

# **ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES**

## **UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PROPOSED ALTERATIONS FOR DEPOSIT**

### **PART II**

#### **DETAILED POLICIES**

Chapters 3 to 14 provide detailed local policies on a topic basis. These will guide day to day decisions on development in the Royal Borough. Strategic policies are repeated so that all the related policies on a topic are together. Chapter 15 provides guidelines for proposal sites.



## CHAPTER 3

# HOUSING AND THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

### Introduction

- 3.1 Housing is a topic of great importance in planning because
- it constitutes a basic human need
  - it is a major use of land, particularly in boroughs such as Kingston, and
  - people spend a great deal of time within their immediate residential environment, and are therefore very interested in it and affected by it.
- 3.2 Housing and its provision has economic and social implications as well as purely physical ones. The framework of planning legislation is such that planning policies are expected to concentrate on the physical manifestations of housing, while taking the social implications into consideration.
- 3.3 This means that the policies within this chapter concentrate on
- facilitating the provision of a sufficient amount of housing development to contribute towards the regional and London-wide requirement;
  - facilitating the provision of housing, of different types and in a variety of locations, to serve people's differing needs;
  - encouraging a good standard of design and amenity for residents, their neighbours and in terms of the wider street scene;

Overall, housing is seen as a strategic priority in the plan (see paragraph 1.10).

- 3.4 Planning policies and powers form part of a complex web of national housing policy. The amount of future residential development in the borough relates not only to the market demand exhibited by people wishing to live here, but also to what the borough as a whole can contribute to the regional and London-wide housing requirements as set out in regional and strategic planning guidance from the Secretary of State. Future housing supply in the borough will be ensured by making effective use of the limited opportunities for new residential development and by supporting the maintenance and improvement of the existing residential housing stock.
- 3.5 Most housing will be provided, whether for sale or rent, by the private market, and there are limitations on planning powers to demand particular types, styles, sizes or layouts of housing. Whether a dwelling is owner-occupied or rented is not generally a planning matter. Planning policies concentrate on wider matters affecting visual appearance in relation to the wider area and issues of amenity (An exception is "affordable housing" - see below). The Building Regulations, under separate legislation, cover detailed matters such as the suitability of construction technique, energy efficiency and drainage.

- 3.6 At the wider level planning policy should attempt to provide for the spectrum of people's housing needs. Again, there are limitations on planning powers in this regard, but one of the most significant changes in government policy in recent years has been to allow Councils to provide specifically for the development of "affordable housing" to cater for those who cannot afford local open market prices. The definition of "affordable" in the plan is tailored to the local circumstances of this comparatively wealthy and attractive area of south west London, where market demand tends to result in high house prices and rents and the provision of affordable housing is seen as important.
- 3.7 Planning policies link to those of the Council's Community Services Directorate which produces an annual Housing Strategy document setting out ways of meeting the borough's housing needs using a variety of methods. Many of these are detailed financial provisions quite outside planning powers, but liaison between the relevant Council staff means that where possible, joint action can be promoted. An example of this is encouraging housing associations to invest in flats over shops, thus meeting planning and housing objectives.
- 3.8 The special needs of people requiring sheltered or other accommodation providing care are assessed within the Council's Community Care Plan. This type of residential accommodation can give rise to particular planning issues, including parking and servicing, and policies within the chapter set out criteria for dealing with such developments. At the other end of the spectrum, student halls of residence and hostels for single people are valuable forms of residential accommodation which relieve pressure on the main stock of housing in the borough, but their location and design need to be carefully considered.
- 3.9 Chapter 15 contains a number of sites identified as suitable to meet various types of housing needs.
- 3.10 Overall the borough has a wide variety of different types of housing and a generally pleasant residential environment. The policies in this chapter are intended to ensure that future provision maintains these characteristics.

## STRATEGIC POLICIES

### Housing Supply STR1

**Please Note**

This Policy have been superseded by the London Plan Policy- Borough Housing Targets Policy (3A.2)

~~THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH, BY AT LEAST 6710 NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS (INCLUDING 1900 NON SELF-CONTAINED UNITS), TO BE PROVIDED BETWEEN 1997 AND 2016.~~

~~IN PARTICULAR THE COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE AND THE DISTRICT CENTRES.~~

3.11 In 1999 the London Boroughs, in collaboration with LPAC, undertook a housing capacity study to estimate the likely sources of housing provision in the capital between 1997 and 2016. The study, to be updated during 2005, provided the basis for LPAC's 1999 supplementary advice on housing capacity. The Council, in conjunction with LPAC, estimated that the borough should make provision for at least 4810 net additional dwellings and a further 1900 units of non self-contained accommodation between 1997 and 2016, whether by new building, change of use or the conversion of dwellings into smaller units. This figure takes into account the need to safeguard environmental quality, and reflects the limited opportunities for new building within the borough as opposed to expressions of demand, which, as elsewhere in London, is virtually limitless. The capacity figure is made up of a number of components and is divided into four phases. These are set out in Table H1 below:

TABLE H1 Estimated Housing Capacity (self-contained dwellings) in Kingston 1997-2016

Source of capacity	Capacity by Study Phase				Capacity 1997-2016
	1997-2001	2002-2006	2007-2011	2012-2016	
Large Identified Sites	1406	408	25	0	1839
Large Windfall Sites	164	240	225	210	839
Large Identified Offices	365	326	0	0	691
Large Office Windfalls	15	15	35	35	100
Small Conversions	100	100	100	100	400
Small Sites	234	234	234	234	936
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2284</b>	<b>1323</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>4805</b>
% by phase	47%	28%	13%	12%	100%
Completions per annum	457	265	124	116	240

Note: The total figure of 4805 is rounded to the nearest 10 to **4810** in the policy in accordance with LPAC's normal practice. The total excludes the 1900 non self-contained units such as student accommodation and homes for elderly people with high care needs.

3.12 Table H1 includes development sites known to the Council, and an estimate of likely future 'windfall' sites, i.e. sites which cannot be identified in advance. Any figures for 10-20 years ahead must be highly speculative, especially on levels of windfall gains in a constrained and built up urban area like Kingston where identifiable redevelopment site opportunities are declining. Although the methodology adopted for estimating windfalls was agreed London-wide, and has been consistently applied it will be important to monitor and review the figures in future years.

3.13 In view of the uncertainties involved in assessing future land availability, the proposed level of provision is not promoted as a target and is not intended to be overly prescriptive or inflexible. It is seen as a broad guide to the amount of residential accommodation which can be satisfactorily achieved up to 2016 and which the Council regards as making an important contribution to meeting London's overall needs. Any future amendment to Kingston's housing capacity assessment by the Council, the Mayor for London or the Secretary of State will

be monitored through the Council's annual monitoring process. At the end of December 1999 a total of 2,500 units towards Kingston's housing provision figure of 4810 self-contained dwellings were either completed, under construction, had planning permission or had been granted planning permission subject to completion of a legal agreement.

3.14 The encouragement of new residential accommodation and reuse of vacant property within the town and district centres and other areas is part of the plan's strategy. Not only is this a sustainable approach, reducing the need for residents to travel, but it also promotes a strong sense of community and a thriving night-time economy. This priority is highlighted in a number of Part II policies in the chapters which deal with Housing (Policy H4), Kingston Town Centre (Policies KTC5 and KTC8) and the District Centres priority policies.

## **Residential Environment STR2**

### Please Note

This Policy has been superseded by London Plan Policies- Maximising the potential of sites (3A.3) and Design Principles for a compact City (4B.1)

**THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE SAFEGUARDING AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE ENHANCEMENT, OF THE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS, AND WILL RESIST OVER-DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN CRAMMING.**

3.15 The Council accepts that increasing density may not necessarily harm local character and amenity. However it is important to balance the use of higher densities by taking careful account of the effects of any development. This is to avoid unacceptable development in terms of, for example, what may be termed over development and "town cramming", which would result in the erosion of the character and amenity of the Borough's residential areas.

3.16 Although redevelopment, infill and conversions make a contribution to the future supply of housing, particular emphasis will be given to safeguarding the residential environment consistent with the guidance given in PPG12, PPG17 and PPG3, and ensuring that new development is appropriate to its surroundings and does not detract from the character of the area.

3.17 The Council will seek to enhance the character and environment of residential areas through a variety of means, for example:

- use of its development control and enforcement powers to achieve sympathetic development and remove harmful developments and activities;
- implementing programmes of environmental improvement and protection and planting of trees;
- implementing traffic calming measures;
- where appropriate, designating Conservation Areas or Local Areas of Special Character (see Built Environment chapter).

## Housing Need

### STR3

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**THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS OF THE BOROUGH ENJOY A STANDARD OF ACCOMMODATION TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION WILL NEED TO BE GIVEN TO GROUPS WHICH HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS OR LIMITED ACCESS TO THE HOUSING MARKET INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, ELDERLY PEOPLE, STUDENTS AND PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES.**

- 3.18 The Council seeks the provision of a range and mix of housing types, sizes and styles to meet the various needs and aspirations of the local community. The importance of providing housing for lower and middle income households and special needs housing is recognised in Draft Strategic Guidance. Groups with particular needs include the elderly and very frail, and people with mental or physical disabilities. Accommodation designed to meet their specific needs is extremely important to their quality of life. In seeking to ensure that the housing needs of specific groups are met, it is recognised that people often have more than one special need, for example, people with a disability and on low incomes.
- 3.19 Kingston is an area of high house prices, and in recognising the difficulty faced by many local people in gaining access to the housing market the Council will seek the provision of affordable housing in accordance with an assessment of local need, in line with PPG3 Housing. Many outer boroughs have an acute problem in that many newly-formed households are not on high incomes, local house prices are high and there is little public rented housing to meet their needs.

## DETAILED POLICIES

### Protection of Residential Amenities

#### H1

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**IN DETERMINING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE NEED TO SAFEGUARD RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES IN TERMS OF:-**

- A. NOISE AND DISTURBANCE;**
- B. PRIVACY AND SAFETY;**
- C. OUTLOOK;**
- D. DAYLIGHT.**

- 3.20 The first intention of this policy is to preclude the introduction of non-residential uses incompatible with the amenity of the area. This is particularly important where developments would attract extraneous traffic conflicting with the emphasis on traffic calming and safety, especially where road widths are below modern standards and where on-street parking is important for residents. The

Council will give consideration to the fact that some uses which would not be appropriate in a predominately residential area may not necessarily be incompatible with existing housing in a mixed use or commercial urban area. It is important to safeguard the interests of adjoining residents by ensuring that their amenities, such as garden space, privacy and the character of the area, are maintained. In considering any development, including extensions to residential property and proposals for the sub-division of existing plots, considerable care and attention will be given to ensuring a secure environment, satisfactory parking and protection from noise etc. Policy BE12 and its associated text explain how sunlight and daylight will be assessed.

## Residential and Other Uses in Residential Areas

### H2

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**WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS THE RESIDENTIAL USE OF LAND WILL NORMALLY BE AN ACCEPTABLE USE, AND THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE REPLACEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL USES WITH A RESIDENTIAL USE OR OTHER USE COMPATIBLE WITH THE AREA WHERE THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER PLAN POLICIES.**

- 3.21 The aim of this policy is to achieve a balance between the need for housing and local environmental constraints, including the protection of the borough's established residential areas. The history and geography of the borough's urban form have resulted in the creation of very few "mixed use" areas. The borough's residential areas are characterised by established estates whose uniformity in layout and visual appearance is a key feature, and where the introduction of non-residential uses would be clearly out of character. The character of older residential areas surrounding Kingston, New Malden and Surbiton is largely determined by their layout, which cannot easily accommodate the requirements of modern businesses such as parking and servicing. Thus, in seeking to safeguard the character of the borough's residential areas the Council has taken account of the need to make satisfactory provision for business and other uses elsewhere in the borough.
- 3.22 The proposals map identifies Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and also industrial areas and local shopping areas throughout the borough. The relevant town and district centre inset maps identify areas where office and retail use will be appropriate, though not so as to preclude the suitability of a residential use (see Policy H4). Other areas are used as public or private open space. Areas not specifically identified for any of these purposes can be seen as residential areas and housing will normally be the appropriate use for any land which does come forward for development.
- 3.23 This policy establishes a general presumption in favour of residential use of land not now used for that purpose where siting and circumstances are appropriate. 'Residential Use' means use in Class C3 of the Use Classes Order, plus those uses in Classes C1 and C2 providing a permanent or sole place of residence for the occupant.

