

4. NEW HOMES

Introduction

4.1 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for housing to meet projected needs over the Plan's period. The Plan should identify the mix and type of housing required, including the proportion of affordable housing needed to achieve mixed and balanced communities.

4.2 The overall amount and broad locations for growth are set out in the Local Plan Part 1. The Site Allocations and Designations document identifies specific sites for residential development, to meet the borough's housing supply target. This document contains detailed policies to deliver housing the right type of housing, in a way that does not have an adverse impact on local amenity or character.

Safeguarding Existing Housing

4.3 In order to meet projected housing needs, the Council aims to resist the loss of residential accommodation within the Borough by means of Policy DMH 1: Safeguarding Existing Housing. For the purposes of this policy, residential accommodation includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), student accommodation and other uses falling into Use Classes C3 and C4.

4.4 In addition to resisting the net loss of residential accommodation, proposals to combine separate flats within an original house or purpose built block to create family sized housing (3+ bedrooms) will be supported as this does not result in the net loss of residential floorspace and provides much needed family sized accommodation. Proposals related to the conversion of residential properties should take account of Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions.

4.5 The Council recognises that exceptional circumstances may exist which outweigh the loss of residential units and deliver other Local Plan policy objectives. Each case for exceptional circumstances will be assessed on its merits.

Policy DMH 1: Safeguarding Existing Housing

A) The net loss of existing self-contained³ housing, including affordable housing, will be resisted unless the housing is replaced with at least equivalent residential floorspace.

B) The Council will grant planning permission for the subdivision of dwellings only if:

- i) car parking standards can be met within the curtilage of the site without being detrimental to the street scene;**
- ii) all units are self contained with exclusive use of sanitary and kitchen facilities and provided with individual entrances and internal staircases to serve units above ground floor level;**
- iii) adequate amenity space is provided for the benefit of residents; and**
- iv) adequate living space standards are met.**

Housing Mix

4.6 The Council's current information on housing need indicates a substantial borough-wide requirement for larger affordable and private market units, particularly three bedroom properties. Applicants proposing residential schemes will be required to demonstrate that this need has been taken into account.

Policy DMH 2: Housing Mix

The Council will require the provision of a mix of housing units of different sizes in schemes of residential development to reflect the Council's latest information on housing need.

³ Self-containment is where all the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet) in a household's accommodation are behind a single door which only that household can use. See <https://www.gov.uk/definitions-of-general-housing-terms>

Office Conversions

4.7 Paragraph 51 of the NPPF 2012 supports the conversion of commercial premises to residential use where there is an identified need for additional housing and no strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.

Policy DMH 3: Office Conversions

A) Where offices are found to be redundant, their demolition and redevelopment for office accommodation will be supported. Where this is not feasible or viable, proposals for the conversion of offices to residential which fall outside of current permitted development rights will be supported where:

- i) the conversion of offices provide an external finish that is suitable to a residential building and in keeping with the character of the area;**
- ii) balconies and/or amenity spaces are designed into the development as integral facilities and the creation of well designed public realm and landscaping is demonstrated;**
- iii) any additional functional features that are needed such as pipes, flues or communications equipment are grouped together and routed through existing features where possible, and kept off publicly visible elevations; and**
- iv) proposed homes have a dual aspect⁴ wherever possible (see Mayor of London's Housing SPG). A sole aspect home overlooking a parking court or other shared use rear area will generally be unacceptable.**

B) All conversions that fall outside of existing permitted development rights will be expected to accord with National and London Plan minimum space and parking standards and meet the requirements of all other policies in this plan, including those in Policy DME 3: Office Development.

⁴ a layout in a room or building in which windows on adjacent or opposing external walls allow for views in more than one direction.

Residential Conversions

4.11 The conversion of single dwellings into more dwellings or the redevelopment of dwellings into new blocks of flats can enable more effective use of sites to be achieved. However, this type of development must seek to enhance the local character of the area. In recent years, large concentrations of flats have resulted in a range of problems, including increased on-street parking and resultant congestion on roads, the loss of front gardens, reductions in privacy, significant changes to the street scene, and loss of family accommodation.

4.12 Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions and Redevelopment aims to address these issues by controlling the number of residential conversions and the size of the original residential units from which conversions are achieved. Policy DMH 5: Houses in Multiple Occupation specifically deals with the conversion of properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation, hostels and secure accommodation.

Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions and Redevelopment

Residential conversions and the redevelopment of dwellings into new blocks of flats will only be permitted where:

- i) it is on a residential street where the proposal will not result in more than 10% of properties being redeveloped into flats;**
- ii) On residential streets longer than 1km the proposed redevelopment site should be taken as the midpoint of a 1km length of road for assessment purposes;**
- iii) the internal floor area of the original building to be converted is at least 120 sqm; and**
- iv) units are limited to one unit per floor for residential conversions.**

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), hostels and secure accommodation

4.13 Large homes in multiple occupation (HMOs) and hostels can contribute to the overall supply of cheaper accommodation, particularly for students, young people and those on low income.

4.14 Intensive occupation of former family dwellings such as those used for student accommodation or as a HMO can have negative impacts on residential amenity within an area through increases in on-street and off-street parking, loss of front gardens, reductions in levels of privacy, alterations to the

exterior of buildings and increased generation of refuse. There are significant concentrations of HMOs in the Uxbridge South and Brunel Ward, where an Article 4 Direction has been imposed removing permitted development rights for HMO accommodation.

Policy DMH 5: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Student Accommodation

A) In all parts of the Borough

Proposals for the provision of large HMOs, residential hostels, student accommodation and secure accommodation will be required to demonstrate that:

- i) there is good accessibility to local amenities and public transport;**
- ii) they accord with the Accessible Homes standards and provide satisfactory living conditions for the intended occupiers; and**
- iii) there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties or the character of the area.**

B) In wards covered by an Article 4 Direction for HMOs

Planning applications for the change of use from dwelling house (Use Class C3) to HMO (Use Class C4 and Sui Generis) will only be permitted:

- i) where it is in a neighbourhood area where less than 20% of properties are or would be exempt from paying council tax (or in the case of Conservation Areas 10%) because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs;**
- ii) in Conservation Areas where less than 10% of properties are exempt from paying council tax because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs and the change of use does not form a consecutive HMO use in a street frontage;**
- iii) where less than 15% of properties within 100 metres of a street length either side of an application property are exempt from paying council tax because they are entirely occupied by full time students, recorded on the Council's database as a licensed HMO, benefit from C4/Sui Generis HMO planning consent and are known to the Council to be HMOs; and**
- iv) where the accommodation complies with all other planning standards relating to car parking, waste storage, retention of**

amenity space and garages and will not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of adjoining properties.

Garden and Backland Development

4.15 In general, the Council will not accept proposals for developments on garden land but proposals for development of backland sites in other uses will be considered subject to the criteria in Policy DMH 6: Garden and Backland Development and other relevant policies.

4.16 The restrictive approach reflects the direct and indirect value of gardens which contribute to local character, provide safe and secure amenity and play space, support biodiversity, help to reduce flood risk and mitigate the effects of climate change, including the 'heat island' effect.

4.17 The London Plan recognises the contribution of gardens (especially back gardens) and suggests a presumption against their loss where it can be locally justified.

4.18 In addition, the Council's Townscape Character Study produced in November 2013 notes the contribution that front gardens make to local character. The Council will take account of the conclusions of the Study when assessing proposals that involve the loss of front gardens in certain character areas.

Policy DMH 6: Garden and Backland Development

There is a presumption against the loss of gardens due to the need to maintain local character, amenity space and biodiversity. In exceptional cases a limited scale of backland development may be acceptable, subject to the following criteria:

- i) neighbouring residential amenity and privacy of existing homes and gardens must be maintained and unacceptable light spillage avoided;**
- ii) vehicular access or car parking should not have an adverse impact on neighbours in terms of noise or light. Access roads between dwellings and unnecessarily long access roads will not normally be acceptable;**
- iii) development on backland sites must be more intimate in mass and scale and lower than frontage properties; and**
- iv) features such as trees, shrubs and wildlife habitat must be retained or re-provided.**

Affordable Housing

4.19 Policy H2: Affordable Housing in the Local Plan Part 1 seeks to maximise the delivery of affordable housing from all sites. For sites with capacity for 10 or more units, the Council will seek to ensure that the affordable housing mix reflects housing needs in the Borough, particularly the need for larger family units of three or more bedrooms.

4.20 The supporting text to Policy H2: Affordable Housing in the Local Plan Part 1 refers to a target to provide 35% of all new units as affordable housing in the Borough, with a tenure mix of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing. In terms of unit size, 70 % of net need is for two and three bed accommodation, more than a fifth is for four bed accommodation and almost 7% is for one bed accommodation.

4.21 It is important to acknowledge that the type of units and tenure requirements will change over the period of the Plan. Planning decisions should be based on the most up to date evidence of housing need in the Borough.

