

# CHAPTER 7 - HOUSING

## CONTENTS

<b>7.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Policy Context</b>	<b>76</b>
	- Government policy	
	- County Structure Plan policy	
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>7.4</b>	<b>General Policy</b>	<b>78</b>
	Policy HSG1	
<b>7.5</b>	<b>New Housing Provision 1991-2006</b>	<b>78</b>
	- Housing Provision in the Borough	
	Policy HSG2	
	- Housing Capacity in the Plan Period (1996 -2006)	
	Policy HSG3	
<b>7.6</b>	<b>Meeting Housing Needs</b>	<b>81</b>
	- Household Demand and Dwelling Type Supply	
	Policy HSG4	
	- Affordable Housing	
	Policy HSG5	
	- Housing for Elderly People and Other Special Needs Groups	
	Policy HSG6	
	- Housing for Young People	
	Policy HSG7	
	- Change of Use to Hostels and Group Homes for Young or Elderly People	
	Policy HSG8	
	- New Development of Sheltered Accommodation and Group Homes for Elderly People and Other Special Needs Groups	
	Policy HSG9	
	- Housing for People with a Mobility Disability	
	Policy HSG10	
	- Temporary Dwellings and Gypsy Sites	
	Policy HSG10	
<b>7.7</b>	<b>New Residential Developments</b>	<b>89</b>
	- Design and Layout of New Development	
	Policy HSG11	
	- Conversions to Residential Use	
	Policy HSG12	
<b>7.8</b>	<b>Existing Residential Areas</b>	<b>90</b>
	- Improvement and Enhancement	
	- Retention of Existing Housing Land and Buildings	

- Policy HSG13
- Change of Use
- Policy HSG14
- Sub-divisions
- Policy HSG15

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 Epsom and Ewell has, for many years, been an area of high housing demand based on the attractiveness of the area and on the relative ease of access to employment opportunities. At the same time, the inclusion of much of the open land in the Borough in the Metropolitan Green Belt has effectively restricted the opportunities for further housing development to surplus, infill and redevelopment sites within the urban area. Regional guidance and Structure Plan policies for Surrey, and therefore for Epsom and Ewell, have also sought to reconcile provision for housing with maintenance of the quality of the environment. Against this background, the situation of demand for housing generally exceeding supply is unlikely to change and will continue to cause particular problems to those wishing to live in the Borough but unable to afford the housing available on the open market.

7.1.2 Much of the demand for housing is a reflection of the increasing number of people wishing, for a variety of reasons, to live as separate independent households. The population of the Borough peaked at 72,301 in 1971 and by the 1991 Census had decreased to 67,007. This was largely accounted for by the decrease in the institutional population, the population in private households only decreasing from 64,028 to 63,730. However, over the same period, the number of dwellings increased from 23,676 to 26,358 and the number of households from 23,008 to 25,662. These figures reflect a decrease in average household size from 2.78 persons in 1971 to 2.48 in 1991. At the base date of 1 April 2000 for the housing provision figures in this chapter of the Plan, it is estimated that the dwelling stock had further increased to a total of 27,460 and that the population had reached 70,300.

7.1.3 A large proportion of the Borough's housing stock was developed in the inter and early post-war years and the following table taken from the 1991 Census reflects the characteristic dwelling types of that period:-

Detached House	Semi-Detached House	Terraced House	Purpose-Built Flat	Other
27.9%	37.6%	14.7%	17.8%	2.0%

The proportion of semi-detached houses is the highest in Surrey and that of purpose-built flats is also higher than the average. In contrast, the proportions of detached and terraced houses, typical of more recent housing development, are lower than the Surrey average. Across the Borough as a whole, the standard of properties is comparable with the high levels for Surrey.

7.1.4 In terms of dwelling size, which is taken from the information in the 1991 Census on the number of rooms occupied by households, 72.5% of households occupy five or more rooms which is slightly higher than the Surrey average. In contrast, 59.9% of households comprise only 1 or 2 persons.

7.1.5 In 1991, 83.9% of households were in owner occupied property, the highest proportion in Surrey and in the top 25 of all English district local authorities (including metropolitan authorities); and a high proportion of these were owned outright. The overall tenure position in 1991 was:-

Owner Occupied	Rented Privately	Rented With Job	Rented From Housing Association	Rented From Local Authority
83.9%	6.2%	1.6%	1.1%	7.2%

The proportion of local authority stock in 1991 was already the lowest in Surrey having been considerably reduced by the Right-to-Buy legislation. In 1994 the remaining balance was transferred to the Rosebery Housing Association.

## 7.2 POLICY CONTEXT

### Government Policy

7.2.1 Central Government's general policies for housing are currently set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3 March 1992). The Government looks to the planning system to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing, taking account of market demand and of Government policies for the encouragement of home ownership and the provision of rented housing. In so doing, it must ensure that established environmental policies are maintained and enhanced, including the continuing protection of Green Belts and the conservation and enhancement of the urban environment and built heritage. The planning system can best achieve these objectives by identifying an acceptable choice of sites which are both suitable and available for house building.

