

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Affordable Housing Development Guidance Note 2017

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

Sept 2017

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

Foreword

We are frequently asked to provide information for developers and Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) on the type of affordable housing required to meet the Borough's need for affordable housing. In response we have prepared this guidance note which we hope will provide useful advice for those looking to deliver affordable housing in Rushmoor.

The Note takes account of policies set out in the adopted Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy. The Council is currently preparing a new local plan and is advanced in this process, having published the Draft Submission Rushmoor Local Plan in June 2017. The policies contained in the Draft Submission Local Plan give a strong indication of the direction of travel for the planning policy framework to guide future development in Rushmoor to 2032, and where relevant, can be used to supplement the development plan policies as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This note will provide advice consistent with the current Core Strategy and will, where appropriate, make reference to policies in the Draft Submission Rushmoor Local Plan. This note will be updated further when the new local plan is adopted.

1.0 Introduction

- Affordable housing is a requirement on sites of 15 or more net dwellings, subject to site viability. On these sites 35% of dwellings will be required as affordable housing. However, the Draft Submission Local Plan lowers the site size threshold to 11 or more dwellings and reduces the percentage of affordable housing to 30%, subject to viability.
- 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 2017 – 2022 and learning from our experience of working in partnership with registered providers of social housing (RPs) to deliver affordable housing.
- A copy of the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy can be found on the Council's website

www.rushmoor.gov.uk/housingstrategies

- The guidance is intended for developers and registered providers of social housing (RPs)
- Where appropriate we have given links for further advice and guidance.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

2.0 Prior Consultation

- We ask that proposals for development are discussed with the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager as this can help resolve any issues at an early stage. It will also help to make sure that proposals are meeting local housing needs.
- 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.

3.0 Planning Policy and Development Control

- The key development plan document containing policies on housing is the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy (adopted October 2011)
- A new Rushmoor Local Plan is being prepared and the Draft Submission Local Plan was published in June 2017. This document is relevant as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- Where appropriate this guidance note refers to emerging policy as well as that contained in the Core Strategy.
- The Council's Development Control Team can provide pre-application planning advice. We also have a pre application checklist for developers.

<http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/3420/advice-for-developers>

and

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

4.0 Funding

Schemes should be designed so that they are eligible for public subsidy These standards will also apply to schemes that are funded by the Council.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

5.0 Residential Mix

- Affordable housing schemes of more than 10 units should aim to provide a mix of house types and tenures.
- The current Development Plan Core Strategy seeks to deliver a mix of dwelling sizes as follows:

Bed Size	1 bed%	2 bed%	3 bed%	4 bed +%
Social rented	25	35	25	15
Intermediate	40	40	20	0

- The Draft Submission Local Plan, working on evidence contained in the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 – 2032, suggests that for future affordable housing delivery we should aim to provide a mix of dwelling types as follows

Affordable Housing size requirement across the Housing Market Area			
1 bed	2 bed %	3 bed %	4 bed %
30%	30 – 40%	20	10

In addition:

- To best meet housing needs the 2 bed requirement should be met by providing 2 bed houses as well as 2 bed flats.
- To offer maximum flexibility in the households that can be housed in 2 bed homes they need to be suitable for occupation by 4 people
- It is recognised that the full house type 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.
- Dwellings should be built to accessible and adaptable standards to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(2).
- Developers must aim to include house types for a range of household types including wheelchair accessible dwellings. Where evidenced by local need a proportion of affordable dwellings should be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3).
- Developers will need to consult with the Council on the need for specialist housing.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

6.0 Tenure Mix

- Affordable housing schemes of more than 10 units should aim to include a mix of tenure types.
- The appropriate tenure for smaller (10 or fewer) sites will need to be discussed with the Council taking in to account housing need and tenures in the surrounding area.
- Housing design must be tenure blind
- Large groups of homes (more than 10 units) of the same affordable tenure should be avoided.
- The Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy identifies a target affordable housing tenure mix of 60% rent and 40% shared ownership. The Draft Submission Local Plan (<http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/newlocalplan>) seeks to secure affordable housing principally as subsidised rent. The tenure mix is likely to be about **70% for rent** and **30% for intermediate housing**.

7.0 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.]

8.0 Dwellings

8.1 Dwelling Sizes

- To achieve a satisfactory living environment we would recommend that dwellings should meet the internal space standards set out in Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (DCLG 2015). Attached in appendix 1. These standards are reflected in the Draft Submission Local Plan (Policy DE2).
- We would suggest all affordable dwellings should be provided with some private external amenity space. All new affordable homes should provide good-quality, useable private outdoor space in the form of gardens, balconies, and / or roof terraces. More detail is set out in Draft Submission Local Plan Policy DE3.
- Ensuite bathrooms and utility rooms are excluded from the GIA figures
- Bedsits for single people aged over 35 years will not be considered favourably.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

8.2 Internal Dwelling Features

We have analysed the outcome of new build affordable housing schemes and from the feedback we have received we would recommend that the following dwelling design issues are considered.

8.2.1 Circulation Space

- Circulation space near the dwelling entrance should allow space to accommodate outside items such as prams, umbrellas, coats and shoes. Entry directly into a living room should be avoided.

8.2.2 Living Space

- In larger homes careful thought is needed when designing open plan living, dining and kitchen areas taking into account the number of potential occupiers and the need for some quiet space.
- All rooms, except internal bathrooms, should have natural light.
- Double and twin bedrooms must be capable of being used interchangeably. A minimum width of 3m would allow this to be achieved.
- Layouts should be planned so that the effect of noise from adjoining properties is minimised in sound sensitive rooms e.g. bedrooms.

8.2.3 Bathrooms and WCs

- Clear circulation space of 1500mm x1500mm provided in bathrooms together with a minimum of 1200mm in front of the WC pan to the nearest obstruction will allow properties to be used by a wider range of occupiers including those with mobility problems.

8.2.4 Storage

- Lack of storage is frequently an issue for residents, therefore, storage in excess of the Nationally Described Space Standard would be welcomed.
- In planning internal space and layout, account needs to be taken for the washing and drying of clothes and for waste and recycling bins.

8.2.5 Private Open Space

- Family homes (two bedrooms and above should have gardens of a minimum of 30 sqm, Smaller 1-2 person houses should have a 15 sqm garden.
- Flats should be provided with a balcony of a minimum of 5sqm and ground floor flats should have small gardens or private external space such as a patio (5 sqm min).
- Gardens to houses 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.
- If it is not possible to provide external balconies, Juliet balconies with compensating internal space in the living area may be acceptable.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

- Ideally balconies should have enclosures that are safe, offer some degree of privacy and be robust enough to take clothes drying equipment and furniture.

8.2.6 Entrances, Access 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 number of dwellings served from a communal core should ideally be limited to 12 homes and corridor access flats should be avoided.
- Proper consideration of access control, number and size of lifts and management and maintenance is advised.

8.2.7 Space Heating

- Space heating should be chosen having regard to the need for simple operation, building regulations energy efficiency requirements and to make sure running costs are at a reasonable level to minimise the risk of fuel poverty. Use of renewables is encouraged to reduce residents' energy costs.

It is our view that consideration of the issues set out in this section can reduce housing management issues in completed properties.

9.0 External Environment

Our advice, based on feedback we have received on completed schemes, is that the following scheme design issues are considered

9.1 Secured By Design

We would recommend that when designing schemes consideration is given 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>.

9.2 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
- Our advice is that rear car parking courts should be avoided.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

9.3 Bin Storage

- Good design can incorporate bin storage into a scheme so that bins are easily accessed from the home but do not harm the appearance of the development. Arrangements that require rubbish to be taken through the home should be avoided..
- 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>

10.0 Environmental considerations

- The planning policy requirements for sustainable development, energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable construction are set out in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy. <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/corestrategy>

11.0 Maintenance

Developers should be able to demonstrate that they

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

12.0 Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Standards for accessible and adaptable homes are now optional standards contained in Building Regulations Document M. The Draft Submission Local Plan expects that affordable housing should meet the standards in Part M4(2), this is broadly similar to Lifetime Homes Standards. Where there is evidenced local need the Council will support proposals for wheelchair accessible affordable housing meeting the requirements of Part M4(3) of the building regulations

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

13.0 Management

Our expectation is that to secure affordable housing for future eligible households, it should be managed by a registered provider of social housing (RPs).

There are a number of RPs developing in the borough or adjoining districts. The Council maintains a list on its website of RPs with which it is currently working. We believe that working with one of these RPs should minimise management costs and provide better value for money for residents .

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

14.0 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. This will help to secure housing for local people.

15.0 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. The Council's Tenancy Strategy forms part of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017 - 2022

www.rushmoor.gov.uk/housingstrategies

16.0 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.

To be considered as affordable housing it must be affordable to people whose incomes do not allow them to buy or rent a home that is suitable to their needs in the borough. Although affordable rented housing can be offered at a range of rents it should be no more than 80% open market rent including service charges and no more than 90% of the Local Housing Allowance, but regard should also be had to whether a scheme includes homes affordable to households on lower quartile incomes.

The measure of affordability recommended by the Council and to be considered by Registered Providers when appraising their schemes is that housing costs are not more than 30% gross income. Developers are advised to have regard to this when agreeing offers with Registered Providers, and Registered Providers are advised to discuss rents with the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager to make sure their scheme meets local housing need.

There is a particular issue with rents for larger properties and the degree to which they are affordable to low income working households. For this reason we would suggest setting rents as follows:

- One two and three bedroom properties 70% of Open Market Rent or 90% of the Local Housing Allowance whichever 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 £250 per week.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

- Or such other rents as are agreed with the Council

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

The Council will periodically make available information on the incomes of those waiting for affordable housing under its allocations scheme. See appendix Two

16.0 Commuted Sums

The Council's preference is for affordable housing to be provided on site. In exceptional circumstances where local housing needs can best be met by securing a financial contribution to off site provision, a 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 may be asked 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 a policy compliant scheme and the correct level of s106 contributions. Money received from developers 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 and meet the requirements of Building Regulations Document Part M4(3).

18.0 Grant Funding

For some schemes the Council may be able to make grant funding available.

If an RP wishes to apply for grant funding it will need to make sure that the scheme for which funding is sought can meet the following criteria

- Provides homes for rent at the rent levels indicated in para 16 above

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

- Provides shared ownership that is additional to shared ownership required under a s106 agreement
- In the case of shared ownership, offers a return to the council in the form of a ground rent and a share in capital growth
- Meets the standards set out in this guidance note.
- Provides Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair housing as requested by the Council
- Provides opportunity for chain lettings, and
- Provides the Council with nomination rights.

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

Appendix One

Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage

No. of bedrooms (b)	No. of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built in storage
1b	1p	39	-	-	1.0
	2p	50			1.5
2b	3p	61	70	-	2.0
	4p	70	79	-	
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Affordable Housing Development: Guidance Note 2017

Appendix Two

Income	1bed	2bed	3bed	4bed	5bed	Tot
under 10,000	82	26	7	2	1	118
10,001 -15,000	71	42	19	5	0	137
15,001-20,000	47	44	20	5	1	117
20,001-27,500	17	31	38	3	2	91
27,501 -32,500	3	4	13	1	1	22
32,501 - 40,000	1	2	2			5
40,001 -55,000			3			3
Total	221	149	102	16	5	493