4.22 House designs for affordable housing should be “tenure blind” i.e. no distinction should be made in design terms between affordable and open market housing. Affordable housing provision should be ‘pepper potted’ around sites to allow for a mix of tenures. Design standards for affordable housing will need to comply with those set by the Homes England and the GLA design standards on housing.

4.23 Where a proposed open market housing development is configured to provide less than ten dwellings, the Council will make an assessment of the capacity of the site to accommodate additional housing. Similarly, where a larger development site is to be subdivided for planning application purposes such that each parcel delivers less than ten dwellings, the Council will seek to apply the requirements of Policy DMH 7: Provision of Affordable Housing to the site as a whole, even if an individual planning application relates to less than ten new dwellings.

4.24 The Council’s preference will always be to provide affordable housing on-site. Off-site affordable housing provision will only be considered acceptable if exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated.

Policy DMH 7: Provision of Affordable Housing

A) In accordance with national policy:

- i) developments with a capacity to provide 10 or more units will be required to maximise the delivery of on-site affordable housing;
- ii) subject to viability and if appropriate in all circumstances, a minimum of 35% of all new homes on sites of 10 or more units should be delivered as affordable housing, with the tenure split 70% Social/Affordable Rent and 30% Intermediate as set out in Policy H2: Affordable Housing of the Local Plan Part 1.

B) Affordable housing should be built to the same standards and should share the same level of amenity as private housing.

C) Proposals that do not provide sufficient affordable housing will be resisted.

D) To ensure that Policy H2: Affordable Housing of the Local Plan Part 1 is applied consistently and fairly on all proposed housing developments, the requirement for affordable housing will apply to:

- i) sites that are artificially sub-divided or partially developed;
- ii) phased developments where a housing development is part of a much larger development of 10 or more units (gross), affordable housing will be required as part of the overall scheme; and
- iii) additional units created through or subsequently amended planning applications, whereby the amount of affordable housing required will be calculated based on the new total number of units on the site. Affordable housing will be required where a development under the 10 unit threshold is amended to have 10 or more housing units in total (gross).

E) In exceptional circumstances, where on-site provision of affordable housing cannot be delivered and as a last resort, a financial contribution will be required to provide off-site affordable housing on other sites which may be more appropriate or beneficial in meeting the Borough's identified affordable housing needs.

Sheltered Housing and Care Homes

4.25 There are 34,385 people over the age of 65 in Hillingdon, of which 14,797 (43%) are men, and 19,588 (57%) are women. The population in this age bracket is predicted to increase by 7.1% in the next five years. The population for persons aged 85+ is expected to experience a higher increase

of 8% over the same period. These figures compare with a predicted 5% population increase for the rest of Hillingdon's population.

Policy DMH 8: Sheltered Housing and Care Homes

A) The development of residential care homes and other types of supported housing will be permitted provided that:

- i) it would not lead to an over concentration of similar uses detrimental to residential character or amenity and complies with Policy DMH 4: Residential Conversions;**
- ii) it caters for need identified in the Council's Housing Market Assessment, in a needs assessment of a recognised public body, or within an appropriate needs assessment and is deemed to be responding to the needs identified by the Council or other recognised public body such as the Mental Health Trust;**
- iii) the accommodation is fully integrated into the residential surroundings; and**
- iv) in the case of sheltered housing, it is located near to shops and community facilities and is easily accessible by public transport.**

B) Proposals for residential care establishments which fall under Use Class C2 must demonstrate that they would provide levels of care as defined in Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision

4.26 For the purposes of planning policy, the Site Allocations and Designations document identifies sufficient provision to meet the Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision needs over the period of the Local Plan. Planning applications for new sites will be assessed in accordance with Policy DMH 9, which complements the high level principles in policy H3 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Policy DMH 9: Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show-People

Provision to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show-people, including those for new sites and pitches will be supported where:

- i) Need is adequately evidenced through an up to date needs assessment, undertaken using an agreed, quality-assured**

methodology;

- ii) The site is not located in the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land, unless there are very special circumstances;
- iii) The site is otherwise suitable for residential development and the necessary infrastructure requirements will be made available as part of the development proposal;
- iv) The site will have safe access to the highway and will not result in any unacceptable impact on the capacity and environment of the highway network;
- v) The site is in a sustainable location and in reasonable proximity to relevant services and facilities, including transport, education, healthcare and other community infrastructure provision;
- vi) The ability to achieve neighbourliness can be demonstrated in relation to the living conditions of current or future residents of the site and its interaction with its neighbours and neighbourhood;
- vii) Proposals demonstrate high quality design, sensitive to local character; and
- viii) Arrangements are put in place and included in an appropriately detailed management plan, to ensure the proper management of the site.