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**Ashford Borough Council**

# **RESIDENTIAL SPACE AND LAYOUT SPD**

**ADOPTED OCTOBER 2011**



## Residential Space and Layout SPD





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## Foreword

### Foreword

This SPD has been produced at a time when the effects of a lack of either National or Local residential space and layout standards for privately funded housing, are widely recognised. Articles have been written in the press such as, 'Honey, they've shrunk the house' (Daily Telegraph, August 22nd 2009) following a damning report published by a Government advisory group, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) entitled 'Space in new homes: what residents think'.

The report confirmed what Councillors, Planning and Housing Officers and indeed many home owners had suspected; that a combination of poor design, and dimensions cut to the bone has created homes which lack the essentials for comfortable living. Whilst publicly funded or subsidised housing has had to meet the standards laid down by the Housing Corporation or English Partnerships, sometimes even these homes fail to come up to expectations.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which replaced the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships was, until the Housing Minister's announcement on 25th November 2010, in the process of producing new housing standards that would have applied to all publicly funded housing, the Mayor of London has produced a draft London Housing Design Guide and a few Councils have produced their own housing standards. Most of the Councils which are already using space standards are London Boroughs but one notable exception is Mid-Sussex District Council, which has produced standards based on those of those originally adopted by English Partnerships.

Ashford is potentially to be the subject of significantly more housebuilding over the next 20 years and there is really no time to be lost in addressing this need for better and more consistent standards for all new housing. Local authorities have the power and the remit to influence internal space standards through the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004 in a way which did not exist before. The requirement for a Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Space and Layout, was identified in the Council's Core Strategy.

This document is aimed at improving the space standards inside and around new homes in both the private and publicly funded sectors so that, in conjunction with high standards of design and 'place making', Ashford's new homes will all have the space and layout to satisfy the needs and aspirations of its population.

In the light of the Housing Minister's announcement of November 25th 2010 regarding the scrapping of the HCA's proposed national standard, this SPD is set to take the Council's residential space standards forward one step at a time. The Government is working on a process that will enable the production of a new Local Standards Framework, which it envisages will be developed and maintained by the industry and Councils. It will be implemented through the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, which is due to be introduced by April 2012.

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This SPD sets out the desired standard of residential accommodation for the Borough but the standards are broken down into 'essential' minima, which need to be met in order to gain planning permission and 'advocated' minima, which need to be met to comply fully with the Ashford Borough residential space standards.

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- 1.1 Historically there has been very limited planning policy guidance on the issue of Residential Space Standards. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and resulting system of Local Development Frameworks, offers scope to Local Planning Authorities to address the broader interests of the community and quality of life issues. This provides an opportunity to address some of the concerns over the inadequacy of space that have arisen over recent years with regard to some newly built homes. In chapter 3, this SPD sets out a series of minimum standards which would mean that all new homes to be built in the Ashford Borough would conform to basic size and liveability standards. The Government's announcement in November 2010 that the HCA standards will not be published or endorsed has necessitated a more cautious approach and the standards are divided into 'essential' minima and 'advocated' minima. By the time it is adopted, the SPD will have gone through a process of stakeholder and public consultation and will be part of the Council's Local Development Framework. As such, it will be a useful tool for the Council to use in raising the quality of the space within and around homes and one to which due weight will be given in the consideration of planning applications and any subsequent appeals. The Council will seek to update and revise the SPD if necessary following the introduction of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.2 The last comprehensive review of how residents use their internal space was undertaken by the Parker Morris committee and led to the publication of 'Homes for Today and Tomorrow' in 1961 (Ministry of Housing and Local Government). The standards were introduced for New Towns in 1967 and for Council houses in 1969. The rationale for the standards was to improve the standard of these categories of housing. The standards were never applied to private housing and were abolished in 1980. The former Housing Corporation set out standards for residential space and layout known as Housing Quality Indicators. These have had to be adhered to in social housing schemes, as they are a condition of funding for such developments. The former English Partnerships also produced Quality Standards including space standards, which were applied to all English Partnership projects. These are set out in the English Partnerships policy guidance 'Places, Homes, People' revised in November 2007. The Housing Corporation and English Partnerships have since been merged into the 'Homes and Communities Agency' (HCA) and one of its tasks was, until recently, to set new space standards for all its publicly funded schemes. It also seeks to influence privately funded schemes through leading by example. The consultation process on the now abandoned HCA space standards closed on 17th June 2010. Although the HCA standards will not be adopted in the foreseeable future, they do represent an updating of minimum space standards based on a high degree of experience and a large volume of evidence. The Council's SPD has the opportunity to guide local decision making on all future

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applications for new housing both publicly and privately funded, and to set minimum standards by which those applications will be judged. There is of course no reason why properties should not exceed the minimum requirements and indeed it is hoped that in many cases they will do so. A true mixed development should include not only properties which attain the minimum standard but also those which exceed the standards.

1.3 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) commissioned a report by UCL 'Space standards: the Benefits' published in 2010, which concludes with a list of 6 benefits of space standards as follows:

- Improved health and wellbeing from living in a well designed home that provides sufficient space to function well and support privacy and social activity.
- Family life and the opportunity for children to study in private and therefore achieve more, increase educational attainment and the opportunity (for adults) to work from home.
- The flexibility of space within the home and adaptability to changing needs.
- The ability to respond to occupants' changing physical requirements over their lifetimes.
- The benefits to society from reduced overcrowding, which can result in anti-social behaviour.
- A more stable housing market underpinned by an understanding of long term need and the usability of homes rather than short-term investment.

1.4 Inadequate space in new homes has been identified on a national level. One of the reasons put forward for dissatisfaction with space in the home is that in every other country in Western Europe, and every other property sector in the UK, space is purchased or rented by the square metre (or square foot). For residential schemes in the UK, space is rented or purchased by the number of bedrooms. Unfortunately for the occupant, the number of bedrooms is not always a helpful indication of the amount of useful space within a home.

1.5 Research carried out by CABE for the document 'Space in new homes - what residents think' (2009), highlighted preferences for:

1. More space for accommodating furniture and storage cupboards.
2. More space for circulation and movement of furniture.
3. More space in the kitchen for food preparation and for supervision by adults of children at play.
4. Adequate space for waste bins and efficient waste removal.

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- 1.6 Some of the recently constructed residential developments in Ashford fall short of the minimum space standards currently proposed. The standards set out in this SPD reflect those of the Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide Interim Report, August 2010, and the HCA's proposed 2010 standards. General concern about the lack of space in new privately funded houses in Ashford has been one of the drivers which has prompted the Council to seek to address this problem through this SPD. Even some properties built as affordable housing and conforming to the previous Housing Corporation Standards are judged to be unsatisfactory for occupation by the number of people for which they are intended and have to be 'under occupied' when let by the Council. Similarly, there are examples in Ashford of unsold properties built for private sale being offered to Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPSH) but if taken up, the properties have had to be 'under-occupied' in order to be considered acceptable. The need for a SPD to address these issues is confirmed in paragraph 9.24 of the Core Strategy, adopted in 2008.
- 1.7 The HCA standards (had they been adopted), were to be implemented by the use of a calculator which allowed for certain variations so that there would have been 'benchmarks' rather than minimum standards and therefore a greater degree of flexibility. The drawback of this system is that it is more complex than having easily measurable minimums. The Council's SPD relies on a more easily understood system based upon minimum areas, minimum dimensions and requirements. The Council recognises the need to keep the guidance as simple as possible in order not to add to the burden to the already extensive checks and measures encountered by house builders. The 'essential' standards to be operated by Ashford Borough Council in this SPD are therefore the minimum standards which need to be met in order for a scheme to be regarded as acceptable in design terms against the 'liveability' criterion in policy CS9 of the Core Strategy, unless there are compelling reasons otherwise.
- 1.8 The '**essential**' **minimum** standards to be met in order to obtain planning permission apply to the following:
1. Gross Internal Area (GIA) - the internal area contained by the outer walls.
  2. Cooking, Eating and Living Space (CEL) - including a minimum width.
  3. A living area separate from the kitchen for units with 3 or more bedrooms.
  4. Bedroom area.
  5. Internal general storage including recycling.
  6. Specified area for 'dirty storage'.
  7. External storage for dustbins and re cycling boxes.
  8. Minimum ceiling height (2.4m).
  9. Balcony or terrace area (flats) plus communal open space.

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- 10. Garden dimensions (houses).
  - 11. No single-aspect north facing dwellings.
  - 12. Minimum number of WCs
- 1.9 The '**advocated**' **minimum** standards which should be met to achieve the Ashford Borough Residential Space and Layout Standards are additional to the essential standards and are as follows:
- A. a living area separate from the kitchen for units with 2 or more bedrooms.
  - B. minimum dimensions for bedrooms.
  - C. minimum ceiling height (2.6m).
  - D. minimum bathroom and WC floor areas
  - E. compliance with the 16 Lifetime Homes requirements including provision for disabled parking.
- 1.10 This SPD has drawn heavily upon the work carried out by the HCA, the Mayor of London's proposed Housing Design Guide and its evidence base, supporting publications by and on behalf of CABE and information supplied by the Borough Council's Housing Services.
- 1.11 The figures in the consultation document published by the HCA in the spring of 2010 differ slightly from those in the Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide Interim Report of August 2010. Where there is a difference between the Mayor's Design Guide and the HCA document, the Ashford SPD uses the higher figure in most cases. It should be noted that in some cases the former English Partnerships space standards, which are applicable to schemes funded by HCA and still 'in the pipeline' and some of the 'Swing a Cat' standards, are higher than those proposed in this SPD. The HCA consultation document dropped the need for minimum dimensions. Had the new HCA standards gone ahead it is likely that it would have been necessary for drawings to show how furniture would fit within a space, whereas the proposed standards for London, which include minimum dimensions, are based upon essential furniture and the circulation space required to move freely around and access furniture. Minimum room dimensions are important for circulation around items of furniture or fittings and are included in this SPD as **advocated minima** for bedrooms and bathrooms. Having **advocated minimum** dimensions avoids the need to show every item of furniture in a layout, (although this is often helpful), and also ensures that there are no pinch points that make circulation difficult. An example would be a bedroom where the floor area meets the standard but there is insufficient room to get past the end of a bed or insufficient space to open drawers or cupboard doors.

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- 1.12 This SPD seeks to fill the gap in detailed policy provision regarding space standards. As part of the Council's adopted Local Development Framework, it will carry sufficient weight to be taken into consideration in decision making on both planning applications and appeals. The adoption of the SPD is seen as a way of achieving a minimum standard of accommodation for all new residential development in Ashford whether publicly or privately funded. With the advantage of one standard agreed upon for public and private sectors, there would no longer be so much of a problem with interchanging the occupation of properties between the sectors.
- 1.13 It is proposed that one difference will remain between the assessment of publicly and privately financed schemes and this concerns the way in which bedroom sizes are assessed. Evidence obtained by HATC & Ipsos MORI for CABE's report 'Resident Satisfaction in the Home' indicates that rented housing tends to be fully occupied, whereas this is less likely in owner occupation. It is also a fact that accommodation provided by the Council and Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPSH) is likely to be fully occupied at least in the first instance. To reflect this difference it will be necessary for developers to provide information on the intended number of bedspaces for each unit. Dwellings must be described in terms of the number of bedspaces they are intended to accommodate and required floor areas will depend on this information. In most cases of family sized market dwellings they will be occupied by two people occupying a double bedroom and other bedrooms will be occupied singly. This will have a knock-on effect on the expected standards for the remainder of the house, reflecting the fact that secondary double bedrooms will not necessarily be occupied by two people. It is recognised that this concession will not help the smooth transference of houses between the private and publicly funded sectors. Developers will need to take this mismatch into account if they are mindful of selling some of their properties to Registered Providers of Social Housing, for example if all double bedrooms are to be occupied by 2 people, other floor areas will need to increase accordingly.

## Purpose of the SPD

- 1.14 This document sets out the proposed standards to be adhered to by developers providing homes within the Ashford Borough. It seeks to provide readily available and clear guidance in the form of minimum areas and dimensions for acceptable residential space and layout standards. This is part of a series of measures to ensure high quality design in developments. The information presented in this document is to be read alongside the other documents which comprise the Ashford Borough's Local Development Framework. The most relevant elements of

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these are the Core Strategy policies on Design and Sustainability CS9 and CS10, the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and the Residential Parking SPD. The application of Lifetime Homes standards is cited in the Core Strategy as a recognised tool for achieving flexible and adaptable design and is introduced here as an ***advocated minimum***. Building for Life is used by Ashford Borough Council as a model for achieving good 'place making'. The Kent Design Guide provides good information on design and siting, and covers aspects such as sunlight, daylight and overlooking, which are not covered in any detail in this SPD.

- 1.15 A report for CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) by HATC limited and Ipsos MORI published in July 2009 entitled 'Resident Satisfaction with Space in the Home', looked at the situation nationally. Whilst this study was not of the same scale as the Parker Morris Report of 1961, the authors of the report did draw the conclusion that housing does not consistently provide adequate space for residents to go about their everyday lives in comfort. The research shows that many residents lack sufficient space for the furniture they need, for storing their personal possessions, household necessities, materials for recycling, enough room to prepare food conveniently, for children to play, to have somewhere private to retreat to, space to work from home or for children to do their homework and space to entertain friends and family in the home. It is unlikely that the private market will meet the internal space requirements without local or national space standards being adopted. The CABE report concluded that those who can't afford to move to larger homes have to live with the negative effects of space constraints and that Local Authorities should: 1) Introduce or apply existing minimum space standards through their planning departments. 2) Recognise that adequate space in the home has an effect on health, and community cohesion and that insufficient space provision in the local housing stock will ultimately impact upon local services. This report supports the view that failing residential space standards result in a higher cost to the public sector.
- 1.16 Research carried out for the Greater London Authority indicates that the levels of space in the home in England are near the bottom of the range compared with other countries in Europe (Housing Space Standards, HATC for the Greater London Authority, 2006). The same report draws attention to research which shows an association between the quality of living accommodation and psychological health.
- 1.17 It is easy to appreciate how having nowhere to store possessions, insufficient space to sit around a table as a family or with guests, lack of privacy for home study or work, lack of space to entertain friends or for children to play in safety can cause the occupants to feel dissatisfied and unhappy or even stressed due to their living arrangements. Lack of storage may leave the occupants with the choice of an untidy home, to which they may feel they cannot invite guests or alternatively ridding themselves of items which would, if kept, add to the quality of

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their lives. Building homes at higher densities must not be allowed to result in inadequate living space with all the unfortunate consequences that is likely to bring upon the occupants and the knock on effects upon the community at large.

- 1.18 In parallel with the need for better provision of space in the home and the emergence of minimum space standards, the Lifetime Homes organisation has introduced a list of 16 key requirements which, if complied with, should enable homes to provide satisfactory accommodation throughout a lifetime including times of illness, bringing up a family or disability and old age. The Lifetime Homes (Lifetime Homes 21st Century Living [www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)) requirements enable a greater number of people to stay within their local neighbourhood and community throughout changes in lifestyle and needs, which in turn helps to build more stable communities. Homes built to the Lifetime Homes standard permit adaptation to the changing needs of its occupants and are able to be altered more easily and with less expense and disruption than more conventional homes.
- 1.19 The Core Strategy for Ashford seeks the provision of 16,770 new homes between 2006 and 2021 and this includes 2,750 in the town centre. Without the Residential Space and Layout SPD there is a danger that the drive to provide housing at high densities will result in homes being built which do not meet the physical and psychological needs of their occupants. Although the number of houses to be built by 2021 may now be lowered due to a reduction in pressure from the Coalition Government to achieve the targets set out by the now abolished Regional Government Offices, Ashford remains a growth town and is set to undergo a further major expansion which includes large amounts of new housing. Development at high densities, such as may be expected in town centres, must be balanced against the need to provide homes with sufficient space for basic living and which offer functional and adaptable spaces that meet the needs of families, children, older people and disabled residents. The **advocated minimum** standards set out in this document should ensure that all new residential development is built with an acceptable amount and arrangement of usable living space, storage space and outdoor private space. The **essential minimum** standards are the first step to achieving this.
- 1.20 The Tenterden and Rural Sites, Urban Sites and Infrastructure and Town Centre Action Plan Development Plan Documents all include allocations of land for housing development. The Action Area plans for the growth areas will include allocations of large parcels of land for residential development. The Residential Space and Layout SPD provides a useful measure against which the adequacy of the proposals for this new residential accommodation can be judged. Developments which fail to meet with the **essential minimum** standards set out in this document are likely to be refused planning permission unless there is compelling justification for non compliance. The Residential Space Standards SPD is an important tool in assisting the Council to procure a good standard of space and layout for all new development. Once adopted it will support the

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Council's case, should the need arise, to defend any appeals against the refusal of planning permission based wholly or partly upon inadequate residential space and/or layout.

