

## **Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan – Housing Section Brief**

The objective of the Stonehouse Neighbourhood Local Plan is to Shape, Protect & Enhance Stonehouse through to 2031 in such a way that the identified housing needs of both our own citizens, the wider National and District strategic policies are fully met, whilst retaining the individual, unique and vibrant community spirit that gives the rural market town of Stonehouse its distinctive atmosphere, sense of community coupled with its valued green spaces and vistas.

To achieve this we have developed a comprehensive range of policies to give direction to developers of existing buildings and new build sites which include infrastructure, materials, energy conservation as well as minimising the effect on the natural environment and vistas.

A detailed review of all the potential sites for housing development within Stonehouse has been undertaken as detailed later in this section. The review highlights the very few remaining sites still available to be developed within Stonehouse.

### **SDC Emerging Local Plan Housing Need Assessment**

Stroud District Council (SDC) following recent detailed research and consultation have estimated the housing need for the SDC area from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2031 at 11,200 homes with 15% of these (1680 homes) to be delivered within the Stonehouse Cluster.

#### **Allocated sites for development.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Planning Reference</b>	<b>Comment</b>
West of Stonehouse	S14/1288/OUT Awaiting decision	1350 homes contained within SDC's emerging Local Plan.
Wharfdale Way, Bridgend Land owned by SDC	S15/0768/FUL Awaiting decision	9 homes contained in SDC Local Plan 2015/16
Oldends Lane, Magpies site	At public consultation	STC proposes 35 homes

#### **Housing already delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Planning Reference</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Foxes Field		105 homes completed
Rear of 38 and 40 High Street, Stonehouse	S13/1806/FUL	11 dwellings completed
Rowing Tank Regent St	S/08/0719/FUL	8 houses built
61 Regent Street	S/07/2226/FUL	Net -7 houses built

### Outstanding Planning Permissions within Stonehouse Parish

Location	Planning Reference	Comment
Land at old Station Bristol Road	S13/2538/OUT	49 houses on appeal
Land at old Station Bristol Road	S13/2110/FUL	15 houses
Old Stonehouse Youth Club	S13/1267/FUL	8 homes on appeal
22, Ebley Road	S/15/0540/FUL	2 houses North Side
Rear of Triona, Glos Rd	S/15/0223/FUL	1 house
The Orchard, Bristol Rd	S13/2745/FUL	1 house
Doverow Grove Farm	S13/2244/FUL	1 house
58, Gloucester Road	S13/2206/FUL	1 house
21 Perth Road	S13/1620/FUL	2 houses
Land adjacent to 8, Midland Road	S13/0237/FUL	2 houses
Land adjacent to 43, Severn Road	S13/0222/FUL	1 house
113, Ryeland Road	S12/2556/FUL	1house
The Orchard Bristol Road	S11/2337/FUL	2 houses Built
24, Ebley Road	S13/1547/OUT	1 house North Side
28 Ebley Road	S12/0465/OUT	1 house North Side
14 Green Street	S11/1748/OUT	1 house
Fieldview, Pearcroft	S12/1892/FUL	1 house
Spa Inn	S13/1034/FUL	5 dwellings

### Recent Stonehouse Cluster Planning Consents outside of Stonehouse Parish

Location	Planning Reference	Comment
Land South of Leonard Stanley Primary School	S13/1288/OUT	150 units approved on appeal
Mankley Fields, Leonard Stanley	S13/2424/FUL	Demolish 23 build 51 net increase of 28 units
Eastington	S13/1214/FUL	3 dwellings
Land off Swallowcroft, Eastington	S13/0399/FUL	30 dwellings
		Overall total 1827
See appendix "A"		36 identified planning consents in Stonehouse since 2006 if built = 1863 + other cluster builds



## Decisions Pending

Kings Stanley	S14/0525/FUL Awaiting decision	48 dwellings
Wharfdale Way, Bridgend	S14/2833/FUL Awaiting decision	5 homes, private applicant

Whilst there is no pressure to deliver further housing above the 1680 within the Parish of Stonehouse as Stonehouse and the Stonehouse Cluster are able to deliver well in excess of the required homes to meet the National/District identified need (1863 units to the 1680 within the emerging SDC Local Plan), Stonehouse's NLP identifies specific areas of under supply of the following types of housing need within the Parish which we look to address.

The following statistical data is required to help inform and develop housing policy.

- Population of Stonehouse Parish
- Population demographics
- Predicted demographics for Stonehouse
- Contrast to SDC/National demographic trends
- Housing stock within Stonehouse
- Highlight all under provision of house types to projected need
- Average house prices within Stonehouse
- Average earnings of Stonehouse residents
- What is the affordable housing range to average earnings?

In preparation to producing policies for Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan a number of public consultations, meetings with local businesses and a public call for sites have been undertaken. These have been considered together with previous research and public consultation from the Community Plan and Stonehouse Design Statement going back over the last 11 years to 2004. This, as well as hard statistical data gives a good sense of what local people need and would be willing to support.

The NLP group have also looked at all the remaining land not built upon at present with a view to see where specific housing needs may be delivered. One of the largest landowners within the Parish of Stonehouse is Wycliffe College. NLP group met with Wycliffe to see if they would consider developing any of the playing fields for housing, they state the playing fields are too valuable to them as resources to consider developing them for homes.

## Identified Undeveloped Sites Within Parish Requiring Assessment

Site Location	Land owner/agent	Comment
Berryfield Playing Fields	Wycliffe College	No intention to change use
Ebley Road Playing Field	Wycliffe College	No intention to change use
Willow Farm	Wycliffe College	Planning consent for pool.
Tily's Field	Wycliffe College	No intention to change use
Playing fields opp Wycliffe Junior School	Wycliffe College	No intention to change use
Field opposite Avenue Terrace	Robert Hitchens	Wish to develop. SDC refused planning. Awaiting appeal
Field/Orchard Pearcroft	Consortium of local householders & Wycliffe. 24 shares	Unlikely that sufficient shareholders will ever agree to development- 75% + to agree
Land West of Ebley by-pass by Horsethrough Roundabout	All owners to be identified	Gradient could be an issue 2 Applications by Bathurst SDC refused and Bathurst lost on appeal. Next to Junior School
Land to rear of gardens Ebley Road	Individual householders	22, 24 & 28 Ebley Rd already have full planning permission
Doverow Hill	Doverow Hill Trust	Community green space
Oldends Lane Magpies	STC	Limited development up to 35 homes to meet housing/sport /recreational identified needs.
Land next to Sub station, Ebley Bypass	To be identified	Site recently cleared
Brunsdon Yard, Ebley Bypass	Alliance Group Venture	S13/1498FUL Supermarket at appeal as of April 2015
The Secret Garden	Unknown	Housing/Retail/Other

*A map of area here to show undeveloped land within the Parish of Stonehouse, colour coded to owners where applicable. Likelihood of owners wishing to develop the land or sites regarded as unsuitable for development for whatever reason.*

### Ebley Road, South Side next to Wycliffe Junior School

From this appeal decision the following inspector comment. "The appeal site is not inside a settlement boundary but nor is it in a remote countryside location. There is existing development alongside much of Ebley Road to both east and west, including a recent housing development on the opposite side to the east. The nearest shops and services (in Stonehouse) are some 1.2km away, along lit and generally level roads. ***That distance exceeds the 800m suggested in Manual for Streets as allowing for 'comfortable' access on foot to local amenities but in the same paragraph, it is also stated that 800m is not an upper limit.*** Moreover the centre of Stonehouse and Stroud are within reasonable cycling distance and there are also regular bus services accessible from bus stops near the appeal site. Inspector did not agree with SDC that site is remote from local settlements, services and facilities.

Appeal dismissed though through failure to provide affordable housing and the ICHA's character and appearance. (Industrial Conservation Heritage Area).

In a town with as few sites available for future developments as Stonehouse the delivery of starter, affordable, special needs housing for the elderly and disabled has through Government policy in the past, present and in the future makes delivery difficult, currently only developments of 10 dwellings plus must include an element of affordable housing this was as high as 25 dwellings in the early part of the last decade.

Specific housing policies to cover the following:

### **Vistas**

1. Nothing to be built that detracts or obstructs the vistas from and to the town from the Doverow Hill escarpment.
2. Nothing to impede the vistas of St Cyrs Church, Nutshell Bridge or the Ocean all iconic vistas within Stonehouse. This should consider maximum height of buildings to ensure the Church Tower could be still seen from across the area.
3. Nothing to impede to or from the long-range vistas over the canal to the more open countryside on the other side of the valley. This is particularly important from the Ebley Road.
4. Nothing to impede or encroach upon the boundary of Stonehouse and Standish to the North of the Town.
5. The building line should not be encroached upon to ensure no creep to joining the Parish's of Stonehouse and Standish together.
6. Nothing to be built within the High Street that detracts from the nature of the High Street and its distinctive mix of services, food outlets and in the main sole trader businesses.
7. All development must meet the requirements of the ICHA.

### **Buildings**

1. Policy to cover conversion, renovation and extension of existing builds. This is to include no conversion of single storey dwellings to two storeys to protect the limited supply of housing available for elderly and disabled people in Stonehouse.
2. Rear garden development policy

3. All builds/renovations/conversions must achieve (list here relevant grade) of energy efficiency.
4. Material to be used
5. Height of buildings in keeping with area and ensuring compliance with policies on Vistas.
6. Builds need to deliver two dedicated car parking spaces for each unit, which does not include any garage space provided.
7. New builds and conversions on the limited amount of new build land and properties suitable for conversion left available in Stonehouse need to deliver the locally identified housing needs.
8. Minimum of 40% of all new builds to be high quality social and affordable housing.
9. Occupancy to be protected to (here tier system) to enable local families to remain within their own town.
10. Specific policy on sheltered housing
11. A minimum of 10% of housing on sites of 9+ dwellings must meet current Lifetime Home Standards.

## **Infrastructure**

1. Any new developments, conversions or renovations will deliver access roads, which are a minimum of 6 metres in width.
2. Any new developments, conversions or renovations will deliver pedestrian footpaths, which are raised, above the vehicular road level by 10 cms.
3. Pedestrian footpaths will be a minimum of 1.25 metres in width to allow adequate room for pedestrians, pushchairs and disabled access.
4. Pedestrian footpaths where a bus stop is to be located will be increased in width to 2.5 metres to allow queuing without obstructing the free passage of other users.
5. Pedestrian footpaths where there is junctions or driveways crossing will have dropped curbs with appropriate attention to the surface to alert blind and partially sighted people to a road crossing.
6. Green provision and landscaping

7. Where appropriate children's play areas.
8. Where traffic is being considerably increased as a result of development in access of 9 dwellings then traffic calming and 20mph speed limits should be incorporated within the design.

*Drawing conclusions on characteristics of housing needed. PAS Advice Note.*

*Gathering a wide range of data from the Census and other sources on local demographic composition and characteristics of local households will enable the characteristics of the housing needed to be determined, including relative proportions of dwellings by size (i.e. number of bedrooms), by tenure, by type (i.e. detached, terraced, or apartments) and by specialised need (e.g. housing for older people, for families or for those who mainly work from home). Sub-national population projections (SNPPs)<sup>33</sup>, which form the basis for household projections, can be disaggregated by age band and thus, in theory, future population age bands can be 'mapped' to housing type required. This is particularly useful in determining provision of housing for older people, as noted by the NPPG<sup>34</sup>. However, in practice, this is complicated because demand for housing is driven by a range of factors other than simple demographic change, for example policy, recent completions, employment growth and other factors on both the demand and supply sides. As such, applying a percentage based only on demographic projections, which are themselves subject to future adjustment, could risk policy becoming inaccurate, inflexible or both. A more realistic approach could be to set broad policy parameters to guide new housing development, within which applications could be assessed on a case-by-case basis, drawing on monitoring data measuring the characteristics of housing developed up to that point in the plan period. If this approach is used, the broad, flexible policy parameters recommended can be based on broad conclusions in the HNA on the characteristics of the housing needed, which, for the reasons described above, may reflect qualitative as well as quantitative factors*

## **Appendix "A"**

**Planning Consents - Stonehouse additional to above since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006**

<b>Site Location</b>	<b>Planning Reference</b>	<b>Comment/Units</b>
3 Park Road,	S07/0335/FUL	2
22 Kings Road	S07/0934/FUL	Net 1
Lyndian, Oldends Lane	S07/1674/FUL	6
12 High Street	S08/0326/FUL	2
31 Juniper Way	S08/0411/FUL	Net 1
19 Kings Road	S08/0544/FUL	1
Severn Road	S08/0666/FUL	Net 8
6 Juniper Way	S08/0935/FUL	Net 1
70 Park Road	S09/1066/FUL	1
75 Regent Street	S09/1421/FUL	1
Land by 7 Storrington Rd	S09/1131/FUL	2
Laburnum Walk	S09/1649/FUL	3 - built
19 High Street	S10/0430/FUL	1
44 Avenue Terrace	S10/1055/FUL	Net 1
58 Gloucester Road	S10/1761/FUL	1
Old Orchard Bristol Road	S11/0336/FUL	1
Old Orchard Bristol Road	S11/2337/FUL	2 - built

Appendix B

# Stonehouse

**Housing Report**

**July 2015**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report was prepared by the Stroud Rural Housing Enabler in order to provide a summary of the existing housing stock in Stonehouse. In this instance it was decided not to carry out a full housing need survey (HNS) and, instead, the data was drawn from ACRE's Rural Evidence reports which are based on the 2011 Census. Although this data may be considered less up-to-date than that gathered from a more recent housing need survey, because the Census includes all households, it is perhaps more representative than a HNS which would only represent the proportion of households who respond – usually between 25-40%. Additional information on the current social housing stock was provided by the Housing Strategy Office at Stroud District Council and information on current house sales and rent prices and volumes were obtained from [www.rightmove.com](http://www.rightmove.com) and the Land Registry.

