

Hart District Council Affordable Housing Informal Development Guidance

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Introduction

This guidance note has been prepared by Hart District Council's Housing Strategy and Development Team for landowners, developers and Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs).

The aim of this guidance note is to ensure that landowners, developers and RPs are aware of the affordable housing requirements for new developments prior to pre-application, major application and outline application submissions.

This document sets out the Council's objectives for new build affordable housing and reflects the aims of the Hart Housing Strategy 2020-2025.

Planning Policy

Affordable housing will be sought at 40% of total dwellings on all qualifying sites that are triggered by Policy H2 of the HLPSS where the proposed residential development falls within Use Class C3 (dwelling houses), including extra-care schemes and other types of accommodation for older people. This will apply to all developments where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.

On larger sites which will be developed in phases, affordable housing should achieve 40% across the whole site. The percentage of affordable housing in each phase will be dependent on the dwelling types, layout and numbers in each phase. There should be a minimum of 25% and maximum of 50% affordable housing delivered in each phase.

Proposals should make efficient use of land - any proposal which appears to have an artificially low density in order to avoid the affordable housing threshold will be scrutinised and planning permission may be refused.

There is a clear expectation that affordable housing will be provided on development sites in accordance with the affordable housing components in this guidance. However, where there are viability or other exceptional circumstances which affect the preferred affordable housing components, alternative tenure splits, dwelling types and/or numbers may be considered in order to reach a resolution.

Where the 40% proportion of affordable housing results in a partial dwelling e.g., 0.4 or 0.6, this will be converted to a financial contribution using the Commuted Sum Formula.

- **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

The latest SHMA (2014) was published in spring 2015 and updated in 2016. This was commissioned jointly with Rushmoor Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council. The SHMA provides an evidence base that has assessed the requirement for affordable and market housing up to 2036. See also the section below on Dwelling Types and Tenures.

- **Data captured by the Hart Housing Register**

The Council's Housing Register is a comprehensive list of individuals and households that have applied for and qualify for affordable housing in the district. The data held is used to support the development and housing enabling process and to assist the Housing Service in ensuring that new affordable housing meets an identified need. Housing needs include households or individuals who require accessible accommodation due to them having mobility difficulties and who may use wheelchairs some or all of the time. The Housing Register includes data on numbers of people with mobility issues that require ground floor homes, those who use a wheelchair and those who need some form of adapted accommodation.

When considering the mix of affordable housing to be provided within specific development schemes, developers and Registered Providers should contact the Housing Strategy and Development Team to discuss the most recent housing need data from the Housing Register.

Prior Consultation

Proposals for new residential development should be discussed with the Council's Housing Strategy and Development Team as early as possible. Advice can be given by the Housing Service at all stages of the planning process as required. Registered Providers should ensure that their housing management teams are able to comment on any scheme being promoted and that any concerns are resolved by practical design and appropriate and reasonable lettings arrangements.

After initial consultation with the Housing Service on the affordable housing components, residential proposals should engage formal pre-application advice from Planning which includes completing an on-line form and paying a fee.

An applicant is encouraged to prepare and submit an Affordable Housing Statement to inform the pre-application discussions, having regard to the full contents of this guide.

Key issues to include within the Affordable Housing Statement include:

- A site plan showing the suggested location and clustering of the affordable housing units, including details regarding tenure.
- An accommodation schedule detailing for each dwelling; phase number (if applicable), plot number, property size (by number of bedrooms), property size (by m²), maximum occupancy, floor level (for flats), property type, tenure, number of parking spaces and details regarding accessibility provision in line with Building Regulations Part M4(2) or M4(3).
- Details regarding the proposed phasing and timing of the affordable housing delivery on site.

Funding Requirements

Residential proposals for affordable housing should be designed so that they will be eligible for public subsidy, which could include funding from Homes England or Hart District Council and to be suitable for inclusion in Homes England's Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme.

They should deliver good quality housing in well-designed schemes and the same standards will also apply to schemes that are funded by the Council.

The subsidy from whatever source should be used to ensure that first lets or sales are genuinely affordable to local residents in housing need, and when appropriate should be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision within Hart.

Dwelling Types, Tenure Mix and Design

Where there is a requirement for on-site affordable housing provision, Hart requires the following tenure mix to be delivered:

| Rented | Intermediate |
|--------|--------------|
| 65% | 35% |

The following should be provided at the earliest opportunity in relation to the proposed affordable housing provision:

- An accommodation schedule should be submitted to inform discussions and should show the following information for each proposed affordable dwelling - phase number (if applicable), plot number (once known), postal address (once known), property size (by number of bedrooms), property size (by m²), maximum occupancy, floor level (for flats), property type, tenure, number of parking spaces and details regarding accessibility provision in line with Building Regulations Part M4(2) or M4(3).
- A site plan showing the suggested location of the affordable housing units, including tenure.
- Scale plans of each affordable housing unit internal layouts including proposed layout for any wheelchair accessible (meeting Part M4(3)) and other accessible (meeting Part M4(2)) homes.
- Detail of the number, type and tenure of proposed affordable housing within each phase should be provided.
- Detail of the phasing plans identifying the amount of affordable housing which is proposed in each phase. Affordable housing should be provided as 40% across the development with a minimum of 25% and a maximum of 50% of the overall affordable housing provision being provided within each phase. Any alternative proposed distribution of affordable housing must be agreed with Hart's Housing and Planning Teams and be specified in the S106 agreement.

The following requirements should be taken into account when considering the site plan, internal layout and design of the proposed affordable homes:

Distribution of Affordable Housing:

- Affordable housing should be ‘pepper-potted’ throughout the site in clusters of no more than 5 houses together on smaller sites and up to 12 houses on larger sites relative to the size of the development. Where the affordable housing is provided as flats, a maximum of 12 flats should be provided together in one block on larger sites.
- The affordable housing should be indistinguishable from the market housing, be ‘tenure blind’ and constructed from the same materials, form and external appearance as the market housing.
- Blocks of flats for affordable housing should be well distributed across any given phase and the overall site and not all be located in the same area.

Occupancy Levels:

- Properties should offer maximum occupancy levels, i.e., 1 bed 2-person, 2 bed 4-person, 3 bed 5 or 6 person and 4 bed 6, 7 or 8-person occupancy unless otherwise requested by Hart's Housing Team.

Property Types and Sizes:

- Affordable homes should generally be provided as semi-detached or terraced homes, unless otherwise requested by Hart's Housing Service in consultation with Hart's Planning Team.
- Affordable housing should not comprise of detached properties or have garages, car barns or en-suite bathrooms in order to retain affordability.
- Dwelling types in residential proposals will vary and occasionally there may be a need identified by the Housing Service for bungalows, maisonettes or 1-bed houses to be delivered which should be incorporated into the layout.
- 2-bedroom houses rather than 2-bedroom flats should be provided wherever possible.
- All 3+ bedroom properties must be provided as houses.
- Blocks of flats should not include 3-bedroom flats but a small number of 1 and 2 beds in the same block may be acceptable if they are designed to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour issues arising from households with children living in close proximity to households without children.
- The affordable housing mix should be provided in line with the agreed S106 and be based on current identified local housing need.
- A small number of 1 and 2-bedroom flats located within the same block may be acceptable if they are designed to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour issues arising from households with children living in close proximity to households without children.

Internal Layout and Space Standards:

- Care should be given to design the internal layout of properties to avoid potential noise disturbance from being caused to neighbouring homes, for example, avoiding the following - high noise areas e.g. kitchens and living rooms, and low noise areas e.g. bedrooms being positioned adjoining one another in neighbouring attached properties, placement of high noise areas above low noise areas in neighbouring properties within blocks of flats and placement of bedrooms near communal areas, staircases etc.
- Internal layout and design should maximize space standards whilst providing private space for families.
- In 2, 3 and 4-bedroom dwellings, the second, third and fourth bedrooms should be positioned sensibly to avoid noise disturbance to children occupying the property from within or from outside the home where possible.
- All affordable housing should meet NDSS space standards as a minimum.

Tenure Mix:

- Pairs of semi-detached properties should be the same tenure where possible and practical.
- Blocks of flats should not contain a mix of tenures and instead consist of the same tenures, i.e., a block of rented and/or a block of shared ownership homes.
- Similar tenure homes should be located together in small groups where possible.

Accessible Housing:

- The accessible homes should be designed in accordance with Building Regulations Part M4(2)/M4(3) and in line with the Council's advice note for accessible housing - Wheelchair Accessible Housing Guidance.

Parking:

- Parking for all affordable units and particularly for accessible homes should be located as close as possible and practical to the home and ideally be on or adjacent to the relevant plot.
- Large parking courtyards for blocks of flats should be avoided.

Rent Levels and Property Management:

- Affordable housing should be owned and managed by a Registered Provider from the Council's Approved Registered Provider list.
- Rent levels should meet LHA levels for the Broad Market Rental Area (BRMA) to which the properties are located to ensure they are affordable in perpetuity.

