



Design Brief

April 2011

Preface

Welcome to the 2011 edition of Southern Housing Group's Design Brief. This document is intended as a guide for our designers and staff.

The document has been reviewed with our internal clients and updates have also taken account of feedback from a survey of residents living in our new homes. It also reflects the latest regulatory requirements.

I hope that you will find the Design Brief easy to use and that it will help you to understand the Group's design requirements for our new homes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dale Meredith', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dale Meredith
Development Director

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Introduction to the Document

Introduction to the document

Southern Housing Group is committed to developing high quality, well designed homes which people will be proud to live in. This Design Brief sets out the basis for achieving this and provides our staff and partners with clear guidance on the quality of design we want to achieve.

The contents of the Design Brief give a clear indication of the standards which must be achieved on all developments by the Group.

The document is based on a number of mandatory and supplementary requirements. These should be treated as minimum requirements and any inability to meet these standards should be highlighted at the outset. Where the Group procures housing through Section 106 obligations imposed upon a developer, whilst it is understood that the Group may not be in a position to enforce absolute compliance with the Brief, all divergences should be noted and highlighted to the Project Team before any final contractual commitment is made.

Chapter 1 outlines the Group's key design principles. The Group's detailed requirements are covered in Chapters 2-4 inclusive and set out the standards for all new build accommodation.

The supplementary requirements are covered in Chapter 5 and set out the standards for alternative tenures, categories, classifications and types of accommodation. As such, these requirements either refer back to the mandatory requirements, or set out enhanced or new standards as appropriate.

The document employs the principle of referring to various national standards and codes (e.g. The Homes & Communities Agency's Design and Quality Standards, HQIs, the London Housing Design Guide etc.) rather than duplicating them. It is therefore incumbent upon the designers to have access to such reference material. For ease of reference, all HCA London standards have been highlighted in blue.

The appendices include a glossary of terms and a list of reference material used in the document as well as suggestions for further reading on specific topics.

The document as a whole should be read in conjunction with the Group's Employer's Requirements.



1

Key Design Principles

Chapter 1: Key Design Principles

This section sets out Southern Housing Group's design goals and aspirations. These principles are at the core of Southern Housing Group's work as a housing provider and, as such, give clear direction to designers and others without being prescriptive in the detail.

1.0 Key Design Drivers

- 1.1 Southern Housing Group (the Group) is committed to the regeneration of urban and rural communities and, in doing so, aims to stimulate social well-being. We must not only provide an ever-improving quality of living environment for today's generations but also establish a legacy for future generations by promoting genuinely sustainable development. Our role as a residential provider is vital to this process both as an individual organisation and as a partner with other key players.
- 1.2 Our residents are at the heart of everything we do and in developing new housing it is vital that residents' needs are paramount. Central to this is the need for our housing to be functional and affordable. All new housing should be designed to the highest quality as this is critical to resident satisfaction and designers are expected to pay close attention to the future running costs of new schemes, in particular to those areas that will be paid for by service charges.
- 1.3 In order to ensure that design quality is consistently high, the Group require that, before a planning application is made, designers provide a Design and Access Statement covering all 20 'Building for Life' criteria as well as detailed internal layouts showing furnishing and circulation spaces. This will enable adequate consideration to be given to design at an early stage in the process and support the Project Team in ensuring that the designs meet our requirements before a commitment is made. Designers should note that for **London schemes** the HCA's required minimum Building for Life score is 14/20 whereas for outside London the HCA's minimum score is currently 12/20.

2.0 Key Design Principles

- 2.1 The Group is likely to be developing projects in a range of locations, from dense urban locations to more peripheral out-of-town and rural locations where the natural environment is increasingly dominant. Therefore, in setting out the design principles, we are aware of the varied locations and influences to which our designers will have to respond.
- 2.2 The Group believes that good quality design must apply at all levels, from the master plan to the detail and, if achieved, will foster greater stewardship with both the residents and the community at large.
- 2.3 In promoting a design-led approach, the Group is committed to the principles of the *Urban Design Compendium*:
- to provide places for people
 - to enrich the existing
 - to make connections
 - to work with the landscape
 - to mix uses and forms
 - to manage the investment
 - to design for change.
- 2.4 **To Provide Places for People**
- 2.4.1 For places to be well used and enjoyed, they must be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive. They also need to be distinctive, offering variety, choice and fun with opportunities for meeting people, playing in the street and ‘watching the world go by’. Developments should sit comfortably within existing frameworks and yet provide their own sense of identity, security and privacy. Furthermore, they should also promote a sense of community both within the developments themselves and in the wider neighbourhood beyond.
- 2.5 **To Enrich the Existing**
- 2.5.1 New development should capitalise upon and enrich the qualities of existing places with a distinctive and complementary response to the character, surroundings and environment. This principle applies at every scale – the city, the town, the village, the neighbourhood and the street.
- 2.6 **To Make Connections**
- 2.6.1 Places need to be easy to access and integrated physically and visually with their surroundings. Careful attention should be given to how to get around by foot, bicycle, public transport and the car, with priority given to residents and pedestrians in general. Their form and layout should

establish a hierarchy of public through to private spaces and create vistas and features which not only provide interest, but give clear orientation and routing. The links themselves must be designed to control movement through developments to provide both security and safety.

As a general rule, the Group will seek to have all roads and footpaths adopted by the local authority.

2.7 To Work with Landscape

2.7.1 Places must strike a balance between the natural and man-made environment and utilise each site's intrinsic resources (e.g. land form and ecology) to maximise energy conservation and amenity. Any development proposals must include a strategy to minimise the impact on the site ecology and biodiversity, and wherever possible actively improve it.

2.8 To Mix Uses and Forms

2.8.1 The Group will actively promote, wherever possible, not only mixed tenure, but also mixed uses and forms to meet the needs of a variety of users. Designs should be carefully considered to create a fully-integrated and inclusive development.

2.9 To Manage the Investment

2.9.1 The Group acknowledges the importance of our role and responsibilities for not only delivering economically-viable developments, but also for ensuring that they are well managed and maintained. We will work closely with developers, authorities and communities to embrace their aspirations and needs.

2.10 To Design for Change

2.10.1 New development needs to be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency, creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and the service infrastructure, and introducing new approaches to the use of transportation, traffic management and parking.

2.10.2 In acknowledging that energy consumption in the home accounts for a substantial proportion of the UK's carbon emissions, the Group is committed to increasing the energy efficiency of its new developments to meet the Government's target of all new homes being zero carbon by 2016. In seeking to achieve this, the Group will apply the requirements of the [Code for Sustainable Homes](#) to all of its developments and in doing so, not only improve their energy efficiency but also give residents better information about the sustainability of their home.

2.10.3 New developments need to be resilient and able to adapt to any impacts due to projected changes in climate conditions. This includes overheating due to increased summer temperatures, flood risk due to changes in rainfall patterns and water consumption levels based on

future water availability. A full list of projected regional climatic changes is provided by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) available from the [UKCIP website](#).

- 2.11 A thorough appreciation of the overall site context is the starting point for designing a distinct place. In doing so, the designers must consider its history, form of settlement, location and local community. Developments should have clear interrelationships between building blocks, streets, open space and landscape. They should have effective and economic infrastructure systems, both above and below ground, which are crucial to the success of the urban fabric and life within. Careful consideration should also be given to the details of the interface between the buildings and areas of the public realm.
- 2.12 Developments should be at a density appropriate to site location, with the highest densities around town centres and public transport nodes, and the lowest densities in both the outer edges of urban areas and rural locations. In high density development, careful consideration must be given to the increased demands in the use of public and communal areas, facilities, equipment and services, and the maintenance and management required to maintain a high quality living environment.
- 2.13 Both daylight and sunlight can have a significant impact on the quality of life and should be enjoyed wherever possible both outside and inside the building. Notwithstanding the many other influences on building form and layout, and the recommendations of [Site layout, planning for daylight and sunlight – a guide to good practice](#), individual dwellings should, wherever possible, maximise the use of sunlight, in particular to main living areas, kitchens and gardens.
- 2.14 Designers should consider not only the benefits of direct daylight and sunlight, but also those of indirect daylight and sunlight (e.g. reflected and borrowed light). Particular attention should be given to those dwellings where the main aspect faces north, to provide sunlight into some of the habitable areas.
- 2.15 Careful consideration should be given to using the building form, its orientation and siting, to mitigate noise pollution from excessive noise sources.
- 2.16 The Group is keen to promote both contemporary and traditional design to suit the varied demands of individual locations. We also encourage innovative thinking which provides design solutions which are both sympathetic with their surroundings and practical in their construction and use.
- 2.17 Careful consideration should be given to the relationship between rooms and circulation areas, which may also include the opportunity for new designs for alternative lifestyles and living.
- 2.18 Visual and physical links between the inside and outside of the dwelling should be designed to enable the residents to enjoy both a sense of

space beyond the confines of their home and being part of a larger place and community.

3.0 Accommodating Cultural and Community Diversities

- 3.1 The Group seeks to respond positively to the needs of households from minority ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds in the design of its housing.
- 3.2 As a residential provider, we wish to produce housing that will reflect and respond to the requirements of as wide a range of people as possible. Housing design should therefore take into consideration the many and diverse lifestyles within the communities to be accommodated.
- 3.3 Developments should generally seek to promote flexibility in the design of housing and, wherever possible, maximise opportunities for resident choice in relation to the use of rooms, bathroom accommodation, kitchen design, storage, fixtures, fittings and colour schemes.
- 3.4 Addressing the needs of minority ethnic communities is a key priority for neighbourhood renewal and community regeneration in a regional and local context. The Group is committed to seeing this worked through to the level of meeting spatial and amenity needs within the home.
- 3.5 It is recognised that an overly prescriptive design approach is inappropriate and that this can serve to reinforce cultural norms where these are in fact in a process of change. Younger members of multi-generational households may have different needs and aspirations from older generation residents. However, minority ethnic, religious and cultural groups do have various domestic needs and meeting these, whilst encouraging an individual identity, is likely to promote both social inclusion and long-term housing sustainability.
- 3.6 Where schemes are being developed on behalf of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations, we recognise that their requirements cannot necessarily be prescribed in advance. The designers must therefore consult closely with the appropriate representatives of these organisations at an early stage, with liaison directed through the Group.
- 3.7 In addition, all housing designed for households from minority ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds should follow the principles and guidance set out in [NHF Accommodating Diversity – Housing Design in Multicultural Society](#). Where schemes are being developed on behalf of BME organisations, the design should take into account requirements contained in any specialist design brief from the organisation itself.
- 3.8 The principles of [Lifetime Homes](#) must also be applied to meeting the needs of the multi-generational households of many minority ethnic groups.

- 3.9 Whilst Security is important on all schemes, it is particularly important on schemes where there is a high concentration of residents from minority groups as evidence shows that these groups are more likely to be victims of crime.

4.0 Innovation and Sustainability

- 4.1 The Group is committed to bringing about radical improvements in the design, quality and sustainability of our developments which will lead to improved customer satisfaction.
- 4.2 The organisation has a commitment to continuously improve construction processes. To this end, we are signed up to the 2012 Construction Commitments (Affordable Housing). This Design Brief embraces the design related criteria within the document. As part of our aim for continuous improvement, the Design Brief itself is seen as a continuously-evolving document and it will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 4.3 The Group aims to achieve the following long-term goals:
- higher quality homes that better meet the needs of our customers
 - higher levels of customer satisfaction
 - higher quality for lower costs
 - lower energy consumption and reduced fuel poverty
 - more sustainable development with lower maintenance costs.
- 4.4 The Group aims to be the first choice provider for the development and management of housing. To do this, we must produce quality homes that meet or exceed the aspirations of its customers. Our homes must be sustainable, have low running costs and have the flexibility to meet future needs.
- 4.5 The Group will use innovation in construction, both in terms of building techniques and components, but also procurement and consultation methods, to help to achieve this. However, innovation must be affordable, deliverable, fundable and maintainable.
- 4.6 The Group's long-term goals will be achieved by adopting some or all of the following measures:
- standardisation
 - pre-assembly
 - partnering and teamwork
 - sustainability
 - whole life costs
 - future flexibility.

4.7 **Modern Methods of Construction**

4.7.1 The Group seeks to promote the use of modern methods of construction including volumetric and panellised systems (or combinations of these called hybrid systems) as well as innovative timber and blockwork systems.

4.7.2 Should modern methods of construction be proposed, consultation is required with the Group. Key issues for consideration are:

- geographical location
- mortgageability of the system
- insurance-backed accreditation scheme
- regulatory accreditation
- maintainability and life cycle costs
- durability and life expectancy
- availability during construction
- availability of replacement parts
- quality of finish
- integration with other pre-fabricated components and the assembly process
- air leakage and acoustic testing
- future flexibility
- sustainability overview – materials, assembly, transportation.

4.7.3 The Group acknowledges that the use of standardised and pre-assembled components and construction techniques can offer significant improvements in both quality and predictability. The benefits include:

- improved health and safety
- increased speed of construction
- reduced defects
- reduced waste
- improved environmental performance
- improved sound insulation
- greater efficiency in the production process.

4.7.4 The Group is committed to maximising the use of factory-assembled components on new developments.

4.8 **Partnering**

4.8.1 The Group is committed to the partnering ethos and will continue to find ways of working more closely with its developer partners to improve communication and relationships with the whole supply chain.

4.9 Sustainability

4.9.1 Through our Sustainability Strategy we wish to incorporate environmentally-friendly features into our homes to reduce the impact of our developments on the environment, both in the initial construction and in the long-term running of the buildings. Sustainable development is a complex issue, requiring a balance between the economic, social and environmental concerns of any development. Our Sustainability Strategy sets out the following overarching objectives to be addressed on each and every project:

- raising environmental awareness amongst residents and in the supply chain
- ensuring good build and design quality
- reducing energy use, water use and carbon dioxide emissions
- reducing waste and construction waste
- considering the transport needs of residents
- improving the social cohesion of communities we serve
- environmental procurement, purchasing and specifying
- continuous improvement.

4.9.2 The Group will seek to achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes rating of level 3, as a minimum on all new build developments, and will aim for higher ratings wherever possible. Note that in **London, Code Level 4** is mandatory for all HCA funded schemes whereas outside London HCA funded schemes are still working to code 3. It is anticipated that all funded schemes will have to be level 4 from April 2012.

4.10 Whole Life Costs

4.10.1 The Group understands the importance of accounting for the costs of renovation, repairs and maintenance over the expected lifetime of the property, as well as the initial capital costs. The results of whole life costing should be good design, sound buildings and well managed and maintained homes.

4.10.2 Materials should be selected on the basis of longevity, robustness and fitness for purpose. Designers should ensure that replacement parts for all products specified are affordable and readily available in the UK.

4.11 'Smart' Homes

4.11.1 New technologies are becoming increasingly important and will impact on the design of homes and how they are planned. Information and communication technologies will become commonplace in the homes of the future. They will not only improve convenience, but also provide lifelong learning and working opportunities, improved security, support mechanisms, and access to the community. The Group's homes must be able to incorporate future technological developments.

5.0 Resident Involvement

- 5.1 Successful, vibrant communities are created and sustained primarily by the voluntary energy of active citizens. Our experience has shown that involvement of communities helps to ensure that investment in construction produces places where people will want to live in the long term.
- 5.2 The Group recognises the importance of giving residents the opportunity to become involved in the development process and to maximise the opportunity for feedback from our customers.
- 5.3 Listening and learning from our customers leads to better decision-making and will ensure we support local communities to determine their priorities and achieve their goals – whether housing-related or not.
- 5.4 **Levels of Involvement**
- 5.4.1 The level of resident involvement depends on the influence the Group has on the development process and in all cases the technical specification must be the responsibility of the project team.
- 5.4.2 Resident involvement should be considered at the outset and funds set aside to support resident involvement on large or complex schemes or schemes where future residents are known.
- 5.4.3 Whether future residents are known or not, Project Teams should also consider whether it may be appropriate to involve residents in the design and delivery of individual communal features such as shared gardens, art works or play areas post handover.
- 5.4.4 Where future residents are known, consultation should begin at an early stage to agree the extent of the participation and inform the design process as early as possible. We believe this approach promotes a genuine sense of ‘ownership’ and identity with the development. Liaison will normally take place through a residents’ focus group, which can consider the scheme design as a whole as well as agreeing residents’ choices and options. On larger schemes, residents should be included in the project team overseeing the development.
- 5.4.5 Where residents are not known until the design is completed, consideration should be given to setting up a panel of residents from nearby schemes or using an existing resident panel to advise on scheme design.
- 5.4.6 Where residents are not known until the design is completed but are nominated early in the construction programme, they will be offered choices in certain fixtures and finishes.
- 5.5 **Resident Feedback on Design**
- 5.5.1 Residents’ views on the design of new homes have been incorporated into the Design Brief via a telephone survey of residents in newly built

homes. The results of this survey, along with ongoing resident satisfaction data were then taken into account when developing this Brief. Residents' views will continue to feed into ongoing reviews of the Brief.

5.5.2 All residents in newly-built or refurbished properties also have the opportunity to provide feedback and views on design and specification issues by responding to a questionnaire at the end of the defects period. The answers are assessed and are used to aid the Group in reviewing the Design Brief and in designing future schemes.

5.6 Information for new residents

5.6.1 Residents should be given guidance on sustainability and how to maximise energy efficiency in using their homes. Systems and installations must be user friendly and capable of easy operation by residents.

5.6.2 Residents should be given guidance on how to conserve water in their homes. Systems and installations must be user friendly and capable of easy operation by residents.

6.0 Adaptable Homes

6.1 One of the components to a successful community is the ability of the homes we produce to reflect the changes in our residents' needs and circumstances and to reduce the need for our customers to move home. We seek to produce housing that remains adaptable and flexible, and recognise the need for improved accessibility wherever possible.

6.2 All units should be designed to fully meet the requirements of Lifetime Homes, thus attaining the 4 available Code for Sustainable Homes credits. Note that for **London Schemes** this is also a mandatory HCA funding requirement.

6.3 The inclusion of carefully-designed features as shown in this document are integral to the Group's aim of providing sustainable communities and homes, which our residents wish to live and remain in. This approach provides the flexibility to adapt our homes with the minimum of structural works and cost.

6.4 The needs and requirements of our customers can change as a result of age and circumstance. Providing homes which have lifetime capacity strengthens the Group's commitment to social investment in addition to merely providing 'bricks and mortar'.

6.5 The internal planning of dwellings should be designed to meet the changing requirements of the occupants. This will include the ability to make future adaptations without major structural alteration.

7.0 Legislative and Technical Requirements

- 7.1 All developments must comply with key legislative and technical requirements including but not limited to:
- planning
 - Building Regulations
 - development control
 - Disability Discrimination Act
 - highways and drainage
 - health & safety
 - relevant European legislation
 - National House Building Council and Zurich accreditation/insurance
 - British Standard Specifications, British Board of Agrément Certificates, British Research Establishment Digests, etc
 - prohibited materials and processes
 - principles of Secured by Design
 - Environment Agency
 - The Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 Designers are expected to be fully conversant with the guidelines set out in ['Managing Health & Safety in Construction'](#)- the HSE Approved Code of Practice for the CDM Regulations 2007. In particular, designers should be aware of the need to design out hazards from the outset.
- 7.3 Should there be conflict between the contents of the Design Brief and the above requirements, these should be highlighted at an early stage.

8.0 Local Authority Requirements

- 8.1 The Group works with a number of local authorities who may have different and changing requirements in respect of housing policy and design, and affordable housing. Designers should check with the local authority prior to concept designs to establish what, if any, particular criteria the relevant authority has. Any areas of divergence or conflict with the Brief should be discussed with the Group



2

Specific Design Requirements: The Site

Chapter 2: Specific Design Requirements: The Site

This section is to set out those requirements which are specific to the Group and are over and above those set out in the various national standards.

9.0 Dwelling Orientation and Outlook

- 9.1 Building orientation can have a substantial impact on the success of a development, maximising the use of the sun and capitalising on both views within and beyond the site. Designers must consider these aspects and in doing so create a balance which best suits the project.
- 9.2 Natural daylighting should be used wherever possible to reduce the need for artificial lighting.
- 9.3 The use of sunlight should be considered in the following ways:
 - To generate passive solar gains and reduce space heating, being mindful of the risk of overheating in summer.
 - To enhance both internal and external spaces and in particular to encourage the use of external areas. North facing gardens should be avoided where this does not conflict with other requirements.
 - To generate heat or electricity. Where there is no plan for the immediate use of solar thermal or photovoltaic units designs should nonetheless incorporate the possibility or retrofitting these.
- 9.4 Views from inside the home should be created to provide contact with the neighbourhood and community outside. Consideration should be given to extending the internal space beyond the main walls of the building envelope to maximise these views.
- 9.5 Notwithstanding the above, the location, orientation of each dwelling, the internal layout and positioning of openings should give reasonable privacy and freedom from noise disturbance without infringing the privacy of adjoining properties. The conflict between areas of glazing and the impact on SAP/Carbon Index ratings should be minimised.
- 9.6 Building forms, layouts and construction should be designed to maximise energy efficiency.
- 9.7 For **HCA London** funded schemes, developments must avoid single aspect dwellings that are north facing (within 45 degrees of north), experience noise exposure categories of C or D or contain 3 or more bedrooms.

- 9.8 For **HCA London** funded schemes, where single aspect dwellings are proposed, the designer must demonstrate how good levels of ventilation, daylight and privacy will be achieved in each habitable room and the kitchen.

10.0 External Form and Layout

- 10.1 Whilst local site conditions and constraints will have a substantial influence on the form and layout of a development, there are a number of other specific issues which the designer must consider.
- 10.2 Each dwelling or group of dwellings (in the case of flats) should have its own clearly-defined plot which provides a clear distinction between public and private areas.
- 10.3 Wherever possible, large family dwellings should be dispersed throughout the site in order to prevent a high concentration of children in any one area. Care should be taken to consider child density or high concentrations of other household types and the relationship between location and facilities in overall scheme design.
- 10.4 There should be a clear relationship between the front of dwellings and adjoining public areas – a public face on to a streetscape.
- 10.5 Public space should be clearly located within the public realm and building frontages should give positive definition to the shape and function of outdoor spaces. The design should be unambiguous, leaving no space unused or undefined.
- 10.6 The rear areas to dwellings, be they individual or communal, should be private, ideally backing on to private rear areas of adjoining dwellings. The front elevation of one dwelling should ideally not face the rear elevation of another property. Individual front gardens must be private in that they must clearly define the boundaries to adjoining public areas.
- 10.7 Access between the public and private areas should provide an unambiguous route to the building entrance, which should be safe and well lit, with clear sight lines.
- 10.8 The buildings should afford natural surveillance of all public and private communal areas including car parking, cycle stores, entrance areas and play spaces. Care should be taken, however, to maintain a reasonable level of privacy to private areas by minimising visual intrusion.
- 10.9 Buildings on corners should be designed not only to provide the appropriate emphasis but also to address both aspects with windows and views in each direction.
- 10.10 Play and games areas, where specifically required by the Group, should be overlooked and in areas of regular public activity, whilst minimising noise and light pollution into adjoining properties.

- 10.11 Careful consideration should be given to the effects of light pollution both in private areas and when agreeing street lighting proposals with the relevant authority.
- 10.12 Careful consideration should be given to the possible impact of noise pollution both in and around the site and appropriate measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of noise.
- 10.13 Wherever possible, services and ducts should be in soft landscaping areas to avoid the need to disturb hard landscaping, however in private gardens care should be taken in the siting of access points such as manholes, which should not be sited in flowerbeds but rather be incorporated into paved areas.
- 10.14 Designers should consider the potential for future antisocial behaviour and should try to avoid low level walls or stepped projections that encourage climbing or running.

11.0 Vehicle Access & Accommodation

- 11.1 Roads and footpaths should provide a clear and logical hierarchy of routes to all dwellings providing practical access to pedestrians, cyclists, cars and service/emergency vehicles. They should provide a safe and secure environment for pedestrians and cyclists and clear sight lines with appropriate traffic calming, clearly-defined pedestrian and cycle areas and street lighting.
- 11.2 All public roads, footpaths, parking and services should comply with the relevant authority's requirements to allow for adoption. Where, for any reason, adoption cannot be secured, they shall nevertheless be constructed to adoptable standards.
- 11.3 The level of car parking provision should comply with the local authority's requirements.
- 11.4 All parking should be overlooked, well lit and located for the safe and convenient use of residents and visitors.
- 11.5 Particular consideration should be given to the provision of visitors' parking as this is a regular cause of resident dissatisfaction.
- 11.6 Project Teams should consider the provision of 'trade' parking spaces on sites where parking for maintenance access may be a problem.
- 11.7 An outline parking management plan should be devised at an early stage to ensure adequate consideration has been given to the management of demand for parking on site.
- 11.8 For mixed tenure schemes, parking should be tenure neutral in design, distribution and allocation.
- 11.9 Where there is limited and/or mixed-tenure parking on site the selling of a car parking space along with a property lease (on shared ownership or outright sale homes) can cause substantial management problems

as it prevents an effective and fair car parking policy from operating for the life of the scheme. The preference, from a management perspective, is that no spaces should be sold, however where the sale of parking spaces is proposed, this will need to be discussed with the Group.

- 11.10 Basement and undercroft parking are generally not desirable due to high building and maintenance costs, however, where the designer considers basement or undercroft parking is their preferred option for meeting the parking requirements for a particular scheme, the designer shall seek early guidance from the Group.
- 11.11 Undercroft parking may be acceptable on sites where there is a flood risk and in other situations where raising living accommodation above ground level provides a good design solution.
- 11.12 The provision of gates, bollards and other security measures should be carefully considered where unofficial car parking is likely or where building corners need protection.
- 11.13 Due to the service charge implications of electronic gates the designer should seek guidance from the Group in advance of any decision to install these.
- 11.14 Parking spaces should be labelled and allocated, particularly if parking is less than 100% and/or if the scheme is mixed tenure.
- 11.15 Parking area surfaces should be designed without large expanses of single materials. Surfaces should be carefully chosen and parking should be broken up and screened with soft landscaping.
- 11.16 Car clubs should be considered in areas where there is little parking, however careful consideration should be given to the terms of contract for such arrangements as well as the design of car club parking. Car club spaces cannot usually be situated in underground parking as they rely on strong mobile phone signals to work. As car club users may not be resident on the estate, spaces should be provided outside any secure areas.
- 11.17 Parking for houses should be carefully considered and enhance the streetscape. All other parking should be designed to create a sense of ownership by the residents they serve, with clear links to access paths and entrances.
- 11.18 Shared drives and garage compounds are not acceptable.
- 11.19 For **HCA London** funded schemes, each designated wheelchair accessible dwelling must have a dedicated car parking space (2400mm wide with clear access to one side of 1200mm) (unless the development has been formally designated as car-free by the local planning authority)
- 11.20 Designs should include suitable cycle storage which should be Secure and well lit and meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

12.0 External Appearance

- 12.1 The appearance of buildings, be they traditional or contemporary, should provide interest, life and vitality to the public realm in the use of doors, windows, articulation, materials and detail. They should also respect the surrounding fabric whilst generating a synergy and establishing a character and identity of their own.
- 12.2 Windows and doors should be used to describe a building, identify the entrance, give human scale and reinforce the vertical and horizontal rhythms of a street.
- 12.3 External materials and details should take account of the need for durability and low maintenance. They must look good wet and dry and provide a quality of appearance from a range of viewing distances.
- 12.4 Where brickwork is not being considered as the predominate external cladding material, the designer shall seek early guidance from the Group.
- 12.5 Where a large amount of timber cladding is proposed designers should seek early approval from the Group and ensure that the specification complies with the Employer's Requirements and is of the correct TRADA defined grade and exposure categories.
- 12.6 Cladding materials must be commonly available UK stock for repairs and finishes that require regular painting should be avoided.
- 12.7 Cladding and details should use robust materials at ground floor level, particularly around common entrance areas. Examples to avoid include rendered insulation and terracotta rain screen tiles.
- 12.8 Consideration should be given to specifying anti graffiti surfaces at street level and elsewhere where graffiti may be a problem.
- 12.9 Consideration should be given to the effects of weathering in the choice and detailing of external finishes, particularly in coastal locations.
- 12.10 Buildings should be designed to eliminate roosting places for pigeons and seagulls and to control other vermin without the need for deterrents such as netting or spikes.

13.0 Soft Landscaping

- 13.1 Soft landscaping can have a significant impact on the local environment and quality of life. It should be designed to reflect and enhance the building form and appearance, and, in rural locations in particular, reinforce the *genus loci*.
- 13.2 The success of any soft landscaping rests on the quality of soil and ongoing maintenance. Designers should take these into account from the outset, ensuring that ground is adequately prepared and that planting will be easy and affordable to maintain.

- 13.3 The landscaping should take into account its effect on the local microclimate in relation to solar shading, overshadowing and shelter from winds.
- 13.4 The extent and type of planting in communal areas must be agreed with the Group, taking into account the maintenance that will be required.
- 13.5 The landscape proposals must meet the approval of the local planning authority and shall include, wherever possible, a range of trees, shrubs and ground cover to provide attractive surroundings throughout the year. They should also take account of aspect and provide colour, form and fragrance.
- 13.6 Planting in public areas should be designed to be able to be adopted by the local authority.
- 13.7 There should be a careful balance between soft and hard landscape, taking into account; water attenuation, surface run off and difficult to maintain areas that are subject to regular pedestrian use.
- 13.8 Trees should be planted along streets wherever possible and shrubs/hedges within the public realm should have a mature height of at least 900mm.
- 13.9 The positioning of trees should be carefully considered in relation to screening for privacy, shading and overshadowing, without impacting on the cost of the foundations.
- 13.10 Designers should consider potential anti-social behaviour problems arising from landscaping design such as using trees as 'goal posts'.
- 13.11 Careful consideration should be given to the use of planting to provide screening to areas such as parking, drying areas and refuse storage, without compromising the general level of surveillance.
- 13.12 Lockable and properly drained watering points should be provided to communal areas which may also serve the shared refuse store.
- 13.13 Landscape proposals should include drought-resisting plant species and mulch, however the use of loose materials where they may get kicked around should be avoided.
- 13.14 Planting should be done in the appropriate season and in adequately prepared ground.
- 13.15 Consideration should be given to providing opportunities for food growing either in private or communal gardens.
- 13.16 Designs should incorporate opportunities for increasing biodiversity through landscape designs and planting plans.
- 13.17 Wherever possible, semi-mature or mature trees and shrubs should be planted. This is a good way to create a strong sense of place and large trees, although more expensive, are less likely to be vandalised or accidentally damaged. Designers should consider the extent of a tree's root system when choosing the type/location of trees.

14.0 Hard Landscaping

- 14.1 Hard landscape should be designed for areas which are unsuitable for soft landscape and to provide safe and convenient areas for pedestrian use. It should not only provide a clear delineation between private, communal and public areas, but also create a seamless interface between buildings and the public realm.
- 14.2 Areas of hard landscape proposed for adoption should be designed to meet the requirements of the relevant authority.
- 14.3 The selection of materials and details should take account of the need for permeability, durability and low maintenance. They must look good, wet and dry, and provide a quality of appearance from a range of viewing distances.
- 14.4 External signage should be clear and unambiguous, and non-institutional in character. Street names, dwelling numbers and block names should be easily visible from the public footpaths.
- 14.5 Street furniture will be considered by the Group on a project-specific basis and only if it is necessary and important to the success of those public spaces.
- 14.6 Avoid gravel and other loose materials that can be kicked about or thrown.
- 14.7 Consideration should be given to access issues in external areas: paths should be of appropriate widths and materials for wheelchair access.
- 14.8 Good external lighting and street furniture can have a considerable impact on the quality of the scheme. Materials should be attractive and durable with easily sourced replacement parts and should be carefully positioned to avoid 'street clutter'. Designers should consider ongoing maintenance and bulb replacement, for example using lamp posts that can be collapsed for maintenance purposes.
- 14.9 Trees should be adequately protected from accidental or malicious damage.
- 14.10 Where possible, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be incorporated in soft & hard landscaping (in accordance with the drainage hierarchy) unless there are practical reasons for not doing so (e.g. local ground conditions or density of development).

15.0 Boundary Treatments and Fencing

- 15.1 All boundary treatments and fencing should comply where practicable with Secured by Design.
- 15.2 Full Secured by Design certification is required from April 2011 on all **HCA London** funded schemes.

- 15.3 Consideration should be given to the stability and durability of all boundary treatments and fencing.
- 15.4 Additional trellis fencing should be provided to the tops of walls and fences abutting public areas.
- 15.5 Where rear gardens abut roads, public footpaths and any other area generally accessible to the public, the boundary treatment should comprise brick walls of a minimum height of 1.8m and be finished with copings which deter climbing.
- 15.6 Where there is private access from the front to the rear of the dwelling, minimum 1.8m high close-boarded fencing with matching gate shall be provided. The fence should be located as near as possible to the front building line and the gate should be fitted with a lock.
- 15.7 Fencing between back to back rear gardens shall comprise 1.8m high close-board fencing.
- 15.8 Front gardens shall be enclosed with a boundary height and material suitable to the scheme. Front gardens should provide a sense of security and privacy and should be usable spaces, particularly where they are the primary outdoor space to that dwelling. Boundary options include:
- brick walls with painted steel gates
 - painted metal railings and matching gate
 - timber fencing
 - brick walls with painted metal railings on top.
- 15.9 All gates in walls and fencing should be of a height and construction to suit the wall or fence and comply with Secured by Design requirements.
- 15.10 The Group prefers to avoid the use of hydraulic/electronic gates, unless considered absolutely necessary, as they incur high maintenance costs. Where these gates are used, care should be taken to ensure that they do not close on walls adjoining dwellings.

16.0 Communal Gardens and Terraces

- 16.1 Shared gardens, where provided, should be private (to the residents) and secure, and not compromise the privacy of adjoining ground floor flats. Communal seating should be provided, suitably located in relation to access, aspect and enclosure. These areas will be maintained by the Group.
- 16.2 In locations where amenity space is scarce, designers may approach The Group to seek a view on the provision of communal roof terraces. If communal roof terraces are to be incorporated, the following elements should be considered:
- the height and fixing of the balustrade

- the use of planters between the balustrade and the useable terrace area, which both reduces overlooking and improves safety by reducing the ability of the residents to approach the edge of the building (s)
- the potential for an automated watering system
- preventing access to areas designated as non accessible, such as higher level flat roofs.
- landscaping enhances the appearance of these areas but also creates additional load which must be accounted for
- the covering of the terrace should be non slip, fixed well and hard wearing to avoid the potential for accidents.

