

D4 HOUSING

OBJECTIVES

- D4/a To provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing to meet the strategic requirement for 6,000 dwellings at Northstowe by 2016;**
- D4/b To provide high quality housing that makes best use of land with higher densities in locations close to a good range of services and facilities and public transport stops;**
- D4/c To ensure the provision of a range of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing, to meet the identified needs of all sectors of the community, including key workers.**

POLICY NS/9 Northstowe Housing

Housing Supply

- a) Northstowe will provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing to meet the strategic requirement for 6,000 dwellings at Northstowe by 2016.**

Density

- b) Northstowe will achieve an average net housing density of at least 40 dwellings per hectare across the town as a whole. A range of densities will be provided following a design-led approach, including higher densities in and around the town centre, local centres and at public transport stops, and lower densities on sensitive edges of the town.**

House Types and Quality

- c) The Strategic Design Guide will ensure that there will be variety in the housing types provided at Northstowe to offer choice. It will require imaginative and high quality developments which include apartments in the more accessible locations and close to services and facilities, town houses, terraced housing and family housing in forms which embrace the move towards more sustainable ways of living.**

Affordable Housing Funding

- d) Pursuant to Policy HG/4 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there are insurmountable subsidy issues for**

the provision of affordable housing at the time of a detailed application, the Council may negotiate a lower proportion of built affordable housing to be provided on site. This will not apply at the outline planning application stage. Contributions for off-site provision will not be appropriate.

Housing Supply

- D4.1 Northstowe will provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing to meet the strategic requirement for 6,000 dwellings at Northstowe by 2016.

Housing Density

- D4.2 Creating a town which minimises the amount of land that will need to be taken for development and which provides a basis for sustainable living where services and facilities are nearby for most of its residents means development at densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare. The approach should be design-led and seek to make the most effective and efficient use of land across the development.
- D4.3 Higher densities will be appropriate in the town and local centres and around public transport stops where increased density and scale of buildings will also contribute to the design quality of Northstowe by providing opportunities for landmark buildings and different character areas.
- D4.4 There will be some small areas that are less accessible and where lower densities may be more appropriate and also to provide variety in character and more typical family housing. Those housing areas which border the countryside between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington should also generally be developed at densities lower than 40 dwellings per hectare in order to help the area of 'green separation' maintain the village character of these two villages

House Types and Quality

- D4.5 One of the keys to the success of Northstowe will be as much the quality of what is provided as the nature of the uses, services and facilities themselves. Densities of 40 dwellings per hectare or more are quite normal in most towns and do not mean sacrificing quality. A high quality of design in both the buildings and the wider environment will be required at Northstowe, and the Strategic Design Guide that will be required will be a key tool in ensuring that high quality is delivered on the ground.
- D4.6 In order to meet the need for smaller dwellings in the area and to respond to the density requirements for the town, a variety in dwelling types will need to

be provided. This will also help provide interest in the character and design of the town. This will include modern apartments in the town centre and close to services and facilities and public transport nodes, imaginative use of town houses, terraces and other forms of high quality but higher density housing types. In the interests of providing a range of housing at Northstowe, it would also be desirable for land to be made available within the town for an element of self-build projects.

Housing Mix

D4.7 Policy HG/2 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies sets out targets for housing mix that seek to ensure that developments provide a mix of housing sizes that address the high level of need for smaller 1 and 2 bedroom homes in the Cambridge area. For many years, the market in South Cambridgeshire has been providing a high proportion of larger properties of 4 bedrooms or more, at the expense of smaller properties. The district wide targets aim to redress this imbalance, whilst at the same time are mindful of the need to create balanced communities. It proposes that affordable housing should be of an appropriate mix to respond to identified needs at the time of the development, in accordance with HG/3. Market properties should provide:

1. At least 50% of homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms; and
2. Approximately 25% of homes with 3 bedrooms; and
3. Approximately 25% of homes with 4 or more bedrooms;

unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Council that a different mix would better meet local needs. As a key component of the housing strategy for South Cambridgeshire, the district wide policy will apply to Northstowe.

Affordable Housing

D4.8 A key driver behind the growth area strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region is to help provide more affordable housing in and close to Cambridge. The issue of affordable housing is addressed in the Housing section of the Core Strategy, which sets out affordable housing policy district wide, having regard to the findings of the Council's 2002 Housing Needs Survey (Final Report June 2003), carried out by Fordham Research. Policy HG/3 requires approximately 50% of the dwellings for which planning permission may be given to be affordable. The strategic developments are key to addressing the affordable housing requirements in the area and logically the district wide targets, and therefore Policy HG/3, apply to Northstowe.

D4.9 The District Council is mindful of the significant infrastructure requirements of building a new town. If there is an issue about whether the development will stand the affordable housing target, that is a matter that needs to be addressed through the planning application process where all the policy calls on the development, together with other development related requirements, can be looked at comprehensively and relative priorities determined.

D4.10 The other factor particular to Northstowe is that it is an entirely new freestanding settlement. It is not an addition to an existing settlement where the wider housing mix will be relevant in addition to that within the development itself. Here, it will be a new community and it is important that it achieves a balanced and sustainable community profile. In order to ensure this, it is important that the right tenure mix within the affordable housing is secured. It will be important to ensure the provision of social rented housing in recognition of the high level of need for this type of housing. However it will also be appropriate to have a significant proportion of intermediate housing to ensure that all sectors of the population are able to live in the town. It is envisaged that a different tenure mix is likely to be appropriate for Northstowe, with:

1. Approximately 25% social rented; and
2. Approximately 25% intermediate housing, including for Key Workers;

giving a total of 50% affordable housing, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Council that the local circumstances suggest a different mix would better meet local needs.

D4.11 In order to ensure that Northstowe develops as a sustainable community, affordable housing will be distributed through the development in small groups or clusters, with the appropriate cluster size being determined having regard to the location within the development eg town centre and residential neighborhoods.

D4.12 Policy HG/4 of the Core Strategy provides for alternative approaches to the provision of affordable housing in the exceptional circumstances of insurmountable subsidy issues. It is appropriate at Northstowe to allow for the provision of a lower proportion of built units on site if exceptional circumstances were demonstrated by way of very clear evidence to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. However, having particular regard to the long period over which the town will be built, such evidence can only be provided at the time a detailed planning application comes forward in the light of circumstances pertaining at that time. This policy approach will therefore not apply at the outline planning stage when setting the overall affordable housing requirement. Policy NS/9 will apply to Northstowe. In view of the scale of the development and the importance of achieving a sustainable and balanced community, the provision in Policy HG/4 for making contributions for off-site provision of affordable housing will not apply to Northstowe.