

# Housing Standards Review

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government published a [Ministerial Statement](#) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This formed the culmination of the [Housing Standards Review](#), which sought to rationalise the locally derived standards which are applied to new housing developments. Whilst the statement does not change any policy in the adopted development plan, it will constitute a material consideration when assessing proposed developments against the adopted policies. This note sets out how the city council will consider the Ministerial Statement in applying certain policies of the [Portsmouth Plan](#).

## Housing size

Internal space standards were adopted through policy PCS19 of the [Portsmouth Plan](#) and the [Housing Standards Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#). For any planning applications determined up to 30th September 2015, the existing, adopted internal space standards will continue to apply.

From 1st October 2015, the requirement to meet internal space standards for new homes will remain. However the specific size standards to be met will be taken from the [Nationally Described Space Standard](#) (set out in annex 1 of this note). Schemes which could be determined close to the changeover date should ideally be designed to the higher of the two standards which would apply in order to ensure that the scheme will always be compliant with the relevant size standard.

## Sustainable design and construction

Specific standards of sustainable design and construction were adopted through the [Portsmouth Plan](#) and the [Sustainable Design and Construction SPD](#). The Ministerial Statement will not result in any changes to how schemes for non-residential development will be assessed and any schemes involving the construction of more than 500m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace will need to continue to meet the 'Excellent' level of the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM).

The Ministerial Statement sets out that Local Planning Authorities should no longer require compliance with specific levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes (the Code) or to require a certain proportion of the Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) to be offset through Low or Zero Carbon (LZC) Energy. Policy PCS15 has required both of these in all new dwellings since its adoption in 2012. However the Statement does set out that a standard of energy and water efficiency above building regulations can still be required from new development in a way that is consistent with the Government's proposed approach to zero carbon homes. As such, the standards of energy and water efficiency that will be required from new residential development are as follows:

- **Energy efficiency** - a 19% improvement in the DER over the Target Emission Rate as defined in Part L1A of the 2013 Building Regulations
- **Water efficiency** - 110 litres per person per day (this includes a 5 litre allowance for external water use).

These standards will remain in place until the zero carbon homes policy is brought into force in 2016, after which the same standard of energy efficiency will continue to be required, though this will purely be through the Building Regulations rather than through compliance with planning conditions.

Any schemes which already have planning permission accompanied by conditions requiring compliance with the Code should still meet the required standard, unless a variance of condition application is made.

### *How should I go about meeting this standard?*

The advice in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD still stands in that all schemes should use the energy hierarchy. Passive, fabric based measures such as enhanced insulation and airtightness should always be investigated first as these are the easiest for new residents to use and enhance the longevity of the sustainability measures. After this, energy efficiency measures such as mechanical ventilation with heat recovery should be used. Finally, on-site LZC energy should be used to further reduce the DER to the required level. Further advice on how to approach sustainable design is in sections 3.24-3.41 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and guidance on the kinds of LZC technologies that are most suitable for Portsmouth is in appendix 2 of the SDP.

*What information is required and when do you need it?*

The required energy efficiency standard is higher than building regulations and could require changes to a building regulations compliant design in order to meet it, such as changes to building footprints, materials and LZC energy. As such, it is necessary to confirm that the design will be able to achieve the required standard prior to construction starting.

This should be through the submission of design stage SAP worksheets and a [water efficiency calculator](#) with the planning application showing that the required standard has been met together with a short method statement setting out the measures which would be put in place. Larger developments should continue to submit a full energy strategy with the scheme setting out the development's approach to energy provision and energy efficiency. If this matter is addressed during the life of the application, it will only be necessary to attach a pre-occupation condition. Otherwise a pre-commencement condition will also be required.

In order to conclusively show that the standards have been achieved, all developments will be required through conditions to submit as-built SAP worksheets to the city council prior to the occupation of new dwellings.

*What if I cannot achieve the required standard on my development?*

Developments in Portsmouth and many other locations across the country have met higher standards of sustainable design and construction for many years. As such, it is not considered likely that the required standard will be unachievable on even the most tightly constrained scheme. The costs of achieving a Code 4 energy and water standard have also fallen considerably and so it is not considered that the standard threatens the viability of any scheme.

However if you feel that the standards would not be achievable, this should be discussed with the case officer as part of the pre-application engagement process and not left to be addressed through the life of an application.

*What conditions will be used?*

The conditions that will be attached to planning permissions will vary to take account of site-specific factors. However the conditions below effectively replace the model conditions for residential development that are in appendix 1 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD. It should also be noted that our previous Code for Sustainable Homes conditions included the requirement to provide cycle storage. As such, a further condition requiring cycle storage, in order to ensure compliance with PCS17 of the Portsmouth Plan and the [Parking Standards and Transport Assessments](#) SPD.

**Pre-commencement condition** - Construction shall not commence until written documentary evidence has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority proving the development will:

- a) Achieve a minimum of a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1A: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition). Such evidence shall be in the form of a Design Stage Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Assessment, produced by an accredited energy assessor; and
- b) Achieve a maximum water use of 110 litres per person per day as defined in paragraph 36(2)(b) of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended). Such evidence shall be in the form of a design stage water efficiency calculator

**Pre-occupation condition** - the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until written documentary evidence has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority, proving that the development has:

- a) Achieved a minimum of a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1a: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition). Such evidence shall be in the form of an As Built Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Assessment, produced by an accredited energy assessor; and
- b) Achieved a maximum water use of 110 litres per person per day as defined in paragraph 36(2)(b) of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended). Such evidence shall be in the form of a post-construction stage water efficiency calculator.

**Cycle storage condition** - prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, secure cycle storage facilities shall be provided in accordance with a detailed scheme that shall previously have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The cycle storage facilities shall thereafter be retained.

# Annex 1: The nationally described space standard

The Government published nationally described space standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application to housing of all tenures. It sets out requirements for the gross internal (floor) area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height. More detail is on the [Government's website](#).

Minimum floor areas and room widths for bedrooms together with the minimum floor areas for storage are also an integral part of the space standard. They cannot be used in isolation from other parts of the design standard or removed from it. The GIA of a dwelling is defined as the total floorspace measured between the internal faces of the perimeter walls that enclose the dwelling. This should be set out in square metres.

The standard requires that:

- (a) the dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in the table below
- (b) a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom
- (c) in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m<sup>2</sup> and is at least 2.15m wide
- (d) in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m<sup>2</sup>
- (e) one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide
- (f) any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m<sup>2</sup> within the Gross Internal Area)
- (g) any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all
- (h) a built-in wardrobe counts towards the Gross Internal Area and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72m<sup>2</sup> in a double bedroom and 0.36m<sup>2</sup> in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement
- (i) the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area

**Table 1 - minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m<sup>2</sup>)**

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (p)	One storey dwelling	Two storey dwelling	Three storey dwelling	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) <sup>†</sup>	-	-	1.0
	2p	50	58	-	1.5
2b	3p	61	70	-	2.0
	4p	70	79	-	
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

<sup>†</sup> Where a one person flat has a shower room rather than a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m<sup>2</sup> to 37m<sup>2</sup>.