

2.32 Housing design, layout and space standards

What is the aim of this policy?

- 2.242** This policy sets how to achieve high quality design and internal layout of new development. This is necessary to ensure the long term sustainability of new housing development by meeting the present and future needs of the occupants.

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Housing design, layout and space standards

Siting and layout of development

1. The Council expects all new residential development to:
 - a. be attractive and neighbourly
 - b. provide a satisfactory level of privacy, outlook and natural lighting both for its future residents and its neighbours and
 - c. meet the functional requirements of future residents.
2. The siting and layout of new-build housing development, including the housing element of mixed use developments, will need to respond positively to the site specific constraints and opportunities as well as to the existing and emerging context for the site and surrounding area.
3. New-build housing development will be required to be:
 - a. sited to minimise disturbance from incompatible uses and be well located in relation to public transport with a high quality pedestrian environment. Table 2.2 Sustainable Residential Quality Matrix will be used to aid assessment of the appropriate density of development in relation to public transport accessibility and character areas
 - b. provided with a readily accessible, secure, private and usable external space and include space suitable for children's play
 - c. designed so that schemes in mixed tenure do not distinguish between public and private housing provision either in terms of quality of materials and design, or in level of amenities
 - d. designed to be safe and secure and reduce crime and the fear of crime
 - e. designed to ensure that internal layout and external design features ensure that housing is accessible to all intended users.

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Internal standards

4. The standards in the London Plan will be used to assess whether new housing development provides an appropriate level of residential quality and amenity. This will involve an assessment of whether the proposals provide accommodation that meet the following criteria:
 - a. meet the minimum space standards for new development which should conform with the standards in the London Plan
 - b. habitable rooms and kitchens and bathrooms are required to have a minimum floor height of 2.5 metres. between finished floor level and finished ceiling level. Space that does not meet this standard will not count towards meeting the internal floor area standards
 - c. provide accommodation of a good size, a good outlook, with acceptable shape and layout of rooms, with main habitable rooms receiving direct sunlight and daylight, and adequate privacy. There will be a presumption that residential units provided should be dual aspect. Any single aspect dwellings provided will require a detailed justification as to why a dual aspect dwelling is not possible and a detailed demonstration that adequate lighting and ventilation can be achieved. North facing single aspect flats will not be supported.
 - d. family housing (dwellings with three or more bedrooms) should be designed to have the potential to separate dining and living accommodation from the kitchen area in order to ensure privacy for the occupants
 - e. Single person dwellings will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances. Developments will be required to have an exceptional design quality and be in highly accessible locations
 - f. include sufficient space for storage and utility purposes in addition to the minimum space standards.

Table 2.3 Minimum space standards for new housing development including conversions⁽¹⁷⁾

Dwelling Type	Bedroom (b) / persons - bedspaces (p)	GIA (sq m)
Flats	1p	37
	1b2p	50
	2b3p	61
	2b4p	70
	3b4p	74
	3b5p	86
	3b6p	95
	4b5p	90
	4b6p	99
2 storey houses	2b4p	83
	3b4p	87
	3b5p	96
	4b5p	100
	4b6p	107
3 storey houses	3b5p	102
	4b5p	106
	4b6p	113

Justification

2.243 DM Policy 32 implements, in relation to housing development, Core Strategy Policy 15 (CSP15) which sets out the over-arching principles for new development of whatever type in Lewisham.

2.244 The standards and criteria in this policy, including those taken from the London Plan and the London Plan Housing Supplementary Guidance, will ensure a reasonable level of residential amenity and quality of life, and that there is sufficient space, privacy and storage facilities in development to ensure the long term sustainability and usability of the homes. Table 2.3 Minimum space standards for new housing development including conversions, include the current London Plan standards and have been quoted for information purposes

¹⁷ All new residential developments and conversions including conversions of commercial space and space above shops are required to meet or exceed the standards or as updated and amended by future alterations of the London Plan

and convenient reference. Should these standards change in future versions of the London Plan then the new standards will be used. This policy therefore implements London Plan Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments.

- 2.245** DM Policy 32 is consistent with the NPPF which states that Local Planning Authorities should 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings' (paragraph 17 the Core planning principles) and Section 7, Requiring good design.
- 2.246** High density new development in the form of purpose built flats proposed in the Core Strategy means that in order to be livable, a reasonable amount of usable external space needs to be provided. This may mean that amenity space is provided in the form of balconies and roof terraces rather than in the form of gardens. Balconies and terraces should be large enough to be usable as an amenity space and should have a minimum width of 1500mm. Roof terraces and gardens should be designed with the security of the users in mind and also achieve a sense of enclosure. This form of external space may give rise to problems of privacy and overlooking in traditional street layouts and are more suited to dense urban areas where balconies and terraces are a more typical form of development. Family houses should be provided with their own private garden area of a size appropriate to the design and configuration of the housing site, the size of the houses and their intended occupancy. The Council will apply the standards of the London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance, 'Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation', which specifies 10 square metres of playspace for each child.
- 2.247** Flexible and adaptable housing design reduces the need to move from home to home and allows for the sustainable development of communities. Larger room sizes can be used more flexibly as they are generally more adaptable. The South East London Housing Partnership Wheelchair Homes Design Guidelines comply with (and generally exceed) Part M of the Building Regulations, British Standard 8300, Lifetime Homes, the Housing Corporation 'Design and Quality Standards/Stephen Thorpe's 'Wheelchair Housing Design Guide' and the Mayor of London's Wheelchair Accessible Housing Guide. The South East London Housing Partnership Wheelchair Homes Design Guidelines (or as subsequently amended), will be used to assess whether new build housing schemes meet Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Housing Standards both in terms of internal layout and the external design features needed to ensure houses are accessible to their users. The adoption of the space standards for housing in this policy has been tested and adopted by the London Plan. Small studio flats intended for single person occupation are not considered to provide long term, sustainable solutions to housing need. In the exceptional cases when they are provided they will need to be in places that are not isolated and provide very good access to public transport and other amenities.
- 2.248** The minimum floor heights set out in clause 4.b of the policy are a guideline. Dependent on the format and aspect of the room this standard may need to be achieved in order to achieve adequate amenity and daylighting. Additionally there is a requirement in DM Policies 30 and 33 to respect the form and proportions of adjacent development where these form part of the character of an area.
- 2.249** A dual aspect dwelling is defined as one with openable windows on two external walls, which may be opposite or adjacent around a corner. Single aspect flats are difficult to naturally ventilate and more likely to overheat, an increasing concern for homes in London due to anticipated temperature increases from climate change coupled with the urban heat island effect where London is inherently warmer than its surrounding areas. Single aspect flats will only be permitted where the design is shown to allow adequate daylight and ventilation to all habitable rooms and direct sunlight to at least one habitable room for part of the day. Living areas and kitchen spaces should preferably receive direct sunlight.

- 2.250** Adequate privacy is an essential element in ensuring a high level of residential amenity. Unless it can be demonstrated that privacy can be maintained through design, there should be a minimum separation of 21 metres between directly facing habitable room windows on main rear elevations. This separation will be maintained as a general rule but will be applied flexibly dependent on the context of the development. A greater separation distance will be required where taller buildings are involved.