

Sefton Council



**Bootle Area Action Plan
Housing Topic Paper**

Introduction and Purpose

This is the Housing Topic Paper and is one of a number of topic papers produced to support the examination of the Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP).

The topic paper sets out the national, regional and local planning context and then for each housing policy in the Bootle AAP the topic paper details how comments received during consultation and relevant evidence have helped to shape the policy approach.

The topic paper is intended to help the Inspector and other parties understand the Council's approach to the housing policies and to demonstrate that they are 'sound'.

National Context

This section sets out the key national planning policies that relate to housing and which have informed the policy approach taken.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development. These include a social objective which seeks 'to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations'.

To deliver sustainable development in a positive way paragraph 11 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which in terms of plan-making means that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change; and strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole'.

Paragraphs 20 to 23, states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development making sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing) and employment development. Strategic policies should also provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, this should include planning for and allocating sufficient sites to deliver the strategic priorities of the area.

Chapter 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) sets out the requirements regarding boosting the supply of homes. The key elements are as follows:

a) Paragraph 61 states that strategic policies should be based upon a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method set out in national planning guidance.

b) Paragraph 63 states that policies should identify the size, type and tenure of homes needed for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require 4 affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

c) Paragraphs 64 to 66 set out the requirements in relation to affordable housing:

- Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required and expect it to be met onsite in the first instance, unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution can be robustly justified or the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities;
- Affordable housing should not be sought for developments that are not on major sites; • To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being re-used or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution should be reduced by a proportionate amount;
- Where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significant prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. There are also exemptions to this requirement where the site or proposed development provides solely for Build to Rent homes, provides specialist accommodation for people with specific needs, for self-build, custom build or community-led homes or is exclusively for affordable housing

There are a range of other policies in relation to housing that are relevant to strategic policies in a Local Plan, rather than a neighbourhood level plan such as the AAP. These include in relation to identifying an overall housing requirement (paragraphs 67-68); identifying land for homes to meet the overall housing requirement (paragraphs 69-70); Paragraphs 75 to 79 set out the requirements in relation to maintaining supply and delivery of housing.

Chapter 11 of the NPPF sets out the requirements relating to 'making effective use of land' such as:

- Planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- Supporting opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes; and

- It also sets out that local planning authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs.

Paragraphs 128 and 129 set out the approach to achieving appropriate densities, stating that planning policies should support development that makes efficient use of land.

Regional Context

Sefton is part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA). The CA are tasked with producing the Spatial Development Strategy. The Spatial Development Strategy is statutory land-use planning document. It will set out a framework for building and development for the Liverpool City Region looking ahead for at least the next 15 years. It will also identify strategic areas for growth and infrastructure provision, and when finalised, it will form part of the 'Development Plan' for the city region along with Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. This means it will need to be considered when planning applications are being determined.

The SDS must only deal with planning matters that are of strategic importance to the Liverpool City Region. Certain housing matters would be considered strategic.

The SDS is being progressed by the CA. They have undertaken early stages of public and stakeholder engagement and are anticipating a 'publication' draft SDS during 2025. The most recent [draft](#) of the SDS 'Towards a Spatial Development Strategy for the Liverpool City Region up to 2040' (November 2023) contained a range of policies relevant to housing:

Policy LCR SS1 - Liverpool City Region Spatial Strategy

Identifies areas that will be the strategic priority for development, providing the city region's focal points for employment, retail and other commercial and professional activities, as well as culture and tourism destinations.

Bootle is identified as an 'Inner Urban Area' which will provide a focus for sustainable regeneration, benefitting from its proximity to Liverpool City Centre and complementing the wider city region. The policy sets out that 'the revitalisation of Bootle will be driven through the repurposing and regeneration of the Strand shopping centre and sustainable canal side development'. It promotes the 'provision of a mixed high-quality offer for residents, businesses, employees and students throughout Bootle, including a greater choice of house types.'

Policy LCR SP1 - Strategic Housing Need and Distribution

Identifies the total housing requirement and the spatial distribution. for the city region.