7.2.2 A well planned strategy of land for housing can also make a valuable contribution to national prosperity, but the need to provide for economic development must be reconciled with the need to conserve and enhance the quality of the environment in town and country. To meet the requirement for new housing and at the same time maintain conservation policies, it is important that full and effective use is made of land within existing urban areas.

7.2.3 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) emphasises the importance of ensuring that an adequate supply of housing to an acceptable standard is within reach of all of the Region's people. The Region should plan to meet its own generated demand for housing and, in considering local housing needs, local authorities should take account, not only of expected household numbers, but also of the age and size of households, affordability and special needs, which will influence the kind of housing required.

7.2.4 The local scale and distribution of new provision, and planning policies governing development should be designed to help to ensure that the needs of all sections of the population are met, while maintaining the quality of the environment. The distribution of the regional housing provisions set out in RPG9, which provides the basis for the provision in the Surrey Structure Plan, takes into account the environmental constraints of the Region; the location of present and likely demand for housing; the overall needs of the economy and the expected shift in the longer term of new development pressures and employment opportunities from the west to the east of the Region.

County Structure Plan Policy

7.2.5 The Surrey Structure Plan 1994 seeks the promotion of housing which, as far as possible, meets the needs of all sections of the community including newly formed households, single people, elderly people, people with disabilities and people requiring rented accommodation. To ensure that housing opportunities are made available to people on lower incomes who are unable to compete for housing in the local market, but need to live in Surrey, developments will be expected to contribute to the supply of affordable housing, taking into account market, site and other considerations.

7.2.6 The distribution of the Structure Plan housing provision to the Borough as set out in Policy DP4 is as follows:-

	<u>1991-2001</u>	<u>2001-2006</u>	<u>Total</u>
Epsom & Ewell	1900	1300	3200
(of which Epsom Hospital Cluster)	(1000)	(1000)	(2000)

The provision includes the net gain from infilling, redevelopment and conversions. The provisions made in the two phasing periods are cumulative and any surplus or shortfall from the first phasing period will be carried forward to the second period. The Structure Plan also provides that "in the event that the adopted plan proposals for the Epsom Hospitals Cluster provide for less than 2,000 dwellings, it will be necessary to make provision for additional dwellings elsewhere in Surrey in a further review of this [Structure] Plan". It is now believed that no more than 1,300 dwellings will be provided in the Hospitals Cluster.

**7.3 OBJECTIVES**

7.3.1 Local plans should translate the broad policies of the Structure Plan into more detailed development control policies and map-based land allocations. The introduction and policy context to this chapter have set out these broad policies, together with the background to the housing needs, demand and supply in the Borough, and the need to take account of environmental constraints, including the protection of the Green Belt and the enhancement of urban areas. The Council has accordingly identified the following objectives:-

- (i) To make provision for an appropriate level of housing which meets local needs and the requirements of the Surrey Structure Plan;
- (ii) To ensure that new housing development is carried out in a form which meets, as far as possible, the needs of the Borough whilst maintaining the quality of the environment;
- (iii) To support the retention and improvement of the Borough's existing housing stock and residential areas and prevent the loss of existing housing land and buildings.

## **7.4 GENERAL POLICY ON HOUSING**

- 7.4.1. The Local Plan has to reconcile the inherent conflict between the level of demand for housing in the Borough and the need for the continuing protection of the Green Belt and the protection and enhancement of the environment of the urban areas. Furthermore, this has to be done within the context of Government and County Policy, in particular the provision of a level of housing development in accordance with Regional Guidance and the Surrey Structure Plan.

~~HSG1 PROVISION WILL BE MADE FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH WHICH MEETS LOCAL NEEDS, AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SURREY STRUCTURE PLAN WITHIN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE PROTECTION OF THE GREEN BELT AND OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE URBAN AREAS.~~

## **7.5 NEW HOUSING PROVISION 1991-2006**

### Housing Provision in the Borough

- 7.5.1 The Structure Plan indicates in broad terms the scale of provision to be made for housing in the county as a whole and in each district, and local plans are required to translate this broad provision into specific land allocations in a way which takes proper account of local conditions. Plans should not specify the precise number of houses to be developed each year, but where, as in Surrey, the plan extends over a long period and there are strong pressures for development, which it is desirable to resist, it is reasonable to indicate, in broad terms, how development is to be programmed over the period of the plan.
- 7.5.2 Surrey Structure Plan Policy DP4 makes the following housing provisions for the Borough outside the Epsom Hospital Cluster (the provision for housing on the Epsom Hospital Cluster is considered separately in Chapter 8 of this Plan):-

<u>District</u>	<u>1991-2001</u>	<u>2001-2006</u>	<u>Total</u>
Epsom & Ewell	900	300	1200

The reduced level of provision in the second phasing period is derived from the need to prevent the further urbanisation of the County, to protect the local environment and to reflect infrastructure and resource constraints.

