

**ADOPTED SOLIHULL  
UNITARY DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN**

**EXTRACTS FROM SOLIHULL**

## **Chapter 3: Housing**

### **POLICY H1**

#### **PROVISION OF HOUSING LAND**

***The Council will ensure that sufficient land is provided to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy target of 4,000 new homes during the Plan period of 2001 to 2011, such supply arising from:***

- (i) The completion of approximately 1,895 dwellings on sites with planning permission or previously committed for housing on 1 April 2001;***
- (ii) The designation of new strategic housing sites providing for approximately 770 dwellings; and***
- (iii) The grant of planning permission during the Plan period of sites not specifically allocated in the Plan ('windfall' sites), provided that such sites (i) pay due regard to Government guidance to make more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the environment (ii) pay due regard to the immediate neighbouring buildings, local distinctiveness and the character, townscape and landscape of the wider locality***
- (iii) promote good design and***
- (iv) do not conflict with other policies of the Plan.***

***This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy H5.***

3.1.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy requires, subject to environmental safeguards, the provision of at least 4,000 new homes in Solihull between 2001 and 2011 – an annual rate of 400.

3.1.2 In carrying out the exercise of identifying land, the Council has had regard to the processes laid down in PPG3. It has undertaken an Urban Capacity Study, which was approved by the Council in October 2001, to ascertain, in particular, what brownfield (i.e. previously-developed land) opportunities existed for housing development in the Plan period and what the likely annual 'windfall' yield would be. Furthermore, in selecting new sites for designation it initially followed the sequential approach advocated by the Government. This entailed giving first consideration to brownfield sites, then, if required, extensions to the urban area and, finally, sites adjacent to nodes in good transport corridors. The designated sites have also been tested against the policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which modify the PPG3 search sequence to a sequence that commences with previously developed land within the major urban area (with no peripheral urban extensions). All of the designated sites are within the major urban area.

3.1.3 At 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, the Council estimated that there would be at least 6.6 years' identified housing land supply and at least 13.7 years' potential housing land supply from the Plan's forecast date of adoption. All of the housing land supply capacities assumed are cautious but generally above the 30 dwellings/hectare density specified in PPG3. The final capacity may be significantly higher. The sources of supply to meet the requirement are as follows (and illustrated in Table 1):

### **POLICY H3**

#### **TYPE OF DWELLINGS**

***The Council will require developers submitting planning applications for housing development on both strategic and windfall sites to make provision for a range of sizes and types of dwelling having regard, in particular, to the projected increase in one-person households. In the case of strategic sites and appropriate windfall sites the Council will prepare development briefs setting out its proposals based on evidence of need.***

3.3.1 The 1997 UDP, when first deposited in 1990, expressed the Council's concern about the disproportionate number of larger houses being built in the Borough, despite demographic trends suggesting that the future growth of households will be singleperson. Although in the last ten years there has been an increase in one and two bedroom dwellings, the percentage of larger homes has remained persistently high. Of all houses completed in the period, 65% have been 3-bedroom or larger, with this increasing to 74% on strategic sites. Of these, dwellings of 4 or 5 bedrooms account for 41% of all new houses, rising to 47% on strategic sites.

3.3.2 Government policy in PPG3 also registers this concern, confirms that over the longer term the majority of the projected growth will be in one-person households and exhorts local authorities to adopt policies which take full account of changes in housing needs.

3.3.3 The Council's Housing Needs Survey, published in October 2001, provides evidence in this regard that will inform the review of the Housing Strategy Statement as well as the UDP policies and proposals. Key to this will be the balance to be struck between the needs for different types, sizes and tenures across the Borough.

### **POLICY H4**

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

***The Council will require developers of both strategic and suitable windfall sites to make a contribution to affordable housing on residential sites of 0.5 hectares or more or housing developments of 15 or more dwellings. Contributions will be expected to be made in the form of 40% dwelling units on the development site or, in exceptional circumstances, by means of a financial sum or other contribution towards provision elsewhere throughout the Borough that would***

**not otherwise be provided. In assessing the suitability of the site and the amount of affordable housing, the Council will, in negotiations, have regard to:**

**(i) Its size;**

**(ii) Existing provision of affordable housing and local housing need in the area;**

**(iii) The proximity of local services and facilities and access to public transport;**

**(iv) The economics of provision, including particular costs that may threaten the viability of the site;**

**(v) Whether the provision of affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority in the development of the site;**

**(vi) The need to secure a range of house types and sizes in the locality in helping to achieve socially balanced and mixed communities; and**

**(vii) The need to achieve a successful housing development. The mechanisms and criteria for delivery are laid out in Supplementary Planning Guidance which will be reviewed to remain in accordance with national policy on affordable housing.**

