different treatment to backlog and netting off of oversupply of 2 bed accommodation.

9.1.4 In percentage terms, the indicated mix for new social rented provision in the SHMA area would be 41.5% 1-Bedroom, 28.8% 2-Bedroom family-suitable, 19.2% 3-Bed and 10.5% 4-Bed. These proportions vary quite a lot between the districts. For example both Bristol and West Wilts need a high proportion of 1-Bed units, while South Glos needs relatively more 2- and 3-Bedroom family-suitable housing. Bristol needs comparatively few extra 3 Bedroom but quite a lot of 4-Bedroom, reflecting its existing size mix.

9.1.5 Family-suitable accommodation is discussed further in Chapter 10.

Background

9.1.6 Some of the background analysis underpinning the overall size analysis in the above table is presented in Tables 9.2 and 9.3.

9.1.7 Table 9.2 shows the size mix of housing need cases on the local Housing Registers, with numbers in the upper part of the Table and percentages shown below for each local authority. Overall, housing registers are skewed towards small households needing 1-Bedroom accommodation. This group accounts for 58% overall, but with a rather lower proportion in South Glos and North Somerset and a higher proportion in Bristol, Mendip and West Wilts. 2-Bedroom need is split evenly between families and others in WoE overall, but the family proportion is higher in B&NES, South Glos and Mendip, whereas nonfamily cases appear to predominate in North Somerset. Four-bed cases account for between 2% and 4% of the register.

Table 9.2: Size Mix of Housing Register Need Cases 2007

Local Authority Numbers	HR need 1 Bed	HR need 2 Bed Flats	HR need 2 Bed Houses	HR need 3 Bed houses	HR need 4+ Bed houses
B&NES	972	104	369	119	65
Bristol	3223	531	740	447	163
North Som	1770	911	239	455	60
South Glos	904	344	472	111	38
Mendip	517	47	121	61	21
West Wilts	1568	414	367	289	50
WoE Total	8954	2351	2308	1482	397
Percentages	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
B&NES	60	6	23	7	4
Bristol	63	10	14	9	3
North Som	52	27	7	13	2
South Glos	48	18	25	6	2
Mendip	67	6	16	8	3
West Wilts	58	15	14	11	2
WoE Total	58	15	15	10	3

Source: Local authority counts of Housing Register cases above need threshold

Size mix of supply

9.1.8 Table 9.3 analyses relets. It should be noted that the family/nonfamily split of 2-Bedroom is uniform across the authorities because this is estimated from the SEH., not local sources. Again, relets show a skew to 1-Bed, probably because these units have a higher turnover. However, this is less pronounced than with the Register cases. Overall, existing relets supply shows a lower proportion of all of the family-suitable size groups (2-4BR). Very few relets occur with 4+ bedrooms.

Table 9.3: Size Mix of Net Relets Supply by Local Authority (2009-21 forecast based on 2004-07 actuals)

Local Authority Numbers	Relets 1 Bed	Relets 2 Bed Flats	Relets 2 Bed Houses	Relets 3 Bed houses	Relets 4+ Bed houses
B&NES	217	80	80	52	3
Bristol	776	427	427	267	8
North Som	199	100	100	56	9
South Glos	332	80	80	64	0
Mendip	130	54	54	32	1
West Wilts	127	88	88	53	4
WoE	1,781	830	830	524	25
Percentages					
Bath & N E S	50.3%	18.6%	18.6%	12.0%	0.6%
Bristol	40.7%	22.4%	22.4%	14.0%	0.4%
North Som	43.0%	21.6%	21.6%	12.0%	1.9%
South Glos	59.6%	14.4%	14.4%	11.5%	0.0%
Mendip	47.8%	19.9%	19.9%	11.9%	0.5%
West Wilts	35.2%	24.5%	24.5%	14.8%	1.1%
WoE	44.6%	20.8%	20.8%	13.1%	0.6%

Source: zonal forecasting model. Note: CORE figures suggest that this overestimates supply of 2 bed houses.

Local patterns of size need

9.1.9 The zonal need model can estimate size mix needs for social rented provision at this lower geographical scale, and these are summarised using two broad size categories in Table 9.4. It should be remembered, however, that some elements in the calculation are based on assumptions or evidence from wider regional scale sources. In addition, since many households move between zones when taking up social tenancies, need-supply imbalances may be evened out to some extent. Nevertheless, the figures in Table 9.4 should be useful for indicative planning purposes.

Table 9.4: Size Mix of Social Rented Net Need by Zone (average values for 2009-2021)

Zone Name	Soc Rent Net Need % 1/2 nf	Soc Rent Net Need % 2-4 fam
Bath City North	69%	31%
Bathavon	39%	61%
Bath City South	24%	76%
Chew Valley	22%	78%
Keynsham	5%	95%
Norton/Radstock	43%	57%
Bristol North	9%	81%
Bristol North West	46%	54%
Bristol Inner West	73%	27%
Bristol Inner East	0%	100%
Bristol East	47%	53%
Bristol South	0%	100%
Clevedon-Yatton	51%	49%
Nailsea-Backwell	30%	70%
Portishead-Gordano	44%	56%
Weston-Super-Mare	54%	46%
Yate/Sodbury	34%	66%
Kingswood	25%	75%
North Fringe	46%	54%
South Glos Rural	27%	73%
Thornbury	16%	84%
Glastonbury/Street	34%	66%
Wells & Rural	46%	54%
Shepton Mallet & Rural	30%	70%
Frome & Rural	38%	62%
Bradford on Avon	57%	43%
Melksham	55%	45%
Trowbridge	58%	42%
Westbury	75%	25%
Warminster	53%	47%
West Wilts Rural	43%	52%
WoE Subregion	40%	60%

Source: Zonal level affordability and need model

9.1.10 Certain inner city areas do show a concentration of need for small accommodation, one and two-bedroom flats, including Bath City North and Bristol Inner West. Westbury also appears to need a significant majority of this smaller category of provision. Some of the other smaller towns in West Wilts, and Weston-Super-Mare and Clevedon-Yatton also need a majority of smaller accommodation, although this is marginal.

9.1.11 More generally, across WoE as a whole the emphasis should be more on accommodation suitable for families from 2-bedrooms up to four bedrooms, and larger, in size. While overall it is suggested that nearly three-fifths of social rented provision should be in this latter category, there are some zones where it appears that most or all provision should be in that category: Keynsham, Bath City South, Chew Valley, Bristol North and South, Kingswood, Thornbury all have indicative figures at or above 75%.

Transfer Need

9.1.12 Transfers of households within the social rented stock do not in general add to net need for additional social housing provision, because they create a vacancy at the same time as they use one up. That of course is a slight simplification, even when dealing with total numbers. Each transfer relet entails some (hopefully short) period of vacancy. Some unpopular stock may be released which will require more repair or other work to make it lettable.

9.1.13 A more significant issue is that the size, type or location of housing sought by transfer households may be quite different from the profile of the stock released. There is some relevant evidence on the matter of size/type at the LA level using a combination of data sources, as summarised in Table 9.5.

9.1.14 For the sub-region as a whole, transfers create additional demand for four bedroom, one-bedroom, two bed family and three bed accommodation. The one size category for which transfers create a substantial surplus is 2-bed non-family (i.e. flats). This pattern is not particularly helpful, as it generally mirrors the wider imbalances in need and supply described above. It basically suggests that there is a further need for provision of larger family accommodation, beyond that indicated from the main analysis, because of this size imbalance among existing tenants.

9.1.15 The pattern of differences revealed here would be consistent with (a) significant overcrowding involving families within the social rented sector (see also Chapter 10) as well as (b) some under occupation by older households awaiting suitable smaller accommodation. (as discussed also in Chapter 10). The evidence here suggests that policies of relaxing size standards for some small households needing to move may be justifiable, in terms of letting 2 bedroom flats to applicants with a 1 bedroom need.

Table 9.5: Transfer Need by Property people are seeking.

Local Authority	1Bed	2 Bed flats	2 Bed houses	3 Bed houses	4 Bed houses+	OPD (incl Extra Care) 1 bed	OPD (incl Extra Care) 2 bed	Total transfer need
B&NES	168	36	171	171	109	62	6	723
Bristol	558	213	402	335	135	362	41	2046
North Som	184	66	94	116	21	150	17	648
South Glos	67	4	131	78	27*	132	62	501
Mendip	70	19	65	76	28	49	0	307
West Wilts	104	36	199	115	30	129	14	627
WoE %	24%	8%	22%	18%	7%	18%	3%	100%
WoE Total	1,151	374	1,062	891	350	884	140	4,852

Sources: Local Authority data provided on transfers need (filtered where need exists) * Includes need for 2 , 5 bed houses.

9.1.16 The last column of Table 9.5 suggests that across WoE just over a quarter of transfer applicants (above need threshold) may expect to obtain a move in a typical year. This proportion is higher in B&NES, Bristol and Mendip, and lower in West Wilts and North Somerset. These differences are likely to reflect both policy differences and differences in pressures and mismatches. Low percentages imply relatively long waits for transfers, and provide a further indication of pressure in the local housing system.

9.1.17 Data from this analysis is not integrated within the main analysis, but it does support the conclusions on size mix generated from the main analysis. It is clear from this analysis that there is a further need for provision of larger family accommodation, because of the significant number of transfers who are seeking larger family accommodation and the fact that most of the properties released for relet by transfers are smaller properties; many of these are flats.

9.2 Size mix for intermediate housing

9.2.1 The size mix for intermediate housing shown in table 9.6 is taken from the zonal level affordability and needs model.

Table 9.6 Size mix for intermediate housing Annual Averages 2009-2021

Percentages	B&NES	Bristol	North Som	South Glos	Mendip	West Wilts	WoE
1 bed flat	44.1	48.6	37	43.8	30.3	32.8	41.9
2 bed flat	18.5	13.4	18.1	16.7	20	17.5	16.5
2 bed house	13.9	19.1	20.9	18.9	24	23	19.6
3 bed house	21.7	16.9	22.5	19.4	23.9	25.2	20.3
4 bed+ house	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.2	1.8	1.4	1.7

Source: Zonal level affordability and needs model

9.2.2 Table 9.7 compares the size mix of the Zone Agent list with the size mix as modelled based on affordability, grouping sizes into three categories. The List has a higher share of 2-bedroom demand (52% vs. 38%, based on minimum bedsize) and a lower share of one-bed demand (26% vs 40%), compared with the modelled shares. The share of 3-plus bedroom demand is similar in both cases, around 22%. A possible explanation for the difference is that single person households may be more likely to seek rented housing while slightly larger households may be more likely to seek low cost home ownership (LCHO). A further factor may be that many small households on the list for intermediate housing would expect to have a spare bedroom, as is normally allowed under these schemes. Both estimates suggest one-bedroom demand is higher in Bristol and B&NES.

Table 9.7: Size Mix of Modelled New Need and Zone Agent List Numbers Seeking Intermediate Housing by Local Authority 2006/08 (percent)

Local Authority	Mod Int Need 1 BR	Mod Int Need 2 BR	Mod Int Need 3 BR	ZA List Consider 1 BR	ZA List Consider 2 BR	ZA List Consider 3 BR
B&NES	43.5%	34.8%	21.7%	23.5%	51.8%	24.7%
Bristol	44.8%	35.3%	19.9%	31.8%	52.2%	16.0%
North Som	37.7%	40.4%	21.9%	19.6%	51.4%	29.0%
South Glos	38.4%	39.9%	21.7%	20.9%	52.3%	26.7%
Mendip	34.1%	43.4%	22.5%	19.6%	53.6%	26.8%
West Wilts	34.4%	41.4%	24.2%	16.3%	53.3%	30.4%
WoE	40.0%	38.4%	21.5%	25.9%	52.2%	21.9%

Source: Modelled need from affordability model for 2006 (including 10% backlog allowance); Zone Agent filtered data for early 2008.

9.2.3 In formulating policy for size mix for intermediate housing it would be sensible to provide housing which meets aspirations of those seeking intermediate housing and thus provide a greater number of two bedroom properties than the analysis based on need would suggest.

9.3 Size Mix in the Private Sector

9.3.1 There is considerable interest in the issue of size mix in relation to the private market, particularly for new build supply into owner occupation. Current planning policy guidance (PPS3) encourages local authorities to seek a mix of housing types across all tenures. In addition, the guidance on affordable housing gives encouragement to authorities to consider in particular the supply of lower cost market housing just above the formal affordability threshold. There is a danger that the private development industry might produce a mix in certain areas which does not correspond with the need and demand among households who can in principle afford owner occupation or market renting. Planning might be able to influence supply to correct possible imbalances.

9.3.2 However, there are considerable difficulties in arriving at a firm view on what is the most appropriate mix, because of two factors: the role of existing supply from turnover within the market, and households' desire to consume more than minimal amounts of housing space, given their economic ability to do so. The latter applies in particular to existing owners trading in the market but also to better off first time buyers.

9.3.3 In this section we present evidence from several sources to inform this issue. From the 2001 Census we can identify the size mix of existing owner occupier housing, although this can only be approximated in terms of bedrooms because the Census only records numbers of habitable rooms. From the S.E.H. we can identify the actual size of dwellings in owner occupation, both for the overall stock and for cases where there has been a move in the three years preceding the survey. For these moves we can break it down further into first time buyers, by affordability band. However, all SEH figures can only be estimated at regional or broad sub-regional level, subject to sampling error. Thirdly, we can identify from the Regulated Mortgage Survey the size mix of dwellings sold, broken down into new and secondhand dwellings.

9.3.4 Table 9.8 looks at the owner occupier stock and recent moves in WoE using Census and SEH. The owner occupier stock is skewed towards larger dwellings, with 53% 3 bedroom and 29% with four or more bedrooms. Only 3.5% have one bedroom. These proportions only vary to a modest degree between the local authorities, with Bristol having more three-bed and less four-bed, while South Glos has more three-bed and less two-bed.

Table 9.8: Size Mix of Existing Owner Occupied Stock

Area /Category	Owned 1 BR	Owned 2 BR	Owned 3 BR	Owned 4 BR
Census 2001				
B&NES	3.5	14.5	49.7	32.3
Bristol	3.7	15.0	59.8	21.5
North Som	3.8	16.4	46.3	33.6
South Glos	3.0	12.7	55.9	28.4
Mendip	3.1	14.2	48.0	34.7
West Wilts	3.6	14.8	49.3	32.2
Total WoE	3.5	14.6	53.4	28.5
SHE 2004-06				
WoE stock	3.8	15.5	53.8	27.0
SEH WoE moves	8.0	23.3	46.0	22.7
Turnover Ratio	2.1	1.5	0.9	0.8

Sources: Analysis of Census, SEH and Regulated Mortgage Survey (RMS)

9.3.5 The SEH-based estimate of stock has a similar distribution. The distribution of moves is more skewed towards smaller units, so we can roughly estimate that the relative turnover for one-bed is double the average while that for 2-bed is 50% above the average, while 4-bed has only 80% of the average turnover rate.

9.3.6 Table 9.9 presents an analysis of mortgaged sales in 2006 based on RMS data at LA level. In this case we are able to distinguish family-suitable types of two-bed houses from flats, as in the affordable need analysis.

9.3.7 The figures in the bottom line of Table 9.9 are similar to those derived from the earlier sources, except that the proportion of three-bed sales in the secondhand category is higher, while for the four-bed category it is lower. New build mortgaged sales in 2006 had a high share of two-bed flats, the category we showed was also oversupplied for the social rented sector. 28% of new sales were of 4+ bedroom accommodation.

Table 9.9: Mortgaged Sales by Size and Whether New by Local Authority 2006

	LA	1B	2F	2H	3B	4B
New	B&NES	11.1	24.1	7.4	24.1	33.3
	Bristol	19.2	38.5	6.0	28.6	7.7
	North Som	4.3	12.4	8.6	36.0	38.7
	South Glos	3.7	31.7	3.7	28.0	32.9
	Mendip	0.0	13.6	9.1	54.5	22.7
	West Wilts	6.5	15.2	2.2	32.6	43.5
Total		9.1	23.8	6.3	32.7	28.3
Old	B&NES	4.4	6.7	12.4	56.1	20.4
	Bristol	6.2	10.9	12.0	61.4	9.4
	North Som	3.3	7.6	9.9	56.5	22.8
	South Glos	2.4	3.4	10.7	64.1	19.4
	Mendip	2.9	3.7	15.9	57.1	20.5
	West Wilts	2.3	4.1	14.3	59.0	20.3
Total		4.1	7.1	12.0	59.9	17.0

Source: Analysis of Regulated Mortgage Survey

9.3.8 There is also quite a bit of variation between the authorities. Bristol has relatively few 4-bed sales (new or secondhand) and a large share of 1-2 bed flats in the new build supply (58%). North Somerset has quite a high share of 4+bed new build. Mendip appeared to have no 1-bed new sales and only 3% secondhand. West Wilts has a very high share of four-bed new (44%) and very few two-bed houses (2%)

9.3.9 We can estimate the size mix appropriate for certain demand-side groups we may be particularly interested in. Table 9.10 shows the size mix required by both marginal and more comfortable first time buyers – marginal first time buyers are those who can only just afford purchase and would be looking for cheaper properties in the cheaper areas, comfortable first time buyers are able to afford up to the lower quartile in most areas and thus have a larger degree of choice. These indications suggest that there is a requirement for significant numbers in the small size categories for first time buyers and that quite a lot of the 2-bed numbers would be looking for family-suitable accommodation. Whether this implies a similar mix in the new build supply depends upon the availability of secondhand stock and sales in these categories.

Table 9.10 size mix required by first time buyers

	%age requiring 1 bed	%age requiring 2 bed	%age requiring 3 bed	%age requiring 4 bed and larger
Marginal first time buyers (West of England)	25	45	17	16
Marginal first time buyers (RoSW)	15	48	33	4
Comfortable first time buyers (West of England)	8	33	50	8
Comfortable first time buyers (RoSW)	5	42	32	21

Source: Analysis of Regulated Mortgage Survey.

9.3.10 A further factor in planning future housing supply is the increasing number of older people who will need appropriate housing in the future. In the social rented sector it is generally assumed that older people will be seeking smaller accommodation. The housing need may only be for one bedroom but it is now generally accepted that many older people would prefer 2 bedrooms. There is also evidence of need for extra-care housing for those older people who need more support and care. In Chapter 10 there is an analysis of existing accommodation for older people which shows that three authorities (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire) have a current surplus of one bedroom traditional sheltered accommodation dedicated to older people, but that five of the authorities (apart from West Wiltshire) have a shortfall of two bedroom accommodation for older people. This shortfall is likely to increase as the numbers of older people increase.

9.3.11 It is clear that there will be some need for specialist housing for older people in the private sector, as many of these older people will be home owners. Demand is likely be for a minimum of two bedroom accommodation. However, it is difficult to translate this into solid numbers. Nevertheless, consideration needs to be given to meeting the needs of older people in formulating planning policy.

9.3.12 A further factor is the need for more accessible housing. Demographic projections show significant increases in older people with a long term limiting illness, in three of the six authorities there is a projected increase of over 50% for this group between 2008 and 2025. Not all of these will require full wheelchair housing, but this still suggests an increase in the amount of wheelchair housing that will be required. This is examined further in chapter 10.

9.3.13 Pulling this all together creates a mixed picture. Existing owner occupied stock is heavily skewed towards larger dwellings, with over 80% being 3 bedroom or larger, and only 3.5% 1 bedroom. However, turnover is much higher among smaller one and two bedroom properties. Sales of new build properties indicate some differences to the existing stock, with significantly more new build 2 bedroom flats than second hand ones. For three bed houses second hand sales make up a higher percentage of overall sales, while for 4 bedroom houses new sales are a bigger proportion than second hand sales in all areas except Bristol.

9.3.14 Demographic projections of households tend to emphasise smaller properties. Marginal first time buyers need mainly one and two bedroom accommodation, while more comfortable first time buyers are likely to be seeking two or three bedroom accommodation. Older people trading down are likely to prefer two bedroom accommodation; a significant proportion of these will need to be accessible.

9.3.15 There is a good deal of evidence that in the wider owner occupier market there is significant demand for larger accommodation, well in excess of minimum bedroom standards, reflecting rising incomes, aspirations and lifestyles. King and Hayden (2005) in recent work for the House Builders Federation showed that demographic trends in household and dwelling size by tenure indicated a strong emphasis on larger owner occupied dwellings[1]. NHPAU[2] argue using the CLG/Reading Affordability model that building a mix with more larger dwellings can improve affordability more in the long run than meeting the same numerical targets with mainly smaller units. This allows for the filtering down effects within the existing stock.

9.3.16 These issues and numbers are presented as background information for consideration in the development of local planning guidelines. Each authority will decide its policy on future mix taking into account the above and local information.

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[1] Room to Move? Tenure and Housing Consumption- King and Hayden – House Builders Federation 2005.
[2] Developing a Target Range for the Supply of new Housing Across England-NHPAU October 2007

9.4 Flats and Density

9.4.1 One of the themes of this Chapter concerns the apparent imbalance between the need and demand for housing suitable for families and the current supply, particularly in the social rented sector but also to some extent in the market and intermediate sectors. It is therefore of interest to draw on our ward-level housing database and forecasting model to provide some further evidence on the overall mix of housing, particularly the share of flats, and how this is changing. The information on density (gross dwellings per hectare) is also provided. Table 9.11 provides a comparative profile of these measures for England and the West of England.

9.4.2 For England as a whole the proportion of flats in the housing stock was 17% in England, with WoE slightly lower at 15.6%. The share of flats naturally varies depending on location on the urban-rural spectrum, as shown in the upper part of the table. City centres in the south outside London had 30% of flats in 2001; for City centres in WoE this was 38%. For other urban areas the proportion was 15.7% across the south, but somewhat lower in WoE at 12.2%. The proportion of flats falls to low levels at the town fringe (9.1%/6.7%) and in rural/village locations (4.6%/3.5%). Flats are rather more common in relatively deprived wards, and in the case of the most deprived wards the figure for WoE was above the England figure (41.6% vs 21.5%).

9.4.3 Over the 1990s the proportion of flats increased nationally, but this increase was particularly marked in city centres. There was a particularly sharp increase in WoE city centres (20% points versus 11% for South City Centres).

9.4.4 For example, in Bristol almost 5000 new city centres homes were completed between 1997 and 2007, and in 2007 there was planning permission for a further 5,700 units. Most of this new housing takes the form of flats built at high densities. In 1998, when planning policy changed in favour of higher density brown field development, flats accounted for 15% of total new homes; by 2007 flats were almost 50% of total new homes.

9.4.5 The recent changes in the housing market may have a bigger impact on this type of development. It has been suggested that the values of city centre flats have been inflated due to investor demand fuelled by speculation over future capital growth, and if such investors have disappeared from the market, then prices may be forced down quite rapidly. This could provide some opportunities for those who are just outside the margins for home ownership currently, but is likely to create difficulties for some recent purchasers with high loan to value ratio mortgages (either owner occupiers or investor landlords), leading to negative equity.

Table 9.11: Level and change in share of flats by urban-rural typology and deprivation level of ward, comparing England and West of England.

Urban-Rural Ward Typology	Share of Flats (%) 2001	Increase % pts 1991-2001	Increase % pts 2001-11	Increase % pts 2001-21	Density Dwellings per ha 2001	Density Dwellings per ha 2021
England						
Central London	83.0	26.1	-2.3	0.1	80.9	95.0
Inner London	59.1	17.2	-0.2	0.9	55.1	64.7
Outer London	32.0	7.0	1.6	3.6	31.7	36.4
South city centre	30.1	10.8	2.1	4.8	32.8	38.8
South other urban	15.7	1.6	1.5	3.0	20.7	24.5
South town fringe	9.1	1.1	0.7	1.7	11.1	13.4
South village isol	4.6	1.5	0.5	1.0	3.2	3.7
Mid-North City Centre	19.4	-0.1	2.3	4.9	29.7	34.3
Mid-North other urban	9.1	-2.5	1.1	2.3	20.2	22.4
Mid-north town fringe	5.3	0.0	0.6	1.4	10.9	13.3
Mid-north village isol	3.4	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.5	2.6
Total England	17.0	1.9	1.2	2.6	22.7	26.1
West of England						
City centre	37.7	20.5	1.0	2.7	36.6	44.4
Other urban	12.2	0.9	0.9	2.3	20.0	23.7
Town fringe	6.7	0.4	-0.2	0.7	11.3	13.9
Village isol	3.5	1.4	0.1	0.7	2.4	2.7
WoE	15.6	4.4	0.8	2.1	20.9	24.9
IMD Deprivation All England						
Worst 10%	25.9	0.0	0.7	2.5	34.0	39.1
10-20%	30.3	1.2	0.2	1.6	35.8	42.4
IMD Deprivation West of England						
Worst 10%	41.6	8.5	7.0	12.3	29.5	44.3
10-20%	23.7	11.9	3.9	7.7	40.9	45.6

Source: Bramley et al (2007) *Transforming Places* ward level housing dataset; WoE ward forecasting model. Note: Density is calculated using gross district area, not the area developed for housing.

9.4.6 The forecasting model predicts that the share of flats will continue to rise nationally and in most types of area, although less spectacularly in city centres. The forecast increases for WoE are slightly below the comparable national figures. Nevertheless, the trend continues to be one of an increasing tendency to build flats, so that the potential conflict with housing needs evidence may intensify.

9.4.7 The density figures in the table are for crude gross density but they do nevertheless point up related trends. Density is increasing in all types of area but with sharper increases in central and other urban areas. WoE is sharing in this pattern, with higher central densities than across the south as a whole. Density is relatively high in deprived wards, especially in WoE, and is tending to increase sharply. This increase is associated with a steep rise in the proportion of flats in the most deprived wards in WoE. This may create some problems of social sustainability of these neighbourhoods.

9.4.8 We can look at the results of the forecasting model for the share of flats at zonal level in WoE, as shown for selected zones in Table 9.12. The biggest increase in flats is forecast to occur in the most deprived zone, Bristol Inner East, which already had more than one-third of its stock as flats in 2001. Other significant increases are expected in other poorer zones within Bristol, and some other less affluent urban areas in WoE; however, the existing share of flats in these zones is only moderate.

Table 9.12: Level and change in share of flats in selected zones in West of England 2001-2021

Zone Name	**Flats % 2001**	**Increase 2001-11 % pts**	**Increase 2001-21 % pts**
Most Increase in Flats			
Bristol Inner East	34.6	8.0	14.0
Bristol East	15.0	2.6	4.6
Bristol North	11.6	2.0	4.0
Bristol South	12.8	1.9	4.0
Bath City South	15.1	1.1	3.4
Portishead-Gordano	11.7	1.2	2.9
Kingswood	9.3	1.5	2.7
Trowbridge	11.8	-0.2	2.4
Weston-Super-Mare	21.0	1.0	2.2
Keynsham	12.8	-0.2	1.8
Most Decrease in Flats			
Warminster	10.7	-0.6	0.3
Melksham	7.6	-0.5	0.2
Bristol North West	21.5	0.3	0.2
Bradford on Avon	10.7	-0.7	0.1
Thornbury	6.1	-0.2	-0.1
Westbury	8.4	-1.8	-0.9
Bristol Inner West	57.8	-3.6	-4.6
WoE Average	15.6	0.8	2.1

Source; WoE ward forecasting model.

9.5 Summary

9.5.1 In a context of overall shortage, there is a significant imbalance between supply and need for social rented housing. There is a significant shortfall of 2 bedroom housing suitable for families, with a historic oversupply of 2-bedroom flats. There is also an acute shortage of larger 4-bedroom houses.

9.5.2 There are also variations between districts, with Bristol and West Wilts needing more one-bedroom accommodation while South Glos needs more medium sized family accommodation. At zonal level, some towns and central areas need more smaller accommodation, while in some other areas most or all new provision should be focused on family-suitable housing.

9.5.3 Analysis of transfer demand and potential supply released tends to reinforce this general picture.

9.5.4 Existing owner occupied stock is heavily skewed towards larger dwellings, with over 80% being 3 bedroom or larger, and only 3.5% 1 bedroom. However, turnover is much higher among smaller one and two bedroom properties. Sales of new build properties indicate some differences to the existing stock, with significantly more 2 bedroom flats. Sales of new build three bed houses are a smaller percentage of overall new build sales than in the second hand market, with higher sales of new 4 bedroom accommodation.

9.5.5 Demographic projections of household sizes, however, implies a need for smaller properties. Marginal first time buyers need mainly one and two bedroom accommodation, while more comfortable first time buyers are likely to be seeking two or three bedroom accommodation. Older people trading down are likely to prefer two bedroom accommodation; a significant proportion of these will need to be accessible.

9.5.6 In the owner occupier market, the existing mix of supply is biased more towards larger units, and there are indications that in some areas more smaller units would be appropriate for potential first time buyer demand. At the same time, in some more central areas recent output has included a high share of flats and this may not provide enough opportunities for families. However, there is also evidence that providing larger houses meets demand and increases affordability through a filtering down effect.

9.5.7 The share of flats in the housing stock has been rising and is forecast to rise further, particularly in central urban areas. The increasing concentration of flats at high densities in the most deprived areas is a cause for concern.

9.5.8 Each authority will need to consider the above issues and local evidence in determining its planning policy on size mix.

9.5.9 The aspirations of people seeking intermediate housing shows a marked preference for two bed units in contrast to than their assessed one bed need.