17.0 Outdoor Play & Games Areas

- 17.1 Adequate play facilities should be provided for children of different age groups. Facilities should be suitable for the scale of the development and should take account of the catchment area for each age group. Teenagers, for example, have a much larger radius of operation than small children and they may prefer to share facilities with others of their age group off-site.
- 17.2 Assessments should be made of what is already available locally. Play provision should take account of the predicted number of children, their likely age distribution, and the need for change as children grow up. Changes of this kind are essential if the project is to be successful in creating a stable community, with many long-term residents.
- 17.3 Designers should consult the Local Authority's play strategy as early as possible.
- 17.4 Wherever possible, establish local need in consultation with local play groups, residents and children, including teenagers.
- 17.5 Develop a flexible play and recreation strategy. The aim should be to provide both formal and informal play spaces that will suit the target age groups. Include grassed areas.
- 17.6 Locate play areas so as not to disturb nearby residents but so that they can be overlooked and supervised informally.
- 17.7 Provide adequate space and seating facilities for supervising adults especially in play areas for the under fives.
- 17.8 Provide shady areas so that children are protected from direct sun.
- 17.9 Ensure that play areas for toddlers and young children are securely fenced and gated and have 'grids' or similar measures to prevent dogs getting in.
- 17.10 Consider whether to install high fencing and access control to prevent non-residents using the facility. This may be relevant in some locations

where misuse is likely and designers should bear in mind that maintenance costs are covered by residents' service charges.

- 17.11 Consider provision for teenagers – for example teenage shelters, Multiple Use Games Areas (MUGAs), skate ramps etc. but ensure that these are appropriately located so as not to cause disturbance to adjoining properties.
- 17.12 Consider maintenance, security and safety issues and whole life costs. Play equipment must be durable and safety surfaces should be used to reduce injury risks. Play areas may need to be lockable at night in areas where anti-social behaviour is an issue.
- 17.13 Consider the management of play areas at an early stage as there may be a need for additional on site facilities to support management plans.
- 17.14 Designers should pay particular attention to planting in play areas, avoiding the use of plants with sharp thorns or poisonous berries and taking particular care to prevent the growth of fungi.

18.0 Community Centres

- 18.1 Consideration should be given to the provision of community centres in areas where there is little community provision. Early guidance should be sought from the Group's Social & Economic Development Department who can establish local demand and put together a management plan.
- 18.2 Where community centres are to be provided, designers should be aware that the Group's Social & Economic Regeneration Department, local residents and any future service provider will need to be consulted on the design of the facilities.
- 18.3 All community centres should be designed to be operated entirely independently of housing and other estate services. This includes ensuring that running costs can be separately identified and that utilities can be allocated and charged directly.
- 18.4 Consideration should be given to the fact that non-residents are likely to be accessing the community centre, so buildings and entrances should be clearly identifiable, welcoming and easy to locate.
- 18.5 Community Centres should be provided with their own cycle parking, which should be easily identifiable, close to the entrance and well overlooked.
- 18.6 Parking and access for vehicles will need to be considered and any parking provided should be additional to that provided for residential use, clearly identifiable, close to the entrance and well overlooked.

19.0 Roofs

- 19.1 Roofs should be designed to enhance the building form and appearance. Although duo pitch roofs are preferable, alternatives will be considered on a project specific basis. In any event, careful consideration should be given to durability, maintenance and whole life costs.
- 19.2 Flat roofs and similar non-traditional roof forms should be in materials that have a 20- year insurance-backed guarantee and be designed/specified such that maintenance is required on no greater than a yearly basis. Access arrangements for maintenance should be considered at an early stage in the design development.
- 19.3 Roof orientation and design should provide maximum potential for the future installation of solar thermal or photovoltaic equipment.
- 19.4 Where possible, roof structures on houses should be built with attic trusses and suitable insulation to allow for future expansion into the roof space.
- 19.5 Designers should avoid the use of single ply systems and lightweight alloy cappings.

20.0 Windows and Doors

- 20.1 Windows and glazed doors should be designed so as to maximise the natural light within a property without compromising occupants' privacy.
- 20.2 All habitable rooms should have an openable window.
- 20.3 All individual dwelling windows should be cleanable from within the dwelling.
- 20.4 The restrictor stays should be such that a casement, once opened, can also be closed without excessive reach.
- 20.5 Windows in communal areas should be cleanable from the internal communal areas wherever possible. Where this is not possible this should be highlighted at an early stage due to the service charge implications for future cleaning arrangements.
- 20.6 Outward opening windows should not create a hazard over paths.
- 20.7 The Group's preference is for aluminium-clad timber windows. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. coastal locations) alternative materials may be considered.
- 20.8 Careful consideration should be given to the design of windows and reparability of moving parts and designers must be aware of the need for occupants to hang curtains.
- 20.9 The group will consider the provision of plain blinds or nets where overlooking is an issue or consistency in appearance of the windows

and fenestration is important to the overall appearance of the building. This is particularly desirable for larger windows where residents may not be able to afford suitable coverings.

- 20.10 Windows should be adequately recessed to enhance the appearance of the building.

21.0 Sound Insulation

- 21.1 All schemes must achieve airborne sound insulation values that are at least 3db higher and impact sound insulation values that are at least 3db lower than the performance standards set out in Approved Document E of the Building Regulations. This will attract 1 credit under the Code for Sustainable Homes and is also the minimum requirement for HCA London funded schemes.
- 21.2 The Group ideally wishes to achieve airborne sound insulation values that are at least 5db higher and impact sound insulation values that are at least 5db lower than the performance standards set out in Approved Document E of the Building Regulations. This will provide three credits under the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 21.3 The Group may have specific requirements on individual schemes and designers should ensure that they discuss this with us before finalising the design for any scheme to ensure that the overall design will give us the ability to achieve any specified levels.
- 21.4 Sound insulation levels should be verified by testing and not merely by compliance with the relevant Robust Standard Details.
- 21.5 Consider supplying carpets to prevent use of hard flooring and further enhance sound insulation.
- 21.6 If a noise assessment is made and noise levels exceed the minimum set out in PPG24, then appropriate measures should be taken to mitigate noise transmission, taking into consideration 'Guidelines for Community Noise'.

22.0 Fire Equipment

- 22.1 The design will conform to Document B 'Fire' of the Building Regulations using common or alternative solutions to achieve compliance. Fire resistant materials should be incorporated into the building structure to reduce the breakout of fire.
- 22.2 In order to reduce future maintenance and to ensure sustainability the specification of fire equipment should not be disproportionate and should err in favour of manual systems over automatic.
- 22.3 The building design should look at Southern Housing Group's diverse customer base when considering the speed of escape in an emergency

and bear in mind that the majority of the Group's fire risk assessments opt for a 'stay put' policy.

- 22.4 The Southern Housing Group requires a design that will provide fire safety that is in line with the current fire legislation as well as being sustainable and economical. Designers should take into account the likelihood of vandalism on site and avoid systems that are vulnerable to intentional or accidental damage or costly to maintain.

23.0 Materials

- 23.1 Southern Housing Group is committed to taking action to help build a more sustainable future and we recognise that our role as a housing developer brings with it a responsibility for the future. As well as more general requirements to achieve relevant Code for Sustainable Homes levels and the other principles set out in Chapter 1, we will also commit to not using any materials with high embodied energy (as set out in The Green Guide to Housing Specification). Designers should produce an assessment of the materials and construction techniques proposed for the scheme against standards set out in The Green Guide to Housing Specification.
- 23.2 If the site has existing buildings, they should be considered for re-use wherever practical. If demolition is proposed, demolition materials should be re-used or recycled. New buildings should be designed and constructed so that materials can be easily re-used or recycled should they be demolished in future years.
- 23.2.1 It is essential that great attention is given to the selection of materials with a view to ensuring their robustness and fitness for purpose. Designers should ensure that replacement parts for all products specified are affordable and readily available in the UK.



3

Specific Design Requirements: The Home

Chapter 3: Specific Design Requirements: The Home

24.0 Dwelling Sizes

24.1 The tables below outline our minimum space standards across all tenures. These have been set to correspond with the standards set out in the London Housing Design Guide, which apply as minima for all **HCA London** funded schemes. These standards are incorporated in the Draft Replacement London Plan, which is due to be adopted during 2011. note that for schemes outside London these standards still apply, but are not a regulatory requirement.

24.1.1 Minimum Space Standards

Type	Minimum area (m ²) Flat	Minimum area (m ²) 2 Storey House/Maisonette	Minimum area (m ²) 3 Storey House/Maisonette
1B/2P	50		
2B/3P	61	71*	
2B/4P	70	83	
3b4p	74	86	
3B/5P	86	96	102
3B/6P	100	106**	112**
4b5p	90	100	106
4B/6P	99	107	113
4B/7P		117**	123**
4B/8P		127**	133**
5B/9P		143**	

* Specific Standards not stated in London Plan

** Specific Standards not stated in London Plan: This standard achieved by adding 10sq per person over 5 persons and an allowance for stairs.

- 24.2 Bedsits and studio flats are not acceptable.
- 24.3 Before a planning application is submitted, designers should provide detailed floor plans demonstrating that furniture layouts and associated circulation spaces, location of sockets, outlets and radiators comply with relevant quality and design criteria such as the London Housing Design Guide and HQI. This will enable the Project Team to assess the quality of the scheme whilst also complying with **HCA London** funding requirements.
- 24.4 For developments outside London, dwellings should meet the stipulated minimum scores for at least the three aspects of *Housing Quality Indicators* as set out in the Homes and Communities Agency's *Design and Quality Standards*, i.e. unit size, unit layout & unit services. Floor plans should meet the requirements of Part E of the NHF guide 'Standards & Quality in Development' (2nd edition).
- 24.5 The minimum areas for dwellings are to be measured in accordance with 'Section 2.0 Core Definitions – Gross Internal Areas of the *Code of Measuring Practice – A Guide for Surveyors and Valuers* (6th edition), subject to the following exceptions:
- the internal face of perimeter walls shall mean the finished surface
 - garages shall be excluded from the overall area provision but can be counted as storage provision.
 - conservatories, sun spaces which are not within the insulated envelope, and balconies shall be excluded from the area provision.
 - All usable loft areas where not used as habitable rooms are not included in the area provision.
 - Areas with a head room of less than 1.5m (except under stairs) shall be excluded from the area provision.
- 24.6 All ceilings shall have a minimum height above finished floor level of 2.3m except for limited areas such as storage or parts of rooms where any reduced ceiling height does not compromise the furniture layouts and functions of those rooms. For **HCA London** funded schemes, the minimum floor to ceiling height in habitable rooms is 2.5m (from finished floor level to finished ceiling level).
- 24.7 Where flats are comprised of two-storey blocks, each flat shall have its own individual ground floor entrance i.e. there shall be no communal areas. The calculation of area for the first floor flat shall exclude the area of the staircase serving it.
- 24.8 All units should be designed to fully meet the requirements of Lifetime Homes, thus attaining the 4 available Code for Sustainable Homes credits. Note that for **HCA London** funded schemes this is also a funding requirement.
- 24.9 For two bedroom dwellings and above a kitchen/dining room with separate Living Room is preferred, thus providing two separate living spaces. For three bedrooms and above this is an absolute requirement.

This not only meets the requirements of the majority of our residents (from resident feedback) but also the specific requirements of particular cultural groups who may need separate entertaining spaces and families who need space to work or study from home. Note that for **HCA London** funded schemes, social rented dwellings with three or more bedrooms must have two living spaces, each with external windows (studies will not be considered as second living spaces).

- 24.10 Stacking of kitchens or living rooms above bedrooms must be avoided.

25.0 Recommended Room Sizes

- 25.1 In meeting the stipulated minimum *HQI* scores and regardless of area, the design of individual rooms must meet the requirements of the *NHF Standards and Quality in Development*. The rooms must be of good practicable design, well proportioned and of regular shape. Room sizes include built-in storage, where provided.
- 25.2 The recommended room sizes listed below are provided as a simple guideline minima only and must not be used as a replacement to the requirements of the previous clause.

Dwelling Type	2P	3P	4P	5P	6P	7P
	Area (m ²)					
Living/dining room	13.0	15.0	16.0	17.5	18.5	20.0
Living room (with separate dining/kitchen)	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0
Kitchen	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.0	8.5	9.0
Kitchen/diner	9.0	11.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0
Single bedroom	N/A	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Double bedroom (main)	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Twin bedroom (secondary)	N/A	N/A	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
Storage (excl. airing cupboard)	1.5	2.25	3.0	3.75	4.5	5.25

Room sizes for larger units should be agreed on an individual basis with the Group.

- 25.3 The recommended room sizes shall apply to all tenures.

26.0 Entrances and Circulation Areas

- 26.1 Circulation areas are fundamental to a good dwelling layout. They should be economic in area and yet provide well designed, practical links between spaces and individual rooms. They should also provide a safe environment in which to move around the dwelling, utilising, wherever possible, natural lighting alongside appropriate levels of artificial lighting.
- 26.2 Entrance areas should incorporate adequate space and hooks for storage of outdoor clothing, shoes and buggies. Where possible, coat hooks should be incorporated in hall cupboards.
- 26.3 For enhanced security all front doors should be fitted with door viewers

27.0 Storage & utility rooms

- 27.1 General, full height storage within the dwelling should be provided wherever possible, maximising on the use of the whole building volume, including roof spaces, providing it does not impact on the quality and practicality of the living spaces. Innovative storage solutions will be considered provided they are practical and readily accessible. Storage should be shelved and accessible from circulation areas wherever possible.
- 27.2 A ventilated linen cupboard, accessible from the circulation area should be provided. It shall include slatted shelving of at least 0.6sqm and a hot water cylinder or equivalent heat source.
- 27.3 Storage space for utility meters and mechanical services equipment should be sensitively designed and should not detract from overall storage provision.
- 27.4 Lockable sheds must be provided in private gardens, located at the end of the garden and accessible by footpath from the rear door. Wherever possible, these should serve as bicycle storage so should meet the design requirements of the *Code for Sustainable Homes*.
- 27.5 Utility rooms are desirable, particularly in family-sized units.
- 27.6 For flats with open plan layouts, consideration should be given to providing a washer-drier space in a separate hall cupboard.

28.0 Kitchens

- 28.1 For two bedroom dwellings and above a kitchen/dining room with separate living room is preferred, for three bedrooms and above this is an absolute requirement. This not only meets the requirements of the majority of our residents (from resident feedback) but also the specific requirements of particular cultural groups who may need separate

- entertaining spaces and families who need space to work or study from home.
- 28.2 Kitchens should be convenient to both the dining area and living room. In smaller units, where the kitchen, dining and living areas are open plan, some partitioning or screening may be considered to define activity areas and provide visual screening to the working areas of the kitchen.
- 28.3 Kitchen areas should be designed such that children can be easily excluded using a standard child safety gate.
- 28.4 Designers must ensure from the outset that the kitchens will comply with the essential standards of *NHF Standards and Quality in Development* and/or Appendix 2 of the *London Housing Design Guide* without compromising the dwelling layout. This incorporates minimum lengths of usable worktop and worktop depth of 600mm.
- 28.5 Kitchens should be designed to incorporate the following appliances: a cooker, a fridge/freezer and a clothes washing machine/tumble drier. The cooker space should not be located near a door or under a window and should incorporate gas and electricity outlets unless there is no gas on site. The clothes washing machine/tumble drier may, with the Group's agreement, be located elsewhere within the dwelling such as in a utility space.
- 28.6 In one and two bedroom flats one removable kitchen base unit (minimum 600mm wide) shall be designated as an additional appliance space, with services provided, for future fitting of a tumble drier or dishwasher through tenant choice. In three bedroom units and above, an additional space should be provided with appropriate services for a dishwasher or tumble drier. For Shared ownership and IMR units, provision of a dishwasher should be considered for all unit sizes.
- 28.7 There should be a further space (min. 400mm wide) for a swing-top type rubbish bin, adequate space for recycling storage and wall space for a radiator (not adjacent to the Fridge Freezer). Space for recycling bins should be either within the kitchen cupboard units (to be installed at a later date) or externally as part of the refuse storage, taking account of local authority requirements.
- 28.8 For family-sized housing, particularly in schemes for particular ethnic or cultural groups, consideration should be given to allowing space for a separate freezer and/or larder to allow for bulk purchasing of food.
- 28.9 White worktops should be avoided as they stain easily.
- 28.10 Ventilation should comply with the Employer's Requirements as a minimum, however consideration should be given to enhancing the extract rate.

29.0 Bathrooms and WCs

- 29.1 Designers must ensure from the very outset that the bathrooms will comply with the requirements and space standards of *NHF Standards and Quality in Development* without compromising the dwelling layout.
- 29.2 Bathrooms should, wherever possible, be provided with a window to provide natural daylight and allow natural ventilation over and above the mechanical ventilation. Care should be taken to ensure that baths and washbasins are not located under windows. A mirror should be provided over the washbasin, with a shaver socket adjacent.
- 29.3 For intermediate tenure properties with more than one bedroom an en-suite shower room with WC & wash hand basin should be provided to the master bedroom. For social rented properties en suite is to be avoided.
- 29.4 Except in the case of en-suite facilities, the bathroom should not be accessed from another room.
- 29.5 All rooms should be no more than one floor from a WC.
- 29.6 For larger properties consider installing the shower in the Lifetime Homes compliant entry level WC from the outset.
- 29.7 Consider ways of integrating storage in bathrooms as this is regularly requested by residents.
- 29.8 All dwellings should have thermostatic showers above baths and full height tiling in the bath/shower enclosure.
- 29.9 The shower head should be able to be stored at low level as well as overhead to accommodate short or seated residents and allow for washing after using the toilet.
- 29.10 Robust retractable clothes lines should be provided above baths.

30.0 Bedrooms

- 30.1 For **HCA London** funded schemes the minimum width of double and twin bedrooms must be 2.75m.
- 30.2 Bedrooms may have direct access to garden or balcony areas providing the primary access to these areas is from the living/dining room, kitchen/dining room or circulation area. In such cases, the bedroom must have an openable window as well as the external door.
- 30.3 A built-in wardrobe should be provided in the main bedroom. It should be full height with a clear internal depth of 600mm and provide at least 1200mm in width. A shelf and hanging rail should be provided.
- 30.4 The wardrobe should, wherever possible, occupy a recess in the bedroom partitions. Where floor coverings are provided, these should be extended into wardrobes.

- 30.5 Consideration should be given to the location of bed spaces so that beds are not located under windows and sockets are provided adjacent to beds. Bed heads should not be located adjacent to main bathrooms.
- 30.6 For two or more storey homes, single bedrooms should not be located at entrance level.

31.0 Staircases

- 31.1 Straight flights of stairs without half landings, returns, dog-leg arrangements and windows are preferable to facilitate future installation of stair lifts,

32.0 Living Rooms & Living/Dining Rooms

- 32.1 Living rooms, or living/dining rooms, are the most heavily and diversely furnished spaces in the home. It is essential that they are designed to provide maximum flexibility for family socialising and home entertainment.
- 32.2 As noted above, for family-sized properties we require the provision of a separate kitchen/diner and living room to allow for two separate living spaces. Where possible, these should be able to be interlinked to provide a larger space for social gatherings.
- 32.3 For **HCA London** funded schemes the minimum width of a living area must be 3.2m at the narrowest point.
- 32.4 Space should be allowed for the minimum *HQI* (or in London, *LHDG*) recommended provision of furniture and home entertainment equipment in all units.
- 32.5 A minimum of 4 double socket outlets (6 in a living/dining room) should be provided, distributed so that all walls against which furniture can be placed have convenient access to at least one outlet. For larger properties (4+persons), more outlets should be provided in agreement with the Group.
- 32.6 Provide a double television and telephone/broadband outlet and two double socket outlets in the most suitable location for the home entertainment system. We assume that a Wi-Fi system will be used for internet access elsewhere in the home.
- 32.7 Living rooms should ideally have direct access to the private external space although this can be provided from a kitchen/dining room. In such cases, the room must have an openable window as well as the external door.

33.0 Work & Study Spaces

- 33.1 The Group recognises the environmental and social benefits that can be gained by working from home and encourages designers to identify suitable spaces for work and study.
- 33.2 In most dwellings, private study and work activities will take place in bedrooms or living rooms. In larger family units a separate home office may be justified if this can be achieved without unduly compromising the main living area. Alternatively, a 'home office' space can be provided in a living room, bedroom or hall although it should be noted that provision in a hallway may not meet the requirements of the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'.
- 33.3 Where a home office space is to be provided (to meet the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' requirements), designers must:
- Ensure that the space is visually and acoustically private and has adequate light and ventilation (openable window).
 - Provide sufficient space (min 1.8m wall length) for an office desk, chair and filing cabinet to ensure the space meets with the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
 - Provide a minimum of two double socket outlets and a double telephone outlet or one telephone and one broadband outlet.
 - Consideration should be given to the fact that working from home may not necessarily mean working from a desk. Many residents may need to use additional space for a sewing machine or other work related equipment.

34.0 Gardens

- 34.1 All houses should have private rear gardens. In the case of mid-terrace dwellings, the garden should be accessed directly from each dwelling, whereas end-of-terrace dwellings should have direct access to the rear garden without passing through the dwelling. Where external side access is provided, it should be designed to provide both safety and security to the residents. This precludes the use of public, rear access paths.
- 34.2 Private rear gardens should be turfed and provided with a paved patio area large enough to accommodate a table and chairs for the maximum number of occupants. Consideration should be given to the use of permeable paving.
- 34.3 Gardens should be a manageable size and designed for low maintenance. Designers should be aware that some of our residents will want to use their gardens for growing vegetables, so beds should be provided and soil should be of an appropriate depth and quality to allow for conversion of turfed areas to vegetable patches.

- 34.4 Provide an outdoor tap and power supply to rear gardens.
- 34.5 Where the urban form permits, and whenever possible, houses should have private front garden areas consisting of both hard and soft landscaping. The hard landscaping should be carefully selected to meet the requirements for access, servicing and parking, whilst the soft landscaping should be low-maintenance shrub planting to provide screening and margins. Grass should not be used in front gardens unless they are the only private garden area provided and then only if there is adequate storage space for a lawn mower.
- 34.6 Rented dwellings with private rear gardens shall be provided with a removable, commercial grade rotary clothes drier (with 30m of line) accessible from a paved area and accessed by a paved footpath. Shared ownership properties should not be provided with rotary driers.
- 34.7 Rainwater butts with child-safe lids should be provided to all dwellings with private gardens, in accordance with Code for Sustainable Homes requirements.
- 34.8 Private rear gardens should be provided wherever possible to ground floor flats, with access directly from the dwelling. The size of these gardens, and the landscaping provided, will depend on the design of the surrounding common areas and shared gardens.
- 34.9 Gardens at the rear should be screened along the property boundary to maintain privacy. Screening should be 1.8 metres high. This could include an element of trellis.

35.0 Balconies and Roof Terraces

- 35.1 Balconies or roof terraces should be provided wherever possible as amenity space for dwellings above ground floor level. They must be practical, easily accessible and useable, but this must not compromise the security of the individual dwellings and the building as a whole. Consideration should be given to enclose these areas to allow use all year round, particularly on exposed sites or at height, where wind is a problem.
- 35.2 Care should be taken in the design of these areas, in particular, the integrity of the building envelope, drainage, protection to balconies/roof terraces below, the cladding and the finishes.
- 35.3 Balconies should be a minimum of 1.5 metres deep with a minimum area of 5 sq metres with sufficient space for a small table with chairs for all the occupants. Note that for **HCA London** funded schemes a minimum depth of 1.5m is a funding requirement.
- 35.4 Balcony balustrades should be designed to maintain privacy. Where glass is to be used it should be opaque or coloured so as to provide an adequate visual screen.

- 35.5 Drainage should be designed such that water will not fall onto balconies below. The underside of balcony decks should be solid and visually attractive. The surface should be robust and non-slip.
- 35.6 Privacy screening should be provided to adjoining balconies.
- 35.7 Doors opening onto balconies must be fitted with high security locks and restrictors in accordance with the Employer's Requirements and access to balconies must be via level thresholds to comply with 'Lifetime Homes'.
- 35.8 Consider supplying retractable clothes drying systems on balconies, below the level of the balustrade, where these are not prohibited by lease restrictions.



4

Specific Design Requirements: The Common Parts

Chapter 4: Specific Design Requirements: The Common Parts

36.0 Blocks of Flats and Common Parts

- 36.1 In all blocks of flats, careful consideration must be given to communal and common areas taking into account matters of resident identity, safety and security, as well as noise, maintenance and management.
- 36.2 Lifts should not normally be provided for blocks of three storeys or less.
- 36.3 Lifts should not normally be provided for blocks with fewer than 15 units per lift as this will cause excessively high service charges.
- 36.4 Blocks exceeding three storeys should be provided with a passenger lift accessible to a wheelchair user and helper. Note that for **HCA London** funded schemes this is a funding requirement.
- 36.5 Wheelchair units should normally be located on the ground floor, however for blocks where wheelchair units are provided above ground floor there should be two accessible lifts. Note that this will affect service charges significantly for all residents and the implications for affordability should be highlighted at an early stage.
- 36.6 Lift shafts and motor rooms must be located and built to minimise the transmission of noise to habitable rooms and should not be located adjacent to bedrooms.
- 36.7 For **HCA London** funded schemes, where family dwellings (2b4p and larger) are provided in buildings with dwellings entered from communal circulation above ground floor, then either wheelchair accessible lifts must be installed (as per requirement (6)) or adequate secure storage space must be provided off the entrance lobby for prams and children's buggies.
- 36.8 Where flats are in two-storey blocks, there should be no common parts.
- 36.9 For **HCA London** funded schemes, where family social rented dwellings (2b4p and larger) are provided, there must be no more than eight units per floor accessed from a single core.
- 36.10 For **HCA London** funded schemes, where dwellings are accessed via an internal corridor, the corridor must receive natural light and adequate ventilation.
- 36.11 Wherever possible the Group would like to avoid a high proportion of 3 or more bedroomed properties in flatted blocks and consideration should be given to the number of family sized units accessed from a single core. Larger units should preferably be provided at ground floor level and incorporate private gardens.

37.0 Common Entrances and circulation areas

- 37.1 Common entrances, lobbies, staircases and circulation generally should be kept to a minimum. Circulation areas should be efficient, practical, safe and well lit, and should encourage a sense of identity and 'ownership'. As a guide, common areas would be expected to be in the range of 10-15% of gross internal floor area.
- 37.2 Common entrances to buildings, including door entry panels should be adequately protected from rain, should be artificially lit, and should avoid hiding places.
- 37.3 Entrances should provide a secure environment and give an impression of quality and welcome in which the residents can take pride.
- 37.4 The finishes and fittings to internal common areas should have a non-institutional appearance which not only reinforces the residents' sense of identity and ownership, but also takes account of issues such as noise, lighting levels, durability and maintenance.
- 37.5 Floor and wall finishes should comply with the Employer's requirements but as a general rule should be durable and easy to clean.
- 37.6 Communal staircases should have adequate space for furniture delivery and removal.
- 37.7 Designs should avoid under stair spaces that become 'cold spots' adjoining dwellings.
- 37.8 A single lockable access hatch shall be provided from the landing into the roof space. This shall be the only access point from below and accessed only by the landlord. Access to all parts of the roof space should be provided from the single access hatch, subject to fire regulations and with due regard to the requirements of secured by design.
- 37.9 Careful consideration should be given to the design of signage. It should be integrated as part of the building design, provide clear, unambiguous directions and should not be institutional in character.
- 37.10 Note that parking requirements are outlined in Chapter 1.

38.0 Security of Common Area

- 38.1 Development design should minimise the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 38.2 Designers should seek to obtain Secured by Design certification where practicable and, as a minimum, should meet the requirements of Section 2. For all HCA London funded schemes, full Secured by Design certification (Parts 1 and 2) must be achieved.

- 38.3 Good quality lighting should be provided to both internal common areas and external areas adjacent to entrances. Careful consideration should be given to lighting design and as a rule, lighting should be controlled by PIR or photo-electric cells and be durable, vandal resistant and easy to maintain. Timers should be avoided and photo cells should be easy to access.
- 38.4 The Group's preference is for video entry phone systems. The system shall comprise a video screen and handset with talk-back facility. The system shall be direct wired (not loop-in) and incorporate a buzzer to indicate when the communal entrance door is open.
- 38.5 Designers should note that our preference is for fob operated systems and the Group will require the provision of appropriate equipment to allow reprogramming of fobs to be done in-house.
- 38.6 Designers should consider possible misuse when specifying door entry systems and avoid systems that are vulnerable to intentional or unintentional damage, for example 'break glass' emergency exit buttons should be avoided and stainless steel dual 'push to exit' buttons used instead.
- 38.7 Access routes to storage areas should be well lit and overlooked. Lux levels should comply with Secured by Design.

39.0 Entrances

- 39.1 All main (front) entrances and rear entrances which are regularly used for access (e.g. from parking), should be covered, artificially lit and have a level threshold. Designs should be such as to prevent water ingress into the building as a result of level thresholds.
- 39.2 In general, all other rear entrances need not be covered nor have level thresholds, however provision of both is preferable.
- 39.3 Where it does not conflict with Secured by Design the Group's preference is for post to be delivered directly to the individual dwellings, each being provided with a draught-proof letter plate with intumescent liner.
- 39.4 Where the above solution is not possible, our preferred solution is to have externally accessible mail boxes set in a sheltered area so that the postman can deliver the mail under cover and residents can safely access the boxes from inside the building. External post boxes with external delivery and collection must not be used.
- 39.5 Both communal mailboxes and individual letter plates must accommodate B4 size envelopes and be designed so as to prevent theft from letterboxes.
- 39.6 Main dwelling entrance doors should provide direct access to circulation areas only.

40.0 Clothes Drying Facilities

- 40.1 Communal drying areas to dwellings without private gardens shall only be provided where there are clearly-defined and secure private communal areas. The area shall be fenced/screened and paved, with lockable gates, and be provided with commercial grade rotary driers as appropriate.

41.0 Refuse Storage and Recycling

- 41.1 All dwellings should be provided with sufficient refuse storage to meet the requirements of the local authority, conveniently located for both disposal and collection. Refuse chutes must be avoided. Designers should consult the local authority regarding the collection of materials for recycling and provide appropriate space and storage. Provision of a bulky items storage facility should be included and clearly demarcated.
- 41.2 Individual refuse storage must be provided to all houses – at the front for mid-terraced houses and in the rear gardens for all other houses where there is external rear access to the back garden. They must be conveniently located for both disposal and collection, and to meet the local authority's requirements including any provision for recycling.
- 41.3 In general, all dwellings with individual private entrances at ground floor level should be provided with individual bin stores. Discreet enclosures should be provided but not underneath windows.
- 41.4 Refuse storage should be discreetly positioned in relation to boundaries, entrances and windows, and suitably screened to minimise its visual and environmental impact, including from above. Positioning and design of refuse storage should take into account the associated generation of noise and smells and should not be in front of or adjacent to entrances.
- 41.5 Bin storage areas for flatted blocks up to four storeys high should comprise brick-built, covered storage areas to accommodate the local authority's refuse collection regime. Where the local authority will allow the use of paladins or large wheeled 'Eurobins', consideration should be given to how residents will access refuse storage. Where black sack refuse disposal is the only means of refuse collection, the store should be designed to accommodate one standard size plastic dustbin for each household comprising one to four persons, and two standard size plastic dustbins for households of five or more persons.
- 41.6 Stores should be of robust construction, sheltered from wind and, where fully enclosed, lockable and suitably ventilated. Stores can be located within the building as long as this is dealt with sensitively and proper security arrangements are in place.

- 41.7 Enclosed bin storage areas should be provided with a light operated by an internally-located PIR sensor light.
- 41.8 Refuse storage areas shall be capable of being easily washed down and, in the case of communal storage, provided with drainage and a lockable communal water supply nearby.
- 41.9 Designers should consider the possibility of future fly tipping or dumping of rubbish and should avoid the creation of spaces that may lend themselves to this use.
- 41.10 Refuse strategies should not include doorstep recycling within blocks as this can cause a fire hazard.

42.0 Storage- Communal

- 42.1 Cycle storage should be provided to both flats and houses. Cycle storage should comply with The Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 42.2 Communal cycle storage to groups of flats should be located close to the entrance, without being overly dominant, and should be overlooked by the associated flats. It should be fully enclosed and yet adequately ventilated, accessed via a lockable door and fitted out with proprietary racking and artificial lighting.
- 42.3 When designing communal storage, consideration should be given to the number and tenure of residents accessing each store as large numbers of users will compromise security. Access should be limited to groups of neighbours who are likely to know and trust each other, for example one store per floor, per tenure group or per core depending on the size and layout of the scheme.
- 42.4 Individual cycle storage to individual houses and flats should be located either close to the entrance or in the rear gardens, providing that access is not through the dwelling. It should be fully enclosed and yet adequately ventilated and accessed via a lockable door.
- 42.5 In blocks of flats without lifts, internal lockable communal cupboards must be provided at ground floor level to store equipment such as prams and buggies.
- 42.6 For **HCA London** funded schemes, where family dwellings (2b4p and larger) are provided in buildings with dwellings entered from communal circulation above ground floor, then either wheelchair accessible lifts must be installed or adequate secure storage space must be provided off the entrance lobby for prams and children's buggies.
- 42.7 Designers should consider providing additional storage space for maintenance materials such as rock salt.
- 42.8 Schemes that will require communal cleaning contracts should be provided with a cleaner's store. A secure cleaner's cupboard with cleaner's sink and hot and cold running water should be provided within the common circulation area for the storage of a vacuum cleaner,

broom, etc. The cupboard may be located under the staircase provided that at its highest point the cupboard is full height. Consideration should also be given to provision of a cleaner's WC.

43.0 Utilities & Metering

- 43.1 Water supply companies should be consulted regarding scheme specific water-saving measures.
- 43.2 The location and type of meters and service tails shall be agreed with the supply companies and comply with standards set out by regulators.
- 43.3 Meters should be discreetly positioned out of sight from the road and footpath, should be located to facilitate meter reading without having to enter individual dwellings and be readily accessible to both residents and supply companies.
- 43.4 Our preference for flatted blocks is to have meters in communal intake cupboards on each landing or individual cupboards next to flat entrances. Residents' meters should not, however, share cupboards with non-resident services.
- 43.5 Cabinets or housings shall be attractively designed and either be supplied by or agreed with the utility supply companies. Sufficient space should be provided to facilitate the installation of a card or credit meter at a later date. In social rented dwellings, gas and electricity metering must be arranged so that the resident has the option to install a pre-pay meter that can be topped up from inside the home.
- 43.6 All dwellings should be individually metered for all services. All billing shall be able to be direct to the resident from the utility provider except by prior agreement with the Group. There should be no landlord meters between the utility company and the residents. Where regulatory requirements prevent these arrangements there should be early discussion with the Group on responsibilities, costs and liabilities.
- 43.7 Wherever possible, all meters should be of a type that can be read remotely.
- 43.8 Separate metering should be provided for each of: estate communal services, block communal services, any offices or community facilities or facilities such as underground car parks where costs may need to be separated out for charging.
- 43.9 Service risers must be easy to locate and access, with spare capacity to retrofit foreseeable new systems and technologies, such as solar hot water or photovoltaic panels. They should be located in communal areas or restricted management areas.

44.0 Services

- 44.1 A communal, 9-wire Integrated Reception System (IRS) shall be provided with two cables to each property and drops to the living rooms and main bedrooms. The system shall enable each dwelling to receive Sky plus and at least one other satellite TV service such as Hotbird or Turksat as well as all current terrestrial analogue, terrestrial digital, satellite digital, FM radio and DAB radio services. Provision for retrofitting of cable TV should also be made with accessible ducting provided in areas where Cable TV is provided.
- 44.1.1 Pipe-work should be adequately insulated to prevent heat loss and overheating in communal areas and to prevent noise nuisance.
- 44.1.2 Heating should not be provided to communal areas in blocks of flats.
- 44.1.3 All mechanical and electrical systems should be as energy efficient as possible. Controls should be simple and robust.
- 44.1.4 Residents should be given simple manuals and demonstrations for the use of all heating and ventilation controls.
- 44.1.5 Building Services should comply with the 'Domestic Building Services Compliance Guide 2010'.
- 44.2 **Individual Dwellings: heating, hot & cold water**
- 44.2.1 Cost-in-use for residents, ease and cost of maintenance, as well as minimising carbon emissions are the primary drivers for determining the choice of fuel to heat dwellings and provide hot water. For this reason the use of direct electric heating and hot water (except to power a back-up immersion heater) or oil-fired heating and hot water is to be avoided.
- 44.2.2 For all dwellings in locations on the gas grid, natural gas is the preferred choice of fuel for individual heating and hot water systems for both flats and houses. This is likely to remain the case for on gas grid locations until the UK electricity supply has become less carbon-intensive.
- 44.2.3 For houses, the Group's preference is for open vented, wet central heating systems using a gas-fired wall-hung boiler, panel radiators and hot water storage cylinder with immersion back-up facility.
- 44.2.4 Unless not possible due to roof orientation or overshadowing, consideration should be given to installing a solar water heater to reduce ongoing energy costs to residents. The solar thermal panel would need to be connected to a secondary heating coil within a larger-sized hot water cylinder. The additional cost may be offset by annual Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payments which are to be introduced in April 2011.
- 44.2.5 For one and two bedroom flats, the Group's preference is for wall-hung gas-fired combination boilers and panel radiators. For larger flats the heat source and system will be decided on a scheme by scheme basis.

- 44.2.6 Flue design & location should take account of regulatory requirements and designers should avoid extended flues or flues under balconies.
- 44.2.7 For dwellings in locations off the gas grid, the use of direct electric or oil-fired heating and hot water is to be avoided due to the high ongoing costs to residents. The Group has growing experience of operating Ground Source Heat Pumps and Air Source Heat Pumps and these systems are the Group's preference in off gas grid locations. Where possible, to further reduce resident running costs, these systems would ideally be accompanied by solar water heaters and/or photovoltaic (PV) panels to offset the additional electricity consumption.
- 44.2.8 Note: the costs of installing solar water heaters may be offset by the annual Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payments which are to be introduced in April 2011. Likewise, the cost of installing photovoltaic (PV) panels may be recouped through claiming the Feed-In Tariff (FIT) which was introduced in April 2010.
- 44.2.9 In all dwelling types furniture layouts must take account of radiator positions. The Group's preference is for radiators to be located under windows.
- 44.2.10 Under floor heating will only be considered on a scheme by scheme basis.
- 44.3 **Communal heating, hot water or combined heat & power**
- 44.3.1 Proposals such as communal heating systems, whether fuelled by biomass, gas, combined heat and power or alternative fuel types will only be considered on a scheme by scheme basis. The Group is gaining experience of these communal systems, but indications to date are that, despite specialist technical opinion in favour of them, the ongoing costs to our residents are very high and unsustainable.
- 44.3.2 Our preference, therefore, is to avoid communal systems wherever possible, which may require making a case against them with planning authorities. Where we have to accept communal systems, we need to be satisfied that legal and cost structures do not place heavy ongoing costs onto residents or the Group.
- 44.3.3 Biomass-fuelled systems will require a clear long-term plan for the regional sourcing of fuel to be developed along with strategies for addressing the negative effects of fuel supply shortages and price volatility over the life of the installation. Importing of fuel or transportation over long distances is to be avoided. Further to this, air quality management and monitoring systems need to be in place to ensure any installation does not breach air quality regulations and leave the Group open to financial penalties.
- 44.3.4 Where any type of communal system is considered acceptable by the group, the design of the system shall be such that individual properties have independent control of their hot water and heating supplies. The system shall allow for individual billing of the energy consumption within each dwelling and common parts if relevant. Systems should also

comply with EU technical standards and be designed to allow for ease of maintenance and repair.

44.4 **Ventilation**

- 44.4.1 Adequate, controlled ventilation, (i.e. extract or fan with humidistat) or passive vents should be provided to control humidity and odours without causing discomfort from draughts or imposing an excessive heat load.
- 44.4.2 Where mechanical ventilation is to be provided, units should be appropriately positioned so that they do not cause noise nuisance. Controls should be easy to use and readily accessible, particularly from the kitchen to enable 'boost mode' to be used whilst cooking.
- 44.4.3 Where mechanical ventilation & heat recovery (MVHR) is to be provided, early consideration should be given to the creation of a management and maintenance plan to ensure its continued effectiveness.
- 44.4.4 In detailing the ventilation provided in homes, designers should have regard to the level of air tightness and ensure that ventilation is adequate to prevent condensation.

44.5 **Plant Areas**

- 44.5.1 Communal areas should be designed with appropriate space for plant areas to accommodate services and equipment which may be required including meters, switch gear, water pumps, water storage and lift motor rooms. The plant areas must provide a safe working environment and suitable access for servicing and deliveries. Careful consideration should be given to preventing any form of pollution to adjoining communal areas and individual dwellings.



5

Supplementary Requirements

Chapter 5: Supplementary Requirements

This section identifies supplementary requirements for alternative occupant groups and building forms. In general these requirements are additional to those set out in the previous sections.

45.0 Higher Density Developments

- 45.1 Higher density housing is becoming an increasing necessity in the projects that the Group develops. It brings with it clear social, economic, transport and environmental challenges. The purpose of this section is to set out those issues which must be given consideration over and above those set out in chapters 2-4.
- 45.2 In the first instance the Group must establish with the designers that the site is appropriate for higher density housing by considering the increase in local population, local services and infrastructure.
- 45.3 Although density is a product of design rather than determining design, as a general guide the Group considers higher density to be over 250 habitable rooms/hectare. In terms of built form it is acknowledged that higher densities can be delivered with low (2-3 storeys), medium (4-7 storeys) and high rise, and that densities of over 500 habitable rooms/hectare can usually be achieved only with medium and high rise buildings.
- 45.4 Many of the issues which must be addressed relate to core areas- that is, the communal spaces between the communal entrance and private entrance to the individual dwelling. The importance of this consideration increases as the number of dwellings per core increases and the intensity of use becomes greater.
- 45.5 In all cases the designers must work closely with the Group in developing the design and, in the case of medium and high rise development, each aspect of the design must be considered from first principles, (as opposed to well established models for low rise), many of which relate to management and cost in use. In doing so the following matters must be considered:

Mix of tenure

- balanced and sustainable communities
- clusters or pepper-potting
- ranges of lifestyles

Amount of family accommodation

- levels of child density

- private and public amenity space
- distribution within development

Areas of significant capital cost

- fire engineering
- services supplies, distribution and metering
- vertical transportation
- facade maintenance
- facade engineering
- access and assembly

Implications on revenue costs

- levels of service charge
- cost of management and maintenance.

Refuse & Recycling management

- residents disposal point
- storage capacity
- local authority collection

Postal delivery

- preferably to individual dwelling entrance doors

Access control

- residents, visitors and deliveries
- Avoid designs that require concierge/security/caretaker

Car parking

- allocation of car parking
- internal or external
- wheelchair units

Communal spaces

- security, maintenance and management
- internal and external

Security

- general overlooking and 'ownership'

Centralised storage

- individual and communal
- internal or external

Pest control

The above list is by no means exhaustive and each development must be thoroughly analysed so that the design is carefully conceived.

46.0 Wheelchair Housing

- 46.1 Wheelchair housing should be designed to comply with the *Wheelchair Housing Design Guide*.
- 46.2 The Local Authority and the Group's lettings team should be consulted at the outset of any scheme incorporating wheelchair units for social rent. Wherever possible, tenants for these units should be identified early on so that units can be adapted to meet their specific requirements and, where relevant, applications can be made for disabled facilities grant.

47.0 Supported Housing

- 47.1 Unless otherwise specified, or if specifically for wheelchair use, all supported housing should be designed as general needs accommodation and fitted out for the user groups concerned. Where this is not appropriate, the design should have the capacity to be easily converted to general needs accommodation.
- 47.2 Supported housing should be designed to meet the specific requirements of those user groups to be accommodated. This should take place in close collaboration with relevant agencies such as Social Services and Occupational Health, with liaison directed through the Group.

48.0 Cultural and Community Diversity

- 48.1 This Design Brief sets out the general design principles the Group adheres to in its developments. Specific cultural design requirements will differ depending on the particular requirements of the communities being housed, therefore hard and fast design rules do not apply. Wherever possible, the Group will seek to work with specialist BME providers and, where appropriate, will seek their views on any specific design requirements.
- 48.2 For further requirements and detailed guidance designers should refer to *NHF Accommodating Diversity – Housing Design in a Multicultural Society*.

49.0 Refurbishment and Rehabilitation

- 49.1 The Group wish to achieve the same design standards in their refurbished property as they do in their new build property. In practice, however, these standards are likely to be compromised, as each property or development is likely to have different characteristics and constraints. It is therefore important to apply guidelines on approach, assess carefully the practicality and cost of achieving these standards in full and record how and where a property or development does not comply with the new build design standards.
- 49.2 Refurbishment properties are not required to meet the specific requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes, In terms of sustainability, there is a hierarchy of retrofit improvements to address poor performing stock. The Group favours the "Fabric First" approach and where budgets or external funding permit, designers should propose measures that improve the thermal capacity and energy performance of the property.
- 49.3 One of the following methods of assessment and establishing scopes of work must be applied to all refurbishments:
- Method 1 – for major refurbishment, conversion, reconfiguration works and on all newly-acquired properties.
 - Method 2 – for small scale reinvestment work on existing properties owned by the Group, with the emphasis on general component or fabric replacement or repair.
- 49.4 **Method 1**
- 49.4.1 Before agreeing any scope of work the designers should carefully assess the practicality and cost of achieving the new build design standards, particularly in relation to:
- Condition of property structure and components and need for renewal and/or repair. A whole life costing approach should be taken so that future maintenance requirements are considered in the appraisal.
 - Dimensional survey of property and review of accommodation to be provided in terms of units, space standards, furniture layouts and stacking.
 - Condition of existing services and need for renewal or repair, paying particular attention to capacity of statutory services and drainage.
 - Legal issues, including effect on surrounding properties, party wall issues and any legal or charging restrictions.
 - Planning issues, particularly in relation to any conservation requirements.

- Practicality and cost of achieving Building Regulations (or desirable Code for Sustainable Homes/Eco Homes standards) particularly in relation to energy efficiency and sound transmission.
- 49.4.2 The designer should identify any aspects of the design or specification that do not comply with the Design Brief and identify the practicality and cost of complying. If costs exceed the available budget, the Group will decide if it is possible to prioritise which work is undertaken to achieve an acceptable scheme. Priorities will depend very much on individual circumstances and working experience, but it will not be acceptable to compromise on space, design or specification standards if this will adversely affect accommodation standards or future maintenance costs.
- 49.5 **Method 2**
- 49.5.1 Small scale reinvestment work may proceed on a single component replacement basis (e.g. window or roof renewals) or a multiple component 'whole house' approach. The approach and scope of work will be agreed with the Group following detailed condition surveys of the properties concerned and as assessment of the work requirements against budget availability.
- 49.5.2 The Group will use stock condition survey information to establish an outline brief for each scheme, but will expect its consultants to take a wider view of the property following survey to identify any consequential works which it is essential or advisable to incorporate at the same time, or indeed any work not identified in the initial brief which may be of higher priority.
- 49.5.3 Wherever possible, each component of reinvestment work should meet the design and specification standards applicable to new build properties. Consultants should identify any areas where the existing component does not meet our design standards and should identify the practicality and cost of carrying out alterations or improvements to meet the current standards. The Group accepts there are real constraints in existing properties which will make this impossible or too expensive to achieve in all cases, but does not accept a straightforward 'like for like' approach as a default.
- 49.5.4 Designs and specifications should incorporate wherever possible the aims of the design brief and the sustainability policy with regard to energy efficiency, water saving, sustainability and renewable technologies.
- 49.6 Any proposed works should take account of the practicality of carrying out work with residents in occupation. The Group wishes to avoid whenever possible the need to decant residents in order to carry out work to their homes.



6

Appendices

50.0 Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

2012 Construction Commitments (Affordable Housing)

A set of commitments developed by industry and government to set the standards for the construction of the 2012 Olympics. These were adopted and adapted by the Housing Corporation (Now the Homes & Communities Agency) for affordable housing providers. They replace the Clients' Charter as a requirement for grant funding from 2008.

BME Black and Minority Ethnic

refers to individuals or communities from black and other minority ethnic groups.

Building for Life

Accreditation system for new housing which promotes high design standards, good place making and sustainable development. Formerly administrated by CABA (Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment), the future of Building For Life is currently unclear as CABA lost government funding in October 2010.

BRE

Building Research Establishment.

Code for Sustainable Homes

National standard for sustainable design and construction of new homes. The code measures sustainability against various categories and homes are then awarded a star rating, ranging from 1 to 6 stars.

CLG

Department of Communities and Local Government (with responsibility for housing matters which were formerly dealt with by DETR, DTLR and ODPM).

Design and Quality Standards

The Design and Quality Standards set out the Homes & Communities Agency's requirements and recommendations for all new homes which receive Social Housing Grant. These standards apply to schemes outside London until April 2012.

DETR

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Housing issues are now dealt with by CLG (see separate definition).

DTLR

Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions Housing issues are now dealt with by DCLG (see separate definition).

General Needs

Refers to self-contained, affordable social rented accommodation which is not designed to meet any specific or special needs groups.

Greater London Authority

The GLA is the mayor's strategic body for Greater London.

Homes and Communities Agency

The HCA, formed from a merger between the funding wing of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships came into being on the 1 December 2008. The HCA manages the Government's funding streams for housing and regeneration. In April 2012 the HCA will take on the regulatory role formerly carried out by the TSA. For London region the HCA will merge with the Greater London Authority in April 2012.

Housing Corporation

The Housing Corporation ceased to exist on 1 December 2008 and was replaced with two new bodies; the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenant Services Authority (see separate definitions). The TSA is due to be shut down in April 2012 and its role subsumed into the HCA.

HQI

Housing Quality Indicators – a Government sponsored measurement and assessment tool designed to allow potential and existing housing schemes to be evaluated on the basis of quality rather than just cost. For London Schemes, the HQI's no longer apply from April 2011, however they still apply to schemes outside London until April 2012.

Intermediate Housing

Refers to all housing options that fall between social rented housing (provided by local authorities and housing associations) and open market housing for sale or rent. It includes New Build Homebuy (shared ownership) and intermediate rent (see separate definitions).

Intermediate Market Rent

Refers to rented accommodation with rents set between market rents and affordable social rents on general needs units. These properties are targeted to assist those who are unable to afford open market rents or home ownership and are unlikely to have any recourse to social rented housing.

Key worker

Employees who are providing a public service. The current definition adopted by central Government covers specific public sector groups only. However, this may be subject to change and indeed some local authorities have wider definitions.

Lifetime Homes

A concept piloted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, it refers to homes designed with various features making them suitable for most disabled people and with little need for specialist and costly adaptation at a later date.

New Build Homebuy

A form of low cost home ownership where the purchaser part-buys and part-rents a property. Initial equity purchased is usually a 25% share in the property and a subsidised rent is paid to the housing association on the part not purchased. Further shares can be purchased, usually so that outright ownership can eventually be achieved. It is also known as Shared Ownership.

NHBC

National House Building Council.

NHF

National Housing Federation.

PPG

Planning policy guidance note, issued by the Government.

RICS

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

S106

A planning obligation authorised by Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991). This obligation may restrict the development or use of the site in a specified way, such as imposing an obligation to provide a level of affordable housing on the site.

SAP

Standard Assessment Procedure. The Government's procedure for assessing the energy efficiency of a property.

SEDBUK

Seasonal Efficiency of Domestic Boilers in the UK – a calculation system for assessing the energy efficiency of domestic boilers, ranging from A (best) to G (worst).

Boiler efficiency is used in SAP and EcoHomes calculations and Code for Sustainable Homes ratings.

Secured by Design

A police initiative to endorse developments which adopt security guidelines in the provision of new or refurbished homes.

SHGL

Southern Housing Group Limited.

SHO

Southern Home Ownership Limited.

Shared Ownership

A form of low cost-home ownership where the purchaser part-buys and part-rents a property. Initial equity purchased is usually a 25% share in the property and a subsidised rent is paid to the housing association on the part not purchased. Further shares can be purchased, usually so that outright ownership can eventually be achieved. It is also known as New Build Homebuy.

Tenant Services Authority

The TSA came into being on the 1 December 2008 and replaced the Housing Corporation as the regulator for affordable housing until its abolition in April 2011. It's functions will be carried out by the HCA from April 2012.

WHO

World Health Organisation.

51.0 Appendix 2: List of References and further reading

Below is a list of documents referred to in the text or recommended for further reading:

Building for Life: CABE

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110107165544/http://www.buildingforlife.org/>

Code for Sustainable Homes: Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2006

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes>

Design and Quality Standards: Housing Corporation, April 2007

http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20100710184205/http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/upload/pdf/Design_quality_standards.pdf

The Green Guide to Housing Specification: BRE, April 2007

<http://www.bre.co.uk/greenguide/podpage.jsp?id=2126>

Guidelines for Community Noise: World Health Organisation, 1999

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/environmental-health/noise>

Housing Quality Indicators, Version 4: Housing Corporation, April 2007

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/hqi>

It's Our Space – A Guide for Community Groups Working to Improve Public Space: CABE, February 2007

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/its-our-space>

NHF Standards and Quality in Development – A Good Practice Guide: National Housing Federation, 2nd edition July 2008

<https://www.housing.org.uk/OnlineStore/Default.aspx?tabid=44&action=INVProductDetails&args=6383>

NHF Accommodating Diversity – Housing Design in a Multicultural Society: National Housing Federation, July 1998

<https://www.housing.org.uk/OnlineStore/Default.aspx?tabid=44&action=INVProductDetails&args=4121>

Meeting Part M and Designing Lifetime Homes: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/meeting-part-m-and-designing-lifetime-homes>

Code of Measuring Practice – A Guide for Surveyors and Valuers, 6th edition: Property Measurement Group, 2007

<http://www.wildy.com/isbn/9781842193327/code-of-measuring-practice-a-guide-for-property-professionals-6th-ed>

Site layout, planning for daylight and sunlight : a guide to good practice:
Building Research Establishment, 1991

<http://www.brebookshop.com/details.jsp?id=321450>

Urban Design Compendium: English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation
2007

<http://www.urbandesigncompendium.co.uk/>

Wheelchair Housing Design Guide: Steven Thorpe & Habinteg Housing
Association 2006

<http://www.brebookshop.com/details.jsp?id=190679>

'Managing Health & Safety in Construction': HSE Approved Code of Practice for
the CDM Regulations 2007.

<http://books.hse.gov.uk/hse/public/saleproduct.jsf?catalogueCode=9780717662234>

UK Climate Impacts Programme: UKCIP

<http://www.ukcip.org.uk>

The GRO Green Roof Code: Green Roof Organisation

<http://www.nfrc.co.uk/NewsDesk.aspx?ID=598>

Suggested further reading:

Play:

SPG Play & Recreation (GLA):

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/young-people/early-years-family-support/spg-play-recreation>

Design for Play:

www.playengland.org.uk

Inclusion by Design- A guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments:

www.kids-online.org.uk

Managing risk in play provision: A position statement.: Play Safety Forum.

http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open%20access%20%20phase%201%20only/manrisk_cpc_2002_08.pdf

Child's play: Facilitating play on housing estates.: Chartered Institute of Housing and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1997.

<http://www.cih.org/publications/downloads/pub205.htm>

Landscaping & public space:

Involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces: What would you do with this space?: CABE, 2004.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/what-would-you-do-with-this-space.pdf>

Green space strategies: A good practice guide. CABE, 2006.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/green-space-strategies-a-good-practice-guide.pdf>

It's our space: A guide for community groups working to improve public space. CABE, 2007.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/its-our-space>

Start with the park: Creating sustainable green spaces in areas of housing growth and renewal.: CABE, June 2005.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/start-with-the-park>

Decent homes need decent spaces.: Neighbourhoods Green. 2005

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/decent-homes-need-decent-spaces>

Streets and Parking:

Manual for streets: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/>

Car parking: What works where?: English Partnerships, 2006.

<http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20100911035042/http://englishpartnerships.co.uk/qualityandinnovationpublications.htm#carparking>

Housing - Supplementary Planning Guidance.: GLA, November 2005

<http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/planning/housing-supplementary-planning-guidance>

Home zone design guidelines.: Institute of Highways Engineers, June 2002.

<http://www.homezones.org.uk/public/guidance/index.cfm>

No parking: Making low or zero parking work on higher density housing schemes.: National Housing Federation, 2006.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/OnlineStore/Default.aspx?tabid=44&action=INVProductDetails&args=4313>

Designing for cyclists: A guide to good practice.: Essex County Council, 2006.

<http://www.rudi.net/node/11080>

Designing for pedestrians: A guide to good practice.: Essex County Council, 2006.

<http://www.brebookshop.com/details.jsp?id=190137>

Higher Density

Better neighbourhoods: Making higher densities work. : CABE, 2005.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/better-neighbourhoods>

Delivering successful higher-density housing: a toolkit. : East Thames Housing Group.

<http://www.east-thames.co.uk/design-and-quality>

Higher Density Housing for Families.: London Housing Federation, 2004.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/OnlineStore/Default.aspx?tabid=215&action=ECDProductDetails&args=8759>

Recommendations for living at Superdensity.: NHBC, 2007.

<http://www.designforhomes.org/pdfs/Superdensity.pdf>

Accessibility

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society : Communities and Local Government, February 2008

<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/lifetime-homes-lifetime-neighbourhoods-pledge.html>

The wheelchair housing design guide.: Habinteq with Thorpe, S. 2nd edition. 2006.

<http://www.habinteq.org.uk/main.cfm?type=WCHDG>

Housing sight: A guide to building accessible homes for people with sight problems.: Rees, L., Lewis, C. RNIB. 2003.

http://www.rnib.org.uk/shop/Pages/ProductDetails.aspx?category=access_inclusion_publications&productID=PR12009P01

Southeast London housing partnership: wheelchair homes design guide 2007.

[http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/Wheelchair%20design%20guidelines%20\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.selondonhousing.org/Documents/Wheelchair%20design%20guidelines%20(WEB).pdf)

What is Southern Housing Group?

Southern Housing Group is one of the largest housing associations across London and the South East. We own and manage over 25,500 homes for more than 66,000 residents, employ 900 people and work with more than 70 local authorities.

Our job is to develop quality affordable housing and a range of housing options for rent and home ownership. We also manage our housing and resident services and social investment activities in the communities where our residents live. Our experience has taught us that investing in people and communities is as important as building homes and this philosophy has been the bedrock of our activities for more than 100 years.

Our mission: Unlocking the potential of people and places

Our values: Progressive, responsible, inclusive, reliable

Southern Housing Group is made up of the following:

Southern Housing Group Limited is the asset-owning parent body, and registered social landlord.

Southern Home Ownership markets a range of low-cost home ownership options.

Southern Space Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Southern Housing Group set up in May 2005 to develop homes for outright sale. All profits generated by its activity are used to provide much-needed independent funding for other Group activities.

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