3.4.1 The Government is clear in its view, and the Council accepts this, that the provision of affordable housing – defined as subsidised and low-cost market housing that will be available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market – is a material planning consideration which should be taken into account in both the formulation of development policies and the consideration of planning applications. Its preferred approach and the framework for deliverability is currently laid down in Circular 6/98. In particular, the Council needs to (a) have an up-to-date survey which assesses housing need, (b) indicate how many affordable homes need to be provided throughout the plan area and (c) identify suitable areas and sites on which affordable housing should be sought. The Circular acknowledges that some sites may be inappropriate – including those of less than 1 hectare or where no more than 25 dwellings can be accommodated – and that in the case of some sites a preferred approach might be to seek financial contributions to enable the required provision to be made elsewhere throughout the Borough. The circular provides advice on how the Local Authority should encourage the supply of affordable housing in appropriate circumstances through negotiation with developers and others. The Council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system will accord with government's advice and policy and will be reviewed accordingly

3.4.2 The Council has recently undertaken a housing needs survey. The survey sought information on the suitability of the current housing stock, household income and affordability, tenure and type of household. From this, conclusions were reached on:

- The newly-arising need in the Borough over the next five years
- The backlog of existing need
- The current supply

- The overall shortfall.

3.4.3 The final conclusion was that there is an annual requirement of 1,642 affordable homes in the Borough over the next five years, with a supply of dwellings (principally from re-lets) of 1,011, thereby leaving an annual shortfall of 631 dwellings, which is, of course, higher than the overall annual requirement.

3.4.4 Given the results of the survey, it has been agreed that the overall target will be 40% on sites of 0.5 hectares or more or delivering 15 or more dwelling units. The Council has reduced the threshold to 15 dwellings in view of the exceptional local constraints, namely the high level of housing need, the level of need in relation to the overall housing provision target and the proportion of development that has taken place, and will continue to take place, on small windfall sites. The 40% provision target is a baseline and starting point for negotiation and will be subject to discussions on a site by-site basis, having regard to the overall target, but also taking into account a range of factors, as set out in criteria (i) – (vii). The Housing Needs Survey in analysing the likely yield over the Plan period, has identified that by lowering the threshold from 25 to 15 adds around 100 affordable dwellings to the total, which is a significant percentage addition to the yield of affordable housing over the period. However even at 40% and on sites of 15 dwellings or more, this would provide for around 836 affordable dwellings, about a tenth of calculated housing need over the whole period to 2011. The mechanisms for delivery are laid out in supplementary planning guidance, and the issue continually monitored through the annual 'Housing Strategy Statement'.

3.4.5 Although affordable housing encompasses all forms of provision, including social rented housing, shared ownership and low-cost market housing, the key factor is whether such housing is genuinely affordable and will remain so in perpetuity. Consideration will be given to providing accommodation for key workers and for people With special needs.

3.4.6 Where appropriate, the Council will seek to negotiate for an element of the affordable housing provision on a site to be for persons with special needs. In determining the need, and the appropriate form and location of provision, decisions will be based on guidance from Solihull's Commissioning Body which includes representatives from the Council, National Health and Probation Services. In all instances due regard will be given to the importance of achieving a balanced community and avoiding an over concentration in any one area.

## **POLICY H5**

### **DENSITY, DESIGN AND QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT**

***The Council will expect developers of both strategic and windfall sites to respect Government policy on the density of development (i.e. of encouraging schemes of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare and of seeking greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility) so as to ensure the better and more sustainable use of land. New housing development should***

**have Regard to the character, local distinctiveness and design quality of adjoining residential areas, the townscape and landscape of the wider locality and should not have an adverse effect in terms of environmental quality.**

**The Council will expect all new housing development to be to a high quality of design and layout and to pay regard to issues of the quality of accommodation, public health, crime prevention, community safety and energy efficiency. Developers will be required to observe supplementary planning guidance on housing layouts and design, together with development briefs and design guides approved by the Council in respect of specific sites.**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy ENV2 and Proposal ENV2/1.**

3.5.1 The Government, through PPG3, expresses concern about the inefficient use of land, citing over half of new developments being built at densities of less than 20 dwellings per hectare (8 dwellings per acre), a position it argues that cannot be sustained. To address this high level of land-take, local authorities, by examining the standards they apply to new development, are asked to ensure there is not a profligate use of land. Furthermore, they are to refrain from setting ceilings on the amount of housing that can be accommodated on a site.

3.5.2 In Solihull, average densities of new development over the last 20 years or so have been lower than the national average – a position aided by the preponderance of 4-bedroom dwellings. Although there has been a modest increase in recent years, the Government's requirement in PPG3 that developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare (12 per acre) should be avoided and that those with densities between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare (12 and 20 dwellings per acre) should be encouraged will require the better and more efficient use of land. But this should be carried out without compromising the quality and character of the environment. Whilst striving to meet the Government's aspirations, the Council nevertheless wishes to ensure that new developments respect the character, local distinctiveness, design and quality of surrounding areas.

3.5.3 In the last few years the Government, through its acceptance of the findings of Lord Rogers' report ('Towards An Urban Renaissance', June 1999) and through its statements in the Urban White Paper, PPG3 and PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, has registered the need for greater emphasis in the design of new development. Whilst imaginative designs will help in making more efficient use of land, they will also improve the quality, attractiveness, durability, adaptability and safety of residential areas. The policies of the development plan, reinforced by supplementary planning guidance, therefore aim to:

- Produce attractive areas possessing their own distinctive identity
- Ensure design and layouts encompass issues of public health, crime prevention and community safety
- Enhance the character of areas
- Give priority to pedestrians in new developments

- Avoid inflexible planning standards
- Promote the energy efficiency of new housing.

All proposals would be expected to comply with ENV18 in respect of water provision.

# Chapter 5: Transport

## *POLICY TI*

### **AN INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

***The Council will expect all development proposals that generate traffic to contribute positively towards the safe, efficient and easy movement of people and goods throughout the Borough in order to create an integrated and sustainable transport network for Solihull.***

***Transport assessments will be required for development proposals that are likely to have significant transport implications.***

***The Council will expect proposals for new development to satisfy the following criteria:***

***(i) Minimise the need to travel;(ii) Locate where easy access can be gained by a choice of means of transport;***

***(iii) Promote facilities that will improve people's choice in the means of transport available particularly by supporting integration between different means of travel;***

***(iv) Promote improved safety and convenience of travel for everyone; and***

***(v) Support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan.***

5.1.1 The integration of land use and transport policies will play a vital role in creating more sustainable patterns of development for the future. It is recognised that development that relies mainly on the private car will not lead to a sustainable future. For this reason it is important to encourage development that is accessible by a choice of means of transport. Integration between different means of transport will also help to create a local and regional transport network that is accessible to a wider range of people and contributes towards social inclusion. Transport Assessments are important in achieving the aims of integrated transport and achieving access to developments in a manner that will support sustainable development principles. Assessments should accompany planning applications for developments that could have significant transport implications and their form and content should accord with requirements set out in national guidance. To ensure no detrimental impact on safety or free flow of traffic, assessments should demonstrate that the transport network can accommodate the level of development proposed or that the developer can provide appropriate mitigation measures where appropriate. Requirements in regard to access to trunk roads are as set out in PPG13 Annex B and DTLR circular 04/2001 (as amended). They refer to a graduated approach to connections to trunk roads, or the intensified use of existing connections.

5.1.2 Encouraging means of transport other than the private car can also give rise to economic and environmental benefits by reducing traffic congestion. Less traffic congestion can make a positive contribution towards the economic regeneration of the West Midlands Region by reducing business costs. Less traffic congestion can also lead to environmental benefits and can improve public safety.

5.1.3 The safe, efficient and easy movement of people and goods throughout the Borough is the principal aim of the policies and proposals set out in this Plan. Public transport has a key role to play in the local transport network because of its potential to encourage modal shift, from the private car to more sustainable means of travel, and benefit the local environment through reduced pollution. Providing an efficient transport network is only part of the solution. Accessibility for people in Solihull, and indeed throughout the West Midlands Region, is the factor that has the potential to make most impact on reducing traffic congestion across the Region.

5.1.4 The Council has produced a Public Transport Strategy that aims to promote greater use of public transport. The co-operation and integration of a number of different transport planning bodies, including Centro/West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority (WMPTA), which has published a 20 year public transport strategy, and other local authorities who contributed towards the Local Transport Plan is necessary. The involvement of bus and rail operators is also essential. The Council will also support the Strategic Rail Authority in bringing forward their proposals to improve the local transport network.

#### **PROPOSAL T1/1 PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR SOLIHULL**

***The Council will support proposals that contribute towards the aims of the Public Transport Strategy for Solihull and improve the public transport network and accessibility for people throughout the Borough.***

#### **POLICY T2**

##### **ACCESSIBILITY TO NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

***In considering proposals for new development which may have significant transport (or sustainability) implications, the Council will expect developers to include analysis of the need to travel to the site demonstrating how access to the site for employees, visitors, goods and services will be achieved in a sustainable manner.***

***This may entail development of public transport services, cycling and walking facilities or in some cases, improvements to the highway network, for which financial contributions may be required in accordance with Policy IM1.***

#### **POLICY T3**

##### **DESIGN FOR ALL MEANS OF TRAVEL IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

***In considering planning applications the Council will expect the design of new developments and highway schemes to provide for the existing and anticipated needs of users of all means of travel - motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Developers should give special attention to the travel needs of disabled people and the elderly in designing new development schemes.***

