

LDP Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 01:

Residential Space Standards

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality in new developments. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and during the handling and determination of planning applications.

2. Status and Stages in Preparation

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Government (WG) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the WG determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by the Council on the 13th of November 2013.

3. Background

- 3.1 In parts of Denbighshire there has been a significant increase in the number of large houses which have been subdivided into flats, bedsits and other forms of multiple occupation. As a result there is a serious oversupply of low quality single person accommodation in parts of the County¹ which has contributed towards social and economic problems and adversely affected the existing residential character.

3.2 Need for standards: Denbighshire Priorities

- 3.3 The Denbighshire Corporate Plan sets out a series of priorities which point towards the key areas that the Council wants to change. This document seeks to contribute towards the priorities 'Responding to demographic change' and 'Regeneration'.
- 3.4 The Denbighshire Housing Strategy has identified the need to ensure that a wide range of housing options are available within the County and equal opportunities. The Strategy identifies a housing vision for Denbighshire that *"Everyone will have the opportunity to access good*

¹ Rhyl Going Forward: Strategy and Key Investment (2004)

*quality, affordable housing designed to meet their needs now and in the future, whether they choose to rent or buy a home within Denbighshire*².

- 3.5 Denbighshire has an ageing population which is expected to increase due to people living longer and the ageing of larger groups, such as those born after the Second World War. Building housing which meets the existing and changing needs of diverse households is therefore essential to allow people to stay in their homes if they so choose and therefore achieving the Council's 'Responding to demographic change' priority.
- 3.6 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Denbighshire has six areas which are in the most deprived 10% in Wales³. The Council aims to reduce the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the County. Accessibility to good quality housing is fundamental to achieving the Council's 'Regeneration' priority.

4. Planning Policy

4.1 National Policy Context

4.1.1 Planning Policy Wales⁴ (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's objectives in relation to housing. PPW encourages higher densities on easily accessible sites, where appropriate, but highlights the importance of good design to ensure a high quality environment. The need for 'barrier free housing' is also highlighted and the use of Lifetime Homes Standards advocated.

4.1.2 Technical Advice Note 12: Design highlights the importance of good design in relation to quality of life and also the importance of inclusive design.

4.2 Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 - 2021

4.2.1 The Denbighshire Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 (LDP), which sit within the framework of national planning policy, is designed to take forward LDP objectives, spatial strategy and vision for this County. The document is used when making decisions on both development proposals and planning appeals alongside national policies and other legislative requirements.

4.2.2 There are two LDP objectives that are pertinent to this SPG:

- no.1: Population and Community – *The Local Development Plan will aim to meet projected housing needs in terms of a total number, type and size of dwellings, including provision of affordable housing;* and

² Denbighshire Housing Strategy, 2007

³ Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Summary Report 2011

⁴ Welsh Government (November 2012) Planning Policy Wales Edition 5

5. Standards

- 5.1 The requirements in this section apply County-wide to private and affordable housing. A developer checklist is included within Appendix 1 which summarises the standards.

Minimum Floor Space Standards

- 5.2 Minimum floor space standards, including circulation space, for all dwellings are set out below:

Property Size	Minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) in Square metres to the nearest metre
1 bed	50
2 bed	65
3 bed	80
4 bed and more	100

- 5.3 The space standards are applied to both new build and conversion of existing properties. It is acknowledged that it may not be possible to achieve the standards in all conversions. In exceptional circumstances, (where it can be demonstrated that the application of the standards would affect the viability of the scheme and such a scheme is vital to the Council's overarching regeneration priority OR in relation to a historic or listed building where the historical merit of the property would be undermined.), the Council may grant planning permission providing the overall quality of the accommodation is not compromised. In such cases developers should liaise with the Planning Department.
- 5.4 The layout of rooms can influence how well a room functions. Long narrow rooms or rooms with awkward shapes may actually reduce the functional part of a room and will therefore not be permitted. Minimum room dimensions⁵ are set for **living rooms at 9 square metres, double bedrooms at 11 square metres and single bedrooms at 6.5 square metres.**
- 5.5 The height of rooms within a dwelling can also affect how well a room functions. The subdivision of dwellings into flats sometimes involves making use of the loft space. It is important that this does not result in a high proportion of proposed floor area being difficult to use. In order to address this all rooms shall have a **minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.14 metres** over an area of the floor equal to not less than three-quarters of the area of the room. Any floor area above which the ceiling height is less than 1.53 metres shall additionally be disregarded.⁶

⁵ Minimum room dimensions proposed are in line with the Council's minimum licensing standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

⁶ The Council currently applies this as minimum licensing standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Private Outdoor Space or Garden: on-site provision⁷

- 5.6 Generally, private amenity green space such as domestic gardens and green spaces in and around housing will be sought in all residential developments, including dwellings which have been subdivided, unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances which make such provision prohibitive. Minimum standards for developments are at least:
- 40 square metres for houses⁸, and
 - 50 square metres for flats with additional 10 square metres per flat.⁹
- 5.7 In some cases, particularly where there is a change of use it may not be possible to provide the private amenity green space requirements identified above. In such cases, developers should liaise with the Planning Department to agree an appropriate level of provision.

Lifetime Homes

- 5.8 The Lifetime Homes standard is a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. The requirements of a household will change over time as a result of having children, illness or disability and age. Compliance with these standards will make it easier for people to remain in their homes should they so wish. These standards will not replace the need for other types of specialist accommodation, but will ensure housing is suitable for a changing households needs. **Dwellings should be built to Lifetime Homes¹⁰ standard as a matter of good practice.** The Lifetime Homes Standard criteria are contained within Appendix 2.

⁷ It should be noted that this does not replace the requirement to provide amenity and recreational open space in new developments. Potential applicants should refer to Policy BSC11

⁸ In line with the Design Quality Requirements, Welsh Government, 2005

⁹ Outdoor space may be communal but should be solely for the use of the occupants of the flat.

¹⁰ <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/> and <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revise-design-criteria.html>

Appendix 1: Developer Checklist

Standard	Dwelling Type							
	1 Bedroom Property		2 Bedroom Property		3 Bedroom Property		4+ Bedroom Property	
	Proposed	Minimum Standard	Proposed	Minimum Standard	Proposed	Minimum Standard	Proposed	Minimum Standard
	Essential Standards							
Minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) in square metres to the nearest square metre		50 square metres		65 square metres		80 square metres		100 square metres
Living room		9 square metres		9 square metres		9 square metres		9 square metres
Double Bedroom		11 square metres		11 square metres		11 square metres		11 square metres
Single Bedroom		N/A		6.5 square metres		6.5 square metres		6.5 square metres
Ceiling Height		2.14m		2.14m		2.14m		2.14m
Private Outdoor Space or Garden for houses / bungalows		40 square metres		40 square metres		40 square metres		40 square metres
Private Outdoor Space or Garden for flats		50 square metres + additional 10 square metres per flat		50 square metres + additional 10 square metres per flat		50 square metres + additional 10 square metres per flat		50 square metres + additional 10 square metres per flat
Standard	Good Practice							
Lifetime Homes	Compliance with 16 criteria, as contained within Appendix 1		Compliance with 16 criteria, as contained within Appendix 1		Compliance with 16 criteria, as contained within Appendix 1		Compliance with 16 criteria, as contained within Appendix 1	
	Yes / No		Yes / No		Yes / No		Yes / No	

Appendix 2

Lifetime Homes Criteria

(1) Car Parking Width	Where there is car parking adjacent to the home, it should be capable of enlargement to attain 3300mm width.
(2) Access From Car Parking	The distance from the car parking space to the home should be kept to a minimum and should be level or gently sloping.
(3) Approach Gradients	The approach to all entrances should be level or gently sloping.
(4) Entrances	<p>All entrances should:</p> <p>4a) be illuminated</p> <p>4b) have level access over the threshold and</p> <p>4c) main entrances should be covered.</p>
(5) Communal Stairs & Lifts	<p>5 a) Communal stairs should provide easy access and</p> <p>5 b) Where homes are reached by a lift, it should be fully accessible.</p>
(6) Doorways & Hallways	<p>The width of the doorways and hallways should conform to the specifications below.</p> <p>Stated specifications and dimensions required to meet criterion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Doorway clear opening width (mm) Corridor / Passageway width (mm)</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>minimum</i></p> <p>750 or wider</p> <p>750 or wider</p> <p>775 or wider</p> <p>900 or wider</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>minimum</i></p> <p>900 (when approach is head-on)</p> <p>1200 (when approach is not head-on)</p> <p>1050 (when approach is not head-on)</p> <p>900 (when approach is not head-on)</p>
(7) Wheelchair Accessibility	<p>There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and adequate circulation space for wheelchairs elsewhere.</p> <p>Stated specifications and dimensions required to meet criterion</p> <p>A turning circle of 1500mm diameter or a turning ellipse of 1700mm x 1400mm is required in dining areas and living rooms.</p>	
(8) Living Room	<p>The living room should be at entrance level.</p>	
(9) Entrance Level Bedspace	<p>In houses of two or more storeys, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient bed-space.</p>	
(10) Entrance Level WC & Shower Drainage	<p>There should be:</p> <p>a) A wheelchair accessible entrance level WC, with</p>	

(10) Entrance Level WC & Shower Drainage (continues)	b) Drainage provision enabling a shower to be fitted in the future.
(11) Bathroom & WC Walls	Walls in the bathroom and WC should be capable of taking adaptations such as handrails.
(12) Stair Lift / Through-Floor Lift	<p>The design should incorporate:</p> <p>12a) provision of a stair lift</p> <p>12b) a suitably identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the ground to the first floor, for example to a bedroom next to a bathroom.</p>
(13) Tracking Hoist Route	The design should provide a reasonable route for a potential hoist from a main bedroom to the bathroom.
(14) Bathroom Layout	The bathroom should be designed to incorporate ease of access to the bath, WC and wash basin.
(15) Window Specification	Living room window glazing should begin at 800mm or lower and windows should be easy to open/operate.
(16) Controls, Fixtures & Fittings	Switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls should be at a height usable by all (i.e. between 450mm and 1200mm from the floor).

References and sources of information

Cabe (2010) Improving the quality of new housing: Technical background paper
<http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/improving-the-quality-of-new-housing.pdf>

Denbighshire County Council Adopted Minimum Licensing Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Denbighshire County Council (2007) Denbighshire Housing Strategy

Denbighshire County Council (2004) Rhyl Going Forward: Strategy and Key Investment

Homes and Communities Agency (2010) HCA proposed Core Housing Design and Sustainability Standards Consultation
http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/public/documents/Consultation_Questions.pdf

Housing Act 2004

Lifetime Homes <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revised-design-criteria.html>

Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987

Welsh Government (2005) Design Quality Requirements

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Welsh Government (2008) Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation