

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 2. The Site Allocations and Designations document identifies specific sites for residential development, to provide 5 years' worth of housing supply. This document contains detailed policies to deliver housing targets and the right type of affordable 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 3 bedroom properties. Applicants proposing residential schemes will be required to demonstrate that this need has been taken into account. The 2011 Census shows a mismatch between dwelling size and household size, with 60% of households living in dwellings containing five or more habitable rooms, but only 24% of households having four or more people. 60% of households contain only one or two persons. Projections envisage that the general trend towards smaller households will continue, particularly amongst elderly persons living alone.

4.7 The Council is of the view that a significant proportion of this need could be met through the provision of one and two bed units in town centres. These units are most likely to be provided in the form of flats above shops, suited to those who wish to live in close proximity to town centre uses, employment opportunities and public transport. However, the Council will also continue to support the provision of a

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>