

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Affordable Housing Development Guidance Note 2014

7/9/2014

A guidance note prepared by the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team for developers and registered providers of social housing.

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1.0 Introduction

- Affordable housing is a requirement on sites of more than 15 or more net dwellings, subject to site viability. On these sites 35% of dwellings will be required as affordable housing.
- This document sets out our aspirations for, new build affordable housing. It has been prepared by our Housing Team and reflects the aims of our Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 and lessons learnt from our experience of delivering affordable housing in partnership with registered providers of social housing (RPs).
- The guidance is intended for developers and registered providers of social housing
- Where appropriate we have given links for further advice and guidance.

A copy of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy can be found on the Council's website

www.rushmoor.gov.uk/housingstrategies

2.0 Prior Consultation

- We ask that proposals for development are discussed with the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager. The Housing Team will not support schemes, without these discussions.
- RPs should make sure that their housing management teams are able to comment on any scheme being promoted and that any concerns are designed out or addressed in other ways e.g. lettings plans.
- The Council's Development Control Team can provide you with pre-application planning advice. We also have a pre application checklist for developers See
- <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/3420/advice-for-developers>

and

- <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/3433/pre-application-advice-for-developers>

3.0 Funding

Schemes should be designed so that they are eligible for public subsidy or for inclusion in the Homes and Communities Agency Affordable Homes Framework. Currently this means that schemes will need to meet the HCA's Design and Quality Standards 2007. These standards will also apply to schemes that are funded by the Council.

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4.0 Residential Mix

- Affordable housing schemes of more than 10 units should provide a mix of house types.
- The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggests that for future affordable housing delivery we should aim to provide a mix of dwelling types as follows

Affordable Homes for Rent			
Bedroom Size %			
1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed & 4 Bed +
25	35	25	15

Intermediate Tenure ¹			
Bedroom Size %			
1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed & 4 Bed +
40	40	20	0

- The 2 bed requirement should be met by providing 2 bed houses as well as 2 bed flats.
- 2 bed homes should be suitable for occupation by 4 people
- It is recognised that the full mix is not appropriate on all sites but the council wants to make sure that across the affordable housing programme a mix of dwelling types is being achieved.
- The Council favours small blocks of flats up to 12 homes. Larger blocks should not have more than 12 units served from one entrance and core.
- Combinations of dwelling forms e.g. terraces, town houses, flats above maisonettes can be used to achieve high density with a variety of house types.
- Flats suitable for under-occupiers will be considered favourably but these should contain features that will allow people to remain in their own homes as they age e.g. Lifetime Homes principles, mobility scooter storage.
- Developers must aim to include house types for a range of household types including wheelchair accessible dwellings.
- Developers will need to consult with the Council on the need for supported housing.

5.0 Tenure Mix

- Affordable housing schemes of more than 10 units should include a mix of tenure.
- The appropriate tenure for smaller (10 or fewer) sites needs to be decided having regard to needs and the tenure of the surrounding area.
- Housing design must be tenure blind
- Large groups of homes (more than 10 units) of the same tenure should be avoided.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework - Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing

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- The Council's SHMA suggests the following tenure mix²

Tenure mix on affordable housing developments %	
Social Rent	Intermediate
60	40

6.0 Density and Design

- The Council's Housing Density and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in 2006 provides guidance on the design and density of new housing schemes. (<http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/3033/Housing-density-and-design---supplementary-planning-document>) Higher density is appropriate in areas of the borough with good transport provision.
- Although high density generally results in developments of smaller units in flatted schemes, concentrations of similar types of dwellings should be avoided and developers should aim to provide a mix of dwelling types.
- Particular attention needs to be taken to ensure that sound transmission in high density schemes is minimised.
- Affordable housing proposals should have regard to the principles set out in Building for Life (12) published by the Building for Life Partnership.

7.0 Dwellings

7.1 Dwelling Sizes

- A guide to dwelling sizes is as follows³

House type	Min Gross Internal Area SQM
Flats or dwellings on one floor	
1B2P	47
2B4P	69
Houses or dwellings on two floors	
2B4P	77
3B5P	90
4B6P	103
Houses or dwellings on three floors	
3B5P	95
4B6P	108

- Ensuite bathrooms and utility rooms are excluded from the GIA figures
- Bedsits for single people over 35 years will not be considered favourably.

² A new joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been commissioned with Hart District Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council and is expected to be published in July 2014.

³ Based on level 1 space standard set out at the consultation stage of the Housing Standards Review

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7.2 Dwelling Features

7.2.1 Circulation Space

- Circulation space near the dwelling entrance should allow space for dealing with outside items such as prams, umbrellas, coats and shoes. Entry direct into a living room should be avoided.

7.2.2 Living Space

- In larger homes open plan living, dining and kitchen areas should be avoided.
- All rooms, except internal bathrooms, should have natural light.
- Double and twin bedrooms must have a minimum width of 3m to allow them to be used interchangeably.
- Layouts should be planned so that the effect of noise from adjoining properties is minimised in sound sensitive rooms e.g. bedrooms.

7.2.3 Bathrooms and WCs

- Clear circulation space of 1500mm x1500mm should be provided in bathrooms together with a minimum of 1200mm in front of the WC pan to the nearest obstruction.

7.2.4 Storage

- Lack of storage is frequently an issue for residents, therefore, a storage cupboard with a floor area of 0.8sqm should be provided for a 1-2 person dwelling. For each additional occupant a minimum of 0.15 sqm should be provided.
- There should be sufficient space for the washing and drying of clothes.
- There must be space provided in the home for waste and recycling bins.

7.2.5 Private Open Space

- Houses should have gardens and ground floor flats should have gardens or private external space such as a patio (3mx3m min).
- Gardens should have sufficient space for the needs of the occupants for example clothes drying, space for garden furniture and a shed and should have space for an area of lawn and for planting.
- Homes on upper floors e.g. flats should have balconies of at least 1.5m deep or should have compensating internal space in the living area.
- Ideally balconies should have enclosures that offer some degree of privacy and be robust enough to take clothes drying equipment and furniture.

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7.2.6 Entrances and Communal Areas

- Approaches and entrances should be designed to make sure that properties are wheelchair accessible and include level access over the threshold.
- The numbers of dwellings served from a communal core should ideally be limited to 12 homes.
- Corridor access flats should be avoided.
- Proper consideration of access control, number and size of lifts and management and maintenance is required.

7.2.7 Space Heating

- Space heating should be chosen having regard to the need for simple operation, meeting code for sustainable homes level 4 and keeping the running costs at a reasonable level to minimise the risk of fuel poverty.

8.0 External Environment

8.1 Secured By Design

Schemes should be designed with regard to Secured by Design principles. www.securedbydesign.com. Advice has also been prepared by Hampshire Constabulary and Rushmoor Borough Council "Designing out Crime, Designing in Community Safety" <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/3420/advice-for-developers>.

8.2 Car and cycle parking

- Car parking provision must be provided in accordance with the council's adopted Car and Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document. This is available on line at <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/parkingspd>. This includes guidance on visitor parking.
- The appearance of the car parking needs to be considered early in the design process to make sure that it does not dominate the street
- Rear car parking courts should be avoided .

8.3 Bin Storage

- Bin storage should be incorporated into the design so that bins are easily accessed from the home but do not harm the appearance of the development. They must also allow easy access by refuse collection vehicles.
- Consideration should be given to the size of the bin stores, and how bins will be collected. Further information is available online at <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5087>

9.0 Environmental considerations

- From April 2014 all publicly funded schemes in Rushmoor should reach code for sustainable homes level 4⁴. Information about the Code for Sustainable Homes can be viewed online at www.communities.gov.uk/thecode. The provision of energy efficient homes is required to minimise fuel poverty.
- The planning policy requirements for sustainable development, renewable energy and sustainable construction are set out in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy. <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/corestrategy>

10.0 Maintenance

Developers should demonstrate that they

- Have designed their scheme with low maintenance in mind
- Have considered the implications of design on service charges.
- Can provide easily understood maintenance manuals for occupiers.

11.0 Lifetime Homes

Compliance with Lifetime Homes Standards is encouraged and dwellings should be designed to incorporate features from Lifetime Homes Criteria 1-16. This is particularly important in 2 bed homes that may be used to encourage older people to downsize.

To make all homes easily adaptable they should include the following Lifetime Homes features

- Level access
- Wide door widths
- Drainage for the future installation of a shower

Together with

- Straight staircases.
- Lever taps
-

<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk>

⁴ The Housing Standards Review proposed winding down of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Transitional arrangements are yet to be announced.

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12.0 Management

It is our clear preference that in order to secure the affordable housing for future eligible households, affordable housing should be managed by a registered provider of social housing.

The Council has five approved registered provider development partners which are eligible for funding and support from the Council.

Contact details are contained in the appendix to this document.

13.0 Nominations

The Council will expect to enter into a nomination agreement with the provider of the affordable housing units giving the council the right to nominate to 100% of the units on first let or sale and 75% on subsequent lets and sales.

14.0 Tenancies

RPs will let their properties according to their tenancy policies. RPs should have regard to the Council's tenancy strategy when setting their policies. A copy of the Tenancy Strategy 2013-16 can be found on the Council's website

www.rushmoor.gov.uk/housingstrategies

15.0 Affordability

Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

The measure of affordability to be considered by Registered Providers is that housing costs are not more than 40% net income. The Council offers the following percentages as a guide to establishing rents that are locally affordable

One two and three bedroom properties 70% of Open Market Rent or 90% of the Local Housing Allowance is the lower

Four bedroom properties 65% of Open Market Rent or 80% of the Local Housing Allowance whichever is the lower, OR
A rent cap in the region of £200 per week.

Registered providers will be asked to demonstrate that their rents are affordable to those who are likely to apply for their homes.

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16.0 Commuted Sums

The Council's preference is for affordable housing to be provided on site. In exceptional circumstances where this is inappropriate a financial contribution of equivalent value may be accepted. This contribution will be calculated as follows.

*Financial Contribution = residual land value of the development proposal with 100% market housing **minus** residual land value of the development proposal with x% affordable housing.*

(x% is 35% of the total number of dwellings of which 60% are affordable rent/social rent and 40% intermediate tenures as required by the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy paragraph 8.79, unless otherwise agreed following a viability assessment of the development proposal).

Developers will be expected to provide appraisals to support the calculation of an appropriate financial contribution which the Council may submit for independent assessment at the cost of the developer. These appraisals should be based on assumptions that follow the guidance contained in the Planning Obligations SPD.

Any subsidy received from the developer through this route will be ring-fenced for affordable housing to meet local need.

17.0 Specialist Housing

Developers are requested to consult with the council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Team concerning the requirements for specialist housing.

Wheelchair Housing needs to be designed taking account of the Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (2010) Habinteg Housing Association.