Rural Exception Sites

Rural exception sites (RES) are small developments of affordable housing on land adjoining, or closely related to villages. The schemes are designed to meet local need and enable people to remain in an area where they may have grown up and have existing family. Existing rural exception sites exist within Hart in the parishes of Crondall, Crookham Village, Eversley, Heckfield, Long Sutton, Rotherwick and South Warnborough. Historically they have ranged in size from 5 to 15 dwellings and comprise of houses and bungalows.

Rural exception sites are not formally allocated for residential development in the HLPSS. However, Policy H3 “Rural Exception Sites” allows for such development and their size would not be expected to exceed 20 dwellings. The need for affordable housing from the development will need to be established by the applicant through a housing needs study. This will be undertaken with support from the parish council and reference to the Council’s Housing Register to highlight a proven local need for affordable housing in that parish. This study will clarify the dwellings types and sizes required, and tenure mix of rented affordable/shared ownership.

The Section 106 legal agreement in place for rural exception sites limits allocation of these homes in the first instance for local people with a strong connection to the parish where the homes will be located and are allocated via the Council’s Housing Register and/or Help to Buy agent. The Section 106 agreement will include a cascade of secondary parishes in the event that there are insufficient people coming forward from the main parish. There will be an obligation to ensure that the housing remains affordable and available to those with a local connection in perpetuity.

An element of market housing may be supported in order to incentivise the delivery of a rural exception site, as long as the need for affordable housing dwelling types and tenures is properly addressed. If an element of market housing is suggested for viability reasons, this will need to be justified with a viability and open book assessment.

Entry Level Exception Sites and First Homes Exception Sites

The Government’s First Homes Written Ministerial Statement (released 24th May 2021) outlined that the Entry Level Exception Sites (ELES) policy will be replaced with a First Homes Exception Sites (FHES) policy. The FHES policy was implemented on 28th June 2021, however due to transitional period arrangements, and depending on the circumstances of the individual site; it may be possible for a ELES to obtain planning permission where permission is granted by 28th March 2022 at the latest.

First Homes are classified as being an affordable housing tenure and are discount market sale homes that are reduced from market value by at least 30% and are to be sold to first-time buyers. However, each local authority has flexibility to set a number of their own criteria, including for a higher percentage discount to be applied to First Homes based on local evidence of need. Therefore, the local authority’s First Homes policy (where published) should be read in conjunction with national Government guidance in relation to First Homes delivery. A summary of ELES and FHES are shown below for reference, however this should be read in the context that clarification regarding the Government policy around FHES is still emerging.

Entry Level Exception Sites

Entry Level Exception Sites (ELES), as per the NPPF 2018, are sites that provide entry-level homes suitable for first-time buyers (or equivalent, for those looking to rent). They are to be suitable for first-time buyers and on sites should be on land not allocated for housing.

ELES are similar to Rural Exception Sites (RES) but differ in the following respects:

- ELES have a site size restriction and should not be larger than one hectare in size or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement.
- ELES should be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance within NPPF, and comply with any local design policies and standards.
- ELES can potentially deliver one or more of the affordable housing types listed in Annex 2 of the NPPF.
- Evidence to support an ELES would include a local Housing Needs Survey including assessment of local incomes and affordability of the units being proposed to justify the site coming forward.
- ELES can be developed in any area, both rural and urban.
- ELES does not need to include the requirement for a local connection but does allow for this to be specified.
- Developers are encouraged to discuss potential ELES with the Housing Strategy and Development Team at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the evidence required and potential scheme that is being proposed.

First Homes Exception Sites

- First Homes Exception Sites (FHES) are similar to Entry Level Exception Sites in that they allow housing development to come forward on unallocated land outside of a local or neighbourhood development plan to deliver affordable housing. The site should deliver primarily First Homes as set out in the First Homes Written Ministerial Statement.
- FHES cannot come forward in areas designated as Green Belt, or designated rural areas as defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In these areas rural exception sites are the sole permissible type of exception site.
- FHES must be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in the NPPF, and comply with any local design policies and standards.
- Developers who are seeking to deliver a FHES are strongly encouraged to engage with both the local authority and parish council covering the area where the homes are planned, in order to determine local need for First Homes and to discuss the proposed scheme. If the

need for First Homes is already being met within the local authority's area, an application for a FHES may be refused.

- A small proportion of market housing may be allowed on a FHES at the local authority's discretion, and where it can be demonstrated that this is necessary in order to ensure the overall viability of the site. The proportion of market homes should not exceed any criteria set out in the local authority and/or neighbourhood plan policies.
- The FHES policy also allows delivery of a small proportion of other forms of affordable homes (as listed in Annex 2 of the NPPF) where local evidence suggests that a local need exists, and it is evidenced by way of a Local Housing Needs Assessment, local authority Housing Register, or other rigorous local evidence.
- Local connection criteria may be set within the local authority and/or neighbourhood plan policy for FHES delivery.

Internal Space Standards

The Hart Local Plan includes Policy H6 “Internal Space Standards for New Homes” which requires all new homes (market and affordable housing) to meet the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard (DLCG, March 2015). The Council will not accept dwelling types which are smaller than its relevant standard, and rented dwellings must be built to maximum occupancy i.e., 1 bed 2-person, 2 bed 4-person, 3 bed 5- or 6-person, 4 bed 6, 7 or 8-person. An extract from the space standards is shown below which should be incorporated into the layout for relevant affordable dwelling types:

| House Type | Minimum Gross Internal Area |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Flats or dwellings on one floor | |
| 1 bed 2 persons | 50 m ² |
| 2 bed 3 persons | 61 m ² |
| 2 bed 4 persons | 70 m ² |
| Houses or dwellings on two floors | |
| 2 bed 4 persons | 79m ² |
| 3 bed 5 persons | 93 m ² |
| 3 bed 6 persons | 102m ² |
| 4 bed 6 persons | 106m ² |
| Houses or dwellings on three floors | |
| 3 bed 5 persons | 99m ² |
| 3 bed 6 persons | 108m ² |
| 4 bed 6 persons | 112 m ² |

(Source: Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard DCLG March 2015)

Parking Requirements

Parking for all affordable units and particularly for accessible homes should be located as close as possible and practical to the home and ideally be on or adjacent to the relevant plot.

Hart District Council are in the process of developing a revised parking standard Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will be due for adoption by approximately Spring 2022.

In the interim, information regarding current parking provision requirements for new developments can be found on Hart District Council’s website - [Hart Parking Provision Interim Guidance](#)

Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Building homes that remain accessible for all stages of life and can be adapted are necessary to support an ageing population, and to meet the varied needs of the wider community, therefore compliance with current Building Regulations Part M4(2) - Accessible and adaptable dwellings for all new affordable homes is actively encouraged.

For further information regarding Part M4(2) regulations, please see [Building Regulations Part M4\(2\) - Accessible and adaptable dwellings](#).

Policy H2 of Hart's Local Plan specifies that 15% of all affordable housing provided must be accessible and adaptable as defined by requirement Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations.

The policy also states that where evidenced by local need, one or more of the affordable dwellings will be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet, or exceed where justified, the requirements of Building Regulations Part M4(3).

The requirement for wheelchair accessible homes Part M4(3) should be discussed with the Housing Service as early as possible in a planning application and provided in accordance with the accessible homes guide produced by the Council.

The Housing Service liaises with an independent housing occupational therapist to ensure that the identified household needs are adequately addressed. The design and accessibility issues will therefore be dependent on the particular needs of the individual and their household.

Developers should refer to the latest version of the Building Regulations Part M "Access to and use of Buildings" in particular M4(2) "Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings" and M4(3) "Wheelchair User Dwellings" as appropriate. These regulations should be used as a starting point, but the accessible homes should also be designed in accordance with the Council's advice note for accessible and adaptable housing. To request a copy of the Council's Wheelchair Housing Accessible Housing Guidance, please email housing@hart.gov.uk or telephone 01252 774110 / 01252 774078.

Allocations and Management

Affordable housing should be managed by one of the Registered Providers on the Council's Approved Registered Providers (RP) List (**Appendix 1**).

There should be a Nomination Agreement between the Council and the RP for the rented affordable housing giving the Council the right to nominate to 100% of the units on first let or sale. Subsequent lets to be allocated as per the Nomination Agreement in place at that time.

The Council's wide-ranging [Allocations Policy](#) enables applicants on the Housing Register to participate in the allocations process and make informed choices about their housing options. It also aims to make the best possible use of the available housing stock.

Shared ownership properties will be allocated to households via the Help to Buy zone agent - [Help to Buy 3](#).

Tenancies

Registered Providers 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 updated Tenancy Strategy can be found on Hart District Council's [website](#).

Affordability

Affordable housing includes 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.

Rent levels should meet LHA levels for the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) where the homes will be located to ensure that properties are affordable in perpetuity. The district of Hart falls under three BRMA - Blackwater Valley, Basingstoke and Reading, with the majority of homes falling within the Blackwater Valley or Basingstoke LHA rates.

Rent levels for larger rented affordable housing should be affordable for families on low incomes and be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

3-bedroom properties should be set at a maximum of LHA rate, and 4 bed properties should be set at a maximum of 72% of LHA rate in the Blackwater Valley BMRA area (£240.26 per week) and 84% of LHA in the Basingstoke BMRA (£241.64 per week).

The current LHA rates (2021-22) for all property sizes within the Blackwater Valley and Basingstoke BRMA areas are included below for reference.

| | Blackwater Valley | | Basingstoke | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | weekly | monthly | weekly | monthly |
| Shared accommodation | £86.50 | £374.83 | £78.59 | £340.56 |
| 1 bed | £161.10 | £698.10 | £159.95 | £693.12 |
| 2 bed | £201.37 | £872.60 | £189.86 | £822.73 |
| 3 bed | £253.15 | £1100.00 | £218.63 | £950.00 |
| 4 bed | £333.70 | £1450.01 | £287.67 | £1249.99 |

Source: www.gov.uk - LHA rates 2021-22
(monthly LHA rates calculated based on government reported weekly figures)

Financial Contributions

Affordable housing should be delivered in association with the market housing to be provided on site. If a developer considers that 40% affordable housing provision cannot be provided on the development, the Council will require a viability report to demonstrate this and to support the calculation of an appropriate financial contribution.

Consideration of a viability assessment will be independently assessed for the Council and paid for by the applicant. If the affordable housing is considered to be not practical to provide on-site, this should be properly evidenced and justified in a supporting statement.

The commuted sum will be based on the number and sizes of affordable dwellings which were part of the planning application and would have been built on-site. Any financial contribution received from the developer through this route will be used for the provision of affordable housing in the district to meet local need.

Specialist Housing

Developers should consult with the Council's Housing Strategy and Development Team concerning any requirements for specialist or supported housing e.g., accommodation for older people, households requiring wheelchair accessible homes and vulnerable groups.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like more information, please contact the Housing Strategy & Development Team using the details below:

Housing Strategy & Development Team
Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
Hampshire
GU51 4AE

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Nicola Harpham | Strategy & Development Manager | 01252 774078 |
| Gemma Watts | Strategy & Development Officer | 01252 774110 |

Email: housing@hart.gov.uk

Website: www.hart.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Hart District Council Preferred Partners Registered Provider (RP) List:

A review of our preferred partners was undertaken in December 2018 and the Registered Providers named below are currently registered on Hart's Preferred Partner list.

| Registered Provider | Contact Details |
|---|--|
| Hampshire Village Homes (consortium) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Rural Housing Association • Hastoe Housing Association • New Forest Villages Housing Association • PHA Homes • Winchester Housing Trust | Lead Contact: Chris Meadows cmeadows@hastoe.com Tel: 01305 216936 / 07590 962067 |
| Aster | Edward Till Edward.Till@aster.co.uk Tel: 07711 425474 Testway House Greenwich Way Andover Hants SP10 4BF |
| Clarion Housing Group | James Gray James.Gray@clarionhg.com Tel: 07557 881693 Level 2/3 Interchange 81 - 85 Station Road Croydon CR0 2AJ |
| Abri | Fergus Cruikshank Fergus.Cruikshank@abri.co.uk Tel: 02380 628323 / 07973 283854 Collins House Bishopstoke Road Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 6AD |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Silva Homes</p> | <p>Tim Tallyn-Hancock Tim.Tallynhancock@silvahomes.co.uk Tel: 07814 834505</p> <p>Western Peninsula Western Road Bracknell Berkshire RG12 IRF</p> |
| <p>Sovereign Housing Association</p> | <p>Jenny Grote Jenny.Grote@sovereign.org.uk Tel: 01635 277428 / 07776 225332</p> <p>Sovereign House Basing View Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 4FA</p> |
| <p>VIVID</p> | <p>John Crapper John.Crapper@vividhomes.co.uk Tel: 0800 652 0898</p> <p>56 Kingsclere Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 6XG</p> |
| <p>Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing</p> | <p>Tim Preston Tim.Preston@mtvh.co.uk Tel: 0208 607 0556 / 07771 897362</p> <p>Premier House 52 London Road Twickenham TW1 3RP</p> |

