

Bradford Local Plan

Core Strategy Examination

**Councils Response to Participants Further
Statements on Policy HO9 Housing Quality**

Date: 29th April 2015

- 1.1 This statement sets out the Council's position in regards to the Home Builders Federation (HBF) response to item (PS/F069) on Policy HO9 Housing Quality.

Background

- 1.2 Core Strategy Policy HO9 sets out the Council's approach to delivering high quality homes that meet the District's needs and sets out the quality of new housing that will be expected. The policy and supporting text includes reference to several housing standards including the Code for Sustainable Homes, Zero Carbon Housing, Building for Life 12 and Lifetime Homes.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) was updated on 27th March 2015 to set out the policy guidance in regards to the optional technical standards for housing.
- 1.4 In response to this update to the NPPG and to ensure consistency with latest National Planning Policy the Council proposed main modifications to Policy HO9 and the supporting text in item PS/FO69. The HBF have submitted comments on the proposed modifications in item PSF069.

Building for Life Standards

- 2.1 Policy HO9 Part A sets out that new housing should be high quality and achieve good design. The supporting text clarifies that design quality will be determined through a Building for Life 12 Assessment (BFL12) and applicants for residential developments of over 10 units should submit their own evidenced Building for Life assessment for consideration to form the basis for discussions on design quality.
- 2.2 The HBF in their response (PS/FO83a) have indicated that while they encourage and are supportive of the use of BFL12 it is important that it does not become mandatory for all developments as this would remove flexibility.
- 2.3 The HBF recommend the following amendment to paragraph 5.3.136;*'Applicants for residential developments of over 10 units **are strongly encouraged to** submit their own evidenced Building for Life 12 assessment for consideration to form the basis for discussions on design quality'*
- 2.4 Ensuring that future housing delivery will be high quality and achieves good design are key elements of the Core Strategy. BFL12 is considered a key design tool for developers, the Council and communities to guide design discussions and assess the quality of

housing design throughout the planning process. The Council consider the requirement for residential developments over 10 units to be supported by a BFL12 assessment to provide the basis for considering the overall design quality of a scheme is fully justified and consistent with the latest national planning policy and the Government's approach for achieving good design in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). This is set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 of item PS/FO69.

- 2.5 The Council therefore do not agree with the proposed change to paragraph 5.3.136 in PS/FO83a, as removing the requirement would make the policy less robust and comprehensive in terms of assessing and securing high quality design and could result in schemes coming forward, which are lower quality and do not achieve good design.

Zero carbon

- 3.1 The proposed main modification to Policy HO9 Part B in PSF069 states that the minimum acceptable sustainable housing standards will be Zero Carbon Housing (or any national equivalent) from 1st April 2016.
- 3.2 The HBF in their response (PS/FO83a) have stated that the ministerial statement indicates that the national zero carbon homes policy will not be introduced until late 2016.
- 3.3 The HBF recommend that the early introduction of zero carbon is deleted and the following amendments are made to Policy HO9 Part B.

'The Council will encourage and support new residential developments to achieve high sustainable design and construction standards. The minimum acceptable sustainable housing standards are set out within the Building Regulations.'

Paragraph 5.3.138. 'Under Criterion B the council will encourage developers to bring forward proposals which meet high standards of sustainable design and construction which should at least meet the prescribed national standards at the time of application'.

Paragraph 5.3.139. 'Whilst not a policy requirement the council will encourage and support developments which exceed the national minimum sustainable housing standards, particularly energy efficiency standards. The council will also support the use of on-site renewable or low carbon energy generation, where appropriate and feasible, to help meet the energy requirements of the development and further reduce carbon emissions.'

- 3.4 The Council agree that Policy HO9 should be consistent with the Government's zero carbon housing policy and that latest national policy is for sustainable housing standards to be dealt with through the building regulations. The Council therefore agrees that further changes

to Policy HO9 are required to ensure the policy is consistent with National Planning Policy and to clarify that sustainable housing standards will not be required in advance of the national zero carbon homes policy. However, given the need to ensure future housing will be sustainable and supports the Council's carbon reduction target, as set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6 of item PS/FO69, the Council consider that the supporting text to Policy HO9 should set out that new housing should achieve the national zero carbon housing standard in line with the zero carbon housing policy.