- 3.24 It is not the intention to promote the redevelopment of land now used for community purposes but to protect existing community uses and allow redevelopment of surplus sites for alternative community uses. The use of land within predominantly residential areas for community purposes will be considered in accordance with Policy CS1 as an alternative to residential use where it is essential for the effective delivery of the service, and where residential amenity and the environment are not unduly affected.
- 3.25 Community uses include education, social and health services, public utilities, libraries, community centres, meeting halls, churches, surgeries and other uses providing a similar service to residents in the surrounding area. Wherever possible such uses should be located within district or local centres or other accessible locations.
- 3.26 Other uses will be considered within predominantly residential areas on their planning merits including the form and location of the site and its relationship with the pattern of residential development. The Council would welcome the provision of new, small convenience shops in residential areas in accordance with Policy S6.
- 3.27 The Council intends to enable the provision of 4,810 additional dwellings and 1,900 non self-contained dwellings as set out in policy STR1. The Council gives high priority to the provision of housing (see para. 1.10). It is necessary to identify additional sites to compensate for the fact that some sites may not be developed by 2016 due to unforeseen circumstances.

## **Change from Residential Use H3**

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**UNLESS THERE ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE COUNCIL WILL RESIST THE LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL LAND AND BUILDINGS TO OTHER USES.**

## **~~Provision of Residential Accommodation Above Ground Floor H4~~**

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**~~IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE, THE DISTRICT AND LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES, THE COUNCIL WILL:-~~**

- ~~1. IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE GIVE PRIORITY TO RESIDENTIAL USE OF UPPER FLOORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY KTC5;~~**
- ~~2. IN THE DISTRICT AND LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES GIVE PRIORITY, SUBJECT TO AMENITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, TO THE RESIDENTIAL USE OF UPPER FLOORS IN SHOPPING STREETS;~~**

### **~~3. GIVE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON APPROPRIATE SITES IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE AND THE DISTRICT CENTRES.~~**

- ~~3.28 Building new dwellings will not be effective in meeting housing requirements if the current stock is diminished without replacement. Thus, unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is the Council's intention to prevent the change from residential use of any building that can still be used, with or without adaptation, for residential purposes. This approach is supported in Draft Strategic Guidance.~~
- ~~3.29 It is the Council's intention to encourage a range of residential accommodation in order to promote choice and variety and to reflect the differing needs, lifestyles and aspirations of the resident population. Not all households have cars or want gardens and for some smaller and non-family households the convenience of 'living over the shop' may outweigh poorer amenity. In encouraging the provision of residential accommodation above ground floor, it is the Council's aim to combat the under-utilisation of space above shops, providing a much needed supply of what is often cheaper accommodation. An added benefit is enhanced vitality and security as a result of extending the normal range of activities outside working hours in the borough's local district and town centres.~~
- ~~3.30 The Council may relax the application of its policies on external amenity space for residential accommodation above the ground floor in shopping streets and other exceptional situations where it is considered impractical. However, the Council will encourage the self-containment of such accommodation and in addition will encourage all proposals involving above-shop residential use to make satisfactory provision for access and storage of domestic refuse, in order to provide and maintain a satisfactory environment for residents and shoppers.~~
- ~~3.31 Unless there are exceptional circumstances which lead to the significant achievement of other policy objectives in the plan, the Council will resist the encroachment of other uses on land and buildings in residential use. When considering proposals the Council will take into account the existing character of the area, the achievement of satisfactory residential conditions, the availability of alternative locations for the proposed use, the effect of the proposed use on adjoining occupiers, and the appearance of the building. Careful consideration will also need to be given to the needs of appropriate community uses such as schools – see Policies H2 and CS1.~~
- ~~3.32 The Council's view is that in general the location of residential accommodation on main roads, in town centres, or within mixed use areas, is not sufficient reason to justify the loss of a residential unit. Similarly the needs of existing businesses can normally be met elsewhere within the borough or wider area without expanding into adjoining residential areas. In some instances improvements to buildings to provide satisfactory accommodation will be necessary and this may entail expenditure. Some expenditure will be necessary, however, whatever the final use of the building, and the fact that improvement for residential use may not provide as high a return as another use does not justify the loss of existing residential accommodation. The~~

~~Council has a degree of control over the demolition of residential buildings, wherever they are located, and will consider the implications for local amenity in the light of Circular 10/95 (See also para. 3.40).~~

## ~~New Residential Development~~ ~~H5~~

### Please Note

This Policy have been superseded by the London Plan Policies- Maximising the potential of sites (3A.3) & Design Principles for a compact City (4B.1)

~~NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD MAKE THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF URBAN LAND WITHOUT DAMAGING THE CHARACTER AND AMENITY OF ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREAS. PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD RESPECT THE ESTABLISHED CHARACTER IN TERMS OF:-~~

- ~~(A) THE PREVAILING DENSITY OF THE LOCALITY;~~
- ~~(B) THE SCALE OF BUILDINGS;~~
- ~~(C) THE SITING OF BUILDINGS AND THE SPACE AROUND THEM;~~
- ~~(D) THE SAFEGUARDING OF IMPORTANT FEATURES EXISTING ON THE SITE;~~
- ~~(E) AVOIDING PROVISION OF PARKING OR GARAGING IN BACK GARDENS EXCEPT WHERE THIS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE AREA.~~

## ~~Residential Density~~ ~~H6~~

### Please Note

This Policy has been superseded by London Plan Policies- Maximising the potential of sites (3A.3) & Design Principles for a compact City (4B.1)

~~A. PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, WHETHER BY NEW BUILDING OR CONVERSION, SHALL RESPECT THE DENSITY PREVAILING IN THE LOCALITY. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SPECIAL DENSITY AREAS LISTED BELOW AND CONSERVATION AREAS AND LOCAL AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER, NEW HOUSING PROPOSALS SHOULD NORMALLY BE DEVELOPED AT A MINIMUM DENSITY OF 30 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE. HOWEVER ANY EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CLEARLY OUT OF CHARACTER WITH THE AREA WILL NOT SET A PRECEDENT FOR HIGHER DENSITIES.~~

~~B. IN AREAS OF:~~

- ~~1. BERRYLANDS~~
- ~~2. THETFORD ROAD~~
- ~~3. HIGH DRIVE/DICKERAGE ROAD~~

~~NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT NORMALLY EXCEED 123 HABITABLE ROOMS PER NET RESIDENTIAL HECTARE (50 HABITABLE ROOMS PER ACRE).~~