1.2 The Rural Housing Enabler (RHE):

- is employed by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, which is part of the national network of Rural Community Councils (ACRE - Action with Communities in Rural England).
- Works closely with rural communities, housing associations, local authorities, other community organisations (including community land trusts) and landowners to meet the affordable housing needs of rural communities.
- is an independent advisor, although, the post is funded by Stroud District Council.

## 2. TOWN SUMMARY

- According to the 2011 Census, the current population of Stonehouse is 7,725, comprising 3,195 households. This equates to an average of 2.42 persons per household which is slightly higher than the average of 2.35 for Gloucestershire county as a whole (source: 2011 Census).
- By road Stonehouse is 4 miles from Stroud, and 9.5 miles from Gloucester.
- Stonehouse has its own railway station connecting it into the national railway network through Stroud or Gloucester.
- Stonehouse has a wide range of facilities typical of a small town: *a Town hall, a Community hall, 5 churches of different denominations, 2 primary schools, 1 senior school and 2 independent schools, 3 GP's surgeries, a Post Office and a variety of shops (many independent), cafes and pubs. Local employment for over 4,000 people is provided at the industrial estates located to the west of the town. There are daily bus services to Stroud and Gloucester and Cheltenham.*
- The draft Local Plan for Stroud District categorises Stonehouse as a 1<sup>st</sup> tier settlement ie 'one of the District's main towns. These towns are the primary focus for growth and development to safeguard and enhance their strategic roles as employment and service centres. They will continue to provide

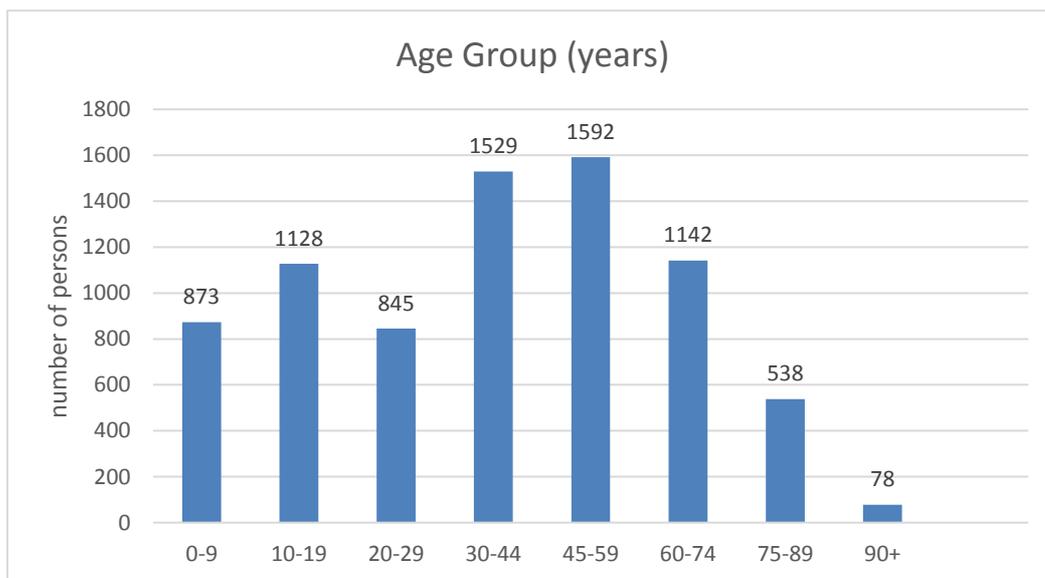
significant levels of jobs and homes, together with supporting community facilities and infrastructure to meet their economic potential in the most sustainable way.’ (p30)

### 3. KEY FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Population distribution by age:

According to the 2011 Census, 26 % of people in Stonehouse are currently under the age of 20, 11% are aged 20 and 29 years, 20% are aged between 30 and 44, 21% are aged between 45 and 59 whilst 23% are aged 60+.