Accessible Homes

- 4.1 The proposed main modification to Policy HO9 Part C in PSF069 sets out that larger sites should include a proportion of new homes which are designed to be accessible and easily adaptable.
- 4.2 The HBF in their response (PS/FO83a) have stated that they support the need for accessible homes but consider the Council's position contrary to the ministerial statement and the NPPG, both of which are clear that such requirements for the proportion of accessible homes must be set within a local plan and the evidence appropriately examined. The HBF consider that the Council cannot introduce a policy requirement through an SPD, as this would not only be contrary to the intended introduction of the optional standards but also the role of SPDs.
- 4.2 The NPPG (ID 56-007-20150327) identifies which criteria must be considered through the examination process. The PPG also advises plans should provide targets (ID 56-008-20150327). The HBF state that the Council (paragraph 4.13 PSF069) clearly indicate additional work is required to justify the requirement. Therefore the Core Strategy cannot place any such requirement upon new developments. The HBF recommends that the policy and supporting text be further modified to simply indicate the Council will encourage and support the provision of dwellings which exceed the national minimum accessibility standards.
- 4.3 The latest NPPG states that local planning authorities can require accessibility, adaptability and wheelchair standards for new dwellings. In doing so local planning authorities should take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need. The council consider that the requirement for larger sites to include a proportion of accessible homes is clearly justified as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.13 of item PS/FO69. This includes clear justification on the basis of the key factors required to demonstrate need for accessible homes including housing need, the accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock and impact on viability. The Council consider this evidence clearly demonstrates a need for the Core Strategy to plan for accessible housing to meet identified housing needs in the District.

- 4.4 This is set out in Criteria C of Policy HO9; however the Council recognise that further work in relation to the proportion and breakdown of accessible homes is required. The Council consider that it is important for the Core Strategy to set out a commitment that this will be undertaken to ensure the implementation of Part C of Policy HO9 will then be informed by up to date and robust evidence. The supporting text in paragraph 5.3.141 clearly states that in considering Criteria C regard will be had to viability and feasibility and site specific factors.
- 4.5 The Council do not agree that it is setting a policy requirement through an SPD, as the requirement for a proportion accessible homes on larger housing sites is clearly stated in Part C of Policy HO9. The Council is proposing that further detailed evidence work will be undertaken in accordance with the latest NPPG, which will provide a sound basis for what the proportion and breakdown of accessible homes will be. It is propose that further guidance on this issue would then be set out in the Housing Design Guide in advance of any adopted policy in the Local Plan.
- 4.7 The Council acknowledge that that latest NPPG states that it should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements. However, while the Council consider that it can demonstrate a clear need for accessible homes based on the key factors in the NPPG, the Council do not consider that it currently has the detailed evidence to robustly justify what that proportion that should be. The Core strategy sets out that the Council intend to undertake this work and that the proportion will be set out in the Local Plan following this work. However, in advance of such a policy the Council will seek to ensure that further guidance is provided in the Housing Design Guide to support the implementation of Policy HO9 in regards to the delivery of accessible homes as part of larger housing sites.
- 4.8 The Council consider that this is a reasonable and justified approach which will help ensure the Core Strategy is able to meet the need for accessible homes in the District and the implementation of the policy will be informed by robust and up to date evidence. The policy is flexible and the Core Strategy sets out that the Council will take into account viability, feasibility and site specific issues to ensure the requirement is deliverable and does not impact on future housing delivery, in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.
- 4.9 The Council therefore disagree that that the policy and supporting text should be further modified to simply indicate that the Council will encourage and support the provision of dwellings which exceed the national minimum accessibility standards. However, the Council considers that the supporting text should clarify that the Council will undertake the further evidence to support the proportion of accessible homes in accordance with the latest National Planning Policy

Guidance. This will help ensure the evidence is fully robust and consistent with national policy.

Space standards

- 5.1 Part E of Policy HO9 states that new housing should provide suitable space standards appropriate to the type of home. The supporting text clarifies that the Council will use the latest nationally described space standard as a benchmark for assessing the suitability of the proposed space standards of new homes. This will allow particularly small homes to be identified, and where necessary, the Council will seek to understand the reasons for any significant variation from the national space standard.
- 5.2 The HBF in their response (PS/FO83a) state this is a requirement for such standards to be achieved, and that given additional work is required to justify the introduction of the national internal space standard it is recommended that reference to the standard be removed from the policy and supporting text.
- 5.3 The Council consider that the provision of sufficient living space within new homes is an important element of good housing design and the inclusion of a policy in the Core Strategy on space standards is justified and that the new nationally described space standard is the most appropriate standard to use to assess the suitability of proposed space standards of new homes, as set out paragraphs 5.1 to 5.10 of item PS/FO69.
- 5.3 The Council disagree that reference to the nationally described space standard should be removed from the policy and supporting text. Policy HO9 Part E does not refer to nationally described space standard and does not set a policy requirement that new housing must meet the nationally described space standard. The supporting text clarifies that the Council will apply the nationally described space standard as a benchmark for assessing the suitability of proposed space standards. This will allow particularly small homes to be identified, and where necessary, the council will seek to understand the reasons for any significant variation from the national space standard. If the proposed space standards are below those set out in the nationally described space standard then the onus will be on applicant to justify why development to these standards cannot be achieved.
- 5.4 Given the need to ensure future housing is sustainable and meets the needs of the District's growing population, the Council consider that in advance of any policy adopting the nationally described space standard in the Local plan, it is justified, reasonable and appropriate to apply the nationally described space standard as a benchmark to assess the suitability of space standard of new homes. This will allow the Council to identify particularly small homes and require justification

where relevant. This approach will also allow greater flexibility and site specific issues and viability to be taken into account, while still providing a mechanism for assessing the suitability of proposed space standards.

- 5.5 The Council consider that the supporting text should clarify that the Council will undertake further evidence on the impact of adapting the nationally described space standard in accordance with the latest National Planning Policy Guidance in advance of any policy requirement in the Local Plan adopting the nationally described space standard.

Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council consider that it is reasonable and justified to set out the approach to housing standards in the Core Strategy in order to ensure future housing growth is sustainable. The Council consider that there is clear evidence to justify Policy HO9 in regards sustainable and accessible homes and the quality of housing development which will be expected in the District. The Council considers that the policy strikes an appropriate balance between setting standards for new housing, which are consistent with the national housing standards in the latest NPPG in terms of quality, sustainability, accessibility and size, and the viability and deliverability of achieving these standards in the District.
- 6.2 To ensure consistency with latest National Planning Policy the Council propose main modifications to Policy HO9 and supporting text as set out below. The changes are outlined below (new text is indicated in underlined and **yellow highlight** and deleted text is struck through). It should be noted that the changes within this note relate solely to the issues raised above and in item PS/FO69.

Proposed Modification to Policy HO9: Housing Quality

Policy HO9: Housing Quality

A. New housing development should be high quality and achieve good design.

B. The Council will encourage **and support** all-new housing **residential** developments to meet **achieve** the highest possible sustainable design and construction standards. ~~Subject to feasibility and / or viability,~~ The minimum acceptable **sustainable housing** standards with reference to ~~the Code For Sustainable Homes or any national equivalent will be:~~ **are set out within the Building Regulations.**

- ~~• Code Level 4 from the date of adoption, and~~
- ~~• Zero Carbon Housing (or any national equivalent) from 1st April 2016~~

C. Larger housing sites should include a proportion of new homes which are should be designed to be accessible and easily adaptable to support the changing needs of families and individuals over their lifetime, including older people and people with disabilities.

D. New development should provide private outdoor space for homes, unless site constraints make this clearly unfeasible and/or unviable.

E. New homes should be well laid out internally and should provide suitable space standards appropriate to the type of home. Rooms should receive adequate levels of daylight.

F. New development should provide adequate storage for bins, recycling and cycles. These should be located or designed in a way which is both convenient for residents and supports the quality of the street scene.

G. Specific guidance on housing quality and design on an area or site basis will be set out as necessary in the Allocations DPD, Bradford City Centre and Shipley & Canal Road AAPs and Neighbourhood Plans. Higher standards of sustainable design and construction may be required for certain sites or areas where it is feasible and viable to do so.

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	TARGETS
Housing that is high quality and achieves good design	% of major housing schemes achieving no reds in Building for Life 12 Assessments	No planning permissions for a major housing scheme should achieve a 'red' rating against Building for Life 12 assessment
Housing that meets high standards of environmental performance as set out by Government	IND23(EV) % of new dwellings achieving Code Level 4 Operational	
Housing that is accessible and easily adaptable which caters for the needs of the district's growing population	% of new dwellings achieving Lifetime Homes Standard or any national equivalent optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings Operational	

5.3.135. Policy HO9 will be implemented through the Development Management process and supported by guidance set out in the Housing Design Guide SPD. The Housing Design Guide will set out further guidance on how the requirements of Policy HO9 should be met.

5.3.136. Under Criterion A all residential schemes will be expected to be high quality and achieve good design. The design quality of schemes over 10 units will be determined through a Building for Life 12 Assessment (or any subsequent revised national standard). A well designed scheme will perform well against all of the questions and the performance will be determined using a traffic light system of green, amber and red. In order to be considered good the scheme should achieve as many 'greens' as possible and avoid any reds unless clearly justified. Applicants for residential developments of over 10 units should submit their own evidenced Building for Life 12 assessment for consideration to form the basis for discussions on design quality

5.3.137. This criterion should be read in conjunction with the following policies in the plan which support the Building for Life Criteria:

- Policy TR2 Parking Policy
- Policy TR3 Public Transport, Cycling & Walking
- Policy HO8 Housing Mix
- Policy DS1 Achieving Good Design
- Policy DS3 Urban Character n Policy DS4 Streets and movement
- Policy DS5 Safe and inclusive places.

5.3.138. Under Criterion B the council will encourage developers to bring forward proposals which meet the highest possible standards of sustainable design and construction, which should meet at least All new development should attain a high standard of sustainable construction in line with the prescribed national standards at the time of application. New housing should achieve the zero carbon housing standard (or any national equivalent) in line with the timescales set out in the national zero carbon housing policy The council will encourage and support developments which exceed the national minimum standards. All new housing developments of 10 or more dwellings will be expected to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, and from 1st April 2016 all new housing must meet the Zero Carbon Homes standard or any national equivalent. If the proposed standards are below those set out in Policy HO9 then the onus will be on applicant to justify why development to these standards cannot be achieved.

5.3.139 The council will encourage and support developments which exceed the national minimum sustainable housing standards, particularly energy efficiency standards. The council will also support the use of on site renewable or low carbon energy generation, where appropriate and feasible, to help meet the energy requirements of the development and reduce carbon emissions.

5.3.139. This requirement will be assessed through evidence provided by the applicant that the scheme will achieve the standards set out in the policy (or any subsequent revised national standards). The evidence submitted by the applicant should enable easy assessment and applicants are encouraged to undertake a Design Stage Assessment of performance against the Code for Sustainable Homes. A post construction stage certificate confirming that the

development has met the required standard will be required prior to occupation.

5.3.140. ~~Under Criterion C~~ The council will encourage and support all new homes should be which are designed to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability designed to be accessible and easily adaptable. This includes accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings, as set out in the national optional technical standards for housing. ~~Where feasible and viable the council will encourage new housing to achieve~~ In addition the council will support the Lifetime Homes Standard as a model for building accessible and adaptable homes.

5.3.141. Under Criteria C larger sites of 10 dwellings or more will be expected to should include a proportion of accessible homes as part of the overall housing mix. This will be assessed through evidence provided by the applicant that a proportion of new homes on a site housing will achieves Lifetime Homes standards, the British Standards for Accessible Housing or any subsequent revised exceed the national minimum requirement for access. ~~accessible housing standard.~~ If these standards are not met, this should be clearly justified and the applicant should demonstrate how the development meets the requirements of Criterion C. In considering Criteria C regard will be had to local need and the viability and feasibility of delivering accessible homes on a particular site. Site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding, the topography of the site or other circumstances which may make a site less suitable for accessible dwellings will also be taken into account, particularly where step free access cannot be achieved or is not viable.

5.3.142. The council intends to undertake further detailed work in regards to the requirement for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings in accordance with the latest National Planning Practice Guidance. The Housing Design Guide will take account of this work and provide further guidance in relation to the proportion of accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user dwellings required in advance of any adopted policy in the Local Plan.

~~5.3.143.~~ 5.3.142. Criterion D relates to private outdoor space including gardens, balconies, patios and communal spaces. Spaces should be directly accessible from the home, secure, defensible and receive adequate sunlight.

5.3.144. The provision of sufficient living space within new homes is an important element of good housing design. Building to suitable space standards will ensure new homes provide sufficient space for everyday activities. Homes can also be used more flexibly and adapted more easily by their occupants to changing life circumstances.

~~5.3.145.~~ 5.3.143. Under Criterion E new homes should provide suitable space standards ~~encourages suitable space standards~~ which will ensure new homes provide sufficient space for everyday activities. Homes can also be used more flexibly and adapted more easily by their occupants to changing life circumstances.

5.3.146. The Government has developed a national space standard to offer a consistent set of requirements with regard to the size of new homes. The overall objective of this national space standard is to ensure that new homes are highly functional in terms of meeting typical day to day needs at a given level of occupation. The standard is intended to be a minimum standard which developers should exceed where possible.

5.3.147. For residential developments the council will apply the national space standard as a benchmark for assessing the suitability of the proposed space standards of new homes. This will allow particularly small homes to be identified, and where necessary, the council will seek to understand the reasons for any significant variation from the national space standard.

5.3.148. ~~Subject to viability and /or feasibility the council will expect all new housing~~ **Where feasible and / or viable new homes should** to meet at least the following minimum internal floor areas **as set out in the nationally described space standard** (or any subsequent national space standards) as follows:

- ~~1 Bed / 2 person dwellings 51 m2~~
- ~~2 Bed / 3 person dwellings 66m2~~
- ~~2 Bed / 4 person dwellings 77 m2~~
- ~~3 Bed / 5 person dwellings 93 m2~~
- ~~4 Bed / 6 person dwellings 106 m2~~

(Floor areas shall be measured in line with ~~RIGS~~ Gross Internal Floor Area)

5.3.149. ~~5.3.144.~~ If the proposed space standards are below those set out **in the nationally described space standard** ~~above~~ then the onus will be on applicant to justify why development to these standards cannot be achieved.

5.3.150. The council intend to undertake further detailed work in regards to adopting the national space standard in the District, in accordance with the latest National Planning Practice Guidance, in advance of any policy requirement in the Local Plan.

5.3.151. ~~5.3.145.~~ Whilst new residential development should incorporate sufficient space in line with the identified standards, regard should also be had to the layout and function of units provided. Rooms will be expected to receive adequate levels of daylight and ventilation appropriate to their use.

5.3.152. ~~5.3.146.~~ Criterion F seeks to ensure that suitable provision is made for the proper storage of waste in new homes. New development should provide external storage space for bins and recycling which is convenient and does not reduce the quality of the street scene. Cycle storage should be accessible and secure. Schemes should achieve a 'green' for Question 12 of Building for Life 12 to accord with this criterion.

5.3.153. ~~5.3.147.~~ Criterion G allows for further guidance on housing quality and design on an area or site basis to be set out as necessary in the Allocations DPD, Bradford City Centre and Shipley & Canal Road AAP's and Neighbourhood Plans. The nature of some sites and areas in terms of their

location, viability and impact upon the environment, mean that higher standards of sustainable design and construction standards may be possible. Where appropriate higher levels of sustainable design and construction standards will be considered on specific sites or areas, where this is feasible and viable