~~HSG2 PROVISION WILL BE MADE IN THAT PART OF THE BOROUGH OUTSIDE THE EPSOM HOSPITALS CLUSTER BETWEEN 1 APRIL 1991 AND 31 MARCH 2006 FOR AN INCREASE IN THE DWELLING STOCK OF ABOUT 1,200 DWELLINGS. PROVISION WILL BE MADE FOR ABOUT 900 OF THESE DWELLINGS BETWEEN 1 APRIL 1991 AND 31 MARCH 2001 AND FOR ABOUT 300 BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2001 AND 31 MARCH 2006.~~

#### Housing Capacity in the Plan Period (1996 - 2006)

- 7.5.3 Local plans will convey greater certainty the more sites they identify as suitable for development or redevelopment for housing, but they should also make allowance for the contribution that will be made by unidentified sites over the plan period. Plans should clearly state what assumptions they make about the likely contribution to total housing supply resulting from the redevelopment of sites not identified in the plan and such assumptions will need to be checked by regular monitoring.
- 7.5.4 Most recent housing development has taken place on surplus, infill and redevelopment sites within the urban area. By their nature, such sites are often difficult to identify in advance, especially as any constraints often relate to an owner's intentions rather than being of an identifiable physical or policy nature. It is therefore seen as inevitable that proposals will continue to come forward for development on sites which are not identified in the Local Plan and that an appropriate allowance should therefore be made for their contribution to total land supply.
- 7.5.5 Completions on sites of less than 10 dwellings (net of demolitions on site) in Epsom and Ewell have been regularly monitored on the basis of a rolling 10 year average. For the 10 years 1990-2000 the average has been 27 units per annum, on which basis contributions from this source, excluding those completed between 1991 and 1997, would amount to 162 dwellings to the end of the Structure Plan period in 2006. However, the Borough Local Plan approved in 1995 assumed a reduction in this contribution of 50% from 1996 and this assumption has been carried forward into the current plan, thereby reducing the potential contribution by 2006 to 81 units. Completions on sites of less than 10 dwellings will be carefully monitored and the estimated level of contribution will be revised if appropriate.

7.5.6 Because of the nature of land supply in the Borough as described in paragraph 7.5.4, past experience shows that proposals also come forward on a regular basis on sites of less than 1 ha (2.47 acres) in size to develop 10 or more dwellings. It is not possible to identify these sites in advance for a period looking ahead for a further 10 years. From the date of the publication of the Consultation Draft of the Borough Local Plan in 1990 to 1996, five such sites, which were not identified in that document, have been developed for a total of 84 units i.e., approximately 17 units per site or 14 per year. Because this is a more recent figure covering the period after the late 1980's housing boom, it is assumed that sites in this range will continue to come forward at this rate to 2001, dropping to 50% thereafter, a total of 70 units from 1996 to 2001 and 35 from 2001 - 2006. However, since 1996 additional unidentified sites in this range have come forward and have been included in Policy HSG3 for development in the 1996 - 2001 period. No allowance for further unidentified sites of 10 units or more has therefore been made for this period but an allowance of 35 units has been included for the 2001 - 2006 period.

7.5.7 Taking into account completions since the Structure Plan base date of 1 April 1991, housing land capacity in the Borough as at 1 April 2000 is assessed as follows:

<u>Housing Land Capacity to 31/3/2006</u>	<u>Dwellings</u>
Net Completions 1/4/91 - 1/4/00 (all sites)	1118
Small Sites (less than 10 units). Estimate 1/4/00 - 31/3/2006	81
Unidentified Sites of 10 units or more (under 1.0 ha/ 2.47 acres). Estimate 1/4/00 - 31/3/2006	35
Identified Sites (Policy HSG3 - 10 units or more) 1/4/00 - 31/3/2006	212
TOTAL	1446

Structure Plan Policy DP4	1200
Potential Surplus	226

**HSG3 THE FOLLOWING SITES OF 10 UNITS OR MORE ARE IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND WOULD PROVIDE FOR A NET GAIN OF ABOUT 176 DWELLINGS:**

1	HEATHCOTE ROAD CHURCH	10 DWELLINGS
2	164-170 KINGSTON ROAD, EWELL	19 DWELLINGS
3	HOLLYDENE & BIRCHCROFT, WEST HILL	16 DWELLINGS
4	WELBECK CLOSE, EWELL	14 DWELLINGS
5	<del>SURREY INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN, LINTON'S LANE</del>	<del>50 DWELLINGS</del>
6	THE ELDERS, EPSOM ROAD	30 DWELLINGS
7	LIFESTYLE CENTRE, WATERLOO ROAD	37 DWELLINGS
8	19 ALEXANDRA ROAD	24 DWELLINGS
9	4 THE PARADE	12 DWELLINGS
TOTAL		212 DWELLINGS

## 7.6 MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

7.6.1 In late 1994, the Borough Council carried out a sample interview survey to provide information on housing needs, demands and preferences across all housing tenures within the Borough. The survey questions dealt not only with the existing situation of size, age and employment status of households and size, tenure and condition of dwellings but also with future intentions in terms of moving, including size, tenure and type of housing sought and amount proposed to spend. In addition to households wishing to move, the survey also sought to identify additional households either newly forming or concealed, who may be seeking accommodation in the Borough in the near future.

