

Housing Standards

Supplementary Planning Document

www.portsmouth.gov.uk



Foreword

With changing demographics and a large demand for housing, the Portsmouth Plan has set a delivery target of around 450 new homes each year until 2027, with many of these being affordable.

This document provides guidance on how to implement the housing policies in the Portsmouth Plan, ensuring that the homes which are delivered are of an adequate size and mix to support our residents' diverse requirements.

This will support developers and the city council in working together to achieve the National Planning Policy Framework's objective to 'deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.'



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Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance to developers on housing requirements and supplements the housing policies of the Portsmouth Plan that was adopted in 2012.
- 1.2 This document has also been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that local planning authorities should 'deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.'¹
- 1.3 Despite demands, the market alone has not delivered enough homes in Portsmouth that are affordable and spacious enough for the average households, particularly those with families.
- 1.4 This SPD aims to ensure that the housing that is delivered is of the appropriate size, density, distribution and affordability in order to create high-quality homes and communities.

Contact

- 1.5 For general enquires on Portsmouth planning policies, please contact:

Email: ldf@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 9268 8633

For pre-application enquiries, please contact:

Email: planningpreapps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 9283 4323

For the Housing Strategy and Enabling team, please contact:

Email: housingstrategy@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Telephone: 023 9284 1567 / 023 9283 5154

Or visit in person at the Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2AU.

Existing policies

- 1.6 This document provides further guidance for housing policies which were adopted in the Portsmouth Plan. The policies elaborated upon within this SPD are:
 - PCS13 a greener Portsmouth
 - PCS19 housing mix, size and the provision of affordable homes
 - PCS21 housing density

Where appropriate, these policies have been copied into this document in either full or an excerpt form to support the relevant section in this document. To read the full policy and for additional context, please refer to the Portsmouth Plan.

¹ Paragraph 50, page 13, National Planning Policy Framework 2012:
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf

1.7 This document does not provide additional guidance for every housing policy in the Portsmouth Plan. For example, separate SPDs are being prepared for:

- PCS15 Sustainable design and construction
- PCS20 Houses in Multiple Occupation

The 'Sustainable Design and Construction SPD' provides further guidance on housing design, including private amenity space.

1.8 An SPD on Planning Obligations was adopted in 2006 and updated in 2008. This Housing Standards SPD will replace parts of the Planning Obligations SPD upon adoption. Guidance on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is also being provided separately.

where else to look

- Portsmouth Plan: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/7923.html
- PCC Community Infrastructure Levy webpage: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/20443.html
- Sustainable design and construction SPD: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/23686.html
- Houses of multiple occupation SPD: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/6091.html
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012:
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf
- Planning Obligations SPD: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/12751.html



Size

Housing size

- 2.1 All new dwellings should be of a reasonable size appropriate to the number of people the dwelling is designed to accommodate. Larger dwellings generally result in more personal and private space which can contribute towards improved health and wellbeing. However in line with national trends, the size of an average new build dwelling has been falling in Portsmouth over recent years.²
- 2.2 To reverse this trend, Portsmouth City Council has reviewed the Homes and Communities Agency space standards³ and created residential space standards guidelines for both new market and affordable housing in Portsmouth. These space standards, which are shown in table 1, will ensure that the internal floor space in new homes will be of an appropriate size for the number of rooms within it and the number of people who are likely to occupy the dwelling.
- 2.3 The sizes shown in the table are minimum standards. There are no maximum standards and developers are encouraged to provide larger rooms and dwellings where appropriate. The standards will be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring Report⁴ and updated if necessary.

Dwelling type	Number of bedrooms	Number of people	Number of floors			
			1	2	2.5	3
Flats	1	2	45	55	-	-
	2	3	60	70	-	-
	2	4	67	77	-	-
	3	5	75	85	-	-
Houses	2	4	-	78	88	98
	3	5	-	84	94	104
	3	6	-	95	105	115
	4	6	-	100	110	120
	4	7	-	108	118	128
	5	7	-	112	122	132
	5	8	-	118	128	138
Special needs – disabled						
Flats	1	2	55			
	2	3	72			
	2	4	78			
	3	5	84			
Houses	Design and size should be discussed with the Housing Strategy and Enabling team					

Table 1 - minimum space standards for residential new builds (gross m²)

² RIBA: Housing space standards: a national perspective:

www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/ResearchAndDevelopment/Symposium/2008/MikeRoys.pdf

³ The National Affordable Homes Agency: 721 Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form (April 2008)

www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/sites/default/files/our-work/721_hqi_form_4_apr_08_update_20080820153028.pdf

⁴ www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/6109.html

Worked example: housing size

A proposed development contains 2-bed flats over one floor, and 4-bed houses over three floors. The minimum internal floor space for each flat is 60m², and the houses 120m². However, if the properties are intended for higher occupancy, a larger size threshold of 67m² and 128 m² respectively will apply.

Conversion

- 2.4 As outlined in PCS19, 'all new development and housing conversions should be of a reasonable size appropriate to the number of people the dwelling is designed to accommodate'. This requirement applies equally to the sub-division of existing properties.
- 2.5 Proposals for the sub-division of existing single dwelling houses will be permitted provided that the property has, or had, a minimum gross floorspace of 140m² as originally constructed, or as existed on the 1st July 1948, whichever is the earlier. Subdivision of 'original' properties whose floorspace fall below 140m² will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The city needs to make the best possible use of its existing stock and find the right balance between housing needs, ensuring adequate standards of accommodation, protecting residential amenity and maintaining the supply of family housing. Most new homes currently built in the city are flats. Between 2001-2007, 84% of all the new homes built in the city were flats and almost two thirds had two bedrooms. Demand for 'family homes' (with three bedrooms or more) remains high. If a balance of housing provision is not maintained, families may have to look outside of Portsmouth for suitable housing. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of sub-division of three-bedroom (or smaller) dwelling houses to flats can erode the existing residential character of a street or area.

PCS19 housing mix (excerpt)

Housing size*

All new development and housing conversions should be of a reasonable size appropriate to the number of people the dwelling is designed to accommodate. Therefore, apart from in exceptional circumstances where it can be shown that the standards are not practicable or viable, all new dwellings and conversions should meet Portsmouth City Council minimum space standards for internal floorspace.

These standards will be kept under review to ensure an appropriate balance of dwelling size is achieved and maintained across the city.

* The requirements for housing mix and space standards do not apply to developments made up entirely of sheltered accommodation, extra care, or purpose built student housing.

Density

Housing density

- 3.1 As Portsmouth has inherent natural constraints on developable land it is important that new housing developments make effective and efficient use of land.
- 3.2 PCS21 states that densities of at least 100 dwellings per hectare (dph) will be encouraged in areas that are, or will become, highly accessible and close to essential facilities. A minimum density of 40dph is considered appropriate for the remainder of the city. Although the majority of anticipated housing development will likely take place at higher densities, a lower limit of 40dph will allow for the development of a mix of housing types. This should bring forward much needed larger family dwellings of three bedrooms or more, as well as smaller units.
- 3.3 The density ranges should be regarded as a guide to development in the city. The council recognises that appropriate housing densities depend on a range of factors such as the character, existing density, accessibility and level of open space in an area. The council's Urban Characterisation Study should be used as reference for an area's character. Developers will be expected to show reasoned justification for building below the PCS21 housing density ranges and also show that they have taken local characteristics into account.

PCS21 housing density (full)

High density housing development will be encouraged in areas with very good public transport links which are close to local facilities and have been identified for intensification. Housing density development on site should be a minimum of 100dph in the following areas:

- City Centre
- Cosham District Centre
- Fratton District Centre
- Southsea Town Centre
- Albert Road/Elm Grove District Centre
- North End District Centre
- Port Solent
- Tipner
- Somerstown and North Southsea

Outside of these areas, housing density should be no less than 40dph.

The council recognises that appropriate housing densities depend on various factors. The rationale for developing at different density levels to those outlined above should be made by the developer in an accompanying design and access statement.

where else to look

- Portsmouth Urban Characterisation Study:
www.portsmouth.gov.uk/media/PLN_UrbanCharacterisationStudy.pdf

Open Space

Public open space

- 4.1 In a city as densely built up as Portsmouth, access to public open space is an important asset for residents. It can be enjoyed by all sectors of the community as a place to relax, to play or to take part in sports, as well as providing visual relief from the urban environment and acting as a habitat for wildlife. All residents of Portsmouth should therefore have easy access to good quality open space facilities.
- 4.2 New residential development inevitably creates pressures on existing open spaces by introducing additional residents. To help compensate for this, PCS13 'a greener Portsmouth' requires 'pocket parks on development sites of 50 dwellings or more to a standard of 1.5ha per 1,000 population'. To calculate the likely number of occupants for a development the figures in table 2 should be used.
- 4.3 Where the application is for the redevelopment of an existing site, the net increase in residents will be calculated so that only the additional pressure on open spaces caused by the development is taken into account.
- 4.4 The need for open space provision will normally be generated by residential schemes of all types including those for single people and the elderly. The only exception will be for sheltered accommodation for the frail elderly.

Dwelling size	Average household size
Studio	1 person
1 bedroom	1.39 persons
2 bedroom	1.85 persons
3 bedroom	2.46 persons
4 bedroom or more	2.84 persons

Table 2 - Average household size in Portsmouth (2001 Census)

- 4.5 The new open space should primarily be provided on-site, enhancing the quality and desirability of the development. In specific circumstances on-site provision may not be possible, in which case off-site provision on a council approved site will be required (see paragraph 4.14).
- 4.6 Pocket parks are generally areas of green space, but they could include an artificial surface specifically laid out for amenity or recreational purposes, such as a children's play area. The provision of open space should be appropriate to the needs generated by the proposed development and should conform to PCC's 'open space design standards', as shown in the next section.
- 4.7 Open space that is provided with the intention of being used exclusively by residents (eg. courtyards) will not be an acceptable alternative to public open space provision. The 'Sustainable design and construction SPD' will provide further guidance on housing design, including private amenity space.

PCS13 a greener Portsmouth (excerpt)

The city council will work collaboratively to protect, enhance and develop the green infrastructure network in the following ways:

Enhance green infrastructure by:

- Ensuring the highest play value of sites, whether they are designed specifically for play or whether they are shared open space for the whole community;

Provide new green infrastructure by:

- Requiring pocket parks on development sites of 50 dwellings or more to a standard of 1.5ha per 1,000 population;

Worked example : on-site open space provision

A proposed development is composed of 34 one-bed units, 12 two-bed units and 8 three-bed units. To calculate the potential number of occupants, the number of each type of dwelling is multiplied by the average household size for that type i.e:

$$(34 \times 1.39) + (12 \times 1.85) + (8 \times 2.46) = 89.14$$

1.5 hectare of open space should be provided per 1000 residents. This equates to 15 m² per person. To calculate the area of open space to be provided, the number of prospective residents is multiplied by that figure of 15, i.e:

$$89.14 \times 15 = 1337.1$$

The development should provide 1337.1 m² of open space.

Open space design standards

- 4.8 Policy PCS13 states that the council will ensure the “highest play value of sites, whether they are designed specifically for play or whether they are shared open space for the whole community”.
- 4.9 The council’s Parks and Open Spaces Strategy considers how Portsmouth’s open spaces are planned, designed, managed, maintained and protected, and sets out a series of objectives to ensure that Portsmouth’s parks and open spaces are of a consistent high standard, fit for purpose, and meet the needs of Portsmouth’s residents and visitors.
- 4.10 One objective of the strategy is to apply high quality design principles to new sites and during the enhancement of an existing green space. This objective should equally apply to any public open space newly created or redeveloped within residential developments.

4.11 The quality of a green space is strongly influenced by the design principles that are applied to its layout and facilities. Good quality design ensures attractive, durable, functional and adaptable spaces and should:

- enhance the connections between people and places;
- integrate places into the existing natural and built environments;
- create safe and inclusive spaces; and
- consider the impact of development on the natural environment.

4.12 Well-designed spaces should be:

Welcoming	entrances and signage work to draw people into the space.
Accessible	there are no barriers to prevent access to pedestrians, cyclists, and those with disabilities.
Promoted	ensuring that an interpretation and information is available to enhance the experience of those who use the space.
Safe	designed to enhance busyness and informal surveillance from outside the space.
Easy to navigate	through routes are suitably positioned and routes within the site promote access to all areas.
Places to be active	sport and physical activity are encouraged.
Places to relax	shelter, shade and seating are available for people to enjoy being outdoors.
Well integrated	well integrated into the environment.
Sustainable	designed to minimise impact on the natural environment and to adapt to climate change.

4.13 Developers should ensure that a high standard is achieved in the design, specification and layout of public open space, particularly if seeking to transfer the maintenance liability to a third party. This may include some or all of the key elements of an open space, including:

- surface finishes;
- boundary treatments;
- horticultural features and associated landscaping;
- play equipment and informal play features;
- ball court facilities;
- site furniture including seats, bins and signs; and
- lighting requirements.

Off-site provision

4.14 In specific circumstances on-site provision may not be possible. Possible scenarios include:

- conversion of existing (non-residential) buildings;
- high-density (new build) schemes on restricted plots;
- where the developer of two or more sites in close proximity (within 1km) wishes to transfer the requirement to one or more of the others.

Where such exceptions apply, off-site provision on a council approved site will be sought, subject to the same design standards requirements.

Financial contribution

4.15 If off-site provision is not viable or feasible, the council will negotiate a Section 106 financial contribution from the developer towards improvements to an existing open space in the development's locality. To avoid overlap with Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, improvements towards The Common, the Seafront or the Horsea Island Country Park will not be sought through this process.⁵

where else to look

- Portsmouth Plan: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/7923.html
- Portsmouth Urban Characterisation Study:
www.portsmouth.gov.uk/media/PLN_UrbanCharacterisationStudy.pdf
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/20574.html
- Sustainable design and construction SPD: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/23686.html

⁵ www.portsmouth.gov.uk/media/Portsmouth_CIL_Reg123_list.pdf

Affordability

Affordable housing

6.1 In order to fully understand this section, a number of key terms first need to be defined. These definitions are those from the National Planning Policy Framework 2012:

Market housing	Private housing for rent or sale where the price is set by the market.
Affordable housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Social rented housing	Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.
Affordable rented housing	Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
Intermediate housing	Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

6.2 As explained in detail in this section, there are three ways for developers to fulfil affordable housing requirements, with the council's preferences being shown in order below. At each subsequent order of preference the developer will be required to present robust evidence to the council that demonstrates that the previous option was not deliverable:

- 1. On-site provision**
- 2. Off-site provision**
- 3. Financial contribution**

6.3 Developers are encouraged to discuss the provision of affordable housing with the city council at the earliest possible opportunity, usually at the pre-application stage. For pre-application enquiries, please either:

Email: planningpreapps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Telephone: 023 9283 4323

6.4 Affordable housing will not be required from care / nursing homes or from student accommodation, but will be required from sheltered accommodation.

On-site provision

- 6.5 Table 3 sets out our requirements for the provision of affordable housing on all new developments of 8 or more units. The initial requirement is for 20% provision, which rises to 25% for 11-14 dwellings and 30% for 15 or more developments. The required number of affordable dwellings is always rounded to the nearest whole dwelling.
- 6.6 Within the provision of affordable housing, 70% should be social rented housing, while the remaining 30% should be a mix of intermediate products. In all cases where provision of affordable housing is required, on-site provision will be sought which mirrors the market element in terms of mix, size and type of dwellings.
- 6.7 The city council will primarily seek for affordable housing to be ‘pepper potted’ around the site to avoid social exclusion and create mixed communities. The city council will however remain flexible in the type and distribution of affordable housing sought, to ensure the appropriate quantity and mix can be provided.

Off-site provision

- 6.8 In exceptional cases where a developer has shown robust evidence to the city council that demonstrates that on-site provision of affordable housing is either unviable or unfeasible, off-site provision may be negotiated. Off-site provision misses the opportunity to create mixed and balanced communities and therefore will only be acceptable in extenuating circumstances where the council is satisfied that the units could not have been provided on-site. The council will need to be assured that the location of the alternative site is suitable and that development can take place within an appropriate timescale. Furthermore, as 100% private market housing would now be achieved on the original site, the total number of off-site affordable housing units sought by the council would rise, to maintain the original private market to affordable housing ratio.

Net increase in dwellings*	On-site provision		Off-site provision	
	Provision of affordable housing	No. of affordable dwellings required	Provision of affordable housing	No. of affordable dwellings required
8-9	20%	2	25%	2
10	20%	2	25%	3
11-14	25%	3	33%	4
15+	30%	5+	43%	6+

* net increase in dwellings proposed on the application site

Table 3 - requirements for the provision of affordable housing

Financial contribution

- 6.9 Only when off-site provision is demonstrated not to be deliverable will a financial contribution towards securing affordable housing elsewhere in the city be considered. The council wishes to make it clear that this option is the last resort. The financial sum agreed - which will be calculated at a rate of £1000m² for the units that would have been provided - will be paid into a “ring fenced” affordable housing fund. This fund will be used to finance additional affordable housing schemes across the city in accordance with the city council’s Housing Strategy.

Worked example: affordable housing provision

On-site

A development of 50 x 45m² one-bed flats and 25 x 84m² three-bed houses are proposed on an application site. The city council requires 30% of the dwellings to be affordable, with the same pro-rata ratio of 2:1 (or 66.6%) affordable flats to affordable housing being provided. To calculate the number of affordable dwellings:

$$(50+25) \times 30\% = 22.5$$

Therefore, with rounding down to the nearest whole, 22 of the dwellings will be required to be affordable. The ratio of affordable flats to houses will be:

$$22 \times 66.6\% = 14.652$$

In this instance, we would expect the developer to deliver 15 x 45m² one-bed affordable flats and 7 x 84m² three-bed affordable houses on-site.

Off-site

It is decided that the affordable homes will be provided off-site. As such the proposed number of on-site market homes will rise to 75, requiring the number of off-site affordable housing to rise accordingly:

$$75 \times 43\% = 32.25$$

Therefore with rounding down to the nearest whole dwelling, 32 off-site affordable homes will be required from the developer with 21 being 45m² one-bed flats and 11 being 84m² three-bed houses.

Financial contribution

It is decided that the affordable homes cannot be provided off-site, so a financial contribution towards affordable homes will be required instead. Using the £1000m² figure, the size of the contribution will be:

$$(21 \times 45\text{m}^2) \times \text{£}1000 = \text{£}945,000$$

$$(11 \times 84\text{m}^2) \times \text{£}1000 = \text{£}924,000$$

Therefore a financial contribution of £1,869,000 will be required.

PCS19 provision of affordable homes (excerpt)

Provision of affordable housing

All proposals for additional housing which would create a net increase of eight dwellings or more must make provision for sufficient affordable housing which will contribute to meeting the identified need in the city. Unless otherwise agreed with the city council, affordable housing should be provided at the following proportions:

Net increase in dwellings	Provision of affordable housing
8-10	20%
11-14	25%
15+	30%

The tenure mix of the affordable units should be 70% social rented and 30% intermediate products. In all cases where provision of affordable housing is required, on-site provision will be sought which mirrors the market element in terms of mix, size and type of dwellings.

The actual amount, mix, tenure and distribution of affordable housing should be as detailed above. There are occasionally specific circumstances associated with a development which would render it unviable if the required amount and type of affordable housing is provided. In such situations the council will negotiate with the developer so that the maximum amount and best mix of affordable housing can be provided whilst maintaining the scheme's viability, based on current land values. In such situations, developers will have to present robust evidence that it would not be feasible or viable, so that it can be closely scrutinised and validated. In such situations, developers will be expected to provide as much affordable housing as would be possible without rendering the scheme unviable.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is not practical or viable to provide on-site affordable housing, provision will be sought on an alternative site. A financial contribution towards securing affordable housing elsewhere in the city will only be considered when both on- and off-site provision has been shown to be impossible. The charging scheme for off-site affordable housing is set out in the Planning Obligations SPD.⁶

Affordable housing will not be required from care/nursing homes or from student accommodation. Affordable housing will be required from sheltered accommodation.

⁶ Please note: the charging scheme in this Housing Standards SPD has replaced that of the Planning Obligations SPD.

where else to look

- Portsmouth Plan: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/7923.html
- National Planning Policy Framework:
www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf
- Providing Affordable Housing in Portsmouth: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/13474.html

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