

# Supplementary planning guidance 2

## **Residential layout guidelines**

**including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015**

Adopted February 1996 - amended June 2020\*

\*Updated to include the Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 and to make document accessible

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## Housing Standards Policy Statement – From 1st October 2015

In respect of the consideration and assessment of housing standards as they apply to development proposals, the starting point for decision taking is the development plan. Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy requires that all development should be ‘fit for purpose’ and be ‘adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users’ and that ‘the design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines’.

At the same time, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings as one of its Core Principles.

On 25 March 2015 the Government issued a written ministerial statement<sup>1</sup> which introduced new technical housing standards in England and set out how these would be applied through planning policy. The system consists of new additional ‘optional’ Building Regulations on water and access, and a nationally described space standard<sup>2</sup> (referred to as “the new national technical standards”). These new standards will come into effect on 1 October 2015.

From 1 October 2015, existing Local Plan policies need to be interpreted with reference to the nearest equivalent national technical standard. Decision takers can only require compliance with the standards where there is a relevant Local Plan policy in place. Therefore, for Gravesham, Local Plan Core Strategy policies CS18 Climate Change and CS19 Development and Design Principles, Local Plan First Review saved policies H5 and AP10 and associated guidance in the Residential Layout Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), should be interpreted by reference to the nearest equivalent new national technical standard. This is set out in Table 1

It is difficult to draw direct comparisons between the existing Gravesham Residential Layout Guidelines SPG and the proposed National Space Standard because they are calculated on a slightly different basis. The existing Gravesham standards are based on guideline minimum spaces for each room whereas the National Space Standard relates to the minimum gross internal area (GIA) of the overall unit to the design level of occupancy based on bedroom size and the potential number of bed spaces that could be accommodated.

The Council will consider whether to adopt the new national technical standards, in their entirety, through the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.

<sup>1</sup> Written Ministerial Statement – The Rt Hon Eric Pickles March 2015 ‘Steps the government are taking to streamline the planning system, protect the environment, support economic growth and assist locally-led decision making’ – <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>

<sup>2</sup> DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, DCLG 2015 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>

Table 1

Existing Standard	Standard from October based on nearest equivalent national technical standard
<b>Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS18</b>	
Requires all new homes to be built to at least level 3/4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of water use (105 litres per person per day consumption).	All new homes to be built to ensure that the consumption of water does not exceed 105* litres per person per day.
Seeks 5% of homes on Key Sites to act as exemplars by meeting level 5/6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of water use (80 litres per person per day consumption).	All new homes to be built to ensure that the consumption of water does not exceed 105* litres per person per day.
Requires all non-residential development of 1,000 sq m and above to meet the BREEAM “excellent” standards of water efficiency and include provision for the collection of rainwater.	Core Strategy policy will continue to apply.
Supports proposals to retrofit existing residential properties in ways which reduce water consumption.	Core Strategy policy will continue to apply.
<b>Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS19</b>	
The design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines.	The design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines where the Guidelines fall within the nationally described space standards.
The design and construction of new development will ... be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles.	Where required by a planning permission, the design and construction of new dwellings shall accord with requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) of Part M (access to and use of buildings) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 (2015 edition).
New development will be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community	Where required by a planning permission, the design of new dwellings shall accord with shall accord with requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) of Part M (access to and use of buildings) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 (2015 edition).

\* Excluding an allowance of 5 litres or less per person per day for external water use (as set out in the ‘optional’ requirement G2 of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010)

Existing Standard	Standard from October based on nearest equivalent national technical standard
New development will be fit for purpose and adaptable to allow changes to be made to meet the needs of users.	Where required by a planning permission, new dwellings shall accord with requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) of Part M (access to and use of buildings) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 (2015 edition).
<b>Local Plan First Review Saved Policy H5</b>	
In considering proposals for the conversion of existing properties to provide flats, maisonettes, bedsitters and multiple occupancy, the proposal shall have regard to the Borough's Residential Layout Guidelines, as set out in supplementary planning guidance.	In considering proposals for the conversion of existing properties to provide flats, maisonettes, bedsitters and multiple occupancy, the proposal shall have regard to the Borough's Residential Layout Guidelines where the Guidelines fall within the nationally described space standards.
<b>Local Plan First Review Saved Policy AP10</b>	
In the Harmer Street area shown on the Proposals Map, residential conversions, particularly of upper floors, will be welcomed provided they comply with the Borough Council's Residential Layout Guidelines, details of which are available as supplementary planning guidance.	In the Harmer Street area shown on the Proposals Map, residential conversions, particularly of upper floors, will be welcomed provided they comply with the Borough Council's Residential Layout Guidelines where the Guidelines fall within the nationally described space standards.
<b>Residential Layout Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance</b>	
Tables 1 and 3	The minimum floorspaces for double bedrooms and single bedrooms will no longer apply as at 11.2 sq m and 6.5 sq m respectively, these are less than the nationally described space standards of 11.5 sq m and 7.5 sq m. The minimum floorspaces for living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, kitchen/diners, lounge/diners, bathrooms and WCs, bathrooms only, WCs only, bedsits, and hallways & landings will no longer apply as there is not an equivalent national standard.
Remaining guidelines contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy distances and overshadowing</li> <li>• Private garden areas</li> </ul>	These will continue to apply.

## Supplementary planning guidance 2 - Residential layout guidelines

### Introduction

All planning applications for new dwellings, extensions to existing dwellings, flats, maisonettes and bedsitters (whether they are new buildings or are to be achieved by conversion), must comply with the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines as set out below. These guidelines set out minimum standards for room sizes, circulation space, layout, privacy distances and garden areas. Where proposals are below those minimum floor areas, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate that the rooms are physically capable of accommodating the furniture and fittings normally associated with their use, and that other statutory requirements are complied with.

### Dwelling houses

- 1 In considering whether to permit applications for new dwellings and extensions to dwellings, the Borough Council will first need to be satisfied that the development is acceptable in principle. In this respect, regard will be had to all relevant policies in the Gravesham Local Plan 1st. Review.
- 2 Table one provides guidance on floor areas which would be acceptable, from a planning point of view, for typical rooms. Dwellings with three or more bedrooms will be expected to have separate dining facilities, or be provided with kitchen/diners or lounge/diners which are significantly larger than the minimum floorspace requirements.
- 3 These minimum floorspace requirements (excluding those for kitchen/diners and lounge/diners) were derived from the DoE Design Bulletins #6 - "Space in the Home" and #29 - "Housing Single People 2" and "Activities and Spaces - Data for Housing Design" published by the DoE in 1983. These documents also provided the basis for the floorspace requirements for the Residential Layout Guidelines approved in 1984.
- 4 The floorspace requirements for kitchen/ diners, lounge/diners and for bedsitters were calculated on the minimum floor area necessary to accommodate the furniture, storage, uses and appliances associated with modern living. A more detailed account, which justifies the figures recommended by the Borough Council is available for inspection if required.
- 5 Access to a bedroom, bathroom and WC should be arranged without having to pass through another room (other than a living room) on a separate floor. In an existing dwelling, where a bathroom or WC cannot otherwise be provided, access may be gained through a kitchen.

**Table 1**

Function of room	Floorspace sq.m
Double bedroom	11.2
Single bedroom	6.5
Living room	13.2
Dining room	9.5
Kitchen	7.2
Kitchen/diner	12.0
Lounge/diner	18.0
Bathroom and WC	3.6
Bathroom only	2.8
WC only	1.3

- 6 External access should be provided to the rear garden of a house. This standard will be deemed to be satisfied where access is available through a garage without entering the house. In addition, a way through the house from front to back, avoiding habitable rooms, should also be provided.
- 7 Direct access should be provided to a public highway or to a non-adoptable road, designed to the satisfaction of the Borough Council's Engineering Services Manager.

**Table 2**

Accommodation with :	Minimum garden area (sq. metres)	Minimum depth from rear wall of house (metres)
1-2 bedrooms	37.2	7.6
3 bedrooms	60.0	10.0
4 or more bedrooms	100.0	10.0

## Natural lighting

- 8 Whenever practical, all kitchens and bathrooms shall be provided with openable windows. All glazing to windows in bathrooms shall be obscure.