~~C. IN SOUTHBOROUGH, NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT NORMALLY EXCEED 74 HABITABLE ROOMS PER NET RESIDENTIAL HECTARE (30 HABITABLE ROOMS PER ACRE).~~

~~D. IN COOMBE, NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT NORMALLY EXCEED 62 HABITABLE ROOMS PER NET RESIDENTIAL HECTARE (25 HABITABLE ROOMS PER ACRE).~~

~~E. IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND LOCAL AREAS OF SPECIAL CHARACTER THE PREVAILING EXISTING DENSITY SHOULD NOT BE EXCEEDED UNLESS IT WOULD MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.~~

~~F: SOME AREAS OF THE BOROUGH, INCLUDING KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE AND AREAS THAT ARE HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING HIGHER DENSITY DEVELOPMENT. IN THESE AREAS HIGHER RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES WILL BE ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO THE QUALITY OF THE DESIGN OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME, AND PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICIES H1 AND H5.~~

~~THE BOUNDARIES OF THE AREAS SPECIFIED IN B, C, AND D ARE SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.~~

~~3.33 Making the most efficient use of land and the best use of previously developed land, including reusing empty property, underpin the objectives of policies for new residential development. However, use of land should respect local character and amenity considerations that are important to attractive environments in which people will choose to live. A particular feature of the Royal Borough is the substantial residential areas that have been developed at relatively low densities, resulting in pleasant and popular suburbs consisting largely of family houses set within spacious gardens. In 1991, the 'Residential Environment and Amenity Study' identified space around buildings as a feature of the borough's residential environment which is being eroded, primarily through the pressure for development of infill and backland sites, sub-division of plots, and the replacement of existing dwellings with higher density development. The cumulative impact of this, mainly small-scale, development is the creeping erosion of the attractive character and amenity of the borough's established residential areas, known as "town cramming". This affects not only the private outlook and amenity space of residents, but also the public street scene. The need to protect the environmental character of particular localities is recognised in national and strategic guidance and policies H5 and H6 aim to do this. Policy RES3 sets out issues to be taken into account in determining planning applications generally.~~

~~3.34 Density policy is an important tool in controlling residential development, whether new development or conversion, to ensure that proposals are of a scale and layout that is consistent with the established character of an area. Usually the prevailing density in a locality will be the guide. Where it is not possible to identify a prevailing density the 'Residential Environment and Amenity Study' showed that a density of between 123-173 habitable rooms (24-37 units) per net residential hectare (50-70 habitable rooms per acre) was appropriate as it is the prevailing density over much of the borough, and this guideline has normally been applied to proposals for residential development for family housing. The guideline provides for houses with gardens and low rise flats and seeks the efficient use of land whilst maintaining a diverse housing stock.~~

~~3.35 Specific density guidelines apply to the lower density areas listed in Policy H6 and shown on the Proposals Map. These areas have been identified as having a coherent, attractive character derived to a large extent from the density of~~

~~development which is lower than is usual in the borough. Retaining the spaciousness of these areas will ensure that the borough continues to provide a broad range and choice of housing types in accordance with PPG3. Higher density development should not be allowed to undermine the character of Conservation Areas, Local Areas of Special Character or harm the setting of Listed Buildings.~~

~~3.36 In some parts of the borough, higher densities may be appropriate for new residential development in order to make efficient use of land (PPG3 indicates a range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare). This includes localities which are well served by public transport, town centres, and other centres with good access to shops and services. In these locations the Council will seek greater intensity of development in line with PPG3 "Housing". Policy 4B.3 of the London Plan ("Maximising the potential of sites"), as well as the London Plan's "Density location and parking matrix (Table 4B.1) which is a strategic framework for achieving appropriate densities at different locations whilst reflecting and enhancing existing local character. Higher density residential developments that consist mainly of non-family housing, achieving good design and site layout, and which satisfy the requirements of other relevant policies will normally be permitted. Higher densities may also be permitted to meet the varied needs of different types of households including elderly people, single person households, and people entering the housing market for the first time, provided that proposals do not result in the introduction of features out of character within the locality e.g. rear garden parking. However, higher densities should not be achieved through the surrender of local green spaces. Outside the special density areas, new residential development in the borough in recent years has generally achieved the minimum density guideline of 30 dwellings per hectare contained in PPG3. Within the borough 30 dwellings per hectare equates broadly to 150 habitable rooms per hectare.~~

~~3.37 On infill sites for single dwellings the effect of the proposed development on the amenities of adjoining residents and the need to protect important features are likely to be the most important considerations. However, all development sites should reflect the spaciousness characteristic of existing dwellings in the locality to ensure new development is in scale and character and amenity space is retained. In accord with PPG3 and PPG17, a reasonable balance must be achieved between adequate provision for development and the need to retain land for recreation, amenity or nature conservation purposes. In most existing residential areas of the borough the predominant form of amenity space is the private garden. The retention of existing site features, such as notable trees or walls, can be a benefit to both future residents and to the street scene.~~

~~3.38 Where family accommodation is proposed an appropriate level of amenity space will be expected. Any proposals for major new developments which provide family accommodation will be required to provide play areas in accordance with policy RL7. Adequate distance needs to be retained between buildings to safeguard the privacy of occupiers of both existing and proposed dwellings, to allow access to sunlight and daylight and to allow an appropriately spacious layout in keeping with the area (see also policies BE11 and BE12).~~

- ~~3.39 The provision of parking and garaging in back gardens, where it is not characteristic of the area can cause noise and disturbance to adjoining residents. Part E of policy H5 aims to prevent the proliferation of parking areas which reduce amenity space at the rear of residential property. In some areas single domestic garages in rear gardens, served off a back lane, are characteristic. However, the introduction of larger areas of parking, serving more than one residential unit, is not considered appropriate. Layouts for residential development should take this into account.~~
- ~~3.40 The scarcity of development land in the borough is increasing the pressure to develop infill sites. In some situations this involves the demolition and replacement of existing satisfactory dwellings. The Council will resist the demolition of a dwelling or building adjoining a dwelling where harm is caused to the local character and amenity of an area, as outlined in Circular 10/95. All applications for demolition will be considered in relation to the requirements set out in Circular 10/95 and the relevant sections of the Building Regulations. In exceptional circumstances, where the Council wishes to prevent the demolition of a dwellinghouse, or building adjoining a dwellinghouse, an Article 4 direction may be served.~~

## **Residential Conversions and Houses in Multiple Occupation H7**

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**THE CONVERSION OF LARGE HOUSES INTO SMALLER UNITS OR MULTIPLE OCCUPATION WILL BE ALLOWED PROVIDED THAT NO SIGNIFICANT HARM IS CAUSED TO:**

- A. THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA;**
  - B. THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY RESIDENTS;**
  - C. THE FREE FLOW OF TRAFFIC AND THE SAFETY OF HIGHWAY USERS.**
- THE CONVERSION OF OTHER BUILDINGS WILL BE ALLOWED SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE CRITERIA. A LARGE HOUSE IS DEFINED AS A DWELLING THAT HAS MORE THAN THREE BEDROOMS AND A NET FLOORSPACE OF MORE THAN 116 SQ M (1,248 SQ FT) (BASED ON THE ORIGINAL FLOORSPACE AND THE NUMBER OF BEDROOMS PRIOR TO ANY EXTENSION).**

- 3.41 While the average family size is decreasing, and flats and houses in multiple occupation form an important (and often cheaper) part of the housing stock, there is also a need to maintain the stock of smaller family housing. Conversions usually result in a number of self contained flats, while houses in multiple occupation typically consist of bedsits with shared facilities. Dwellings proposed for conversion must have a layout capable of satisfactory subdivision and the units to be provided must be of a satisfactory size. Many modern houses and Victorian terraced cottages lack both, leading, for example, to noise disturbance for neighbours and difficulties in providing separate access and internal facilities.
- 3.42 Conversion schemes will be expected to achieve satisfactory environmental standards for the benefit of residents and neighbours. The existing curtilage

should be retained and made available as amenity space for residents, and the further subdivision of flats will be resisted. Sound insulation is a matter dealt with under the Building Regulations.

- 3.43 Particular attention should be paid to alterations which materially affect the external appearance of the property as a result of conversion, so that new porches, doors and windows are unobtrusive and do not adversely affect important design features. Proposals for residential conversion should include details of suitably enclosed refuse storage areas providing adequate screening where necessary. Similarly, external staircases should avoid overlooking, and should maintain light and privacy to adjoining properties and other units created within the conversion. In all cases the external appearance of the property following alteration should be satisfactory and avoid clutter.
- 3.44 The provision of adequate car parking in association with conversions presents particular problems in balancing a reasonable standard of off-street parking with visual quality and the need to provide amenity space. Results from the Council's 'Residential Environment and Amenity Study' indicate that where conversions have been permitted with the requisite amount of off-street parking, the result has been in many cases a reduction in garden size of 50-75%. In considering proposals for residential conversion, parking standards will be examined in conjunction with the provision of amenity space. The proposed development should be reduced in scale where both these features cannot be provided. The retention of landscaping and amenity space is of particular importance in conservation areas and areas of special character.
- 3.45 Where it is feasible, car spaces should be at the side of the property, and no car should obstruct the free passage of another. However it is more important to avoid the use of rear gardens for parking or garaging of vehicles unless this is a predominant existing characteristic of the area (see Policy H5). Where forecourt parking is the only viable option, existing walls and fences should be retained where possible, with generous planting. As a guide, a separate pedestrian access to entrances in the building should be maintained, and approximately one third to half the width of the remainder of the garden should be landscaped.
- 3.46 Housing in multiple occupation can pose particular problems such as means of escape, parking and amenity. Environmental criteria applicable to conversions are equally relevant in the case of multiple occupation.

## **Separate Garage Blocks**

### **H8**

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~~WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF GARAGE BLOCKS SEPARATE FROM RESIDENTIAL UNITS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS THEY FORM PART OF, AND ARE TO BE USED SOLELY BY THE OCCUPIERS OF AN ASSOCIATED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE LOSS OF EXISTING GARAGES AND OFF-STREET PARKING SERVING A RESIDENTIAL~~

**DEVELOPMENT WILL BE RESISTED, ESPECIALLY WHERE ON-STREET PARKING IS WELL UTILISED.**

- 3.47 There have been recent pressures within residential areas to develop independent blocks of lock-up garages which are unrelated to and do not serve the occupants of a specific residential development. The Council is concerned at the effect of such development on the residential amenity of an area in terms of loss of security and privacy, and noise and disturbance over which surrounding residents, most likely to be affected, have no control.
- 3.48 The Council's view, supported at appeal, is that in seeking to create a secure environment it is important to avoid developments which encourage the uncontrolled access of strangers into private residential areas, a consequence of which is that intruders become less conspicuous.
- 3.49 Concurrently, the Council will seek to retain existing off-street parking provision. It is a Council priority to protect the amenity of residential areas; accordingly, the loss of off-street parking provision will not be acceptable where this would exacerbate an existing on-street parking problem to the detriment of the residential environment. Excessive on-street parking is not only visually intrusive, it also represents a danger to both pedestrians and drivers and can affect the passage of emergency vehicles. The amount of on-street parking in an area is largely influenced by off-street provision together with other factors including housing density, vicinity to a town or local shopping centre, and the inclusion within residential areas of other uses which generate additional parking demand.
- 3.50 In applying this policy the Council will oppose proposals leading to the loss of garaging and other off-street parking provision within residential areas, particularly where (either by day or night) 50% or more of the available kerbside in a road is occupied by parked vehicles.

## **Low Cost and Affordable Housing H9**

**THE COUNCIL, IN LIAISON WITH OTHER BODIES INCLUDING THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS, WILL ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE LOW COST AND SOCIAL RENTED ACCOMMODATION IN THE BOROUGH IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEED, BY:**

- (1) SEEKING PROVISION OF SOCIAL RENTED HOUSING PROVIDED BY REGISTERED LANDLORDS, THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OR OTHER SIMILAR AGENCIES;**
- (2) SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOW COST MARKET HOUSING, INCLUDING THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, THE RE-USE OF EMPTY PROPERTY AND BY BRINGING BACK INTO USE UNDERUTILISED RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION SUCH AS THAT ABOVE SHOPS; AND SUPPORTING OTHER INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE**

- COUNCIL'S PRIVATE LEASING SCHEME AND PROVISION OF HOUSING FOR KEY WORKERS;**
- (3) FOR PROPOSALS OF:**
- (i) 25 OR MORE DWELLINGS ON A SITE, 50% OF THESE SHOULD BE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING;**
  - (ii) 10-24 DWELLINGS ON A SUITABLE SITE AND ANY PROPOSAL FOR LESS THAN 10 DWELLINGS ON A SUITABLE SITE OF 0.3 HECTARES OR MORE, 30%-50% OF THESE SHOULD BE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING. IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL WITHIN THIS RANGE, CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE APPLICANT TO RELEVANT FACTORS INCLUDING MARKET AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, SITE CONSIDERATIONS AND ANY OTHER BENEFITS THAT THE PROPOSALS WOULD PROVIDE.**
  - (iii) WHERE A PROPOSAL INCLUDES LESS THAN 50% OR THE 30% RESPECTIVELY, CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE APPLICANT AS TO WHETHER A REDUCED LEVEL OF PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAN BE JUSTIFIED HAVING REGARD TO RELEVANT FACTORS INCLUDING MARKET AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, SITE CONSIDERATIONS AND ANY OTHER BENEFITS THAT THE PROPOSAL MAY PROVIDE. THE PROVISION OF AN ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON SITES BELOW THESE THRESHOLDS WILL BE SOUGHT THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE APPLICANT.**
- (4) SEEKING TO SECURE THE PROVISION OF THESE AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS THROUGH THE USE OF CONDITIONS, LEGAL AGREEMENTS AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS;**
- (5) NORMALLY REQUIRING ALL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO BE PROVIDED ON-SITE. HOWEVER, IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR EXAMPLE WHERE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET PRIORITY NEEDS CANNOT BE REALISTICALLY ACHIEVED ON THE SITE, THE COUNCIL MAY BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT PROVISION OFF-SITE FROM THE MAIN DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THAT A SUITABLE SITE IS IDENTIFIED AND AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT, OR BUILDINGS ACQUIRED OR CONVERTED, WITHIN THE SAME TIMESCALE.**

3.51 A high proportion of new housing completions are housing for sale at normal market rates which are beyond the reach of many newly formed households seeking separate accommodation. Consequently, housing need within the Borough continues to exceed supply, as evidenced by the length of time spent on Council waiting lists and increasing numbers of households in temporary accommodation. The 'affordability' gap has been increasing in recent years as both house prices and private rents have risen faster than inflation. Meanwhile, as the 1999 Housing Capacity Study indicates (Table H1), the supply of sites with potential for new housing development in the Borough is declining.

- 3.52 Within the Royal Borough, affordability and access to adequate housing is largely a function of the high cost of housing locally in this part of London and in the South East Region generally.
- 3.53 PPG3 "Housing" (2000) requires local authorities to provide sufficient housing to meet the requirements of the whole community including those in need of affordable and special needs housing. The estimated need for affordable housing in the Borough can be established from the Housing Needs Survey published in September 2001. The survey of backlog of existing need suggests a requirement for 117 units per year and from newly arising need a requirement for 1,695 units per annum totalling 1,812 per annum for the 5 years to 2006. The supply of affordable accommodation is estimated at 447 units, reducing the total to 1,365. This total of 6,825 additional affordable homes to meet the housing needs of the Borough in full far exceeds the 1997-2016 capacity figure for the Borough and illustrates the exceptional circumstances faced.
- 3.54 The RBK Housing Needs Survey was carried out in 2000/01 covering all areas and tenure groups. It achieved 1,260 personal interviews allowing accurate and detailed analysis of needs across the Borough. The key findings are summarised below:
- 9,126 households were estimated to be living in unsuitable housing (14.5%), by measures such as major disrepair and unfitness; of these, 1,867 would need to move and be looking to remain within the Borough.
  - The average household income (excluding benefits) of the Borough's residents was £28,033. This is higher than the national average, but conceals wide variations among tenure, household type, sub-area, ethnic group and special needs. One third of households have savings of less than £1,000.
  - 75% of those in unsuitable housing wishing to remain in the Borough could not afford to buy or rent.
  - Of the 146 households wishing to move now, none could afford to live in the Borough's private sector stock.
  - In addition to the homeless people living in accommodation secured through private leasing and other means (and accounted for within the survey sample), there are an additional 106 homeless people that could potentially require homeless housing.
  - No households in housing need are able to afford housing costing more than £133, £162 and £192 per week respectively for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings without the assistance of housing benefit. Therefore, for housing to be affordable to significant numbers of households in need, housing costs will need to be considerably below these maximum levels.
  - The newly arising need (1,695) comprises 507 from new household formation, 439 existing households falling into need, and 749 households currently living outside the Borough who would be unable to afford market housing.
- 3.55 Analysis from the draft Housing Needs Survey reveals that adhering to a higher site thresholds (e.g. +25 dwellings) and lower proportions (e.g. 25%) of affordable housing, would yield substantially less affordable units than the

threshold contained within the policy. This is due to the lack of sites projected to come forward large enough to trigger the mechanism. The significant extra yield will bring the amount of affordable housing provided nearer to the level required, and with differentiated targets according to site sizes (see paragraph 3.59) allow flexibility according to individual site constraints. Generally, however, viability will allow for 40% site target in most circumstances, and this requirement should be taken into consideration when a developer acquires the land.

- 3.56 The Council's ability to provide social housing has been greatly influenced by 'Right to Buy' and other legislation, which increasingly casts local authorities in the role of 'enabler' rather than 'provider' of social housing and results in a diminished stock of public rented accommodation. It is therefore the Council's intention, in accordance with national and strategic guidance, to encourage a supply of both cheaper market housing and affordable housing in order to address this need.
- 3.57 Affordable housing is defined as that which is accessible to those people whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to afford adequate housing locally in the open market. It includes:
- Social rented housing provided by local authorities, registered social landlords and other similar agencies where its cost to the occupier, however it is provided, is equivalent to the cost of registered social landlord accommodation of similar size and quality within the locality;
  - Low cost market housing for sale or rent, which demonstrably meets identified priority needs provided, for example, through schemes for shared ownership or equity, private leasing, or low-cost housing earmarked for agreed categories of essential key workers. These should achieve weekly outgoing levels significantly below the maximum affordable to households in housing need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. Such housing should be available, both initially and for subsequent occupancy, only to those with a demonstrable housing need.
- 3.58 The Council will support the development of smaller dwellings which in many cases tend to be the cheapest market housing, provided that proposals are of an acceptable design standard, and there would be no adverse affects on local amenity and character. This would include one and two bedroom 'starter' units, conversions and currently under-utilised residential accommodation such as that above shops. This type of unit would help those at the margin who are just able to afford the lowest market prices, and also help to meet needs of different types of households at appropriate densities as identified in para 3.32b. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG3) recognises that in some areas the realistic provision of affordable housing can only be achieved through the promotion of subsidised housing and studies including the RBK Housing Needs Survey, show that for a high proportion of new households even low cost market housing is out of reach.
- 3.59 In accordance with established need the Council will seek to ensure that at least 40% of future housing provision within the Borough constitutes affordable housing as defined in paragraph 3.50 and some 25% should be social rented

