

**Regulation 18 Statement for:*****Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document  
and its associated Sustainability Appraisal Report***

Bexley's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is one of the Local Development Documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that a local planning authority shall not adopt a Supplementary Planning Document until they have:

- (a) considered any representations made during the consultation period; and
- (b) prepared a statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised in these representations and how these main issues have been addressed in the Supplementary Planning Document that they intend to adopt.

The Affordable Housing documents have now been through the six-week public consultation period, which ended on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2006. The documents were consulted on widely, based on the LDF consultation database that was compiled during preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement. Copies of the documents were sent to 150 statutory bodies and groups with an interest in affordable housing in Bexley, such as residents' associations and community forums, housing associations and developers. In addition, over 865 consultees received notification letters. A summary of the representations made, responses by Bexley Council, and actions to the SPD documents follow this Statement as **Appendix A**.

During the consultation period, copies of the SPD documents were available at Borough libraries, the Contact Centre within Bexleyheath Civic Offices, and the reception at Wyncham House. Posters were also displayed at these locations. The documents were available on the Council's website, along with online consultation forms.

The Planning Control Committee considered the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document on 9 February 2006. It was considered that a greater degree of flexibility should be allowed in determining the tenure of the affordable housing on small schemes, where the number of affordable units would be less than 10. The Supplementary Planning Document has been amended to reflect this.

The Local Development Framework Cabinet Advisory Group considered the responses to the consultation on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document on 21 February 2006. The Group considered that a greater degree of flexibility should be allowed in determining the tenure of the affordable housing on small schemes; that the circumstances where the Council would not seek 10% wheelchair housing on a site should be clarified; and, in response to the Greater London Authority's request that the Council review the 15 unit threshold for affordable housing through the Local Development Framework process, the response should be to keep it under review.

The Affordable Housing SPD and its associated Sustainability Appraisal Final Report have been amended to incorporate the actions proposed by Bexley Council in addressing the main issues raised from the representations made during the consultation period.

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**Adoption Statement for:*****Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document***

- (a) The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is one of the Local Development Documents that comprise the Local Development Framework (LDF). Bexley Council adopted this SPD on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006.
- (b) Any person aggrieved by this SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt this SPD.

Any such application for leave must be made promptly and in any event not later than 3 months after the date on which this SPD was adopted.

## Appendix A - Affordable Housing SPD Consultation Responses

**Direct Reference:** 3.07

**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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### Summary of comments

Need to demonstrate further justification in terms of the recommended 70:30 social housing/intermediate split in affordable housing split as outlined in Para 3.7.

### Response to Comments

Accept that further justification is needed in the text

### Summary of proposed action

Further justification for 70:30 social housing/intermediate split provided.

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### Summary of comments

Notes that Council recognise that funding is required for rented housing therefore a cascade provision should be included to increase the % of intermediate housing in the event that the required funding is not secured on specific sites to be viable.

### Response to Comments

Para 3.17 allows for such a cascade mechanism

### Summary of proposed action

No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** None specific

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

**Summary of comments**

The references to the Mayor's draft Affordable Housing SPG should be updated to refer to the Mayor's Housing SPG.

**Response to Comments**

Accept

**Summary of proposed action**

Change as proposed.

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**Summary of comments**

As previously noted in correspondence to Council the Mayor views that the affordable housing policies in the Bexley UDP are not in general conformity with the London Plan. Inevitably therefore, there will be conformity issues with this SPG. The references to London Plan policy that are made in the document are welcomed and it is recognised that the document seeks to 'bridge the gap' between the UDP and the London Plan. The overall approach in the document is supported.

**Response to Comments**

Bexley Council does not accept that the UDP is not in general conformity with the London Plan. It meets the ODPM test of general conformity provided in para 4.20 in PPS12. Section 15(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 required that a UDP be in general conformity with the London Plan at the point of adoption. Government Offices for London had the opportunity to direct Bexley Council to make the changes requested by GLA, at the point of adoption, but declined to do so. The clear implication of this is that the Bexley UDP meets legal and regulatory requirements and is in general conformity with the London Plan.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required

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**Contact Name:** Mr R E Lucia

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 285

**Summary of comments**

Queries the management of affordable housing properties by RSLs rather than Council. Feels Council is the most appropriate organisation to manage the housing rather than RSLs.

**Response to Comments**

The issue of management of affordable housing properties is outside the remit of this planning guidance.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required

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**Direct Reference:** None specific

**Contact Name:** John Lau

**Organisation:** South East London Strategic Health Authority

**Reference:** 585

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**Summary of comments**

The document has not outlined an eligibility criteria for those who might qualify for affordable housing developed. There is an opportunity to consult with employers to establish local needs and priorities outside of ODPM's "Key Worker Living" and the "New Affordable Housing Programme".

The workforce needs of health and social care employers vary with the individual circumstances of employers and changes over time.

Recommend that: eligibility criteria for health and social staff should include staff groups where we face the highest turnover and vacancy rates; consultation is on an ongoing basis to ensure that eligible/priority groups reflect changes in future workforce needs; and that a "Bexley Key Worker Retention Group", is established to act as the vehicle for employers to be consulted at the Borough level and to continue the good work at the sub regional level through the South East London Housing Partnership.

**Response to Comments**

Accept that it is important to identify those who would be eligible for intermediate housing. However, these groups may change frequently and it is more practical to identify such groups outside of the SPD. Identified priorities can be addressed through negotiations between the Council and the Registered Social Landlord.

The recommendation to set up a 'Bexley Key Worker Retention Group' will be passed to Housing colleagues.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed.

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**Direct Reference:** None specific

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**Contact Name:** Mr Derek Smith

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 1263

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**Summary of comments**

Primary issue of concern is the increased road congestion additional homes will bring to the Borough. More roads need to be built alongside new homes.

**Response to Comments**

This Supplementary Planning Document does not set policy on the level of house building in the Borough. This has been set through the Bexley UDP(2004) and the London Plan (2004). The issue of any road infrastructure in relation to house building will need to be addressed through the forthcoming Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed.

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**Contact Name:** Mr J Joslin

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 1387

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**Summary of comments**

Feels that is necessary to bring the views of all consultation bodies as this gives an overall public examination by the four statutory SEA Consultation bodies.

**Response to Comments**

Everyone on the Council's consultation database has been given the opportunity to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Contact Name:** Rose Freeman

**Organisation:** The Theatres Trust

**Reference:** 1421

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**Summary of comments**

No comment.

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

<b>Direct Reference: None specific</b>		
<b>Contact Name: Ms Maureen Williamson</b>	<b>Organisation: SSAFA Forces Help</b>	<b>Reference: 1499</b>
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
The Sustainability Appraisal does not cover the enhancement of landscapes. Notes that is important for new areas to look well cared for.	The Sustainability Objectives on Table 6.1 (pp22-23) include the objective of maintenance and enhancement of landscape/townscape. The assessment of the Affordable Housing SPD against this objective shows an overall positive outcome.	No action required.
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
More 1 and 2 bedroom low cost properties are needed. Queries what steps are going to be taken to stop owners/developers buying and selling properties at a higher price? Notes this is reason why many first time buyers can not access housing in Bexley.	Access to intermediate housing (which includes low cost market housing) would be controlled through their management by Registered Social Landlords or through S106 Agreements. This would require that only those households on defined incomes could gain access to it.	No action required.
<b>Direct Reference: Para 1.11</b>		
<b>Contact Name: Mr J Farrar</b>	<b>Organisation: Greater London Authority</b>	<b>Reference: 154</b>
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Welcomes reference to the London Plan affordable target and note that Bexley will 'seek to work towards' this.	Noted	No action required
<b>Direct Reference: Para 2.02 (page 8)</b>		
<b>Contact Name: Mr John Mercer</b>	<b>Organisation: Bexley Civic Society</b>	<b>Reference: 123</b>
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Questions the ability of the London Plan (2005) target of 345 dwellings per annum to meet the housing need of Bexley residents. Suggests the Bexley target for dwellings be increased.	Comment accepted in principle. However, matter of housing targets cannot be addressed through a Supplementary Planning Document. The issue will need to be addressed through the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.	No changes proposed.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.01

**Contact Name:**

**Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South  
London Ltd

**Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments**

Agree with the application of a degree of flexibility in applying the 35% affordable housing requirement but the identification of sites and revised site size thresholds should be a matter for the LDF. This SPD is not the platform to provide for changes to the level and provision of affordable housing.

**Response to Comments**

Agree that changes, other than those that are 'de minimis' should be left to the LDF. This principle has been followed in producing the SPD.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Summary of comments**

SPD should state that residential schemes on qualifying sites will require provision of approximately 35% affordable housing (as opposed to at least 35%) to be provided, in accordance with adopted UDP policy.

**Response to Comments**

In the light of the level of housing need identified through Bexley Housing Needs Study and the Mayor's 50% Londonwide target, the objective of at least 35% affordable housing on qualifying private development sites is considered reasonable. It is consistent with para 4.40 of PPS12 and the judgement in the case of JA Pye Ltd vs Oxford City Council, Court of Appeal (2002).

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

When applying the UDP policies the Council should take into account the following "economic viability and sustainability of the scheme" (Para 3.1).

**Response to Comments**

Sustainability covered by other points in para 3.1 but accept that economic viability should be added.

**Summary of proposed action**

Add further bullet point to para 3.1 referring to economic viability

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.04

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Should refer to intermediate affordability guidance to the Mayor's Housing SPG range of £16,400 - £49,000 (though no objection to thresholds of £32,000 and £43,000 for different unit sizes)

Accepted

Reference made to Mayor's Housing SPG range of £16,400 to £49,000.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.04 - 3.06

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**Contact Name:** Mr R E Lucia

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 285

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Queries whether the average working class income level is £24 996?

The figure of £24,996 in table 3.1 is given, not as an average income, but the income required by a household to buy a 1 bedroom property in Bexley

No action required

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**Contact Name:** John Lau

**Organisation:** South East London Strategic Health Authority

**Reference:** 585

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

The document suggests that Intermediate Housing with one or two bedrooms should be accessible to households with an income of £32 000 and below, and for larger units the income threshold will be £43,000 and below. Concern that this may result in developers adhering to the upper limit; with all affordable homes including studio and one-bedroom units being targeted at household incomes of £32,000.  
Propose that Bexley set income one bedroom units separately from two bedroom units.

Accept that there may be a tendency to provide intermediate housing at the upper end of the range. However, the incomes of households targetted will be agreed between the Council and the Registered Social Landlord and the Council will seek that a range of affordability levels are catered for. This will largely be dealt with as part of the funding negotiations which fall outside the planning process. No changes to this document are required

No changes proposed

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**Contact Name:** Mrs E McCook

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 1300

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Supports the Income Thresholds set for access to Intermediate Housing.

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name:** Mr J Joslin

**Organisation:**

**Reference:** 1387

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Notes that if newly qualified teaches and nurses are provided with affordable housing the units can then be made available when they move on in their careers.

Noted.

No action required

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.04 - 3.06

**Contact Name:**

**Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South  
London Ltd

**Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Agree with access income thresholds set for affordable housing

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name:** Ms Maureen Williamson

**Organisation:** SSAFA Forces Help

**Reference:** 1499

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Considers the Income Thresholds set for access to Intermediate Housing in Bexley are appropriate, with most people earning less than £30,000.

Noted

No action required.

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**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

The Housing Corporation guidelines state that shared ownership units are to be sold at a percentage of Market Value. It is not appropriate to enforce a Borough-wide income level. It would be more appropriate to make reference to affordability as a percentage of the full cost of ownership / renting in order to not restrict the development of intermediate housing in relatively high value areas where it is required.

The household income levels set in the SPD are related to local house prices, as required by PPG 3. The income levels which have been set do not pre-empt shared-ownership units being sold at a percentage of market value. The affordability can be secured through entry at low shares of ownership and setting rent levels at low percentages of the value of the property.

No changes proposed

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.07

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**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Clarification that Bexley will apply the London Plan strategic target for affordable housing of 70% social housing and 30% intermediate provision is strongly supported.

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name:**

**Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South London Ltd

**Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Concerned about the percentage split between social housing and intermediate housing (70:30). Social housing is provided to RSL's at a greater cost to the development industry. Accordingly, the SPD should allow for a degree of flexibility in assessing the percentage split of provision to allow for local circumstances including related infrastructure costs.

The approach in this SPD provides for the same cost to the development industry for both social and intermediate housing (see para 3.16 and Appendix 1). Para 3.17 allows for variation in the social : intermediate housing ratio, where necessary. Para 3.38 relates to those circumstances where further planning obligation requirements are sought and clarifies that the Council will consider the individual circumstances of the scheme. Consequently, no changes are considered necessary.

No action required.

<b>Direct Reference: Para 3.08</b>		
<b>Contact Name: Mr John Mercer</b>	<b>Organisation: Bexley Civic Society</b>	<b>Reference: 123</b>
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Agrees that on sites where the affordable housing provided is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing.	Noted	No action required.
<b>Contact Name: Matthew Paterson</b>		
<b>Organisation: Government Office for London</b>		
<b>Reference: 152</b>		
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Para 3.8 adopts a preference in favour of social housing across the majority of wards. Note intent of PPG3 to provide greater housing choice and to meet the needs of the whole community. Both social and intermediate housing have a role to play in providing for local needs and the achievement of balanced communities.	Accept that the SPD appears to be phrased in a way that might restrict housing choice.	Para 3.8 will be amended to clarify that the type of affordable housing to be provided on small sites will be determined on a site-by-site basis having regard to a variety of factors, including existing levels of affordable housing in the locality, as well as the nature of the site and the type of housing most appropriate to it.
<b>Contact Name: Captain L C Woolger</b>		
<b>Organisation: Christchurch Area Residents' Association</b>		
<b>Reference: 225</b>		
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Agree that on sites where the affordable housing is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing.	Noted	No action required
<b>Contact Name: John Lau</b>		
<b>Organisation: South East London Strategic Health Authority</b>		
<b>Reference: 585</b>		
<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Response to Comments</b>	<b>Summary of proposed action</b>
Does not agree that on sites where the affordable housing is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing. Allowing intermediate and social housing in small schemes may increase long term sustainability which may outweigh the short term costs of marketing.	Accept that the determination of the type of affordable housing on these small sites could be made more flexible. However, RSL's have expressed strong concerns about the practicality of dealing with a small number of each type of affordable housing and this has to be taken into account.	Para 3.8 will be amended to reflect a greater degree of flexibility in the determination of appropriate type of affordable housing on small sites.

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**Direct Reference: Para 3.08**

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**Contact Name: Mrs E McCook**

**Organisation:**

**Reference: 1300**

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Agrees that on sites where the affordable housing provided is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing.

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name: Mr J Joslin**

**Organisation:**

**Reference: 1387**

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

Agrees that on sites where the affordable housing provided is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing. Also notes that the affordable housing should be built conforming to a long lasting standard and should remain an integral part of the Borough.

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name:**

**Organisation: Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South London Ltd**

**Reference: 1469**

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**Summary of comments**

**Response to Comments**

**Summary of proposed action**

The percentage split of affordable housing by tenure on sites of ten units or less, should be considered on a site-by-site basis to allow for flexibility.

Accept that the SPD should be clarified to identify other factors that may be taken into account in determining the type of affordable housing on these small sites.

Amend para 3.8 accordingly.

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**Direct Reference: Para 3.08**

**Contact Name: Mr George Venning**

**Organisation: Levvel on behalf of McCarthy and Stone**

**Reference: 1482**

**Summary of comments**

Agree that on sites with less than 10 units it may be necessary that all affordable housing provided is of a single tenure. However, the tenure split sought should take into account the London-wide aspiration of 70:30 split but should balance this against the need to create a successful development.

**Response to Comments**

Accept that a range of factors should be taken into account in determining the form of tenure on these small sites and also that the boroughwide aspiration for a 70:30 split should be taken into account. The document will be amended appropriately.

**Summary of proposed action**

The document will be amended to reflect the need to achieve 70:30 across the borough as a whole and also that individual site circumstances will be taken into account.

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**Contact Name: Ms Maureen Williamson**

**Organisation: SSAFA Forces Help**

**Reference: 1499**

**Summary of comments**

Agrees that on sites where the affordable housing provided is less than 10 units, it should be provided as one type of affordable housing.

**Response to Comments**

Noted

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Contact Name: Mr Pankaj V. Vara**

**Organisation: GL Hearn**

**Reference: 1502**

**Summary of comments**

Agrees that on sites where the affordable housing is less than 10 units, it is appropriate from a management point of view for RSL's, to provide it as one type of affordable housing.

**Response to Comments**

Noted

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required

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**Direct Reference: Para 3.09 - 3.12**

**Contact Name: Mr David Scott**

**Organisation:**

**Reference: 1275**

**Summary of comments**

Primary concern is that Affordable Housing is provided for all sectors of the community, particularly the elderly.

**Response to Comments**

The document makes provision for meeting special needs housing, including sheltered housing for the elderly in paras 3.9-3.12.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** para 3.1

**Contact Name:** Mr Giles Martin

**Organisation:** Fairview New Homes Plc

**Reference:** 61

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**Summary of comments**

Object to the proposal to seeks a 35% proportion of affordable housing on all sites above the threshold. Any specific requirement for affordable housing should be indicative and should be open to negotiation. This accords with current Government guidance in Circular 6/98 which states that an element of affordable housing should be sought on suitable sites through negotiation and policies for affordable housing should set "indicative" targets for specific sites.

Request that due consideration is given to the specific circumstances of each site including economic viability, when negotiating the provision of affordable housing.

**Response to Comments**

The Council's objective in producing the guidance is to provide financial certainty at the outset for both developers and RSL's. This objective received a positive response in informal consultations that included Fairview Homes. Certainty is provided by fixing the percentage of affordable housing and the price the RSL pays for it. Nonetheless, the document recognises that there may be occasions when the specified affordable housing percentage cannot be achieved as a result of financial considerations (para 3.37).

**Summary of proposed action**

A bullet point on economic viability will be added to para 3.1, so as to clarify the Council's intentions in this respect.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.11

**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Level on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

**Summary of comments**

1) Seek acknowledgement that sheltered affordable accommodation would only be provided where a separate block of sheltered housing can be accommodated. There would be difficulties in managing the dwellings where communal facilities are provided and the service charge element of total housing costs is more significant.

2) Where a need for affordable sheltered housing is not identified, the provision of general needs housing on the same site presents challenges, particularly in relation to the relative densities of the different housing types. For example the general needs affordable housing at a low density may absorb a disproportionate quantity of the site and lead to the loss of sheltered housing and impact on the financial viability of the scheme as a whole.

**Response to Comments**

1) Accept the difficulties of joint communal facilities. This section will be amended accordingly.

2) Do not accept that affordable general needs housing will necessarily be low density. There may well be design challenges but these will be addressed on a site-by-site basis. Issues of viability will be dealt with through a financial appraisal.

**Summary of proposed action**

1) Amend to clarify that sheltered affordable accommodation would only be provided where separate communal facilities could be provided.

2) No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.13

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

**Summary of comments**

It is not appropriate to quote the London Plan technical report in support of the 35% position.

**Response to Comments**

The technical report was the basis on which the London Plan policies were formulated. It remains relevant in identifying the low land values in Bexley, as compared to other London boroughs and the consequent impact of this on affordable housing policies. It is, therefore, appropriate to quote it.

**Summary of proposed action**

No change

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.13 and Appendix 1

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**Contact Name:** Captain L C Woolger **Organisation:** Christchurch Area Residents' Association **Reference:** 225

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**Summary of comments** **Response to Comments** **Summary of proposed action**

Considers that the appropriate balance has been struck between maximising the available Social Housing Grant and delivering financially viable private housing developments

Noted

No action required.

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**Contact Name:** Mrs E McCook **Organisation:** **Reference:** 1300

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**Summary of comments** **Response to Comments** **Summary of proposed action**

Agrees that the formula for funding affordable housing provides certainty to developers and RSLs and that a balance has been struck between maximising the grants and financial viability.

Noted

No action required

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**Contact Name:** Mr J Joslin **Organisation:** **Reference:** 1387

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**Summary of comments** **Response to Comments** **Summary of proposed action**

Notes that affordable housing will definitely require a public subsidy due to annual income and expenditure by the Council.

There is no evidence or justification provided as to why the formula should be set at 85% TCI.

No change proposed.

Proposes that the formula for the provision of affordable housing is set at 85%.

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**Contact Name:** **Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South London Ltd **Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments** **Response to Comments** **Summary of proposed action**

Consider the formula for the delivery of affordable housing to be generally acceptable.

Noted

No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.13 and Appendix 1

**Contact Name:** Ms Maureen Williamson

**Organisation:** SSAFA Forces Help

**Reference:** 1499

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**Summary of comments**

Considers the appropriate balance has been struck in balancing the need for maximising the available Social Housing Grant whilst delivering financially viable private housing developments.

**Response to Comments**

Noted

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Summary of comments**

Considers that the formula for the cost of an affordable housing unit to RSL's provides certainty to developers and RSL's. Queries where the public subsidy comes from.

**Response to Comments**

Public subsidy normally comes as grant funding from the Housing Corporation.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.13 and Appendix 1

**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

The Housing Corporation no longer publish TCIs as a benchmark as they do not represent a true reflection in terms of securing affordable housing in the current market and therefore all reference to TCI should be deleted from the document. Generally, RSLs can afford to pay more for residential units than the figures highlighted in Appendix 1 - either through use of Grant funding and / or their own reserves. If TCIs do remain, a more appropriate reference would be linking the base TCI figure to a build cost index, rather than RPI. Furthermore, 12% on-costs are too high, particularly in relation to social rented units where the RSLs on-costs would typically be much lower. What is the Council's justification for taking 80% of TCI? Why not 100% or 110%?

Council needs to recognise that cross-subsidy is also achieved between affordable tenures (from shared ownership to social rented) where insufficient funding is available (Para 3.14). The reference to "(inclusive of parking or garage space)" should be deleted as it then gives the impression that all affordable units will have car parking. This will not be the case for mixed-use high density schemes and where transport links demonstrate a reduced level of car parking is acceptable.

**Response to Comments**

It is true that the Housing Corporation no longer publish TCI's. They are nonetheless a useful benchmark, as demonstrated by the fact that the Housing Corporation requests that RSL's provide updated TCI's to demonstrate value for money of their schemes. It is possible that RSL's could afford to pay more for residential units in some circumstances through the use of high levels of grant funding or through the use of their own reserves. However, grant funding is limited and the aim of the Housing Corporation is to maximise additionality on private development schemes. The use of RSL's own reserves on S106 schemes would undermine their ability to finance 100% affordable housing schemes. These are also required to help meet the large housing need identified in the borough.

It is accepted that the build cost index would be an appropriate way to update TCI's and this will be recommended to the Council's Valuers.

It is accepted that in some cases a parking space will not be provided for every unit. The text will be clarified to reflect this.

**Summary of proposed action**

In para 3.14, add 'where appropriate' after 'inclusive of parking or garage space.'

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.22 - 3.26

**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Levvel on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

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**Summary of comments**

Where affordable housing is to be provided off-site, the contribution should be based on the difference between the cost to an affordable housing provider of developing an affordable housing unit on the site and the 80% of TCI it can afford. In practice, this is the difference between the unencumbered value of an alternative site and the value of the site for the development of affordable housing at 80% of TCI in accordance with Council's on-site formula.

**Response to Comments**

The off-site provision arrangement given in para 3.24 and accompanying table, assumes that the developer of the parent site will also build out the off-site affordable units. The proposal by the respondent assumes that the affordable housing provider will undertake the development themselves. These circumstances may arise and the proposed method of calculating a developer contribution in these circumstances is accepted.

**Summary of proposed action**

Paragraph added with the proposed method of calculating the developers off-site contribution, in circumstances where the affordable housing provider builds out the scheme.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.23

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

The consideration of off-site provision should include the criteria in paragraph 18.17 of the Mayor's Housing SPG.

**Response to Comments**

Accept

**Summary of proposed action**

The following added: 'Examples of exceptional circumstances will include where there are existing concentrations of particular types of social housing and there are demonstrable benefits to be gained by providing new units in a different location, such as to create more socially mixed communities, or to provide a particular type of housing, such as family housing. Consideration should normally only be given to off-site provision where an alternative site or sites have been identified which would enable affordable housing provision more appropriate to the identified needs to be met and where the project is deliverable prior to the on site market development being completed.'

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.24

**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Level on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

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**Summary of comments**

Note concern of the principle (Para 3.24) that would require developments that provide the affordable housing contribution off site to contribute a higher proportion of affordable housing than that would have been provided if on site. The uplift is only legitimate where the number of affordable dwellings involved in the off site contribution is larger than the threshold. It would be unreasonable to expect off site provision of affordable housing to make a greater contribution when the motivation for off site delivery is the inability of the site to accommodate on site provision successfully.

The only site affected are those with capacities of between 15-43 units -seeking larger contributions from these size sites could prevent the site coming forward for development and slow housing delivery.

**Response to Comments**

The mechanism for off-site provision of affordable housing is considered to be financially neutral in terms of the benefit to the applicant relative to on-site provision requirements. Given the large identified need for affordable housing in the borough, the 'uplift' in the number of affordable housing dwellings involved in off-site contribution to which the respondent refers, is considered to be legitimate.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.28

**Contact Name:** Mr Giles Martin

**Organisation:** Fairview New Homes Plc

**Reference:** 61

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**Summary of comments**

Object to the housing mix set out in paragraph 3.28. Consider that the document should not set specific housing mixes for developments, but should allow sufficient flexibility for the composition of residential development to be determined by developers at the time an application is submitted.

**Response to Comments**

PPG3 (para 11) requires that local authorities take account of assessments of local housing need in determining the type and size of additional housing for which they should plan and plans should secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size in the light of the need assessment.

It is not the Council's intention that the mix identified in para 3.28 should be applied on a site-by-site basis, but rather across the borough as a whole. Nonetheless, the Council will aim to guide the mix of units on each individual site, as appropriate to the site, so as to achieve the appropriate mix at the borough level.

**Summary of proposed action**

Para 3.29 will be amended to make it clearer that the housing mix is not to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

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**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Level on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

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**Summary of comments**

Seeks confirmation that the mix of unit sizes is indicative rather than a prescriptive standard. Also that in negotiating the mix of dwellings on a particular site, Council should have regard to the nature of the enabling development, the need to create successful, mixed and balanced communities and the availability of grant funding.

**Response to Comments**

It is not the Council's intention that the mix identified in para 3.28 should be applied on a site-by-site basis, but rather across the borough as a whole. Nonetheless, the Council will aim to guide the mix of units on each individual site, as appropriate to the site, so as to achieve the appropriate mix at the borough level.

**Summary of proposed action**

Para 3.29 will be amended to make it clearer that the housing mix is not to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.28 - 3.29

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

The table should be disaggregated between social housing and intermediate provision and be consistent with the unit size mix set out in paragraph 11.3 of the Mayor's Housing SPG. In particular there should be a much higher proportion of larger housing, especially for social housing.

**Response to Comments**

PPG3 states that local authorities should secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size based on an assessment of the composition of current and future households in their area. Bexley Council has identified the appropriate mix through its Housing Needs Study and this is reflected in the document.

The Housing Needs Study does not provide a disaggregation between social and intermediate provision in terms of unit size mix. Therefore, it will not be possible to provide this. However, the local knowledge of RSL's will be utilised to inform on the demand for unit sizes , particularly for intermediate housing.

**Summary of proposed action**

No change proposed

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**Contact Name:**

**Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South London Ltd

**Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments**

Need to provide for a degree of flexibility in the mix of affordable housing to be provided in a scheme. The appropriateness of the scheme should be determined on a site-by-site basis.

**Response to Comments**

It is not the Council's intention that the mix identified in para 3.28 should be applied on a site-by-site basis, but rather across the borough as a whole. Nonetheless, the Council will aim to guide the mix of units on each individual site, as appropriate to the site, so as to achieve the appropriate mix at the borough level.

**Summary of proposed action**

Para 3.29 will be amended to make it clearer that the housing mix is not to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.29

**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

In terms of the mix of units recognises that outlining a mix of housing sizes and types is required so that new developments meet housing need but also notes that it is important though that the type and location of the development, and variations in need across the borough, are given more weight. For example, in locations which are less suitable for family accommodation (i.e. town centre mixed-use flatted developments) less weight should be attached to the provision of 3 and 4 bedroom homes. There should be an allowance for 2 bed 3 person units in order to maintain a balanced and sustainable development (Para 3.29), and to keep the ratio of child densities to cores as a minimum.

**Response to Comments**

It is intended that the mix of housing sizes will vary according to the location. This will be clarified.

**Summary of proposed action**

Amend text to clarify that in town centre locations there will be less emphasis on 3 and 4 bedroom houses, although 3 bedroom flats will still be sought.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.32

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

Clarification that Bexley will seek to apply the London Plan policies for Lifetime Homes and wheelchair housing is strongly supported. The SPD could usefully refer to the Mayor's Accessible London SPG, which provides further guidance on these matters.

**Response to Comments**

Noted and accepted.

**Summary of proposed action**

Reference to the Mayor's Accessible London SPG will be added.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.33

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**Contact Name:** Mr Giles Martin

**Organisation:** Fairview New Homes Plc

**Reference:** 61

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**Summary of comments**

Object to the proposal to seek affordable housing on sites capable of providing at least 15 units or more. Notes this is contrary to Government guidance in Circular 6/98 which states that affordable housing provision should be sought on housing developments of 25 or more dwellings or residential sites of 1.0 hectare or more.

**Response to Comments**

The threshold of 15 units is adopted UDP policy. It has been tested through a Public Inquiry and accepted by the Inspector.

**Summary of proposed action**

No change proposed to the document

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**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

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**Summary of comments**

The 15 unit threshold is fixed by your UDP and it is accepted that it can not be altered through the SPD. However, the threshold should be reviewed through the LDF process and if appropriate reduced. It should be noted that GOL has directed a number of Boroughs to reduce the threshold in their UDPs to ten units.

**Response to Comments**

Noted and will keep under review.

**Summary of proposed action**

No change proposed to this document.

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**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

Council should introduce a cascade approach for schemes at the threshold. Otherwise developers will be faced with the anomaly of full 35% provision at 15 units and no provision at 14 units.

**Response to Comments**

This is an issue that the Council will consider as part of the LDF. However, this SPD is based on UDP policy and no such proposal exists in the UDP.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed to this document

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.35

**Contact Name:**

**Organisation:** Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of George Wimpey South  
London Ltd

**Reference:** 1469

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**Summary of comments**

Object to the proposed approach of rounding up to the nearest unit, where the 35% affordable housing calculation results in a fraction of a unit. This can have significant financial implications, particularly on small schemes. Should be replaced with rounding to the nearest whole unit.

**Response to Comments**

Accept.

**Summary of proposed action**

Para 3.35 amended to read that the affordable housing requirement will be rounded to the nearest whole unit, with 0.5 being rounded up.

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**Contact Name:** Mr Pankaj V. Vara

**Organisation:** GL Hearn

**Reference:** 1502

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**Summary of comments**

Proportion of affordable housing : the practice should be to round up or down to the nearest whole unit in accordance with accepted mathematical practice.

**Response to Comments**

Accepted

**Summary of proposed action**

Para 3.35 amended to clarify that rounding of affordable housing will be to the nearest whole number, with 0.5 being rounded up.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.36 - 3.40

**Contact Name:** Mr Chris Price

**Organisation:** Network Rail

**Reference:** 92

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**Summary of comments**

The section on site suitability should be expanded to include the suitability of the development to deliver other objectives such as public transport. Provision of affordable housing may undermine a developments ability to deliver public transport improvements.

An example of where public transport improvements will have to be weighed against the delivery of affordable housing is in the Belvedere and Erith Opportunity Areas - where development may impact upon Belvedere and Erith stations and require improvements to the stations.

**Response to Comments**

Para 3.38 of the SPD states that where potential conflicts between objectives arise, the Council will review the relative priority of the obligations sought. The Council will address this issue on a site by site basis, pending more detailed work to be carried out as part of the Erith and Belvedere Area Action Plans as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Documents. The government's proposed Planning Gain Supplement may also serve to address the issue of transport infrastructure.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.37

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

**Summary of comments**

Councils should not use the term 'open book' for viability appraisal. The SPD should refer to a requirements for a 'full financial appraisal to be submitted on a confidential basis'. Reference to GLA development control toolkit is welcome.

**Response to Comments**

Accept

**Summary of proposed action**

Change as proposed.

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**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Level on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

**Summary of comments**

1) Notes that there are circumstances beyond financial viability that make a development not meet Council's policy aspirations such as site circumstances and constraints which are not financial in nature. The situations are likely to arise in cases involving sheltered housing and other specialised housing products. The SPD should make provision for greater flexibility.

2) Concerned that Council will seek to cap the level of profit a developer may make rather than allowing the level of risk involved to determine the profit through the operation of market forces.

**Response to Comments**

1) If a site is inherently suitable for affordable housing, proposals for specialised housing products which make the provision of affordable housing on that site impractical, still carry a policy requirement for affordable housing provision. This may be provided as off-site or cash-in-lieu. Para 3.23 makes provision for this.

2) As stated in para 3.37, the onus is on the developer to take into account known requirements and constraints, such as the level of risk, in negotiating the purchase of land.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.40

**Contact Name:** Mr George Venning

**Organisation:** Levvel on behalf of McCarthy and Stone

**Reference:** 1482

**Summary of comments**

Accept that the eligibility of a site to provide affordable housing should be based on the gross number of dwellings provided rather than the increase in the number of units net of demolitions. However point out that the development of sites which involve a large number of demolitions may have unusually high particular costs associated, which may limit ability to provide 35% affordable housing. The SPD should recognise the need for greater flexibility to take into account site specific circumstances and wider planning gain package.

**Response to Comments**

In considering the provision of affordable housing on a site, para 3.36 states that the Council will have regard to the particular costs associated with a development. No further statement is considered necessary in the SPD. As a matter of course, the Council considers the individual circumstances of sites in determining planning applications.

**Summary of proposed action**

No action required

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.43 - 3.44

**Contact Name:** Mr J Farrar

**Organisation:** Greater London Authority

**Reference:** 154

**Summary of comments**

This needs to be updated to refer to the Mayor's Housing SPG – the £15,000 figure is now £16,400.

**Response to Comments**

Accept

**Summary of proposed action**

Change as proposed.

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**Direct Reference:** Para 3.44

**Contact Name:** Captain L C Woolger

**Organisation:** Christchurch Area Residents' Association

**Reference:** 225

**Summary of comments**

Doubtful as to whether a large proportion of people in the area have incomes which reach the range identified for intermediate housing.

**Response to Comments**

The income ranges identified are for households rather than individuals. This would serve to improve affordability levels. Moreover, families who fall below the intermediate income ranges may be eligible for social-rented housing.

**Summary of proposed action**

No changes proposed.