

1.3.14 The following section provides detailed guidance on the range of considerations which should be taken into account when implementing Policy 3.4 and the density matrix.

Density and dwelling type

1.3.15 Density decisions on new schemes should take account of the different housing needs of the households who will live in the completed scheme. The determination of which housing needs a scheme will meet should be informed by local and sub-regional housing priorities and the London Plan's priority for affordable family housing. Family housing is defined generally in the London Plan Glossary as having three or more bedrooms. Lower density developments lend themselves more, though not exclusively, to family housing, which in turn will require a higher level of provision of open areas and play space.

1.3.16 In broad terms, higher densities (which assume a lower number of habitable rooms per dwelling) will be more suitable for households without children and will require less open space and play provision. Higher density housing can be particularly suitable in town centre and edge of centre locations; in areas with good public transport accessibility; and as an element of mixed-use developments, where open space and car parking may be limited. This does not preclude provision of family homes in town centres when open space, play space, car parking, social infrastructure and other relevant factors can be addressed satisfactorily.

1.3.17 In areas with particularly high accessibility, consideration should be given to capitalising on this to make higher density provision for smaller households. In addition, there should be consideration of the extent to which the provision of smaller accessible and adaptable units in suitable locations as part of higher density mixed use development can encourage downsizing and potentially help to free-up under-occupied larger properties for families in the existing housing stock. The provision of smaller units may also help relieve pressure to convert existing family sized properties into flats. Further guidance on accommodating growth in smaller households is provided in Part 7 of this SPG (para 7.4.9-11).

1.3.1 Schemes should be designed to maximise tenure integration and affordable housing units should have the same external appearance as private housing⁸⁹. In some higher density schemes, separate provision of entrance and circulation spaces for different tenures may enable affordable housing provision which might otherwise be made unviable given high service charges and management arrangements. All entrances will need to be well integrated with the rest of the development and meet the Mayor's housing standards in terms of entrance and approach, accessibility and active frontages (see Part 2 of this SPG).

1.3.19 For planning purposes a habitable room is usually defined as any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries,

⁸⁹ Mayor of London, London Plan, 2015, para 3.76

hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition. In some circumstances, a large kitchen or kitchen dining room may be counted as a habitable room, but the approach varies between boroughs. There is no statutory definition for kitchens to be counted as a habitable room, nor is there any statutory size threshold. Many boroughs, however, include a figure of between 13 and 15 square meters in LDFs: any kitchen above that minimum is usually counted as a habitable room. Generally, a kitchen with a small table and chairs in one corner, or a kitchen 'bar', would not be counted as a habitable room. A room with a clearly defined kitchen at one end and a clearly defined dining area at the other (with a dining table and chairs) would be counted as a habitable room (see also Part 2 on Quality).

- 1.3.20 Effective implementation of the policy to optimise housing output and maximise the affordable housing delivery can be compromised by the provision of particularly large dwellings, especially in central London. In these circumstances, boroughs may consider benchmarking proposals against the unit per hectare density ranges provided in the density matrix (Table 3.2) and the minimum space standards (Table 3.3) in order to examine the number of dwellings and the amount of affordable housing that would normally be sought from schemes yielding average sized homes on a particular site or location. This is especially the case where proposals would be marginally under the thresholds for application of affordable housing policy.
- 1.3.21 Where a development includes family housing, accessible play spaces designed to meet the needs of younger and older children should be provided, taking account of the projected child population in line with Policy 3.6.
- 1.3.22 Linking the level of density to the accessibility of public transport (and, in light of local circumstances, its frequency and capacity) is a central consideration in making the best use of a site, helping to realise the proper potential of those within walking distance of public transport and town centres whilst allowing lower densities where public transport accessibility and capacity is less. This will usually mean building on London's existing pattern of urban development, consolidating its network of town centres, as well as realising new opportunities for intensification based on improvements in public transport accessibility.

Public transport access level (PTAL)

- 1.3.23 To help relate new development to public transport, the London Plan uses Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) data supplied by Transport for London (TfL) to measure the level of connectivity to the public transport network. Low PTAL scores do not by themselves preclude development, but will limit the densities which will be appropriate on such sites, unless a significant change in public transport connectivity levels can be achieved to justify the use of a higher density range without undermining the achievement of sustainable development. In assessing a site's capacity, a site-specific PTAL assessment should be carried out.