Policy LCR DP2 - Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

Sets out that development plans and proposals should support the provision of high-quality new homes of an appropriate and balanced mix of type, tenure, and size to meet identified local needs across the city region

Local Context

The [Sefton Local Plan](#) was adopted in 2017. This contains a number of policies related to housing.

MN1 Housing and employment requirement

This set out the total housing requirement for Sefton of 11,520 during 2012-2030.

MN2 Housing, employment and mixed use allocations

This policy includes a range of housing allocations, including a number in the AAP area. These are:

Former Rawson Road Primary School, Rawson Road, Bootle

Former St Wilfrid's School, Orrell Road, Bootle

Klondyke Phases 2 and 3, Bootle

Peoples site, Linacre Lane, Bootle

Former St Joan of Arc School, Rimrose Road, Bootle

Former St Mary's Primary School playing fields, Waverley Street, Bootle

HC1 Affordable and special needs housing

Sets out that in Bootle affordable housing will be required as part of proposals for new developments of 15 dwellings or more (or for residential and other conversions involving 15 or more additional dwellings net) on the basis of 15% of the total scheme (measured by bedspaces). Affordable housing should be 50% social/affordable rented and 50% intermediate housing.

Policy also sets out approach to vacant building credit, special needs housing, and viability.

HC2 Housing type, mix and choice

Sets out that in developments of 25 or more dwellings, the mix of new properties provided must be as follows unless precluded by site specific constraints, economic viability or prevailing neighbourhood characteristics: A minimum of 25% of market dwellings must be 1 or 2 bedroom properties A minimum of 40% of market dwellings must be 3 bedroom properties.

Also sets out that in developments of 50 or more dwellings, at least 20% of new market properties must be designed to meet Building Regulation Requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.

HC4 House extensions, Houses in Multiple Occupation and Flats

Sets out key considerations for proposals for the conversion to a flat or HMO and that they must not cause significant harm to: a. The character of the area or b. The living conditions for either the occupiers of the property or for neighbouring properties.

Consultation Feedback in relation to Housing

Representations to the housing sections of the Bootle AAP were made by a number of individual/groups. These are summarised and provided in the Regulation 22 statement.

Housing and the Bootle Area Action Plan

The early stages of the AAP process identified a range of key issues that it needed to consider. In relation housing these include:

- The number of vacant homes in the Bootle area is too high and can cause issues with anti-social behaviour which can have a negative impact on a local area.
- There is a need to provide a greater choice in house types in Bootle, including homes with rear gardens and off-street parking spaces. This applies to homes for sale and rented properties.
- There have been too many inappropriate and poor-quality conversions to flats and homes in multiple occupation in the Bootle area causing issues with residential amenity, noise, refuse, parking and the character of local areas.
- Bootle, like many other areas, has an ageing population and there is a higher proportion of residents with a limiting long-term illness. This has implications for the type and standards of future housing that is required.

To help deliver the vision of the AAP (page 24) there are a range of objectives. Those related to housing are:

1 – To meet the housing needs of Bootle’s residents in a way that is safe and secure including affordable and aspirational housing, homes for families, older people, and people with special needs

3 - To prevent the building and conversion of poor-quality houses, flats and homes in multiple occupation that fail to provide a suitable and secure homes or integrate with the community

9 - To bring back into beneficial use vacant land, homes, and buildings

The vision and objectives will be delivered through a range of policies set out in the AAP. The policies in relation to housing are:

BAAP16 Housing Land Provision

BAAP17 Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

BAAP18 Housing for Older People and Supported Homes

BAAP19 Conversions to Flats and Homes in Multiple Occupation

An overview of the rationale and justification of these policies is set out below.

Policy BAAP16 Housing Land Provision

Whilst the Bootle Area Action Plan, in itself, does not have a housing requirement to meet, unlike the Local Plan, it does contain a number of housing allocations that would (and are) contributing to Sefton's total housing land supply. Furthermore, Bootle is expected to contribute a number of windfalls that would also contribute to Sefton's total supply of housing. The approach to selecting sites for housing is set out in [site_selection_technical_report.pdf](#).

The policy indicates that the Council would expect that approximately 1,500 new homes could be added to Sefton's housing supply between 2024 and 2040 from the Bootle AAP area. These are expected to come from the following sources:

- **Housing Allocations**

Policy BAAP16 on Housing Land Provision allocates 6 housing allocations. These are a mixture of sites with planning permission, sites carried over from the Local Plan, or sites that have been promoted for housing through Sefton's 'call for sites' process.

The indicative number of homes expected to be delivered on these housing allocations is **777 homes**.

Site BH1

The 'Peoples' site, Linacre Lane (BH1), is a Local Plan housing allocation with an indicative capacity of 110 homes. It is likely to have significant contamination from previous uses. The Council own the site and are exploring potential options and funding bids to remediate the site to enable it to be brought forward for housing in the short to medium term. Whilst the site could accommodate more homes than indicated in the policy, it is likely that some parts of the site may need to remain undeveloped until the full extent of the remediation required is known. The site is currently being marketed by the Council.

Site BH2

Coffee House Bridge, which includes the former St Mary's Primary School and playing fields, Waverley Street (BH2), is a Sefton Plan housing allocation. The AAP seeks to slightly increase the allocation through the inclusion of the site of the Merton Car Dismantlers between Merton Road and the canal. It is proposed with an indicative capacity of 85 homes. A large part of the site was subject to a recent planning application (DC/2020/00705) which was refused due to concerns of over-development. However, the principle of the proposed uses was supported, and the Council will continue to work with prospective developers to secure an appropriate scheme.

Site BH3

The former Bootle Gas Works (BH3) site is a new housing allocation proposed for the Bootle AAP. With an indicative capacity of 210 homes. It was previously designated as a Regeneration Opportunity Site in the Sefton Local Plan. This previous designation would have allowed residential and other uses compatible with the surrounding area. Since the adoption of the Local Plan, discussions with National Grid have identified their intent to apply to dismantle the remaining infrastructure on the site and make the site available for housing redevelopment. The Council recently approved (December 2023) the dismantling of the gas holders and associated infrastructure on the site and the infilling and restoration of the site.

It is the Council's understanding that National Grid will market the site for residential use once the site has been cleared. The site was submitted to the Council in a recent 'call for sites' exercise and included in the Council's Brownfield Register.

Site BH4

The Litherland House site (BH4) is new housing allocation proposed in the Bootle AAP with an indicative capacity of 110 homes. It was previously within the designated primary residential area. Whilst the site is currently occupied by a substantial office building, it was being advertised for lease/sale in the past year for a range of uses, including housing. The Council considers the site to be more appropriate in the longer term for residential, particularly given its canal side location, the age of the building, the reduced demand for office accommodation since the pandemic and close proximity to the adjacent Bootle Gas Works (BH3) site described above. The site was submitted by the owner for housing in a recent 'call for sites'. However, given the historic industrial uses on the site, investigations are required to ascertain the level of contamination, and it is possible that the likely high cost of the redevelopment of this land may mean that it will struggle to secure any affordable housing or other (financial) planning obligations.

Site BH5

The former Johnson's Cleaners Site (BH5) is a largely cleared site that was formerly occupied by Johnson's Cleaners. Permission was granted in April 2022 for 121 homes. This has subsequently been reduced (DC/2024/00443) to 104 homes to secure more houses and fewer apartments and so better reflect local need.

The site has an allocation approved for Brownfield Land Funding, and this requires developers to be on site by March 2025. Demolition of the remaining main building on the site commenced in October 2024 and this is progressing well.

Site BH6

The site at 503-509 Hawthorne Road (BH6) is a cleared site that was granted permission in January 2022 (DC/2021/02138) for 67 homes and a block of 91 extra care apartments. Site investigations are underway, and conditions are being discharged in advance of commencement. The site is in receipt of Brownfield Land Funding, and it is expected that construction will commence by March 2025.

Other non-allocated sites with planning permission

The most recent [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment \(2024\)](#) identifies a number of sites with planning permission that are part of the housing supply in Sefton (though not necessarily in the Council's short-term 5 year supply). These sites are not allocated in the Bootle Area Action Plan

SHLAA reference	Address	No. of homes	Notes
B0128	Well Lane	13	Current app for 21 units submitted by Jigsaw Homes - 20 flats and 1 bungalow - not yet determined (DC/2023/02195)
B89	Litherland Road/Well Lane	12	
L0028	Former St Wilfrid's School	116	Under construction. Total number of homes on site 185.
mart	St Martin's House	132	Approved to convert under prior approval
mert	Merton House	140	Approved to convert under prior approval
B0154, B0190, B0230, B0235	Various small sites	18	
Total		431	

In addition to the above sites, the Council is in receipt of a Prior Notification application for the conversion of the Triad Office Building, Stanley Road to 228 flats. This has yet to be determined.

Windfall sites

As part of the annual assessment of housing land supply (known as a SHLAA), the Council assess what approvals are secured on sites that would be classed as windfall sites. 'Windfalls' are sites that come forward for housing development that have not been previously identified in a development plan. This is done for each of the main settlements in Sefton, including Bootle.

The most recent SHLAA identified that over a 10-year period (2014-2024) there were an average of 22 homes per year permitted on windfall sites in the Bootle area on small sites. Small sites are defined as sites that would accommodate 20 homes or less. Sites that could accommodate over 20 homes would be classed as large 'exceptional' windfall sites and are not included within the calculation (as they are not seen as a

reliable source of housing supply). We also apply a 10% discount to reflect that some sites are not implemented and only apply the windfall allowance from year 3 onwards.

For Bootle, the SHLAA assumes that there will be a windfall allowance of 20 homes per year from 2026. To 2040 this equates to a **total windfall allowance of 280 homes**.

Whilst not included in the windfall allowance above, there are likely to be a number of exceptional larger windfall sites that are approved in the Bootle AAP area. These could occur on the regeneration opportunity areas that are allocated in the Bootle AAP where residential uses are acceptable.

Therefore, it is considered that the 1,500 homes indicated in Policy BAAP16 is a reasonable and realistic number of homes that would be delivered in the Bootle area.

Policy BAAP17 Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

Amount of and need for affordable housing

Policy BAAP17 sets out that on housing developments that provide 15 dwellings or more should provide a minimum of 15% of the homes as affordable housing. This replicates the policy that is in the Sefton Local Plan in this regard.

The evidence that supports this approach, is the Council's most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of 2019. This had updated the previous SHMA which had informed the Local Plan policy.

As with the previous report, the most recent SHMA identifies that Bootle has a small quantitative over-supply of affordable housing¹. This concluded that there was an over-supply in Bootle of 17 affordable homes per year.

However, the SHMA considered that there could be a mismatch in terms of the size of homes needed and those available. Many of available affordable homes in Bootle are within small, terraced homes, without gardens or private parking. Therefore, it is the Council's view that we should seek opportunities to diversify the affordable housing stock in the town to offer choice and improve quality. The Inspector to the Local Plan accepted this proposal.

To support the policy approach in Policy BAAP17, the Council commissioned its retained Economic Viability Consultant to assess the planning obligations set out in the AAP, including for affordable housing. Whilst this assessment² concluded that securing all the obligations from the AAP would be challenging to meet in Bootle, it does point to certain parts of the town with better viability. It also considers that some sites will be supported by grant funding and that, over time, higher values could be achieved in Bootle. Given the Council aspire for the regeneration of Bootle, it is considered good

¹ See figure 4.16, page 72 of [Microsoft Word - Sefton_SHMA_final_report_Oct2019](#)

² [Microsoft Word - 2024-03-11 Bootle Area Plan Viability - Draft 3](#)

planning to include a policy that seeks secure affordable housing in a plan that will cover the period to 2040 and can take account of changing circumstances.

Notwithstanding the above requirements, the policy, consistent with NPPF, does allow for flexibility if it is demonstrated that an affordable housing requirement would make a scheme economically unviable.

Tenure Mix

In the Local Plan, we originally sought to secure half of any affordable homes secured through obligations as social/affordable rent and the other half as intermediate housing. However, this had become incompatible with paragraph 66 of the NPPF which sets out that ‘planning policies should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership’. Additionally, there is a requirement that First Homes ‘should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations’³.

The tenure split set out in part 2 of Policy BAAP17 reflects these requirements.

It is acknowledged that the government has recently consulted on changes to the NPPF. This included removing the requirement to deliver at least 10% of the total number of homes on major sites as affordable home ownership, and the requirement that a minimum of 25% of affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Should this be confirmed, the Council would request that part 2 of Policy BAAP17 be modified to:

- 50% as affordable or social rent
- 50% as discounted market homes (including shared ownership homes or First Homes)

This would revert back to the approach in the Local Plan and be consistent with the approach we apply elsewhere in the Bootle and Netherton area⁴ and seek an equal share of rented and for sale affordable homes.

100% Affordable Housing Schemes

On occasion, the Council receives proposals for 100% affordable housing proposals. These are often in Bootle (or nearby Netherton). Recent examples include the former Johnson’s site (site BH5, see above), 503-509 Hawthorne Road (site BH6, see above), and 149 homes on the former Everton training ground, Park Lane (DC/2019/01435). Whilst these proposals help boost the Council’s supply of affordable homes, they do not contribute to mixed and balanced communities. Therefore, whilst the Council do not want to prevent 100% affordable housing schemes to come forward, as these often will support the redevelopment of brownfield sites, Policy BAAP17 part 4 does seek to

³ Paragraph 001 [First Homes - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ As shown on Bootle & Crosby Local Plan Policy Map [Layout](#) (Policy HC1)

secure a mix of affordable housing tenures on schemes of 50 or more affordable homes to help positively contribute to mixed and balanced communities.

Housing Mix

Part 6 of Policy BAAP17 sets out the required housing mix (in terms of house size) for both market and affordable housing (25 homes or more).

For market housing, this replicates the existing policy in the Local Plan policy HC1 and requires:

- A minimum of 25% of the homes to be 1 or 2 bedroom properties
- A minimum of 40% of the homes to be 3 bedroom properties

The remaining homes (up to 35%) can be any size, including 4+ bedrooms or other 1-3 bedrooms.

This approach is supported by the most recent [Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\) from 2019](#) which sets out a suggested mix of market homes (at para 5.49). The Council have not commissioned an update to this study; however, the Liverpool Combined Authority have recently undertaken a study of housing needs⁵. This includes (at table 11.22) a suggested mix of market housing for Sefton. A summary of the two studies on market housing mix is provided in the table below:

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
2019 SHMA	5%	30%	45%	20%
2023 HEDNA	5%	40%	45%	10%

Policy BAAP17 doesn't strictly apply the suggested housing mix in both these studies but includes an element of flexibility to allow for some additional larger homes if necessary. This would also allow for improved viability on sites.

The Local Plan does not require a housing mix for affordable housing. However, Policy BAAP17 sets out on schemes of 25 homes or more that any affordable housing should meet the following mix:

- A minimum of 25% of the affordable homes to be 1 bedroom properties
- A minimum of 60% of the affordable homes to be 1 or 2 bedroom properties
- A minimum of 85% of the affordable homes to be 1, 2 or 3 bedroom properties

Both the 2019 SHMA for Sefton and the 2023 HEDNA for the Liverpool Combined Authority sets out suggested housing mix for affordable housing. These are replicated below. It should be noted that these often suggest a different mix for affordable rented properties and affordable home ownership properties, hence the range for some.

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
2019 SHMA	25-35%	30-40%	30%	5%

⁵ [LCR-SDS-Housing-and-Economic-Development-Needs-Assessment-June-2023-1.pdf](#)

2023 HEDNA	20-40%	30-45%	25-30%	5%
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As with market housing, Policy BAAP17 does not strictly apply the suggested housing mix and introduces some flexibility for a wider mix of house sizes. This will allow developers and Registered Providers to suggest a mix that they know is needed at that time in the specific location.

Building Regulations Requirement M4(2) and M4(3)

The Liverpool Combined Authority HEDNA addresses specialist housing in paragraphs 13.20 to 13.28. This concludes that ‘given the evidence, the Councils could consider, as a start point, requiring all homes (in all tenures) to meet the M4(2) standards (which are similar to the Lifetime Homes Standards) and around 10% of homes meeting M4(3) – wheelchair user dwellings (a higher proportion in the affordable sector).’

The 2019 SHMA similarly sets out the projected population with mobility problems subject to viability testing, it is recommended that new housing is delivered to Part M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable’ standards.’ The 2019 SHMA does not suggest a target for M4(3) homes – but does set out that there will be a c40% increase in people with mobility issues between 2017-2036 (figure 6.10) with Bootle having one of the highest proportion of residents with a long-term health issue or a disability (figure 6.09).

Policy BAAP17 part 10 seeks that all new homes to be designed to meet M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable’ homes, with some allowances. This was considered under the viability assessment of the Bootle AAP policies. This has assumed £7 per m² to cover the M4(2) standard. This would equate to £490 for a typical 2-bedroom room (70m²) and £630 for a typical 3-bedroom home (90m²). Whilst this does have an impact on local viability, it is considered a marginal cost for what will be an important social benefit.

Policy BAAP17 part 11 also requires 5% of the homes on schemes of 50 homes to be designed to meet M4(3) ‘wheelchair user’ standard. The viability assessment assumes £400 to cover the M4(3) standard. This is clearly a more substantial cost, with a cost to a typical two-bedroom home (c70m²) of £28,000. However, when these costs are spread across the whole development it is the equivalent of £1,400 per home. Again, whilst this does have an impact on local viability, it is considered to be a limited cost for what will be a significant social benefit.

Self and Custom Build Homes

As is required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 the Council maintain a register of people/groups who wish to build or custom design their own home. Within that register, we ask people their preferred broad location if they have one. We don’t specify the Bootle area specifically, but it is included in the ‘Bootle, Crosby and South Sefton’ option. There is also an option of ‘No Preference’. The table below shows how many individuals have requested to be added to the register over the past 3 years (there have been no groups added).

	Bootle, Crosby and South Sefton	No Preference
2019/20	2	6
2020/21	5	12
2021/22	2	8
2022/23	0	2
2023/24	1	3

Whilst these figures show quite a low demand for self and custom built homes, there is still a small need identified. Whilst the Council would be supportive of proposals on appropriate sites for self or custom build homes, it is often difficult to find appropriate sites in a built-up area such as Bootle. There have been no approvals for Self or Custom Build homes in the Bootle AAP area since 2019/20.

Therefore, policy BAAP17, Part 13, seeks to secure a small number (2%) of serviced plots on housing developments of 100 homes or more. This is only likely to apply to a small number of sites in the AAP area (such as BH1, BH3 and BH4) and would secure <10 plots. Nonetheless, they could make an important contribution towards the Council's self and custom build duty.

Policy BAAP18 Housing for Older People and Supported Homes

Homes for Older People

The Council has prepared an Extra Care Housing Prospectus⁶ that considers the need across Sefton and in individual settlements for extra care homes. This identifies the need for extra care homes for older people (also known as Assisted Living) in the Bootle area of 119 units to 2036, all in the affordable sector. There is no need for private extra care accommodation across the wider Bootle and Netherton settlements. Whilst the prospectus does mention that the Council will be open to discuss proposal for shared ownership extra care accommodation across the borough, it is considered that a lack of available housing sites in Bootle supports prioritising proposals for extra care housing only in the social rented sector, for which there is a demonstrable need. In any case, it is often difficult to secure extra care housing schemes that are mixed tenure, which shared ownership homes more suitable to be provided as part of a largely market scheme.

Residential Care Homes for Children

There has been an increase in the number of proposals for children's care homes in Sefton in recent years (see table below). These can often provide accommodation for children with complex needs. These can cause noise and disturbance issues and on occasion can result in complaints of anti-social behaviour. Whilst the Council supports

⁶ [Extra Care Housing Prospectus](#)

the provision of children’s care homes in principle, these should only be in appropriate locations, suitable properties and not clustered in specific locations.

	Proposals
2022/23	7
2023/24	15
2024/25 (to 31 October)	7

Property prices in Bootle are lower than the rest of Sefton, with a terraced properties widely available from £70,000 to £100,000. This makes the area attractive to investors who wish to convert a family home to flats, homes in multiple occupation (see below) or children’s care homes.

There is a concern that Bootle, which already has a range of complex social problems, will become saturated with a range conversions that can often bring additional pressures to an area. Bootle is also an area with higher than average crime rates⁷ and the police have raised concerns on occasion on children’s care homes being located in the wider area (e.g. DC/2024/01164 - 50 Elm Road, Seaforth) and the impact this can have on children with vulnerabilities.

Therefore, the Council is looking to prevent an over-concentration of Children’s Care Homes in this area. Our suggested approach to this is to restrict proposals to convert to a Children’s care home within 400m (which is considered a short walking distance) to an existing home that contains children with similar needs. Appendix A shows the current children’s care homes in the area with a 400m buffer applied to show that there are still parts of the town that we would consider additional children care homes – subject to other considerations.

Part 7 of the policy considers children’s homes where the accommodation would be aimed at children suffering from some degree of educational, behavioural or social difficulties (EBSA). These can often be the types of home that can often cause conflict with neighbouring properties (those that share a party wall) and could impact on residential amenity. Therefore, the Council suggest that a terraced home should only be used for a single EBSA child, whereas a semi-detached home could accommodate up to two children. A detached property could be used for more children depending on size.

Policy BAAP19 Conversions to Flats and Homes in Multiple Occupation

There is an actual and perceived issue with a large number of properties (residential and commercial) being converted into flats and Homes in Multiple Occupation. This is specifically focussed around the older (western) parts of the town, which is characterised by highly dense terraced homes, which can be relatively inexpensive,

⁷ [Bootle, Merseyside Crime and Safety Statistics | CrimeRate](#)

where deprivation levels are higher and space for parking and refuse collection is limited.

To help manage the issue, the Council introduced an Article 4 Direction in parts of Sefton, including the western part of Bootle (as shown in Figure 17 of the Bootle AAP). Details of the Article 4 Direction for Homes in Multiple Occupation is available at [Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation](#). Specifically this includes evidence to support the application of the Article 4 Direction - [article-4-direction-case-evidence.pdf](#).

Whilst the Article 4 Direction allows the Council to manage the proposals for all types of HMOs, many of the issues that are relevant to HMOs are also applicable to inappropriate conversions into flats. Part 4 of Policy BAAP19 sets out two considerations for when proposals for a conversion to a flat or HMO would not be acceptable. These are expanded upon in an existing Supplementary Planning Document⁸.

As the conversion and use of an existing family home or commercial property into flats or HMOs can often be more profitable than retaining under its current format/use, there is a concern that, in Bootle, we will see residents, community and voluntary groups, and small businesses, being outbid and priced out of the area. One of the benefits of the relatively affordable housing in Bootle is that it gives first time buyers, or those on lower wages, and opportunity to buy a spacious family home.

The 2021 census data⁹ shows that residents in Bootle are less likely to be owner-occupiers than the national average and there are also more social rented properties in Bootle than in other parts of Sefton and England. Furthermore, Bootle has a higher proportion of single person households than other parts of Sefton and England. This points to a need to protect the town's stock of family homes, which will help support a wider range of services and facilities.

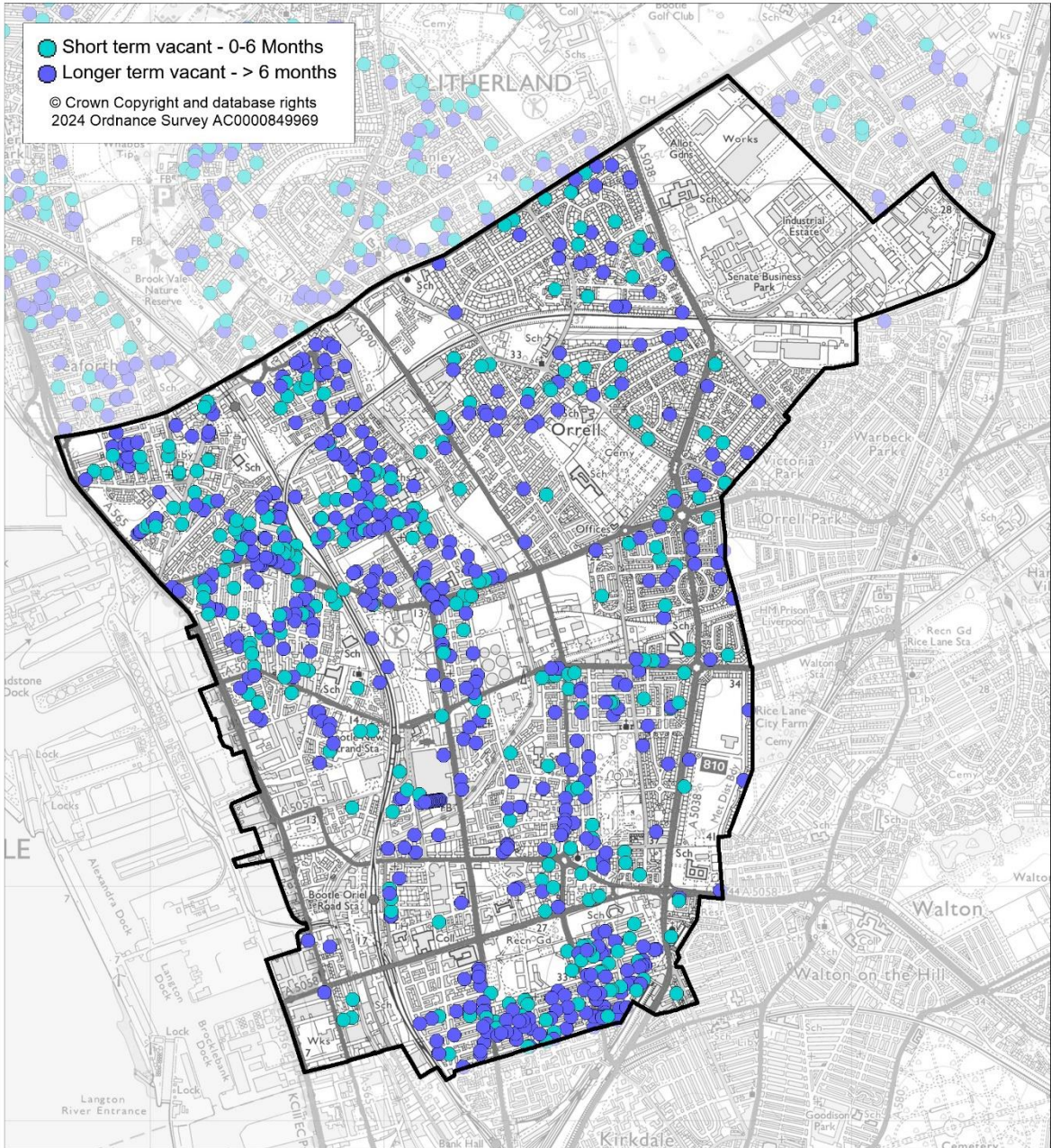
Therefore, we have proposed that we will offer a degree of protection to single family homes from conversion if there is a need for that family home. A lack of demand can be demonstrated if the home has been marketed for sale as a single family home at local market value and it remains vacant for a minimum of 6 months. It is considered this will allow sufficient time for a prospective owner-occupier to buy the property, but also allow for alternative uses if it remains unsold after a short period.

It is considered this policy is sufficiently flexible to retain a good supply of single family homes for prospective owner-occupying households whilst not preventing long term vacant properties finding suitable and viable uses. The plan below shows (as at April 2024) the distribution of short term vacant homes (<6 months) and longer term vacant

⁸ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/1985/flats-hmo-spd-2023.pdf>

⁹ [Build a custom area profile - Census 2021, ONS](#) (note this data corresponds to Bootle Parliamentary Constituency)

homes on the Bootle AAP area. It shows both types of vacant property are well distributed across the plan area.



Appendix A