housing to meet the needs of those in most acute housing need. The 1999 Housing Capacity Study demonstrated that housing land supply in the Borough is constrained and that most sites coming forward for development during the plan period are likely to be smaller infill sites where securing a proportion of affordable housing is more difficult. Thus, it will be necessary to take full advantage of any large housing sites coming forward, where the provision of an element of affordable housing and priority categories of low cost housing is made viable through cross-subsidisation with market housing, in order that significant inroads can be made in meeting established housing need. The Council has adopted 40% of total future Borough housing provision as an achievable guideline for this purpose made up of 25% social rented with the remainder being other types of affordable low cost housing. In order to meet this, the “intermediate” – i.e. non-social rented - provision must demonstrably meet identified priority needs. Low cost housing that falls outside the definition in paragraph 3.50 will not be considered as a contribution to local affordable housing needs. The Council’s current waiting list, increased levels of accepted homeless and numbers in temporary accommodation in the Borough indicate that the supply of affordable housing required to meet current need accounts for a large proportion of the Secretary of State’s guideline figure for future housing provision. However, in view of the local circumstances relating to land availability and within the context of PPG3 and the need to ensure the provision of a range of housing types and sizes at varying prices, the Council has adopted the 40% guideline as a more realistic objective. To achieve an overall level of 40% in the Borough, 50% of the units will be sought as affordable on sites of 25 or more units and negotiated taking into account other planning policies and community benefits and market and site conditions, to ensure that a proposal is viable. On sites of 10 to 24 units between 30% and 50% will be negotiated.

- 3.60 It is unlikely that the amount of affordable housing delivered through the planning system will meet the full extent of need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. In operating the policy, the Council will ensure that affordable housing sought meets priority needs as defined in the Housing Act. Therefore the 25% rented element of the overall affordable housing will be provided in any scheme where affordable element is negotiated.
- 3.61 Within this framework the Council will regard the provision of affordable housing as a material consideration in determining applications for the residential development of identified proposal sites and other appropriate windfall sites coming forward for development on which 10 or more residential units are proposed. The Council will negotiate to secure the maximum reasonable proportion of affordable units, on a site by site basis, having regard to market and site conditions.
- 3.62 The Council will also encourage the provision of affordable units on sites smaller than the size threshold where feasible and practicable.
- 3.63 The provision of affordable housing will be monitored and reported as part of the Council’s annual monitoring process in addition to various indicators of need including those outlined in para 3.50, so that on sites coming forward for development the proportion of affordable housing required as a basis for

negotiation may vary from time to time to reflect the success (or otherwise) of all agencies in meeting the Council's target.

- 3.64 The Council will continue to support other initiatives leading to the provision of low-cost and affordable housing, such as converting existing buildings and bringing empty property into use subject to other relevant policies, and private leasing schemes.
- 3.65 The recruitment of key staff, especially for essential services, is difficult when housing in the open market is so expensive. There is an increasing need for intermediate housing for workers in key public services, and also for people on low to moderate incomes who find it difficult to compete in the housing market and require some assistance. Schemes ensuring nomination rights for key workers and households with low to moderate incomes will be encouraged. Such affordable housing will be expected to contribute towards meeting these intermediate needs and will be provided in addition to the social rented housing element in a scheme.
- 3.66 The Council will seek to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made so that social rented dwellings are normally affordable in perpetuity. The objective here is to ensure the availability of such housing to successive as well as initial occupiers in accordance with the requirements of PPG3. It is anticipated that such arrangements will normally involve registered social landlords, co-operatives or other similar agencies either to manage units completed by the developer or develop a proportion of a site allocated by the developer for affordable housing. Agreements with such organisations may be required in order to secure nomination rights for tenants from the Council's waiting list.
- 3.67 In exceptional circumstances where the provision of affordable housing cannot realistically be achieved on-site, the Council may be prepared to accept provision on another site. The factors to be considered include the ability of the site in terms of size and layout to meet priority housing needs, location, site configuration, and on-going costs and service charges. However, in view of the Borough's scarce development site opportunities, and to ensure that any financial contribution for off-site provision does actually secure additional affordable housing, commuted payments for off-site affordable units will only be accepted if an alternative site can be developed or existing buildings can be converted or housing acquired within the same timescale as the proposal site.

## **Sheltered Housing for Elderly People and People with Disabilities**

### **H10**

**THERE WILL BE SUPPORT FOR SCHEMES WHICH PROVIDE SHELTERED RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PROVIDED THERE IS A CONTINUING NEED FOR SUCH ACCOMMODATION AND PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL:-**

**(A) IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES;**

- (B) IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO LOCAL SHOPS, SERVICES AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES;**  
**(C) PROVIDES A SATISFACTORY ENVIRONMENT FOR RESIDENTS.**

- 3.68 The Council supports the guidelines contained in the advice note 'Sheltered Housing For Sale' (2nd Edition) produced by the House Builders Federation. The guidelines concerning location and design are equally applicable to all forms of accommodation for elderly people, which should provide attractive residential conditions in pleasant surroundings. The location should ideally be on level ground, with convenient access to bus stops, local shops including post offices, and other community services for the less mobile.
- 3.69 Some form of sheltered accommodation or group home is often preferred by disabled people, people with learning difficulties and the mentally ill, since it enables residents to live relatively independently within self-contained units whilst offering a degree of on-site support.
- 3.70 Housing for elderly people and people with disabilities should be integrated within the community where diverse groups can benefit from mutual support. An over-concentration of such accommodation which could alter the demographic balance would lose these advantages and could adversely affect the provision of accommodation to meet other housing needs, for example small households entering the market, and the ease with which local environmental standards can be maintained.
- 3.71 Some sites identified as appropriate for special needs housing, including sheltered accommodation for elderly and disabled people, are identified in Chapter 15.

**Please Note**

This Policy has been superseded by London Plan Policy- Housing Choice (3A.5)

**Mobility Housing  
H11**

~~THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE, WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE, ELEMENTS OF MOBILITY HOUSING AS PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT ON SUITABLE SITES.~~

**Please Note**

This Policy has been superseded by London Plan Policy- Housing Choice (3A.5)

**Wheelchair Housing  
H12**

~~IN DEVELOPMENTS OF 20 OR MORE DWELLING UNITS ON SUITABLE SITES, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE DEVELOPER FOR AN APPROPRIATE PROPORTION OF THE UNITS, CONSISTENT WITH THE ESTABLISHED NEED IN THE BOROUGH, TO BE CONSTRUCTED TO WHEELCHAIR HOUSING SPECIFICATIONS.~~

- ~~3.72 Accessible housing benefits everybody. Most people experience the problems of restricted mobility at some time in their lives, whether as a result of illness or injury, disability, or increasing age. The Council is keen to bring the benefits of an accessible environment to the attention of architects and builders and has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'Access for All'. Policies H11 and H12 on Mobility and Wheelchair Housing encourage the development of a stock of accessible accommodation, enabling people with disabilities to live as independently as possible within their own home. It is important to encourage the provision of a range of suitable accommodation enabling disabled people to make real choices about their living accommodation.~~
- ~~3.73 Mobility Housing is conventional housing built to a certain basic standard so that it can be adapted to be lived in by most people with disabilities. Houses on two storeys are suitable if they have a downstairs WC and a straight flight staircase suitable for the installation of a stairlift.~~
- ~~3.74 Overall space standards are the same as for ordinary housing and mobility housing need cost no more to construct. Indeed, the particular design features of mobility housing are desirable and convenient for any potential occupier, not just people with disabilities. Developers of mobility housing should normally have regard to the specifications for such housing set out in the DoE publication "Mobility Housing" (HDD Occasional Paper 2/74), Part M of Schedule 1 to The Building Regulations 1991, and to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on "Access for All" (published in 1994) which offers guidance on how access into, within, and around buildings can be improved and how many barriers to disabled people can be avoided by planning ahead at the design stage.~~
- ~~3.75 Wheelchair users require housing that has been designed to meet their needs. It is estimated that between 2-3% of disabled people are permanently confined to wheelchairs and that nearly 20% of physically disabled people use a wheelchair at some time. In addition to easy access, wheelchair housing has above average internal space standards in order to allow full wheelchair manoeuvrability throughout. Developers of wheelchair housing should normally have regard to the specification for such housing outlined in the DoE publication 'Wheelchair Housing' (HDD Occasional paper 2/75).~~
- ~~3.76 Very little existing housing is suitable for wheelchair users. In order to redress the historic imbalance and give people with disabilities a choice of housing of different types and tenures, and to enable more people to remain in their homes if they become disabled, a proportion of newly built, general purpose housing is needed, suitable for adaptation for wheelchair occupants.~~
- ~~3.77 Because there is an additional cost in providing the more generous than average space standards required, it is anticipated that wheelchair housing will be provided within larger schemes. There may occasionally be compelling reasons why certain sites are unsuitable; for example where a site is on a steep gradient, or where there are overwhelming reasons for architectural conformity which would make it impracticable to provide satisfactory level access to a dwelling.~~

## **Conversion of Large Houses to Nursing Homes, etc. H13**

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**THE CONVERSION OF LARGER DETACHED HOUSES OF SIX OR MORE BEDROOMS FOR USE AS RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES, NURSING HOMES OR HOSPITALS, OR RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS (CLASS C2) WILL NORMALLY BE ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL:-**

- (A) IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES;**
- (B) IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO LOCAL SHOPS, SERVICES AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES;**
- (C) WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN OVER-CONCENTRATION IN ANY STREET WITHIN RESIDENTIAL AREAS; AND**
- (D) INVOLVES A BUILDING WHICH IS TOO LARGE FOR USE AS A SINGLE DWELLING, AND WHOSE CONVERSION WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.**

3.78 The provision of residential care homes, nursing homes, etc is often, although not exclusively, to cater for elderly people, and the House Builders Federation guidelines described in para 3.56 apply in such cases. In contrast to sheltered accommodation, residential care homes are often located in converted buildings.

3.79 These can be very suitable new uses, particularly in conservation areas or local areas of special character, where substantial older detached houses, now too large for family occupation, would otherwise be redeveloped or converted into flats, often involving a reduction in the area of landscaped grounds to provide for car parking. Since the character of these large houses and their grounds is an important factor in conservation areas and local areas of special character, their retention with minimal alteration and in uses which rarely give rise to significant environmental disturbance is desirable. Nursing homes and similar uses can often make effective use of large houses with limited impact on appearance of the building and grounds.

3.90 However, in some areas of the borough (notably Southborough Conservation Area) many of the large buildings in certain roads are in use as residential care homes, nursing homes, schools, hostels, day centres or similar uses. While many of these uses are residential in nature, their cumulative effect is to erode the primarily domestic character of these areas. This is particularly marked when hotels and guest houses are taken into account (see Policy RL8). It is unlikely that permission for a change of use will be given where this would lead to more than 15% of the plots within a road being used as residential care homes, nursing homes, schools, hostels, day centres or other similar uses.

3.91 In certain cases the Council will consider the imposition of planning conditions to restrict uses within the Use Classes Order. This may be necessary where the demand for parking would involve an unacceptable erosion of amenity space causing harm to residential amenities.

## Hostels for Single People H14

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### **PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR HOSTELS AND ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE WILL BE CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO:-**

- (A) THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND IMPACT ON ADJOINING RESIDENTS;**
- (B) PROXIMITY TO GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES AND TO THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK;**
- (C) PROXIMITY TO DISTRICT CENTRES AND/OR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT;**
- (D) THE CONTINUING NEED FOR SUCH ACCOMMODATION.**

3.92 High local house prices and rents, and the relative scarcity of rented accommodation, make it difficult for single people, particularly young single people and students, to find housing. Proposals by educational institutions, employers or organisations such as the YMCA for hostel accommodation are generally encouraged, and a number of potential sites are identified in Chapter 15. However, such proposals need to be sited with care. Given the likely age and income of residents, good access to public transport is particularly important. The Council may relax its policy on amenity space and parking standards in appropriate circumstances. However, in such cases the Council may use a legal agreement or planning conditions to restrict changes otherwise possible under the Use Classes Order which might give rise to a much higher parking requirement.