7.6.2 The majority of newly forming households are looking to buy property with a loan, although around one third of movers appear prepared to spend less than the amount required to afford a property in Epsom and Ewell. Whereas movers are looking for two, three or four bedroomed properties, newly forming households are predominantly seeking one or two bedroomed accommodation. Nearly 40% of the latter are also seeking flats, which comprise less than 20% of the stock.

### Household Demand and Dwelling Type Supply

7.6.3 The nature of housing need in the Borough is influenced not only by the balance of supply and demand but also by the tenure of the housing stock and the relationship between household and dwelling size. Within the Borough as a whole, owner-occupied dwellings represent some 84% of stock, privately rented less than 8% and housing association also around 8%. Some 72% of households in 1991 lived in dwellings with 5 or more habitable rooms, whereas 75% of households consisted of three or less persons. In spite of some 73% of dwellings built from 1981 to 1991 being one or two bedroomed, the proportion of smaller dwellings hardly changed, whereas the proportion of smaller households

increased by 4%. Since 1991, the proportion of one and two bedroomed dwellings built has actually decreased to 55%.

7.6.4

This increasing mismatch between demand for small household housing accommodation and the types of dwelling in the supply causes a number of local problems which have been recognised by the Council in the formulation of the Borough Council's Housing Strategy. The Borough Council can directly influence the percentage of small dwellings provided in new residential development to redress the imbalance and thereby assist in the supply of dwellings suitable for single people, young couples and newly forming households and sheltered housing for elderly people.

~~HSG4 PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ASSIST IN MEETING THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS FOR HOUSING ACCOMMODATION:-~~

- ~~(I) DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR SINGLE PEOPLE;~~
- ~~(II) DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR YOUNG COUPLES OR NEWLY FORMING HOUSEHOLDS;~~
- ~~(III) DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE INCLUDING AN ELEMENT OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION;~~
- ~~(IV) DWELLINGS SUITABLE TO MEET THE STANDARDS FOR PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY;~~
- ~~(V) DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES;~~
- ~~(VI) DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS.~~

#### Affordable Housing

7.6.5

Local problems are caused not only by an imbalance between household demand and the supply of dwelling type but also by the high cost of housing. The principal agencies for the supply of affordable housing, namely Housing Associations encouraged by the Local Authority, have experienced extreme difficulties due to the considerable increase in household formation rates, especially the large increase in small and single person households, and the competition for housing sites. The Council considers that, as a result of the higher market value of property in the Borough relative to the UK average, even "low cost" market housing is not affordable. Accordingly, the Council consider "Affordable Housing" to be housing which can be sold or let at prices below market levels by reason of a subsidy from whatever source, and is thereby open to local residents on lower incomes. A further definition, together with other

considerations, is set out in the Glossary in the Appendices. The necessarily limited supply of land and increased demand for dwellings has inevitably led to prices and rents at unaffordable levels for a significant number of residents. To overcome this problem, the Borough Council acknowledges that it must participate actively in obtaining and linking resources to approved housing agencies who are then enabled to construct affordable housing.

7.6.6 The Council considers that there is a need for some 726 affordable dwellings during the plan period (1996 - 2006) and will expect the development of all housing sites of 25 or more units or involving 1 ha. (2.4 acres) or more of land to make a substantial contribution, of the order of 25% of the total number of units, towards meeting this need. Neither the target figure of 726, nor the identified proportion of 25% of units on large sites, represent a quota or blanket requirement. Each will be reviewed from time to time to take into account changes in housing demand and need and the affordability of property in the Borough. However, the Council recognises that it is unlikely to meet in full the established need for affordable housing within the Plan period.

7.6.7 The Council has assessed the sites allocated for housing in the Plan, and considers that all are appropriate in terms of site and locational characteristics to provide a proportion of affordable housing. In the case of proposals relating to sites of 25 or more units or involving 1 ha. (2.4 acres) or more of land not identified, the Council will consider each application on its own merits, but considers that, given the reasonable transport and infrastructure connections and the small size of the Borough, the provision of affordable housing will normally be appropriate. In negotiating the precise proportion and location of affordable housing to be provided on individual sites, the Council will seek to achieve balanced communities in terms of the range of housing types, and will resist large concentrations of housing aimed at a narrow social group. Additionally, the Council will take account of the site size and suitability, and the economics of provision including whether the provision of affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives sought elsewhere in the Plan. It will also seek to ensure that where the design of affordable housing differs from that of open market housing, the affordable housing is not identifiable by its appearance as affordable rather than as open market housing. Exceptionally, the Council may agree with the developer to accept a financial contribution towards the provision of an element of affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough in lieu of provision on the particular site.

~~HSG5 THE PROVISION OF AROUND 726 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS IN THE BOROUGH OVER THE PLAN PERIOD (1996 - 2006) WILL BE SOUGHT. THIS PROVISION WILL BE SOUGHT BY:~~

~~(1) EXPECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITES OF 25 OR MORE UNITS OR INVOLVING 1 HA. (2.4 ACRES) OR MORE OF LAND TO CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS OF THE ORDER OF 25% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS;~~

- ~~(II) NEGOTIATING WITH DEVELOPERS TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TYPES WHICH THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING VIABILITY ASSESSMENT HAS SHOWN TO BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SITE. WITHIN THE HOSPITALS CLUSTER, PLANNING BRIEFS WILL BE ISSUED WHICH WILL IDENTIFY THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT;~~
- ~~(III) ENSURING THAT THE BENEFITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ARE SECURED FOR THE LONG TERM AND ENJOYED BY SUCCESSIVE HOUSEHOLDS AS WELL AS BY THE INITIAL OCCUPIERS. TO THIS END THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL EITHER IMPOSE A PLANNING CONDITION OR SEEK THE VOLUNTARY COMPLETION OF THE NECESSARY LEGAL AGREEMENT;~~
- ~~(IV) INsofar AS IT IS POSSIBLE, ENSURING VIA A PLANNING CONDITION OR AGREEMENT THAT INITIAL AND SUBSEQUENT OCCUPIERS ARE IN LOCAL HOUSING NEED;~~
- ~~(V) ENSURING THAT THE DESIGN AND SITING OF THE DWELLINGS ENABLES THEM TO BLEND SATISFACTORILY WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS.~~

#### Housing for Elderly People and Other Special Needs Groups

- 7.6.8 Other housing problems are the proportion of elderly owner-occupiers who find the upkeep of their properties difficult and the demands of special needs groups, for example elderly people requiring special care. A particular local concern is the accommodation of discharged patients from the psychiatric hospitals in the Borough. The Council maintains an active liaison with the health authorities to deal with issues arising from the discharge of patients.
- 7.6.9 Some forms of housing need are characteristically met by special types of housing accommodation such as nursing or group homes, hostels for homeless people or sheltered housing for elderly people. These frequently take the form of conversions of existing properties, which are considered in Policy HSG8, but there have in recent years been an increasing number of schemes for new developments to provide sheltered housing for elderly people. Although concern has been raised as to how accessible these schemes are, because of cost, to elderly residents in the Borough, the Council is generally sympathetic to such proposals and may be prepared in certain circumstances, because of their low level of activity, to grant permission on sites where ordinary residential development would not be considered appropriate - see also paragraph 7.6.15.

~~HSG6 THE PROVISION OF HOUSING FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE, HOMELESS PEOPLE AND SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS WILL BE~~

~~PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT PROPOSALS ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA BY REASON OF SCALE OR DENSITY OR LOSS OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK OF OTHER TYPES, AND COMPLY WITH THE NORMAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CRITERIA, AS SET OUT IN CHAPTER 14 OF THE PLAN. HOUSING FOR MOBILE ELDERLY PEOPLE SHOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN A COMFORTABLE WALKING DISTANCE OF LOCAL SHOPPING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.~~

#### Housing for Young People

- 7.6.10 Another group whose housing needs fall outside the general owner-occupied market are single young people whose problems are exacerbated in the Borough by the limited amount of private rented accommodation. One way of meeting this need is through houses in multiple occupation, although such accommodation can sometimes be less than satisfactory. Another is through the provision of hostel accommodation and the Council itself runs one such hostel in Epsom. The Borough Council would support the establishment of further hostel accommodation for young single people in the Borough.

~~HSG7 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FURTHER HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT PROPOSALS ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA, BY REASON OF SCALE OR DENSITY OR LOSS OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK OF OTHER TYPES, AND COMPLY WITH THE NORMAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CRITERIA AS SET OUT IN CHAPTER 14 OF THE PLAN.~~

#### Change of Use to Hostels and Group Homes for Young or Elderly People

- 7.6.11 There is an increasing demand for group accommodation in the Borough as a result of:
- a) an increase in the number of elderly residents who may ultimately require care;
  - b) a shortage of affordable housing for young single people; and
  - c) the needs of former hospital patients discharged under the Care in the Community Act.

A large proportion of the supply is likely to be met through conversion of existing residential properties.

- 7.6.12 For group accommodation, detailed standards apply to internal spaces, access for disabled people and fire escapes, and advice can be obtained from the Borough's

Environmental Health and Building Control Divisions. However, the Council is also concerned about the planning aspects of conversions to group homes.

7.6.13 Some group accommodation can be established without the need to apply for planning permission. Under the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended), the establishment of a group household for not more than 6 unrelated residents within an existing dwelling does not constitute a change of use. Where permission is required, Control of Development Policy DC1 and Housing Policy HSG15 apply. These seek to prevent serious harm to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers, to protect the character or appearance of the surrounding area, and to ensure that acceptable living conditions will be provided for prospective occupants.

7.6.14 Group accommodation also gives rise to a need for special protection of residential amenity. Facilities will normally be needed for sitting out or, in some cases, more active recreation. The noise generated by communal facilities and food preparation will often be greater than would normally be expected in a residential area and would not be acceptable where dwellings are attached. Conversions will often involve significant alterations to the property, such as the addition of external metal staircases, which can have harmful effects on visual amenity and bring buildings much closer to adjacent properties. There may also be significant traffic flows related to deliveries, to staff and to visitors. These can be especially intrusive where they are accommodated via access to the rear of the property. The proposal should incorporate satisfactory access and parking as required by the Movement policies, but proposals will not be acceptable if they involve intrusive arrangements for access to the rear of the property.

~~**HSG8 CHANGES OF USE OF PROPERTIES TO GROUP HOMES OR HOSTELS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:**~~

~~**(I) THE PROPERTY IS DETACHED AND WITHIN GROUNDS OF ADEQUATE SIZE TO PROVIDE RECREATION AND AMENITY SPACE WITHIN THE CURTILAGE AND IS SITUATED AN ADEQUATE DISTANCE FROM ADJACENT PROPERTIES;**~~

~~**(II) THE PROPOSAL INCORPORATES ADEQUATE NOISE INSULATION WHERE NECESSARY;**~~

~~**(III) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT INVOLVE ALTERATIONS TO THE PROPERTY (SUCH AS EXTENSIONS AND FIRE ESCAPES) WHICH WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF ADJACENT OCCUPIERS OR THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE SURROUNDING AREA; AND**~~

~~**(IV) ADEQUATE ACCESS AND PARKING CAN BE PROVIDED WITHOUT INTRODUCTION OF NEW VEHICULAR MOVEMENT INTO THE REAR CURTILAGE.**~~

### New Development of Sheltered Accommodation and Group Homes for Elderly People and Other Special Needs Groups

- 7.6.15 There are sometimes proposals in the Borough for custom-built sheltered accommodation. The Council is generally sympathetic to such proposals where they can be designed to minimise disturbances such as traffic and noise, particularly where they cater for elderly people. A range of residential developments are provided for through Policies HSG3 and HSG6 in this Chapter. However, it may sometimes be appropriate to develop sheltered accommodation on sites which would not be suitable for more generalised housing development. For instance, sheltered housing is subject to specific parking requirements which are lower than for other residential proposals.
- 7.6.16 Sites which are likely to be suitable for sheltered housing, but not for generalised residential development, will often be those where two storey development would produce amenity problems relating to overlooking and privacy. However, all elements of the Local Plan must be taken into consideration. Control of Development Policy DC1 clearly applies, as do other Plan-wide Policies, particularly the Green Belt controls. Policies DC13 and DC14 apply in the case of infill and backland sites.

### Housing for People with a Mobility Disability

- 7.6.17 Part M of the Building Regulations now includes requirements which will assist disabled people to visit new dwellings. Additionally, the Borough Council wishes to encourage the provision of special housing needed by people with a mobility disability. Such special housing ranges in form from the provision of modest adaptations of existing housing stock to the construction of new, specially designed ground floor dwellings to provide for people whose only form of mobility is with a wheelchair. There is an increasing demand for this form of housing; the Social Services and Housing Associations work towards the provision of part of this special needs housing while the Borough Council can encourage the provision of mobility housing as a percentage of large scale housing schemes.

~~**HSG9 THE PROVISION OF AN ELEMENT OF HOUSING FOR THE WHEELCHAIR DISABLED AND HOUSING CAPABLE OF READY CONVERSION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING SITES WILL BE SOUGHT THROUGH NEGOTIATION.**~~

### Temporary Dwellings and Gypsy Sites

- 7.6.18 There are very few temporary dwellings within the Borough. Given the extent of the Green Belt and the built-up nature of the Borough, it is considered that any sites which can provide residential development for general occupancy should be used for permanent rather than temporary dwellings. The Council may, however, grant permission for the siting of a single caravan for a specific purpose for a limited period, e.g. during the construction of a permanent dwelling where staff

need to be resident on a particular site. Such a proposal will be judged against other Plan policies, particularly Policy DC1 in Chapter 14 - Control of Development. In addition, Policy TOR3 in Chapter 12 - Tourism, provides for the development of summer camping and touring caravanning sites.

7.6.19

The Borough Council manages gypsy sites at Cox Lane and Kiln Lane, which together provide 30 pitches, and which it will protect from alternative forms of development. The Council is not currently seeking to establish further sites for settled occupation. However, the Department of the Environment's six monthly count for January 2000 indicated that there were 21 gypsy families in the Borough occupying a total of 30 trailers and that 9 of the pitches were unoccupied. The Government advises that authorities should set out clear, realistic criteria for the provision of sites should planning applications arise. Provision should protect local amenity but be appropriate to gypsies' accommodation needs, allowing for ancillary business activity and providing access to services such as shops and schools. Proposals will be subject to Policy HSG10 and the environment and amenity considerations given elsewhere, such as those in Chapter 3 - Green Belt, Chapter 5 - Natural Environment, Chapter 6 - Built Environment and Chapter 14 - Control of Development.

~~**HSG10 PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE ESTABLISHED GYPSY SITES AT COX LANE AND KILN LANE WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE THEIR CONTINUED USE FOR SITING GYPSY CARAVANS. PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS OR MOBILE HOMES IN OTHER LOCATIONS, UNLESS THE PROPOSAL SATISFIES THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**~~

- ~~**(I) THE DEVELOPMENT IS FOR THE STATIONING OF CARAVANS FOR RECOGNISED GYPSY FAMILIES;**~~
- ~~**(II) THE DEVELOPMENT HAS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT, DOES NOT CAUSE HARM TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND DOES NOT CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO THE LIVING CONDITIONS OR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES;**~~
- ~~**(III) THE DEVELOPMENT IS MADE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE SURROUNDING AREA THROUGH APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING;**~~
- ~~**(IV) THE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PREJUDICIAL TO HIGHWAY SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY; AND**~~
- ~~**(V) THE SITE IS WITHIN A REASONABLE DISTANCE OF LOCAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**~~

## 7.7

### **NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **Design and Layout of New Development**

##### 7.7.1

Whilst recognising the needs and demands that exist for additional housing, the Council is concerned at the effect of continued housing developments, both individually and cumulatively, on the environment of the Borough which is already one of the most urbanised and congested in the County. In making provision for additional housing development and meeting housing needs, the Council will expect the design and layout of new developments to be at a density appropriate to the site and to the character of the surrounding area, and to respect, and, where possible enhance the amenities of existing dwellings and residential areas. These factors will be given particular weight in respect of development proposals within or adjoining conservation areas or affecting the setting of listed buildings.

##### 7.7.2

Developments should contribute to the achievement of the relevant environmental policies and provide high quality landscaping schemes which are strictly implemented and maintained by the developer until the planting is established, as detailed in Chapter 5 - Natural Environment. Developers should recognise the role which appropriate design can play in providing for security and public safety. Policy DC11 in Chapter 14 - Control of Development provides further guidance on design against crime. The Council will expect the open and play space needs of the prospective occupants to be satisfied in accordance with the provisions of policies OSR3 and OSR6 in Chapter 4 - Open Space and Recreation. The space standards which will be applied in relation to new housing development and in connection with children's play space are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance. Where development is of a "backland" nature, Policies DC13 and DC14 will also apply. All new housing developments will be expected to comply with the Council's parking standards which are set out in the Appendices to the Plan.

#### **HSG11 PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD:**

- (I) BE AT A DENSITY APPROPRIATE TO THE SITE AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- (II) RESPECT THE AMENITIES OF EXISTING DWELLINGS IN TERMS OF ROAD ACCESS AND LAYOUT;**
- (III) PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SEPARATION TO LIMIT OVERLOOKING AND LOSS OF PRIVACY AND GIVE ADEQUATE GARDEN SIZE FOR BOTH EXISTING AND NEW HOUSING;**
- (IV) PROVIDE FOR SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY;**

- (V) BE OF A DESIGN AND HEIGHT APPROPRIATE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;
- (VI) PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INTERNAL SPACE IN DWELLINGS; AND
- (VII) SATISFY THE OPEN AND PLAY SPACE NEEDS OF THE PROSPECTIVE OCCUPANTS.

Conversions to Residential Use

7.7.3

A modest but useful contribution to the increase in dwelling stock can be made by the conversion from other uses to residential. Until recently, economic factors have encouraged developers to seek changes of use from residential to potentially more profitable commercial uses, a trend which the Council has sought to oppose in order to retain the existing stock of residential property (see Policy HSG13). However, with the decline in the profitability of some commercial properties, in particular upper floors over shops and other office buildings whose refurbishment to modern standards is impracticable or uneconomic, there is an opportunity to encourage conversion of such properties to residential use. Such conversions can not only make effective use of property which would otherwise probably be left vacant but also encourage activity back into town centres after the working day. In the case of office buildings in particular, the Council will be prepared to grant planning permission for temporary periods in order that the benefit of the original permitted use is not lost. However, planning conditions will be used to ensure that the car parking provision remains appropriate to the office use so that the buildings can be returned to office use at a future date without creating parking problems.

~~HSG12 THE CONVERSION OF VACANT OFFICE BUILDINGS (CLASS B1) OR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OVER SHOPS TO RESIDENTIAL USE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSALS COMPLY WITH RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CRITERIA AND ACHIEVE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION OF AN ADEQUATE STANDARD. THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO BE PREPARED TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR SUCH CONVERSIONS FOR TEMPORARY PERIODS OF UP TO 10 YEARS DURATION.~~

7.8

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Improvement and Enhancement

7.8.1

As well as making provision for an appropriate level of additional housing and seeking to ensure that such development contributes towards meeting the Borough's housing needs, the Council also attaches importance to the continued improvement of the existing housing stock and to the protection and enhancement

of the environment of existing housing areas. The condition of the Borough's housing stock is generally satisfactory and the Council's housing strategy is to continue, as far as possible, to offer grants for the repair and improvement of older housing. The active promotion of such grants has helped, in particular, the retention in good condition of a substantial stock of the older terraced houses which provide much of the smaller and less expensive accommodation in the Borough. At the same time, the Council, in the exercise of its planning and other powers will seek to maintain and enhance the amenities of residential areas.

#### Retention of Existing Housing Land and Buildings

- 7.8.2 The additional housing provision to be made in the Borough is for an increase in the dwelling stock and therefore it is important, if the pressure to release additional land is to be resisted, that there be no net loss of existing housing land and buildings. Retention of existing dwellings and housing land also assists in meeting continuing housing needs and in maintaining the character of residential areas. However, there may be circumstances where redevelopment is accepted as being necessary as part of a comprehensive scheme which achieves a better form of development or accommodates other desirable uses. There may also be circumstances where, for environmental reasons, it is no longer appropriate for the whole of a site to be used for housing purposes, in which case the Council will seek a mix of residential and other uses. In both of these cases the Council will require the provision of at least an equivalent number of replacement dwellings.

**HSG13 TO MAINTAIN THE STOCK OF DWELLINGS, THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS AND HOUSING LAND FOR OTHER USES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. WHERE, HOWEVER, REDEVELOPMENT IS AGREED BY THE COUNCIL AS BEING APPROPRIATE AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME, EITHER FOR WHOLLY RESIDENTIAL USE OR FOR A MIX OF USES, AT LEAST AN EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS WILL BE REQUIRED.**

#### Change of Use

- 7.8.3 For the same reasons, the Council will not normally permit the change of housing accommodation to other uses. In particular, permission for change of use will not be granted solely on the basis of poor condition or expense of repair. There may, however, be circumstances where the Council is prepared to accept that accommodation is no longer suitable for housing purposes, for example accommodation formerly part of a shop which cannot be satisfactorily converted into a self-contained unit. Permission may also be granted to enable the provision of a social or community use, for example a day nursery, where there is an unmet need in the locality and where no suitable alternative premises can be found. In such instances, the property concerned should be of such a nature, preferably detached, as to minimise any impact on adjoining properties. Policies BE9 and

BE10 in Chapter 6 on the Built Environment set out the different considerations which apply in the case of Listed Buildings.

**HSG14 THE CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING HOUSING ACCOMMODATION TO NON-RESIDENTIAL USES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS:**

- (I) THE PROPERTY CANNOT STILL BE USED FOR HOUSING PURPOSES; OR**
- (II) WHERE IT ENABLES THE PROVISION OF A SOCIAL OR COMMUNITY USE FOR WHICH THERE IS AN UNMET NEED IN THE LOCALITY AND WHERE NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE PREMISES CAN BE FOUND.**

Sub-divisions

7.8.4 Over the years, many of the larger dwellings in the Borough which were no longer suitable for single family occupation have been successfully sub-divided into a number of smaller units of accommodation. Provided that due regard is paid to the standard of conversion, including meeting the Council's adopted noise insulation and space standards, and the amenity of the surrounding area, conversions can represent a better use of these properties and provide a net increase in the dwelling stock, especially of smaller and cheaper units. Advice on noise insulation and internal standards is available from the Building Control and Environmental Health Divisions of the Council. At the same time, the retention of existing buildings can avoid the changes associated with demolition and redevelopment and protect the character of existing residential areas.

7.8.5 The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) provides a single Use Class C3 Dwelling houses, which includes a residence occupied by a single family of any size, or for no more than six residents who may be unrelated but who live as a single household. Simple conversions which provide for a small group to live together as a single household in this way, do not normally require planning permission, and may be an appropriate and cheap way of dealing with the housing needs of certain groups, e.g. young single people. However, all Houses in Multiple Occupation, whether or not they remain within the strict definition of Use Class C3, are subject to regulations concerning safety and living conditions, details of which are available from the Council's Environmental Health Division. Furthermore, larger conversions can create significant problems of neighbourhood disturbance and parking, and are therefore subject to planning control. The Council will assess applications for sub-division and for Houses in Multiple Occupation in accordance with policies set out in Chapter 13 - Movement and Chapter 14 - Control of Development, having regard to their impact on car parking and residential amenity.

~~**HSG15 THE CONVERSION OF LARGER DWELLINGS AND OTHER PROPERTIES INTO SMALLER DWELLING UNITS AND HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION, WILL BE PERMITTED**~~

~~PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE NOT  
DETRIMENTAL TO THE CHARACTER AND AMENITY OF  
THE SURROUNDING AREA; COMPLY WITH THE RELEVANT  
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CRITERIA, INCLUDING CAR  
PARKING; AND THAT THE NUMBER AND DENSITY OF  
SUCH CONVERSIONS DOES NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL  
EFFECT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT.~~

