

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 JULY 2018**

---

**Title:**

**HOUSING DESIGN STANDARDS WORKING GROUP REPORT**

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr King  
Wards Affected: All**

---

**Summary and purpose:**

The attached report sets out the work undertaken and recommendations made by the Member Scrutiny Review Working Group into Housing Design Standards for New Council Homes. Good quality homes consist of well thought out and spacious internal design, provide adequate and well designed external amenity space and are high performing in terms of energy performance and sustainability. It is expected that the recommendations of this Scrutiny Review will inform the design proposals for Site C at Ockford Ridge and future housing development schemes.

---

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

This report relates to the Council's Community Wellbeing Priority with the objective of continuing to invest in the Council's housing stock to maintain decent homes and to deliver affordable housing across the Borough.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

Recommendations that reflect the Working Group's consideration of accessibility and adaptability standards have been made within the report.

**Financial Implications:**

Changes in design standards might have financial and viability implications on any future development schemes. If standards are increased they may increase development costs. Financial appraisals are completed for each new scheme as part of the budget approval process. This will include Site C Ockford Ridge when the scheme has been developed and the impact of changes can be measured in the first instance on this scheme.

**Legal Implications:**

In March 2015, the government published the "Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard" (amended in 2016). These standards replaced the different space standards previously used by local authorities. The technical standards remain within the planning system as a form of technical planning standard.

The standard was one of a wider housing standards review package. There are also optional building regulations requirements for access and water efficiency. Powers to introduce these optional requirements are included in the Building Act 1984 (as amended). The optional regulations and space standard can only be applied where there

is a local plan policy based on evidenced local need and where the viability of development is not compromised. The review also clarified statutory building regulation guidance on waste storage to ensure it is properly considered in new housing development.

---

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council adopted the current Housing Standards and Specifications in April 2014. When this report was brought to full Council it was recommended that as government guidance, building standards and best practice change, current standards and specifications should be regularly reviewed to reflect these changes.
- 1.2 Since the Council adopted the new Design Standards and Specifications in 2014 the Government has concluded a Housing Standards Review (2015) that aimed to simplify government regulations and standards within a set of Building Regulations. The Government also provided further guidance on Housing Standards by introducing a new Technical Housing Space Standard.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 The Housing Standards Review gave local authorities the optional requirement to require developers to build to higher standards than the minimum requirements in the Building Regulations Part M (access to and use of buildings) and Part L (water usage). In addition the Government no longer requires local authorities to adopt the Code for Sustainable Homes as a planning condition for new developments.
- 1.4 The opportunity to review the Council's Design Standards for new Council Homes is therefore timely and will provide an opportunity to collect and review feedback from tenants in recent new builds to learn what aspects of design works well and what could be improved.
- 1.5 Waverley completed a review of its tender specification, which included some elements of design. The latest tender specification was produced in 2017 and is referenced in this report as the 'Draft Waverley General Design and Information Requirements 2017' (GDI). Any approved changes to the Design Standards will be incorporated into this tender specification.
- 1.6 Four councillors and one member of the Tenants' Panel, all members of the Housing O&S Committee, were assigned to form a Task Group to conduct a Scrutiny Review prior to the drafting of updated standards and specifications
- 1.7 The Scrutiny Review focussed on:
  - new homes developed and funded by Waverley Borough Council including general needs and affordable housing for rent
  - Internal design (space) standards, including internal storage space provision and potential use of roof space
  - Accessibility and adaptability standards
  - External space standards / gardens / amenity space
  - Parking provision

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

- Materials – e.g shaver sockets/towel rails
  - Opportunities for future proofing and adaptation to changing circumstances.
- 

### **Recommendation**

For the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the review undertaken by the Working Group, consider the report and endorse the recommendations contained within it.

---

### **Background Papers**

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

---

### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

**Name:** Yasmine Makin  
Policy Officer – Scrutiny

**Telephone:** 01483 523078  
**E-mail:** [yasmine.makin@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:yasmine.makin@waverley.gov.uk)

**Name:** Louisa Blundell  
Housing Development Manager

**Telephone:** 01483 523205  
**E-mail:** [louisa.blundell@waverlgey.gov.uk](mailto:louisa.blundell@waverlgey.gov.uk)