## The role within Local Development Framework and National Policy

### National policy:

- 1.21 There has historically been very limited national planning policy guidance on the issues connected with space standards within and around the home. However, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) do provide support for the development of residential space and layout standards although none are explicit about what such guidance should contain. The relevant PPSs and the national planning policy basis they provide for preparing this SPD are summarised in Table 1 below:

PPS1	Paragraphs 33 - 39 of PPS 1 addresses matters of design, which is inevitably linked with space standards.
PPS3	Paragraph 16 'Provides, or enables good access to, community and green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies.' Paragraph 17 refers to informal play space and in paragraph 49 states 'Successful intensification need not mean high rise development or low quality accommodation with inappropriate space'.

**Table 1.1 National Policy guidance related to Residential Space and Layout**

- 1.22 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) form part of the Local Development Framework for the Borough alongside the Core Strategy and the other Development Plan Documents. Unlike DPDs, an SPD is not part of the statutory Development Plan but can be used to add detail to the policies in a DPD. In this case the relevant DPD is the Core Strategy. The most relevant Core Strategy policy, which is supplemented by this SPD, is CS9 and reads as follows:

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## **CS9: Design Quality**

**Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria:**

- **Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place**
- **Permeability and Ease of Movement**
- **Legibility**
- **Mixed use and Diversity**
- **Continuity and Enclosure**
- **Quality of Public Spaces**
- **Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability**
- **Richness in Detail**
- **Efficient use of Natural Resources**

- 1.23 Of this list of criteria, 'Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability', are the matters most pertinent to the Residential Space Standards SPD.
- 1.24 Paragraphs 9.23 - 9.24 of the Core Strategy refer to the adaptability enabled by Lifetime Homes and to the internal size and layout of homes which are both essential factors to consider if new homes are to be built to a standard which enables people to have a reasonable standard of living accommodation.
- 1.25 There is no requirement for an SPD to undergo Examination in Public but it is subject to public consultation in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This means that interested individuals, community groups and organisations as well as developers will have been invited to become involved in the content of this document and to make representations, which have resulted in amendments being made to the document before its adoption for development management purposes.

## **Who is the SPD for**

- 1.26 The SPD is for any individual, group of people or company contemplating building a home or homes in the Borough of Ashford. It informs developers of the space standards that are expected for all new residential development in the Borough whether publicly or privately funded. The SPD is also the reference document for use by the Council considering applications for new residential development. It contains the information necessary to assess whether or not a proposal is likely to provide satisfactory living accommodation. A checklist is set out in Appendix 2 and will be available on the Council's website.

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- 1.27 Compliance with the standards or exceeding the standards can be used as a selling point. The SPD can also be used by prospective purchasers to find out easily whether the accommodation they are being offered complies with or exceeds the Council's **essential minimum** and/or **advocated minimum** requirements.
- 1.28 Ultimately the SPD is for the people who will live in the Borough's new homes and for future generations so that they can enjoy an acceptable standard of space in which to live and feel comfortable.

## How to use the SPD

- 1.29 All new dwellings should at least comply with the **essential minimum** standards set out in section 3 of the SPD. Compliance should be clearly demonstrated by the drawings that are submitted as part of a planning application together with a check list obtained from the Council's website. Drawings should show all relevant dimensions including ceiling heights in all cases, and wheelchair turning circles, door widths and special adaptations where Lifetime Homes are being complied with. Drawings and check lists should demonstrate that the **essential** and/or **advocated** minimum standards for acceptable living conditions will be met by the development in a way which is readily discernible. If the required standards are not met, drawings should be accompanied by a full explanation as to any circumstances which are considered to mitigate lack of compliance. Adherence to the minimum standards will not guarantee a good level of space in and around the home but will set a barrier below which accommodation will be judged to be inadequate and therefore unacceptable. A 'safety net' is another way of describing the function of these minimum standards. The **advocated minimum** standards are to be preferred over and above the **essential minimum** standards as they include the liveability factors provided by Lifetime Homes and include minimum dimensions.
- 1.30 The standards are broken down into minimum areas for Cooking, Eating and Living (CEL), bedrooms, bathrooms, storage and private outdoor space as well as ceiling heights. In the case of the main living area and bedrooms, minimum dimensions are also part of the standards. This is because reliance on area measurement alone, does not take account of accommodating certain essential items of furniture or circulation around them. However, bedroom dimensions are 'advocated' rather than 'essential' in this SPD. For houses, where it is expected that a private garden will be provided, a minimum length is suggested. The minimum private outdoor space as applied to gardens, may be applied more flexibly than those dimensions relating to rooms but will need to be shown to be adequate to meet the needs of the occupants. The combination or separation of

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kitchen, dining and living areas, the number of bathrooms and ceiling heights are also addressed as part of the standards.