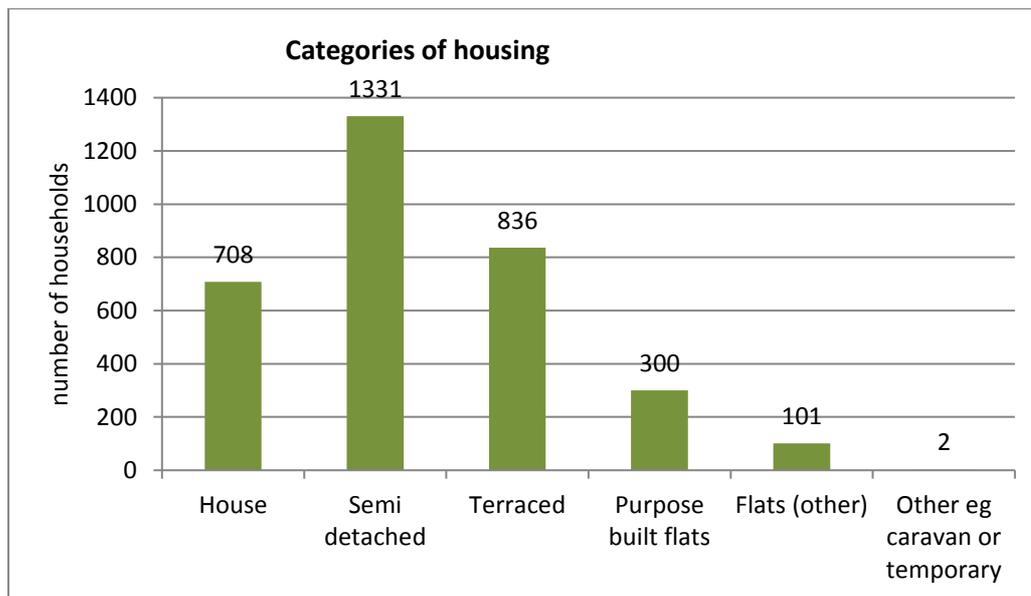
Table A - Age distribution in Stonehouse



#### 3.2 Categories of Housing:

Table B below shows that 21.6% of people in Stonehouse live in a detached house, 40.6% live in a semi-detached house, 25.5% live in a terraced house and 12.3% live in a flat.

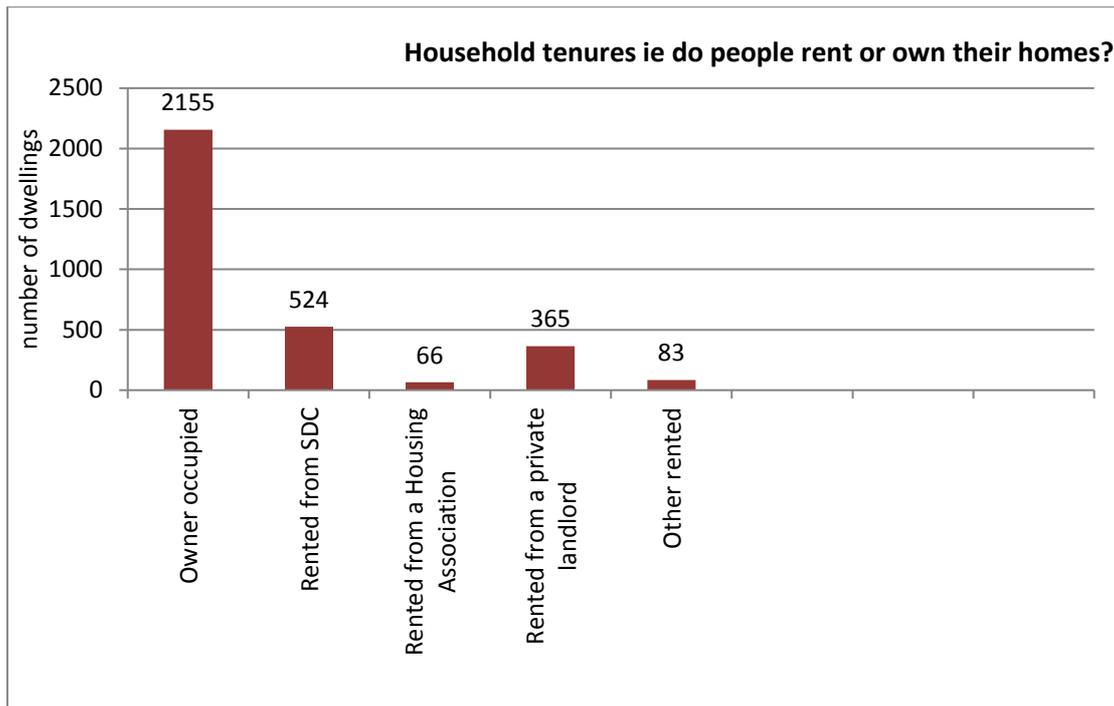
Table B – House type



### **3.3 Household tenure ie do people rent or own their homes?**

Table C below shows that at the time of the 2011 Census, 67.5% of households in Stonehouse were owner occupiers which is slightly higher than the proportion – 64% - for England as a whole (Office for National Statistics). 18.5% of households lived in a home rented from Stroud District Council or a housing association and 11.4% lived in privately rented properties.

Table C – Household Tenure



### 3.4 Housing turnover:

According to the 2011 Census, 980 people (12.9%) had moved house within the last 12 months.

## 4. AFFORDABLE RENTED HOUSING - general information

4.1 Affordable rented housing is housing owned either by a local authority or a registered provider (usually/ie a housing association) and made available to people who cannot meet their needs on the open market. Stroud District Council is relatively unusual in that it continues to own and manage its original council housing stock of approximately 5,200 homes. A further 1500+ homes in Stroud District are managed by housing associations.

4.2 Historically the levels of rent that local authorities and Registered Providers have been able to charge have been controlled by the *Homes and Communities Agency*. These rents are known as *target rents* and are subject to the national Housing Benefit scheme. They are calculated according to a formula based on relative property values and relative local earnings.

4.3 A household's entitlement to housing benefit takes into account a household's size, income, savings and other circumstances, and may entitle a household to a financial contribution of a sum up to the entire rental charge.

4.4 In 2011 the Coalition Government introduced *affordable* rents for council and some housing association rented properties. The *affordable* rents are up to 80 per cent of market rents. For many areas of rural Gloucestershire that means *affordable* rents are significantly higher than traditional *target (or social)* rent levels.

#### 4.5 Existing affordable rented housing stock in Stonehouse

*The following additional information on the social housing stock in Stonehouse has been provided by Stroud District Council and is up-to-date as of July 2015. Please note that the total figures are higher than indicated in Section 3.3 reflecting the additional social housing which has been provided since 2011.*

Stonehouse currently has 696 affordable homes which represents approximately 22% of the total housing stock. This is higher than the proportion for Stroud District as a whole where social housing accounts for 15.5% of the 43,840 total homes.

Table D – Breakdown of Social Housing Stock

Property type	Bed	B	B	F	F	F	F	F	H	H	H	H	M	M	
No of bedrooms		0	1b	2b	Bed	1b	2b	3b	2b	3b	4b	6b	3b	4b	<b>TOTAL</b>
Housing Association	2			3		13	10		48	30	11				<b>117</b>
SDC		30	82	69	6	51	53	6	121	139	13	1	6	2	<b>579</b>
Of which number of units are sheltered housing		28	42	1	6	32	10								

*Key to abbreviations: Bed = Bedsit, B = Bungalow, F= Flat, H = House, M = Maisonette*

#### 4.6 Numbers of households requesting an affordable home in Stonehouse:

359 households who are currently registered on Gloucestershire Homeseeker have put Stonehouse as their first preference location to live. A further 154 households have put Stonehouse as their second preference and 190 have

indicated it as their third preference. Please note that expressing a preference does not necessarily imply that applicants have a 'local connection' to Stonehouse.

#### **4.7 Turnover on affordable homes:**

Social homes in Stonehouse which become available for letting are allocated according to need on a district-wide basis.

The table below indicates the amount of turnover on the above social homes during the period 1/4/2011 to 31/3/2015.

Table E – numbers of re-lets on social homes in Stonehouse

	<b>Bungalow</b>	<b>Flat</b>	<b>House</b>	<b>Maisonette</b>
<b>1bed, 1 person</b>	31	11	0	0
<b>1bed, 2 person</b>	36	37	0	0
<b>2bed, 2person</b>	0	9	0	0
<b>2bed, 3 person</b>	21	8	5	0
<b>2bed, 4 person</b>	3	17	31	0
<b>3bed, 4 person</b>	0	1	6	1
<b>3bed, 5 person</b>	0	1	25	6

<b>3bed, 6 person</b>	0	0	2	0
<b>4bed, 6 person</b>	0	0	9	0
<b>4bed, 7 person</b>	0	0	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>91 (49%)</b>	<b>84 (60%)</b>	<b>79 (22%)</b>	<b>8 (100%)</b>

## 5. AFFORDABILITY

**5.1 Council tax bandings:** The following data shows the number (and proportion) of houses in Stonehouse in the lowest 3 council tax. This data is useful because it relates to **all** local properties not just those that have sold recently.

Table F – proportion of properties in lowest 3 council tax bands

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>As a %</b>	<b>Compare with England average</b>
<b>A</b>	707	21.4%	24.8%
<b>B</b>	1,127	34.1%	19.6%
<b>C</b>	785	23.8%	21.8%

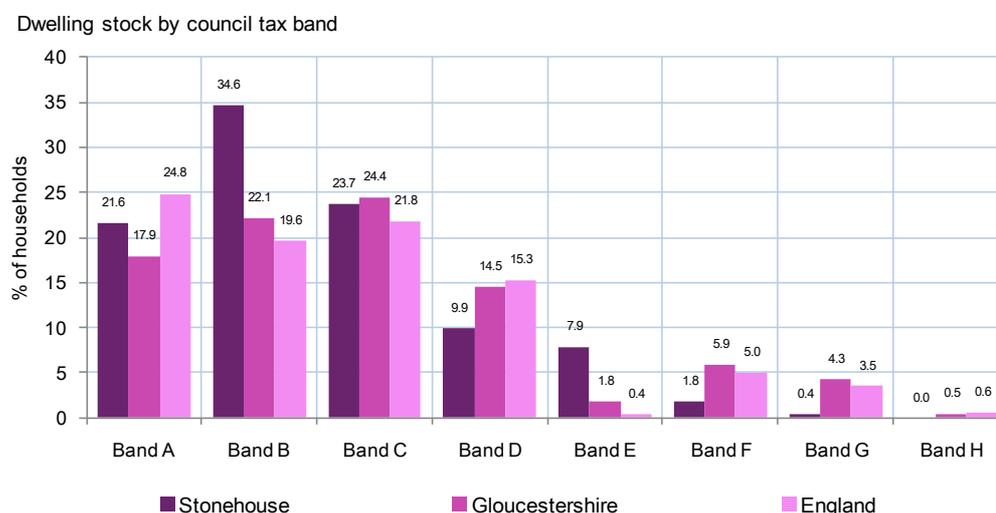
Table G below shows the proportions of properties in all council tax bands in comparison to Gloucestershire & England.

5.2 A household's income, savings and the state of the housing market are key factors for assessing a person's need for affordable housing.

5.3 In simplistic terms the assessment of affordability requires household incomes and savings to be measured against prices of property of a suitable size, type and location, whether rented or home ownership. However, depending upon tenure there will be additional factors that will impact upon costs of acquiring the right to occupy the property.

5.4 For home ownership, these costs include: mortgage interest rates, mortgage indemnity premium, mortgage application fee, legal fees, stamp duty tax, legal fees and search fees etc.

5.5 For rented, these costs may include: rent deposit and rent paid in advance.



## Home ownership

5.6 In order to investigate affordability, further research has been carried out on house prices in the area.

5.7 Using information gained from HM Land Registry it is possible to obtain the average property prices in Stonehouse.

5.8 In the last 12 months 129 properties were sold in Stonehouse, the majority being terraced properties, selling for an average price of £165,314. Detached properties sold for an average of £290,388, with semi-detached properties fetching £188,970.

Table H: Average Prices of residential properties in Stonehouse sold in the 12-month period to 30 May 2015 (according to HM Land Registry)

<b>Average House Prices in Stonehouse (£)</b>			
<b>House Type</b>	<b>Average Price</b>	<b>Number of Sales</b>	<b>Property sizes</b>
Detached	290,388	36	3 x 2bed, 6 x 3bed, 10 x 4bed, 6 x 5bed
Semi-detached	188,970	34	1 x 1bed, 8 x 2bed, 9 x 3bed, 4 x 4bed, 2 x 5bed
Terraced	165,314	51	3 x 1bed, 19 x 2bed, 13 x 3bed, 4 x 4bed
Flats	132,812	8	1 x 1bed, 3 x 2bed
<b>All</b>	<b>194,371</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>5 x 1bed, 33 x 2bed, 28 x 3bed, 18 x 4bed &amp; 8 x 5bed *</b>

*\*NB not all houses indicated the numbers of bedrooms in that property.*

The overall average of £194, 371 is higher than the average for the county which, according to the Land Registry, was £185, 696 in March 2015. Overall sold prices in Stonehouse over the last year rose by 7% from the previous year.

5.9 The number of house sales are for new and existing properties where the sale details registered with the Land Registry are for the postcodes defining Stonehouse Parish.

- Figures were obtained from “www.rightmove.co.uk” with data supplied by HM Land Registry.
- There are sometimes delays in registrations of sales and this may result in under counting of property sales.

5.10 The average price of properties sold does not necessarily reflect the average value of all properties in the parish.

5.11 House prices in Gloucestershire rose steadily during 2013 and 2014, increasing by 5% overall in the year since September 2013.

5.12 House sales volumes fell considerably following the credit crunch in 2008. However since the winter of 2013/14 Gloucestershire sales volumes have remained extremely buoyant, generally over 1000 per month and being on average 36% higher than the same month in the previous year. Although house sales were down again to 641 in January 2015 this dip reflects the usual pattern for sales during the winter months.

## **EXAMPLE CALCULATION FOR A MORTGAGE**

5.13 Typically, a household can obtain a mortgage of 3.5 times their gross

annual income, and in today's financial market would expect to pay a deposit of at least 15% towards the total purchase price.

5.14 To afford a 2-bed terraced house (typical starter home) at the average price in Stonehouse last year of £148,941 a household would require at least £22,341 as a deposit, and their annual gross income for mortgage purposes would have to be at least £36,171.

5.15 At the time this report is published mortgage lenders currently offer first time buyers standard variable annual rate interest rates from 4.5% APR. Applying a 4.5% interest rate to a mortgage of £126,600 equates to £711 per month for a repayment mortgage (repayment of capital and interest) over a 25 year period.

***Gross annual earnings for employees (full and part-time) in local authority areas***

Area	Median gross annual earnings (residents in local authority area) (£)	Median gross annual earnings (place of work in local authority area) (£)
Cotswold	18,099	18,224
Forest of Dean	21,151	19,178
Gloucester	20,456	19,880
<b>Stroud</b>	<b>22,239</b>	<b>21,921</b>
Cheltenham	24,208	21,530
Tewkesbury	23,468	24,264
Gloucestershire	21,727	20,778
South West	20,095	19,934
Great Britain	21,965	21,965

*Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2013, Office of National Statistics – revised and released 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014*

- As shown by the above table, the median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) gross annual earnings of employees in Stroud District (£21,921) is higher than the regional median (£19,934) but comparable to the national average (£21,965).
- Considering the average prices of homes sold in Stonehouse Parish during the 12 months up to 30 May 2015 a household on a median income in Stroud District (£21,921) would be unable to purchase a property without a substantial deposit (by using savings or by using monies from the sale of current home).
- The Rural Evidence Report calculates an affordability ratio (median house prices as ratio of median incomes) of 18.2 in Stonehouse which is higher than the average for England of 15.4.

- Many potential first time buyers struggle to meet the costs of buying their own home.
- In some cases intermediate housing (shared ownership, low cost market housing and rented housing at prices between rented social housing and market rented prices) would be a suitable option, whilst in other instances traditional housing association rents known as target rents would be appropriate.

### **Private rented**

5.16 Only one property was available to rent within Stonehouse town itself although there were several options within a 3-mile radius – see below:.

Two bedroom flat in neighbouring Leonard Stanley....	£610 per calendar month
Two bedroom flat at Ebley Wharf.....	£695 pcm
Two bedroom semi-detached bungalow (Leonard Stanley).....	£750 pcm
Three bedroom terraced house (Stonehouse).....	£775 pcm
Four bedroom house (Kings Stanley).....	£975 pcm

*Information provided by www.rightmove.com*

5.17 Although there is currently no official definition of housing affordability, it is widely accepted that a household's housing costs should not exceed 25% of a household's gross income. Based upon this presumption, a minimum gross annual income required to afford the above properties would be £29,280 for the cheapest two bedroom flat, £37,200 for a three bedroom house and £46,800 for the four bedroom house. Of course, the rent does not include running costs e.g. council tax, fuel bills etc.

5.18 Comparisons of monthly rental costs with monthly mortgage costs for a similar sized property reveal that it is usually cheaper to rent.

## **6. SUMMARY**

- Stonehouse has a housing stock predominantly made up of houses, and in particular a high proportion of terraced and semi-detached houses. There are few bungalows and flats. The proportion of households who own their own homes is similar to the proportion for England. 129 properties (5% of the private housing stock) were sold in the last year.
- Stonehouse has a higher proportion of social housing than the District (15.5%) as a whole. In the last 4 years there has been quite a significant turnover of these homes and in addition 106 new affordable homes have been built. This represents an 18% increase on the overall total of social housing.

- Affordability is an issue for people looking to buy or rent in Stonehouse. At the time of writing there was a limited availability of properties to rent privately and to afford the cheapest property available a tenant would need to have an above average salary. For people looking to buy a property, despite a relatively wide availability and turnover of smaller, starter level homes, the affordability ratio was still extremely high and requiring above average salaries plus a considerable deposit.