

COVENTRY

Supplementary planning guidance

Affordable housing



Coventry City Council

adopted February 2006

COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Adopted by Planning Committee February 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) supplements the planning policies contained in the Coventry Development Plan 2001. It clarifies the role that it is expected that the Council, Landowners/Developers and Registered Social Landlords will undertake in the provision of affordable housing. It aims to provide Developers with guidance that will assist negotiations and the preparation of development proposals and seeks to provide greater certainty and a more consistent approach to dealing with planning applications.
- 1.2 This document has been prepared by the Council. Interested parties including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Developers, representatives from the house-building industry and the Home Builders Federation were consulted prior to this document being adopted.
- 1.3 The Council is concerned to maximise the supply of new affordable homes in the City, particularly as an increasing number of households on lower and average incomes are having difficulty in gaining access to good, quality, affordable housing because of the decline in low cost rented housing, the loss of social housing provided by RSLs and price escalation in the private property market. Also, the Council is also committed to creating a balanced social and economic community, and will seek to influence this by enabling the provision of housing to meet the various accommodation needs through the community.
- 1.4 The Council accepts that negotiating affordable housing can be a time consuming and difficult process and has set out its intention in this document to be as proactive and flexible as planning policies will allow.
- 1.5 Developers who adopt a positive approach to negotiations, including the use of the Council's preferred Heads of Terms or standard Section 106 agreement are more likely to find that agreement is achieved earlier.

SUMMARY OF THIS SPG

- 1.6 The intention of this SPG is that a prospective developer can identify what level of provision is required dependant on whether the level of existing RSL social housing for rent provision in the vicinity of the application site is high [1501 +]; Medium [501 – 1500] or Low [0-500] by reference to the attached map.

Having established this the requirement is as set out in the following Summary Table:

Summary Table showing tenure splits

Tenure type for new affordable housing provision	Areas of low amounts of existing social housing (full 25% quota applies as para.6.2)	Areas of medium amounts of existing social housing (full 25% quota applies as para.6.2)	Areas of high amounts of existing social housing ie 1501+ units (reduced 20% quota applies as para.7.2)
Social rented via an RSL	15%	12.5%	5%
Shared ownership and/or other forms	10%	12.5%	15%

- 1.7 In terms of the housing types unless the particular characteristics of the scheme or locality indicate otherwise the ideal mix below should be used as a basis for provision:

<i>1 bed 2 person flat/bungalows</i>	<i>2 bed 3 person flat/bungalows</i>	<i>2 bed 4 person House</i>	<i>3 bed 5 & 6 person Houses</i>	<i>4+ bed House</i>	<i>Special needs inc. wheelchair bungalows</i>
5%	10%	35%	30%	15%	5%

- 1.8 With the guidance and financial arrangements set out in this SPG, Developers can- be certain of the full implications of the affordable housing requirements. They can therefore include in their application an appropriate affordable housing statement and be certain as to the form of legal agreements required.

2. PLANNING POLICY- AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Planning Policy Guidance 3 - Housing

- 2.1 Central government, in Planning Policy Guidance 3 – 'Housing', building on the advice in Planning Policy Statement 1, has given advice on how the planning system is expected to address the issue of housing. It recognises that the community's need for affordable housing is a material consideration, which should be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in determining planning applications. Its key objective being that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. It also acknowledges the importance of creating mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. This means providing wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing.
- 2.2 More specific guidance in relation to the delivery of affordable housing is included in Circular 6/98 " Planning and Affordable Housing"
- 2.3 The Government is proposing to amend its affordable housing policy through replacing PPG3 and Circular 6/98 with Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3).

Regional Planning Guidance For The West Midlands – (RPG11) June 2004

- 2.4 Policy CF5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy requires Local Authorities to review the need for affordable housing in the area, based on local housing needs assessments. It requires both social and low cost market housing to contribute to meeting the need for affordable housing. It also provides for conversions within the existing housing stock where this helps to create a mixed community. This policy also requires local authorities to have particular regard to the objectives and investment priorities of the Regional Housing Strategy when implementing this policy.

The Coventry Development Plan 2001

- 2.5 The Coventry Development Plan (CDP) is the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Coventry Metropolitan District. It was adopted in December 2001 and rolls forward to 2011.
- 2.6 Policy H10 of this plan sets out the affordable housing policy and requires affordable housing to be provided on:

- Development of residential sites allocated in Policy H8
- Other development of residential sites of 1 or more hectares or of 25 or more dwellings

In such cases, an element comprising at least 25% of the proposed number of dwellings will be sought.

All sites are considered suitable for such an element of affordable housing unless:

- The proposal is wholly for private sheltered housing on a site of not more than 1 hectare
- There is already a high concentration of such dwellings in the nearby area
- The site is inaccessible by a choice of means of transport
- There are abnormal development costs such that the economic viability of the proposal would be prejudiced

2.7 Policy CC4 allocates a number of housing sites within the city centre. Paragraph 11.36 of this policy states that affordable housing will be welcomed within the ring road but will not be a requirement.