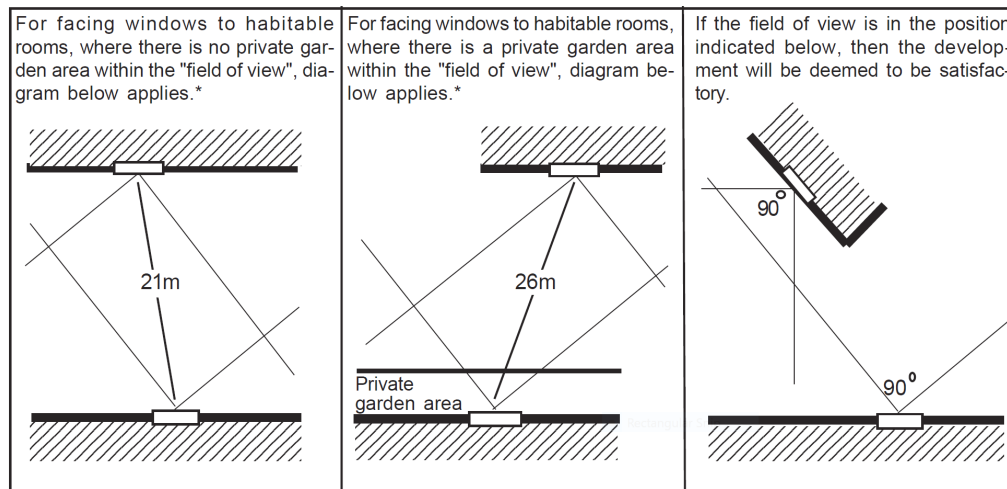
## Private garden area

- 9 New dwellings, and existing dwellings when extended, shall have the minimum areas for private amenity space as shown in table two (above)
- 10 Notwithstanding the above, greater depths/areas may be required where gardens incorporate steep gradients, preserved trees, or if there is garaging or parking at the rear. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for the minimum garden depths and areas referred to (above) to be modified. In these cases, each scheme will be considered on its individual merits, having particular regard to any exceptional circumstances and all other material considerations.
- 11 In all cases, the Borough Council's minimum privacy distances should be met. This may lead to the minimum depth of gardens being greater than that detailed in table two.
- 12 For communal dwellings such as sheltered or retirement homes, a minimum area of 25 sq. metres per dwelling for private amenity space may be considered appropriate. In such cases the amenity space should be reasonably related to the dwellings for which it is intended.
- 13 The standard size for private amenity space and garden areas should be regarded as an absolute minimum in order to allow for provision of adequate outside storage, leisure use, clothes drying and play space. Larger garden areas will be necessary where the accommodation has five or more bedrooms. This is to ensure that development does not appear cramped and out of character with adjoining properties.
- 14 Where a new development is just satisfying the minimum required standard, the Borough Council will normally remove the permitted development rights to extend dwellings, having regard to the density of development and to the amenity of the area.
- 15 Calculation of private garden areas shall exclude the area used for the parking or garaging of private motor vehicles.

## Privacy distances and overshadowing

- 16 All applications for new dwellings (including flats) will be expected to comply with the Borough Council's privacy distances and guidance on overshadowing. The standards specified protect the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of existing and proposed dwellings and protect against loss of light and overshadowing from obstructing buildings.
- 17 Where windows of habitable rooms face each other (whether across a road, pedestrian way or private garden) a window-to-window distance of at least 21 metres should be provided. Habitable rooms are defined as bedrooms and living areas, but specifically exclude kitchens and bathrooms.
- 18 In addition, a minimum distance of 21 metres shall be provided between the windows of habitable rooms and the private garden area of any dwelling. A private garden area is defined as the first five metres of garden adjacent to the rear of the dwelling.
- 19 For "single aspect" dwellings, the minimum distance from the window of a habitable room to any house wall of equivalent height containing no habitable room windows can be reduced to 11 metres.
- 20 In all cases, the privacy distances will be applied on the basis of the principles set out in figure 1 on "fields of view" which are illustrated below.

**Figure 1**

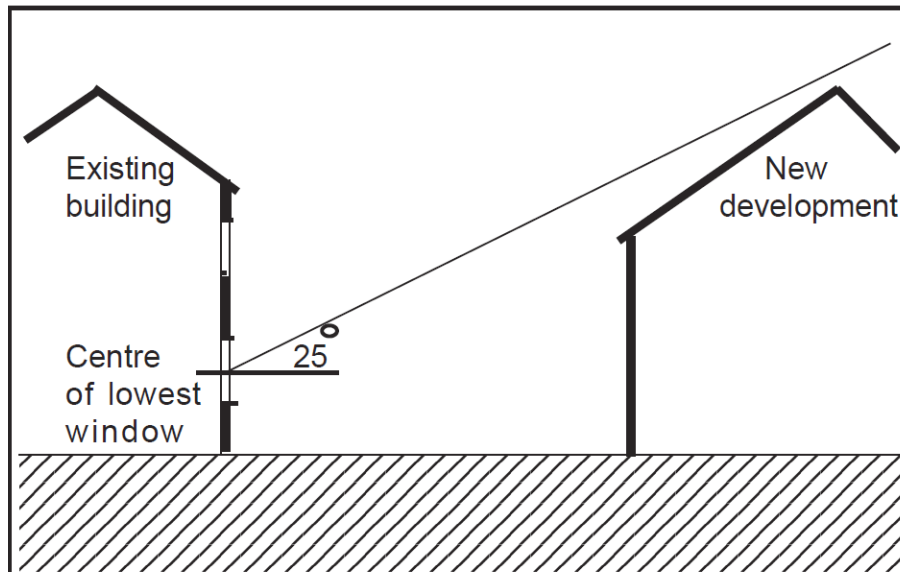


\* A 90° field of view is measured from the central point of a window of a habitable room on any elevation, to where it overlaps a 90° field of view from the central point of a window to a habitable room on any elevation of another property.



- 21 In order to protect against overshadowing, all applications for residential development will be expected to comply with the “25° rule”, described below.
- 22 First, draw a section in plane, perpendicular to each affected main window wall of the existing building. From the centre of the lowest window, from the horizontal, measure an angle of 25°. If any part of the new development obstructs the 25° line, overshadowing and loss of light may occur.

Figure 2



### Flats, maisonettes and bedsitters

- 23 In considering whether to permit applications for flats, maisonettes and bedsitters, whether new build or for conversions, the Borough Council will first need to be satisfied that the development is acceptable in principle. In this respect, regard will be had to all relevant policies in the Gravesham Local Plan 1st Review.
- 24 Table three (below) provides guidance on floor areas which would be acceptable, from a planning point of view, for typical rooms. Units with three or more bedrooms will be expected to have separate dining facilities, or be provided with kitchen/diners or lounge/diners which are significantly larger than the minimum floorspace requirements.

**Table 3**

Function of room	Floorspace
Double bedroom	11.2 sq. m.
Single bedroom	6.5
Living room	13.2
Dining room	9.5
Kitchen	7.2
Kitchen/diner	12.0
Lounge/diner	18.0
Bathroom & WC	3.5
Bathroom only	2.8
WC only	1.3
Bedsits (including Kitchen/bathroom/WC)	30.0
Hallways & landings	900mm width

- 25 Access to a bedroom, bathroom and WC should be arranged without having to pass through another room, other than a living room, on a separate floor. In a conversion, where a bathroom or WC cannot otherwise be provided, access may be gained through a kitchen.
- 26 Access to units should not involve a climb through more than two storeys to the entrance doors, unless access is also provided, or the second storey is comprised of individual units on two levels.
- 27 No unit of accommodation shall be wholly below ground level. Basements should normally be combined with ground floors, to form “family” maisonettes.
- 28 Rooms shall be arranged so that living rooms and bedrooms of different units do not directly adjoin each other, whether on separate floors, or on either side of a party wall.

### **Natural lighting**

- 29 Whenever practical, all kitchens and bathrooms shall be provided with openable windows. All glazing to windows in bathrooms shall be obscure.
- 30 All applications for newbuild developments must also comply with the Borough Council's guidance on "privacy distances" and on "overshadowing", as detailed in paragraphs 16 to 21 of this supplementary planning guidance.

### **Amenity space**

31 In any new building, space about buildings should be provided appropriate to the area and type of unit. This is in addition to any space required under vehicle parking standards, and for drying grounds, footpaths and access ways internal to the layout.

For communal flats, a communal garden area equivalent to a minimum of 10 sq. metres shall be provided for amenity space.

For self-contained units (not necessarily communal) which have two or more bedrooms and are capable of providing family accommodation, an area of amenity space in excess of 10 sq. metres will be expected. Such amenity space shall be of sufficient size to accommodate the following activities :

- children's play space;
- drying area;
- limited outside storage;
- sitting out;
- general leisure use.

### **Refuse storage**

32 Refuse containers shall be provided on a hardstanding and within purpose built enclosures, which are readily accessible for collection.

### **Play space provision**

33 In addition to the advice set out in this document, all planning applications for new flats and dwellings will be expected to comply with the Borough Council's advice on the provision of play space and open space. A supplementary planning guidance note entitled "Outdoor playing space provision in

new residential development” will be published at a future date.

### **Advice and Further Information:**

This document is for guidance only. The Borough Council is keen to encourage better design of advertisements displays in Gravesham:

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at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/do-i-need-planning-permission/overview>

If you are unsure about the need for planning permission you are advised to consult the Council’s Development Management team before undertaking any works to the property by emailing [planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk)