

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 SEPTEMBER 2017

Title:

**REVIEW OF DESIGN STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR
NEW COUNCIL HOMES**

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Carole King]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

To provide members with an overview of the Design Standards and Specifications adopted in 2014 for new council homes and outline a proposal for review of these standards by the Committee both in context of 'Site C' at Ockford Ridge and other future council housing developments.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Financial Implications:

No financial implications have been identified for undertaking the review. It will be undertaken within current approved resources.

Further assessment will need to be undertaken once the review of design standards is complete. Providing new Council homes to a higher standard is likely to have cost implications. However, initial upfront cost implications will be weighed against the long term cost benefits for tenants and maintenance.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications however the Council has taken into account the different guidelines and standards provided by the Government and feedback from residents on their new housing association homes.

1. Background

In July 2013, the Housing Delivery Board discussed the process for ensuring good design and requested that a group was established to prepare a set of guidance notes on design standards and specifications for new Council developments.

A task and finish project group, comprising the Portfolio Holders of Housing and Housing Delivery and officers from Housing, Planning and Sustainability, met to develop these standards.

In preparing the standards, the group took into account the Homes and Communities Agency Design and Quality Standards, the Housing Quality Indicators, the consultation by

the Department of Communities and Local Government on Housing Standards, Waverley Borough Council's Parking Standards and feedback from residents on their new housing association homes.

In November 2013, the Housing Improvement Sub-Committee received a presentation on the proposed guidance note on Design Standards and Specification for New Council Homes. This was followed by a presentation to the Tenants Panel in December 2013.

The final draft of the [guidelines](#) was presented to Executive and adopted by Council at a meeting on 15 April 2014 (Annexe 2).

The guidelines outline the standards and specifications that the Council aspires to achieve when delivering its new homes and provides the starting point for all designs. However, the guidelines indicate that a balance should be struck between meeting all standards and specifications and the wider housing objective, particularly where there are financial and practical constraints.

It was therefore proposed that all designs will be assessed on a site-by-site basis and conflicting priorities will be addressed according to the context of that particular development including the needs of that area and the profile of future tenants. This will ensure the best possible scheme can be delivered within existing financial and practical constraints.

The overarching principles outlined in the guidelines are as follows:

- **Fit for purpose:** homes that reflect modern lifestyles and meet the current needs of tenants
- **Future-proof:** homes that are robust but flexible, with the ability to adapt to the changing needs of existing and future tenants
- **Community:** homes that respect and enhance the character of the local area and create mixed communities where people want to live
- **Sustainability:** homes that meet high levels of sustainability to protect tenants from rising fuel costs and minimise environmental impact
- **Choice:** homes that provide a range of sizes and types to reflect local needs and provide choice to households on the housing register
- **Secure:** homes that provide safe places for tenants to live and discourage crime in the local community
- **Good management:** homes that enable the council to better manage and maintain their stock

The design standards included in the guidance are:

- Pre-application advice
- External Appearance
- Internal Space Standards
- Bedroom Size
- Living Spaces and Layout
- Accessibility Standards
- Sustainability
- Natural Light
- Security Considerations
- External Space Standards

- Parking Position
- Unit Type and Mix
- Internal Storage
- Sound Insulation
- Refuse and recycling

As part of the guidance note it was recommended that the standards were reviewed in two years after their adoption. This would provide an opportunity for the first homes to be delivered to this standard and feedback obtained from the first tenants.

A number of council owned sites had been brought forward to planning prior to the adoption of these standards so the review was postponed to allow time to deliver sites where the properties met the new standards. These include:

- Cedar Close, Farnham
- Show Homes Ockford Ridge, Godalming
- Bridge Road, Haslemere

We are also on site with two further schemes to be delivered to these standards: Wey Court, Godalming and Nursery Hill, Shamley Green.

Since the adoption of the Waverley standards the government has reviewed the design standards, removed the Code for Sustainable Homes and moved to embed energy targets within Building Regulations.

It is therefore timely to review the current Waverley Borough Council Design Standards and Specification Guidelines and then review the proposals for Site C included in the hybrid planning application ([WA/2014/0932](#)) in light of the revised guidelines. A copy of the planning approved outline scheme is attached as Annex 1.

Recommendation

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertakes a review of the Waverley Design Standard Standards and Specification Guidelines, in the context of both Ockford Ridge Site C proposals and other Waverley Borough Council housing development schemes.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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Site C

Planning Approved Outline Scheme

The scheme to the left was submitted as part of a hybrid masterplan and was granted outline planning approval in May 2014.

Apartments (8no)

1B2P - 8no

Houses (21no)

2B4P - 16no

3B5P - 5no

Approved total - 29no

Notes:

The circled units have not been included in this calculation:

- 66 Ockford Ridge to be refurbished; garden area to form part of redevelopment
- Showhomes (complete)



Outline planning approved scheme, 2014