Coventry Local Development Framework

2.8 Following the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Local Development Framework (LDF) that comprises a collection of documents will eventually roll forward and review the Coventry Development Plan 1996-2011. These include Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). The Local Development Framework will provide opportunity for the re-evaluation of planning policy covering housing to reflect housing need policy and government guidance. Policy H10 of the CDP would then be replaced with a revised affordable housing policy forming part of the Core Strategy. It is likely that, based on information available to date that a revised policy would seek a greater proportion of affordable housing and look to lower the threshold for provision. The Core Strategy is time tabled for adoption at the end of 2008. When the Core Strategy is adopted, a Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to supplement and expand the core strategy.

2.9 The Local Development Framework will also look at the definition of affordable housing and other housing needs including requirements for key worker housing. This is housing for employees required to deliver key public services and employees required to meet the wider needs of the City economy, primarily private sector economy who have incomes above those required for social rent, but not high enough to afford market housing to access the market.

3 DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 3.1 Circular 6/98 defines affordable housing as that which is available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market.
- 3.2 The Coventry Development Plan 2001 defines affordable housing as:
- A) Housing provided by an organisation – such as a registered social landlord or local authority – allocating on the basis of need. While such dwellings will normally be made available for rent, they may also include subsidised home ownership, where a registered social landlord or local authority retain a continuing interest
 - B) Low cost market housing, helping to meet the needs of first time buyers, single people, the elderly and other low income households, who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market
- 3.3 The Coventry Development Plan 2001 states that new affordable housing may take the form of:
- A) Housing developed by or transferred to, a housing association or other similar social landlord
 - B) Housing reserved (preferably in perpetuity) for occupation or ownership by those people identified as unable to compete successfully in the general housing market
 - C) Housing otherwise available at low cost
- 3.4 In addition to low cost market housing, the following types of housing will meet categories B and C
- Sub – market or intermediate rented housing (i.e. Providing a discount of at least 20% below current local market rents, or at rent levels affordable by such groups as key workers)
 - Shared or fixed equity, where land value is retained to provide housing for sale at below market levels and where control of 'equity discount' can be retained in perpetuity.
- 3.5 Paragraph 15 of PPG3 states that local plan policies for affordable housing should define what the authority considers to be affordable in terms of the relationship between the local income levels and house prices or rents for different types of households. Therefore to guarantee that dwellings are affordable, any transfer of a dwelling to an RSL or the rent or sale of the dwelling if the developer is to provide affordable housing themselves they must guarantee that the cost or rent of any dwelling is affordable for households of less or equal to the average householder income.

4. COVENTRY CITY HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY

- 4.1 A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in Coventry during 2003 and published in January 2004. The Survey identifies a significant need for affordable housing in Coventry. The main conclusions were that:
- 1,930 additional affordable dwellings are required over the next 5 years (an annual supply of 386 dwellings);
 - the affordable housing element on new housing sites should be increased to 40% to meet this requirement;
 - there are 12,008 households within the City in unsuitable housing, the principal causes being mobility, health problems and overcrowding;
 - there is a rising need for affordable dwellings, as 46.2% of new households are unable to afford market housing;
 - the average household income (average gross annual income excluding benefits) in the City was £17,220;
 - property prices for different dwelling types ranged from £68K to £198K according to type (at 4th Quarter 2002 prices); and
 - the general mix of new affordable housing needed was 2 bedroom dwellings (47%), 3 bedroom dwellings (33%) and 4 bedroom dwellings (20%), but with particular needs for purpose-designed 1 bed units for vulnerable single people needing support, 2 and 3 bed bungalows for households with disabilities and larger family houses.
- 4.2 The Survey also found that Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups tended to experience a proportionately higher incidence of unsuitable housing and overcrowding than indigenous households and that some 22% of all Coventry's households contained a member experiencing health problems, with the physically disabled comprising the largest categories of special need.
- 4.3 The Survey recommends that the vast majority of new affordable housing is social rented. This is because neither low cost market housing nor shared ownership can meet need at current prices. However it accepts that some shared ownership will contribute to the mixed community objective.
- 4.4 The City Council will be up-dating the Housing Needs Survey to inform the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework. In basing this SPG on the 2003 survey, the Council notes that there has been a net loss of social housing within the City over recent years, whilst house prices have increased. Thus, also taking account of the findings in 2004 of the Barker Study [Review of Housing Supply Delivery Stability : Securing our Future Housing Needs] that the present rate of new social provision nationally is about two-thirds of what is needed, it is highly unlikely that the City's affordable housing problem will have improved.

5. THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT IN TERMS OF SIZE OF SITE AND NUMBER OF DWELLINGS

- 5.1 The Council's threshold and affordable housing requirement is in accordance with policy H10 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001. The threshold for affordable housing is on sites allocated in Policy H8 and on residential sites of either 1 or more hectares, or 25 or more dwellings and the affordable housing requirement is at least 25% of dwellings.
- 5.2 However these thresholds do not preclude developers from providing affordable housing on sites that are below this threshold. The Government encourages developers to consider such provision where they think it is feasible and appropriate.
- 5.3 A planning application for housing that is on site allocated in policy H8 or 25 or more dwellings will not be registered unless sufficient information is submitted that either demonstrate that 25% of dwellings are affordable or explains why less than 25% or no affordable housing is to be provided as the site is an exception site as defined in the policies in the Coventry Development Plan 2001 and this SPG. This approach is wholly consistent with the ODPM publication Best Practice Guidance on the validation of Planning Applications published in March 05.
- 5.4 If the 25% (or other relevant percentage) does not result in a whole number of affordable housing units then in cases where the decimal point equals 0.49 or less, the resultant number of affordable dwellings shall be rounded down and in cases where 0.50 and above results, the number will be rounded up (to the nearest whole number of dwellings in each case).
- 5.5 Where the site is to be developed in phases, the outline planning application must include a commitment to comply with this SPG and reserved matters will be expected to be based on a master plan and design statement which sets out the number and type and deliverability of affordable housing to be provided in each phase. The number of affordable dwellings in each phase should be proportionate to the overall level of affordable housing on the site.
- 5.6 If a revised permission or submission of reserved matters results in an increase in density of housing on the site then it will be expected that further provision of affordable housing will be made. Similarly if a revised application increases the site area or represents an increase in the overall development, then even if this extension is below the threshold it will be expected that the totality of development will be considered when determining the provision of affordable dwellings.
- 5.7 There may also be cases where the Local Planning Authority considers that, where feasible and in accordance with planning policy, the area adjacent to the application site should also be developed. This is to ensure that the development is sustainable and meets the needs of the immediate and wider area. In these situations, the Council will require that the applicant demonstrate that their proposal will not prejudice the bringing forward of adjoining land for housing development in a satisfactory manner. Furthermore where the combined schemes result in the threshold for affordable housing being met then it will be expected that provision be split between the developments.

6. THE TYPES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS REQUIRED

- 6.1 The Council is aware that planning policy should not be expressed in favour of any particular form of tenure. However the Housing Needs Survey 2003 concludes that neither low cost housing nor shared ownership can address housing need at current prices, but acknowledges that the inclusion of some shared ownership housing on new developments may enable the Council to create mixed communities. It may also indirectly create vacancies in the social rented sector.
- 6.2 Therefore in order to ensure that provision is actually affordable and meet the needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey and make some provision for people to move from social rented to low cost home ownership, the Council will seek to attain a tenure mix of 15% social rented dwellings and 10% shared ownership dwellings in areas where there is a low concentration of existing RSL social housing and 12.5% socially rented dwellings and 12.5% shared ownership dwellings in areas where there is a medium concentration of existing RSL social housing. Such areas are defined on a tenure map forming part of this SPG. Patterns of provision will be monitored and if shown necessary this map will be reviewed. However it is not anticipated that this will be necessary prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy
- 6.3 Low cost market housing is unlikely to meet affordable housing needs unless it is sold to people who meet the criteria of housing need within Coventry and sufficient discounts are involved to ensure that the dwellings are affordable to people in housing need. To be affordable, discounted prices would be likely to be equal to or below 3.5 times the Coventry's household income. The developer would also have to demonstrate that this form of provision would be available in perpetuity.
- 6.4 Development sites should have a mix of house types and sizes to meet the requirements determined by the Housing Needs Survey 2003 and the Council's Housing Strategy. Reflecting those requirements, the proportions of the different property types and sizes set out in the Table 1 below shows the ideal affordable housing mix as part of a larger residential development site comprising a variety of dwelling types. However the exact mix will be determined by the size, characteristics and nature of the likely development on each relevant site.

Table 1 showing ideal affordable housing mix on larger sites

1 bed 2 person flat/bungalow	2 bed 3 person flat/bungalow	2 bed 4 person House	3 bed 5 & 6 person Houses	4+ bed House	Special needs inc. wheelchair bungalows
5%	10%	35%	30%	15%	5%

- 6.5 The Council may require that an element of the affordable provision on a site (where suitable) is purpose-designed to provide for particular needs, for example, sheltered housing for older people, supported housing, purpose designed bungalows for people with limited mobility or disabilities (i.e. wheelchair units). In some instances, Social Housing Grant may be available to assist in such relevant provision on a gap-funding

basis (i.e. to help meet the difference between Developer's standard subsidy and the extra over costs of special provision).

- 6.6 The Housing Needs Survey 2003 also identified an additional need to cater for larger households and older people especially from the Asian communities. Having regard to those needs, the Council may wish to discuss with prospective Applicants (on relevant and suitable sites) opportunity to include particular forms of provision within the affordable housing element of the development proposals.

7. EXCEPTION SITES

- 7.1 The affordable housing element comprising at least 25% of the proposed number of dwellings will not normally be sought where:
- the proposal is wholly for private sheltered housing on a site of not more than 1 hectare
 - there is already a high concentration of such dwellings in the nearby area
 - the site is inaccessible by a means of a choice of transport
 - there are abnormal development costs such that the economic viability of the proposal would be prejudiced
 - the site is within the ring road
- 7.2 On sites within areas where there is already a high concentration of RSL social housing in the area, a reduced element of 20% of affordable housing will be sought. These areas are defined as those where the proportion of existing affordable dwellings exceeds 1500. To readdress the balance of housing mix within these areas, the tenure mix will be 5% socially rented and 15% shared ownership.
- 7.3 Given the characteristics of Coventry, there are very few sites that are inaccessible by a choice of transport and where there are deficiencies developers may be required to provide funding to procure or extend bus services. It is therefore very unlikely that any dispensation of requirements in respect of affordable housing will be agreed on this ground.
- 7.4 There may be occasions where site characteristics could be regarded as a legitimate reason for a reduction of affordable dwellings sought if it is demonstrated that strict application of policy may lead to an unviable and therefore undeliverable scheme. This will relate to legitimate abnormal development constraints such as constraints on development from sewers crossing the site, and/or unexpected ground conditions. However, it is expected that development costs associated with redeveloping brownfield sites will have been adequately reflected in the price offered for the site. Developers should also explore any opportunities for grant.
- 7.5 The Council has a positive approach to regeneration and new development and the potential benefits that it can bring. Therefore where the Developer considers that there are abnormal development constraints that threaten the economic viability that cannot or could not have adequately been reflected in the price offered for the site, the Developer shall submit an economic viability analysis countersigned by an independent valuer as part of the planning application.
- 7.6 The economic viability assessment referred to at 7.5 above will remain confidential to protect the developer's commercially sensitive information. Where exceptionally dispensation is recognised then through a Section 106 agreement it will be expected that the developer will subsequently demonstrate that the cost assessments were rigorous.
- 7.7 It is not a requirement to provide affordable housing on sites within the ring road. The purpose of this policy is to broaden the social mix of dwellings and to make allowances

for the fact that there is in any case a variety of constraints that may need to be overcome to provide housing within the ring road. Furthermore there may be practical difficulties in providing affordable housing within the high-density designs that is often sought within the ring road. However developers should note that the Council would welcome the provision of affordable housing in cases where an element of affordable housing is feasible.

8. ALTERNATIVE SITES

- 8.1 Paragraph 17 of PPG3 states that where a local planning authority has decided that an element of affordable housing should be provided in the development of a site, there is a presumption that such housing is provided as part of the proposed development of the site. Failure to comply with this policy could justify a refusal of planning permission. In Coventry, this guidance needs to be strictly applied as the low supply of alternative sites restricts alternative provision elsewhere.
- 8.2 Therefore the Council will only allow for off site affordable housing provision in exceptional circumstances where the developer can demonstrate that the location or the mix of the particular scheme is not the most appropriate for meeting housing needs. In these cases, the preference is for affordable housing to be located in the adjacent area although provision elsewhere in the city would not be discounted. If the applicant seeks to make alternative provision, he must either include the development proposal and any phasing for the affordable housing on the alternative site in his planning application or provide a planning obligation to secure the delivery of the alternative provision. In either eventuality the legal agreement will include triggers for delivery which may include a requirement that dwellings on the development site will not be sold or occupied on the open market until the Developer has transferred the affordable dwellings or site to the RSL.
- 8.3 There may be cases where the alternative site proposed is of a scale that development proposals would require provision of affordable housing as part of a scheme. In these scenarios, the developer will also be expected to contribute the affordable housing that would have been sought in addition to any provision made to compensate for non provision on another site. The funding mechanisms are expected to be the same as those on site provision.
- 8.4 The Council may also consider the renovation and modernisation of existing vacant family housing which directly adjoins the site and is not already operated by an RSL [because this would not increase the overall supply] in place of on-site affordable housing provision (either wholly or in part) as part of the affordable housing provision. Such property must either attain the Decent Homes standard or with due allowance being made by the developer in the transfer price to an RSL for the cost of necessary works to attain the Decent Homes standard.
- 8.5 There may also be very exceptional cases where a developer can demonstrate that it is not feasible for the application site or any other off-site alternative available to provide affordable units. In this instance the developer will be required to make a financial contribution in place of the on or off site affordable housing. For this to be agreed, the developer will be expected to provide a financial contribution equivalent to the corresponding subsidy for on-site provision.

9. DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 9.1 The affordable dwellings provided should be of a suitable mix to meet the requirements of a balanced community and meet the needs as identified in the housing needs survey and accord with any mix required in any development brief or supplementary guidance. It should provide for a balance of two, three and four bed houses on small sites and in large sites, a proportion of dwellings must include two and three bed bungalows, especially purpose designed for people with disabilities. Some sites may be able to accommodate purpose designed 1 bed units that cater for vulnerable single people requiring counselling and support especially under the supporting people framework. At least 5% of dwellings should be designed to lifetime homes standards
- 9.2 Developers should have regard to the space standards and other broad design criteria that have been agreed between the City Council and Housing Associations (being RSLs) operating in Coventry under the Housing Partnership Agreement (as shown in Table below) and as far as reasonably practicable these should be reflected in their proposals for affordable housing

Table 2 - Target Minimum Floor Areas for RSL (Housing Association) Dwellings in Coventry:

No. of Bedrooms	No. of People	Total Floor Area (Housing Corp. basis of measurement)
Family Homes		
2	4	72 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
3	5	82 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
3	6	92 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
4	6	98 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
4	7	115 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
4	8	120 sq m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
5	9	125 sq.m + 3/5 sq m to Lifetime standards
Wheelchair Bungalows		
2	3	70-72 sq m & carport
2	4	76-78 sq m & carport
3	4	81-83 sq m & carport
3	5	94-96 sq m & carport
General Needs Flats		
1	1 or 2	45 sq m min + staircase enclosure for above ground floor flat
2	3	52 sq m + staircase enclosure for above ground floor flat
Flats for Older People Within the New Housing with Care Schemes Under the Council's 'New Homes for Old Strategy'		
1		48 sq m self-contained
2		56 sq m self-contained

- 9.2 Submitted layouts should demonstrate that affordable dwellings are to be located in manageable clusters or groups throughout the development and should generally not be limited to one part of the site.

9.3 Local design guidance contained in the Council's other Supplementary Planning Guidance, development briefs or design guides should be addressed. The design and materials used and amenity within the affordable housing should reflect the characteristics of the rest of the development, such that affordable homes are integrated into the overall development. The overall layout should meet Secure By Design Standards. Whilst the main Lifetime Homes standards set out below will not be rigidly applied they represent best practice:

Main Lifetime Homes Standards for RSL (Housing Association) dwellings in Coventry:

Lifetime Homes Standard	Description and standard	Target standard for HA schemes in Coventry	Factors to consider
1. Car Spaces – capable of enlargement to 3300mm width (Part M also)	General car space width = 2400mm. Allow extra 900mm width for future enlargement (Where in curtilage, all spaces to be this width. Where grouped, 10% of those spaces to be to extra width)	Provide 3300mm wide (see also SDS E & Council's guidance for new residential)	Impact on plot sizes needs to be considered according to site capacity
2. Minimise distance from car space to dwelling entrance – that distance to be level or gently sloping	Level approach preferred. Where topography dictates max gradient of 1:12 on slope of less than 5m; 1:15 between 5 – 10m; 1:20 more than 10m. 900mm wide paths. 30m max distance under SDS	As Spec. standard (see also SDS E as regards surveillance)	Distance needs to be considered though where off curtilage parking / garage courts apply. Position on steeply sloping sites needs careful design which also has important consideration for the estate layout.
3. Approach to all entrances to be level or gently sloping (Part M also - additionally Part M specifies stepped changes of level within dwellings should allow ease of access to ambulant disabled people)	As 2 above	As Spec standard as 2 above (see also SDS E where appropriate)	As 2 above
4. Entrances to be illuminated; level access over threshold; covered main entrance (Part M also for accessible threshold; Part L1 also for automatic turn off of external lighting)	Level access threshold – upstand not to exceed 15mm	Adopted (see also SDS E)	Already specified by HA s
5. Lift to be wheelchair accessible; Communal stairs to have easy access (Part M also)	Lift: min. dimensions clear landing entrance 1500mm x 1500mm; min. int. dim. 1100mm x 1400mm; lift controls between 900mm & 1200mm from floor level & 400mm from lift's internal front wall	Adopted (see also SDS E)	Already specified by HA s

	Communal Stairs – rise not more than 170mm and uniform; Going not less than 250mm and uniform; H/rails extend 300mm beyond top and bottom steps; h/rail height 900mm from nosings		
6.Widths of doorways and hallways / corridors as Access Committee England standards (Part M also)	Clear opening to doorways / Corridor or passageway widths: Doorway Corridor /passageway width (mm): - 750 or wider to be 900 when approached head on. 750 to be 1200 when approach is not head on. 775 to be 1050 when approach is not head on. 900 to be 900 when approach is not head on. Clear opening of front door 800mm. Should be 300mm to side of leading edge of doors on entrance level.	Adopt (see also SDS E)	Probably already specified by HA s
7.Wheelchair turning space in dining areas and living rooms and adequate circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere	A turning circle of 1500mm diameter or a 1700 x 1400 mm ellipse	Adopted as standard design practice (see also SDS R)	Already specified by HA s Space standards in Housing Partnership Agreement already accommodate this.
8. Living room to be at entrance level	Self explanatory	Adopted as standard practice (see also SDS R)	Already specified by HA s but consider instances where Developers offer 'inverted' units where bedrooms are at entrance level and living accommodation at 1st floor / upper storey level or on a steeply sloping site where reception / utility / WC / bathroom are at entrance level and living rooms at 1 st floor and bedrooms etc above or split level arrangement
9.Two or more storey houses to have space at entrance level usable for bed space	Self explanatory	Adopted as a target (see also SDS R)	Already current practice for many HA s.

10. Wheelchair accessible entrance level WC; drainage provision for future shower facility (Part M also – requirement for entrance level WC for wheelchair user)	<p>Drainage provision for future shower should be provided in all dwellings</p> <p>Dwellings of 3 or more bedrooms – WC to be fully accessible. Wheelchair user should be able to close door from within WC and achieve side transfer to at least one side of WC. Should be min 1100mm clear space in front of WC bowl. Integral shower or immediately adjacent</p> <p>Dwellings of 1 or 2 bedrooms – where fully accessible WC cannot be achieved min Part M standards will apply</p>	<p>Apart from just including the drainage provision (SDS E) agreed that a shower should be installed as standard at the outset in the ground floor (or entrance level) WC compartment designated for accessible shower (key feature) in houses</p> <p>Aim to achieve fully accessible WC to all WC s within the dwellings in all dwelling types but as a minimum the entrance level WC in 2 bedroomed or more family houses should be fully accessible and incorporate a shower as above whether or not the main bathroom (s) also incorporates a fully accessible WC and shower. Shower over baths provided in other dwelling types (eg flats). (SDS R)</p>	<p>Agreed shower installation at the outset as standard practice in entrance level WC compartment plus aiming to achieve fully wheelchair accessible WC (s) within the other bathroom(s) to the dwelling irrespective of type</p> <p>Enhanced space standards within the Housing Partnership Agreement allow for shower installation in entrance level WC compartments = 3 to 5 sq m. min.</p> <p>Flexibility may be needed to reflect the effect of larger units to achieve Lifetime standards in relation to PPG 3 density requirements (especially on S106 or Planning Brief sites) where higher densities may be stipulated</p>
11. Walls in bathrooms & WC s to be strengthened to take handrails	Reinforcing zone between 300 and 1500 mm from floor level	Adopted (see also SDS E)	Already specified by some HA s
12. Provision for future stairlift installation; identified space for through floor lift with joists trimmed in readiness	Minimum 900mm clear distance between stair wall (where stairlift would be positioned) and the edge of the handrail / balustrade on the opposite side of the staircase. Unobstructed landings needed at top and bottom of stairs	Adopted a standard for 900mm clear width staircase and straight flights (or with 90 degree turns if necessary) to facilitate future stairlift. Also, joist arrangement during initial construction to permit future through floor lift installation in houses (Key features) (see also SDS E & R)	Already specified by most HA s. Staircase configuration is important ie need for wholly straight flights or straight flights with 90 degree (ie quarter turn or dog leg) but no winders or tapered steps. However, there can be difficulties on S106 sites where Developers' standard house types include winders.
13. Bathroom / bedroom ceiling (timber roof trusses) able to take future hoist; removeable "knock out" panel between bathroom & bedroom	Roof trusses generally have a design strength to take a hoist and track	Adopted as standard practice provision for future hoist installation with tracking capable of being affixed to ceiling joists / roof trusses and "knockout panel" between one bedroom and adjacent bathroom (see also SDS E & R)	Already specified by most HA s
14. Wheelchair accessible bathroom	Bathroom to be of sufficient size for ease of access and usage by wheelchair user and wheelchair turning circle – as practicable.	Adopt in relation to 10,11,12 & 13 above	As 10,11,12 & 13 above

15.Living room window glazing at low level ie window sill height beginning at 800mm or lower; easy to operate window mechanism (see also Part N relating to glazing safety)	People should be able to look out of the window whilst seated especially if wheelchair confined. Wheelchair users should be able to operate at least one window	Adopt as standard practice (see also SDS E &R)	HA s specification requirements for window mechanism for wheelchair users need to be considered.
16.Electrical switches, socket outlets, ventilation and service controls at a usable height ie between 450mm and 1200mm from floor level (Part M also for convenient height for all)	Applicable to all rooms including kitchens, bathrooms and WC compartments	Adopted as standard (see also SDS R)	Already specified by HA s

10. FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 10.1 The Housing Corporation regards Section 106 agreements as having the potential to provide affordable housing additional to that provided through publicly funded programmes. Therefore, it has a general policy of not allocating public subsidy through Social Housing Grant for affordable housing provided through Section 106 agreements.
- 10.2 Where affordable housing is sought, in the absence of any other subsidy, an element of subsidy will have to be provided by the developer.
- 10.3 If the developer agrees in a section 106 agreement to build dwellings and transfer them to a Registered Social Landlord the transfer price is calculated using a rental stream approach. This is where the price paid by the Registered Social Landlord is determined by calculating the ability of the Registered Social Landlord to borrow on the basis of the net rent of the affordable dwelling and the Registered Social Landlord pays to the developer the capital sum derived by the mortgage that can be serviced by the affordable rent over a 25-year term.
- 10.4 The other way of providing affordable housing is through the transfer of a fully served site, which is suitable, and with full access rights to the housing association. In this case, the price of the land paid by the Registered Social Landlord must allow Registered Social Landlord to borrow on a sum of money that will pay for the land and construction of the affordable housing and pay off this sum of money through an affordable rent over a 25 year term.
- 10.5 The price of shared ownership housing is calculated on a similar basis. However, this will be adjusted to ensure that the person in housing need can afford to pay the mortgage and rent over the 25-year period and meet the objectives of the Council's affordable housing policy.
- 10.6 A schedule of the guide prices (subject to any increase) that Registered Social Landlord can pay developers to acquire the relevant affordable housing units (taking into account the need to achieve affordable rents and values) is set out in the table below and will be updated annually in May by applying the Retail Prices Index.

RSL payments for each property type 2005/06

Unit Type and Size (Sq. m)	High Value Area		Medium Value Area		Low Value Area	
	Average Rent (£)	RSL Payment (£)	Average Rent (£)	RSL Payment (£)	Average Rent (£)	RSL Payment (£)
1 bed. 2P Flat						
46 Sq. m	53.64	42,350	52.88	41,900	52.11	41,500
2 bed 3P Flat						
56 Sq. m	63.52	47,830	61.22	46,550	59.69	45,700
2 bed 4P Hse						
76 Sq.m	67.74	50,175	63.91	48,000	61.99	47,000
3 bed 5P Hse						
86 Sq. m	70.38	51,650	66.55	49,500	65.40	48,850
3 bed 6P Hse						
98 Sq. m	73.45	53,350	68.46	50,550	66.55	49,500
4 bed 7P Hse						
120 Sq. m	78.01	55,850	72.64	52,875	70.72	51,800

11. SELECTION OF REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

- 11.1 The following list sets out the Preferred RSLs specified in Section 106 agreements which developers are expected to select from in relation to affordable housing provision. These comprise the main RSLs undertaking new social housing developments in Coventry and who have substantial housing stock in the city.

Accord Housing Association
Focus Housing (Prime Focus)
Jephson Homes HA
Mercian HA
Orbit HA
Touchstone (part of Keynote Group)
Whitefriars Housing Group

These RSL's have agreed to the approach to financing as put forward in this SPG which will also be expected to apply to any other RSL that may be involved as a result of paragraph 11.2 below.

- 11.2 The Council will give consideration to accepting an RSL from outside the Preferred List if the Developer considers there is a valid reason to put forward an alternative. However, the Developer must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the alternative RSL in relation to the affordable housing has suitable procedures and long-term arrangements in place to provide for sustainable and responsive management and maintenance, dealing with tenancy matters and addressing complaints at local level.

12. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE NOT TRANSFERRED TO RSLs

12.1 The Council encourages landowners and developers to transfer affordable housing to Registered Social Landlords as they have the housing management structures that provides levels of service that the Council has confidence in.

12.2 However there may cases where the developer may wish to provide affordable housing without the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord. If this is the case the Council may seek a share in the property, or nominate the share to an appropriate body. The Council will not seek to gain any financial liability through any share nominated, but will be required to give consent before the property can be disposed of/transferred by the owners. If the developer does wish to provide the affordable housing in this way, then the developer will be required to gain accreditation under the Council's Coventry Accredited Property Scheme and enter into an appropriate legal agreement or Section 106 agreement that fully demonstrates how accessibility and permanence would be achieved in the long term. This will include provision for:

- The procedures for management, maintenance and future major repair of the affordable housing over the life of the scheme.
- Details of housing allocations, lettings and equal opportunities policies, basis of tenancies, complaints procedures and arrangements for liaison with the Council on its exercise of nomination rights.
- The maintenance of the applicable standards in order to retain accreditation under the Council's Coventry Accredited Property Scheme.

13. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 13.1 It is strongly recommended that prospective applicants informally consult the Council's Planning and Housing Strategy Officers before the submission of a planning application so that any issues of interpretation of this SPG can be resolved and an indication of the appropriate mix, number, type, location, tenure for the affordable housing element can be agreed.
- 13.2 The Council will subsequently seek to ensure that there is close consultation between Planning and Housing Officers and other agencies such as RSLs where necessary.
- 13.3 Consistent with the ODPM publication Best Practice Guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications any planning application that is submitted will not be registered unless adequate information is submitted to show how affordable housing requirements are to be met. This must include the heads of terms for the Section 106 agreements and an agreed affordable housing scheme, together with a management schedule. The affordable housing scheme and management schedule should have a description of the affordable housing provided, how they meet the needs identified in the housing needs survey, how they will be managed and how the dwellings will be distributed across the site. This SPG is intended to guide the detail although pre-application discussions with housing and planning officers are encouraged so that delay can be avoided.
- 13.4 On large development sites the landowner or developer will be expected to submit a master plan in accordance with the requirements of BE3 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001.

14. CONTENT OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 14.1 Where affordable housing is sought, planning obligations will be required as a pre—condition of the grant of planning permission to ensure that it is provided in accordance with the permission and occupied as intended. As stated earlier this SPG will form the basis of requirements and any clarification should be resolved prior to the formal submission of the application so that the Heads of terms can be consulted on.
- 14.2 A model Section 106 agreement has been prepared and can be obtained from the Council's Legal and Democratic Services Directorate. The agreement will include:
- Mix of affordable housing types and sizes
 - Location or distribution of affordable housing within the development site
 - How completed dwellings or land are to be transferred to an Registered Social Landlord or other provider, including costs and phasing of handover
 - Occupancy criteria for the proposal where a partner Registered Social Landlord is not involved
 - Minimum design requirements for the affordable housing units
 - Timing of construction and the occupation of the land or affordable element in relation to the development of the whole site
 - The timing and conditions of the transfer of the land or affordable housing to a Registered Social Landlord.
 - Arrangements regarding the future affordability, management and ownership of the affordable housing, particularly if a Registered Social Landlord is not involved. The Council will seek nomination rights in relation to affordable units provided
- 14.3 Where exceptionally Off Site Affordable Housing Contribution is accepted provisions will require measures to ensure that the contribution enables the affordable housing to be provided on an alternative site or sites within a specified timescale

15. COUNCIL CONTACTS

1.Planning:

City Development Directorate
Civic Centre 4, Tower Block
Little Park Street
Coventry CV1 2PY

Contacts –

Niall McChesney – Senior Planning Officer – Tel 024 7683 1312
E mail : Niall.McChesney@coventry.gov.uk

2. Housing :

Housing Strategy Team
Housing Policy & Services
Coventry City Council
5th Floor Spire House
New Union Street
Coventry CV1 2PW

Contacts –

John Stanway– Housing Enabling Officer – Tel 024 7683 1979
Sally Rosser Housing Enabling Officer Tel 024 7683 2426
David Marsh – Housing Strategy Assistant –Tel 024 7683 2226

3. Legal Agreements

Legal and Democratic Services Directorate
Council House
Earl Street
Coventry
CV1 5RR

Contacts –

Clarissa Evans - Commercial Group Manager – 024 76833083
E mail : clarissa.evans@coventry.gov.uk

ANNEXES:

ANNEX 1

Policy H 10 of the Coventry Development Plan

H 10: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In order to meet demonstrable housing needs across the City, planning permission (or its renewal) for residential development in the following categories will, if the sites are suitable for affordable housing, be conditional upon negotiation of an appropriate element of affordable housing:

- development of residential sites allocated in Policy H 8; and
- other development of residential sites of 1 or more hectares or of 25 or more dwellings.

In such cases, an element comprising at least 25% of the proposed number of dwellings will normally be sought.

Sites will be considered suitable for such an element of affordable housing unless:

- the proposal is wholly for private sheltered housing on a site of not more than one hectare;
- there is already a high concentration of such dwellings in the nearby area;
- the site is inaccessible by a choice of means of transport; or
- there are abnormal development costs such that the economic viability of the proposal would be prejudiced.

ANNEX 2

West Midlands Local Government Association Definition of Affordable Housing:

- A. Housing provided by an organisation – such as a registered social landlord or local authority - allocating on the basis of need. While such dwellings will normally be made available for rent, they may also include subsidised home ownership, shared ownership, where a registered social landlord or local authority has a continuing interest; and
- B. Low-cost market housing, helping to meet the needs of first time buyers, single people, the elderly and other low income households, who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market.

