

# HOUSING (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

First home  
Technical housing standards  
Self and custom build  
Sustainable homes  
Housing choices  
Urban infill



***Oadby and Wigston  
Borough Council  
Leicestershire***

## **First homes**

### What the government says:

- 4.1 First Homes are the Governments preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25 per cent of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.
- 4.2 The Government sets out that First Homes meet the ‘affordable housing’ definition set out in the NPPF and its delivery is a key way of providing affordable homes to local communities. The Government sets out that First Homes must be discounted by at least 30 per cent of the market value and must not be sold for a price higher than £250,000.
- 4.3 Further, Government states that First Homes must be provided on-site in line with the relevant Paragraphs of the NPPF.

### What the Council says:

- 4.4 Currently, the NPPF has not been amended to require the provision of First Homes within development proposals. All Government requirements are set out within NPPG guidance. However, the Council will seek to provide provision of First Homes through the new Local Plan.
- 4.5 It is expected that First Homes will be sought as part of the affordable housing contributions associated to all major development sites (10 or more dwellings). For example, Policy 13 – Affordable Housing of the Council’s current Local Plan, requires the provision of affordable homes at 30 per cent of the total number of new homes on all sites of 10 or more new homes within the settlement of Oadby. Therefore, if a site of 30 new homes required the provision of 9 affordable homes, 25 per cent of the 9 affordable home provision would need to be in First Home tenure; with the remaining a mix of social and / or affordable rent.
- 4.6 Current Government guidance allows local authority areas to increase the level of First Home discount from 30 per cent up to 50 per cent, however with the caveat that they must be able to robustly demonstrate why the higher level of discount is needed. It is not currently expected that the Council will increase the level of discount from the 30 per cent required by Government.

### Potential options:

- Include the requirement for First Homes within planning policy set out within the New Local Plan.
- Increase the level of discount from 30 per cent to either 40 or 50 per cent.

### Questions:

- Is there robust evidence to suggest that the level of discount should be increased within the Borough area?
- Do you consider that ‘First Homes’ will be of genuine benefit to the local communities within the Borough area?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Technical housing standards

### What the government says:

- 4.7 NPPF currently suggests that nationally described space standards should be applied through local planning policy where the requirement for utilising the internal space standard can be justified. NPPG states that *'where a local planning authority (or qualifying body) wishes to require an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the nationally described space standard'*.
- 4.8 The above paragraph should now be put in the context of more up-to-date Government requirements in relation to internal space standards on new homes. Permitted development legislation has been amended in relation to new homes provided through the permitted development route. In short, all new homes provided through permitted development rights must comply with the nationally described space standards.

### What the Council says:

- 4.9 As illustrated above, there has been a recent Government shift when it comes to new homes provided through permitted development rights. Whereas previously, there was emphasis on local authorities producing evidence to justify the use of internal space standards on new homes, its use is now a Government requirement on all new homes provided through permitted development rights.
- 4.10 The Council's current Local Plan requires all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions, and / or changes of use, to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.
- 4.11 It is expected that the Council, at least role forward the requirement to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use. It is also expected that the Council takes on board the recent shift in Government thinking and requires all new homes provided within the Borough to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.

### Potential options:

- 'role forward' the requirement to comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on all new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use.
- require that all new homes provided within the Borough comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards.

### Questions:

- should the Council continue with its current planning policy approach set out within Local Plan Policy 11 Housing Choices, that requires compliance with the Governments Technical Housing Standards on new homes provided through conversions, sub-divisions and / or changes of use?
- should the Council require that all new homes provided within the Borough comply with the Governments Technical Housing Standards?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Self and custom build

### What the government says:

- 4.12 The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local planning authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to provide self-build and custom house building projects. The Act also places a duty local planning authorities to have regard to these registers when carrying out planning and other functions.
- 4.13 NPPG suggests that *'relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period'*.

### What the Council says:

- 4.14 The Council's current Local Plan has a specific planning policy relating to the delivery of self-build and custom build plots (Policy 14 – Self Build and Custom Build). The policy approach is to support the provision of self-build and custom build plots.
- 4.15 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the current Local Plan into the new Local Plan, ensuring that it is up-to-date with current national planning policy and guidance.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the Local Plan that seeks to support plot provision.
- Strengthen the policy approach to require self-build and custom build plots on all major development sites.

### Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 14 – Self Build and Custom Build, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are there any other options available to the Council that would be appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

## Sustainable homes

### What the government says:

- 4.16 According to the Government, both existing and new homes, account for 20 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United Kingdom. It goes onto suggest that the new homes being built now will exist in the year 2050, therefore it is a must that standards set now for homes put us on the right path in meeting the 2050 net zero emitter target for the United Kingdom.
- 4.17 In January 2021, Government published its response in relation to the Future Homes Standard consultation that took place during 2019 and 2020. The main thrust of the Governments published response was a move to a fabric first approach to all new development, in particular new homes. Not only will Government expect higher standards of thermal insulation, but also better use of renewable energy generation and more modern methods of heating, for example heat pumps and heat networks.
- 4.18 NPPF states that the *'planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate...it should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'*.
- 4.19 NPPF suggests that new development should be planned in a way that can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Further, new development should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing, and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

### What the Council says:

- 4.20 The Council is committed in seeking the highest levels of design and sustainability in all new development. A number of the Government requirements in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will come through the Building Control process, however planning can play an important role also.
- 4.21 The Council considers that being proactive when it comes to sustainability and climate change, is the only way forward into the future. With this in mind, the Council would expect all new development proposals to have elements of (or at least the enabling infrastructure for) the following built into its design and build:
- Solar photovoltaic energy producing technology
  - Electric vehicle charging points
  - Ground and / or air source heat pumps
  - Wind energy producing technology
  - Water energy producing technology
  - Grey water recycling
- 4.22 In addition to the above, the Council would expect all new development to make use of the existing environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage by taking account of location, orientation, landform, layout, massing and landscaping.
- 4.23 The Council will also expect new homes to be built using the most up to date and energy efficient technologies, for example modular technologies.



Potential options:

- Require all new homes to have at least one of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Require all new homes to have all of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Require all new homes to have the enabling infrastructure for all of the elements listed above (in bullets) built into its design and build.
- Not require any further elements of sustainability to that expected through the building control process.

Questions:

- Which of the above potential options do you consider to be the most appropriate?
- Are there any elements of sustainable home design that have been missed from the bullet list above, that you consider would be effective in helping battle climate change and reducing energy usage?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



## Housing choices

### What the government says:

- 4.24 With regards to the Governments objective of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, the NPPF states that in order to significantly boost the supply of homes, *'it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'*.
- 4.25 The NPPF goes on to say, *'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)'*.
- 4.26 The NPPF suggests that local planning authorities should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes; they should widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

### What the Council says:

- 4.27 The Council wants to provide the most appropriate housing solutions for all of its existing population, as well as those future populations aspiring to live within the Borough.
- 4.28 Specific note will be taken of the need for bungalows and retirement accommodation within the Borough. Historically the Borough has seen very little new provision of retirement accommodation or bungalows, and would therefore, in principal, actively support the development of bungalows in appropriate locations.
- 4.29 The Council's current Local Plan approach in Policy 11 – Housing Choices, is already committed to providing new homes that are 'fit for purpose' and promote healthy living conditions, and, that they are appropriate for modern living and requirements. The Policy also supports the delivery of all new homes, regardless of type or tenure, to be of a size that allows sufficient space for all of its proposed inhabitants to live comfortably and sustainably.
- 4.30 This Policy approach has been a successful in providing a wide range and choice of new homes and therefore, the Council will look to continue this approach, although amendments may well be appropriate to ensure that it is up to date with National and Local policy and guidance. For example, one additional consideration that must be taken into account is the need for new residential units to take into account the desire of people to work from home and to therefore have sufficient space to do so, without having to make their living spaces into 'make-shift' home office spaces.

### Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan, with wording amendments to allow for National and local Policy and Guidance updates to be reflected.
- Strengthen the policy approach to require more bungalows, residential care facilities and homes fit for purpose to accommodate the full spectrum of health inequalities for people of all ages



Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 11 – Housing Choices, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are any of the other options set out above appropriate?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.





## Urban infill

### What the government says:

- 4.31 NPPF states that *'planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land'*.
- 4.32 NPPF goes on to suggest that planning policies should recognise that some undeveloped land can perform important functions, and that substantial weight should be given to the development of suitable brownfield land. Further, national policy sets out that local authorities should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, if such development helps meet identified needs.
- 4.33 Government also sets out that local planning authorities should be proactive in their approach to helping bring forward suitable development land, whether the land is held in public ownership or not.

### What the Council says:

- 4.34 As set above, one of the key principles of the NPPF is the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land). The definition of previously developed land excludes residential garden land or any other open amenity space around buildings.
- 4.35 With the Borough being relatively compact and urban in nature, appropriate infill development has consistently come forward year on year and it makes a valuable contribution towards the Council's provision of, both, residential and other uses. It however must be appropriately managed as the majority of previously developed land within the Borough is situated within the built up urban areas. It is this land that can be subject to urban infill development proposals.
- 4.36 Current Local Plan policy manages inappropriate infill development that has a detrimental impact on the locale in which it is proposed. The Council also manages development that seeks to split existing residential plots. Detrimental infill development or splitting of existing plots can have a significant detrimental impact on the character of a location and can also contribute towards the loss of heritage and amenity space.
- 4.37 Current Local Plan Policy 15 – Urban Infill Development seeks to manage inappropriate infill development and splitting of existing plots. The policy also makes use of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment evidence base.
- 4.38 It is expected that the Council 'roles forward' the existing policy approach of the Local Plan into the new Local Plan. However, may amend the wording to be 'stronger' in managing development in areas that are of more significance, for example conservation areas, or high value landscape areas.



Potential options:

- Continue with the existing policy approach set out within the current Local Plan that seeks the appropriate management of infill development and proposals that seek to split existing plots, taking account of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.
- Strengthen the policy approach to be 'stronger' in managing detrimental development in areas that are of more significance, for example conservation areas, or high value landscape areas.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current policy approach set out in Local Plan Policy 15 – Urban Infill, ensuring that it is up to date with current national planning policy and guidance?
- Are there any areas within the Borough where the policy relating to Infill development and the splitting of plots should be stronger or should not apply? For example, remove the 'in principle' support for infill development or splitting of plots.
- Should 'in principle' support for infill development or splitting of plots be applied across the entire Borough area, regardless of what the proposal site is, or where it is located?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