**In the standards contained in section 3 the following definitions and explanations apply:**

- The GIA (Gross Internal Area) is the whole of the internal floor area provided between the external walls and therefore includes halls, stairwells, bathrooms, circulation space, storage areas, space to play and work/study at home, the area occupied by internal walls and partitions, columns, piers and other internal projections, internal balconies, stairwells, toilets, lift lobbies and fire corridors.
- The CEL (Cooking Eating and Living) is the floor area devoted to cooking, eating and living and does not include utility areas or areas devoted to 'dirty storage' (bicycles, garden equipment, outdoor play equipment and furniture etc).
- Bedroom minimum areas do not include ensuite bathrooms. If required, these must be provided as areas over and above the minimum floor area for the bedrooms. Walk-in wardrobes and cupboards on the other hand, may be included as part of the bedroom floor area but should not be allowed to reduce minimum length and width measurements to such an extent that circulation around essential bedroom furniture becomes difficult.
- To achieve the **advocated minimum standard** , double and single bedrooms should contain a core area which complies with the minimum width and length dimensions.
- 'Storage' refers to general storage such as would be provided in floor to ceiling (or a least 2 metres high) storage cupboards. It excludes kitchen units, furniture with a storage function and 'dirty storage' (bicycles, garden equipment etc).
- To achieve the **essential minimum standard** , dirty storage should not be provided within a habitable room or on a balcony. An outbuilding is preferable for this type of storage but if necessary it may have to be provided internally.
- Dirty storage provided internally may need to be additional to the GIA especially in larger properties where, for example, it may be necessary to store a number of bicycles.

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- Floor area provided for general storage space forms part of the GIA and can be included as part of the floor area of bedrooms or of the CEL accommodation. (However, built-in storage cupboards should not restrict minimum dimensions such as those that apply to bedrooms and the main living area).
- A utility room if provided, usually houses a washing machine and tumble dryer and is sometimes a convenient place to site a boiler. However, it may include storage space which can count towards the minimum general storage requirement. It could also, if large enough, be an area for 'dirty storage' for example if there is room to accommodate bicycles etc.
- The utility room should not be counted as part of the CEL.
- When calculating the number of bedspaces, the Council will take into account the checklists submitted with applications. It is expected that the occupancy levels of any dwelling will be based on the number of bedspaces proposed. A single bed represents 1 bedspace and a double bed represents 2 bedspaces.
- Adult and child bedspaces are regarded as being the same when applying the standards.

1.31 **The Lifetime Homes** space requirements are included as part of the ***advocated minimum*** space standards in this document. Houses and flats no longer stay in one sector indefinitely as the 'right to buy' and the occupation by Council tenants of homes built for the private market has changed the former distinction between public and private housing. New housing provided with public funding complies with Lifetime Homes and it therefore makes sense for all new housing including that built for the private market to comply. The space requirements for Lifetime Homes are a 'built in factor' of the ***advocated minimum*** standards in this SPD so that Lifetime Homes requirements should be able to be met within the ***advocated minimum*** standards set out in section 3. Homes which comply with the SPD standards and incorporate Lifetime Homes should be adaptable enough to the needs of people at various stages of life, whether parents with young children or residents with age related or other mobility difficulties and including wheelchair users. The proportion of 'Lifetime Homes' will increase over time as more new homes are built to this standard. However, homes that are specifically designed for wheelchair users have more exacting space standards.

1.32 **Wheelchair housing design** requires greater spatial demands than the Lifetime Homes standard and increased flexibility so that a wheelchair user can access every facility inside and out and also has a choice of how to access those facilities. Information on the specific characteristics of wheelchair housing design is available from the Building Research Establishment and also the Greater

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London Authority. The Greater London Plan seeks to ensure that 10% of all new housing is wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for wheelchair users. In Ashford problems are sometimes experienced in matching applicants on the housing lists to a property that will meet their needs. Custom built properties for wheelchair users are sometimes not occupied by the wheelchair user they have been specifically designed for and need to be let to another applicant rather than remain unoccupied. This can make such properties unavailable to a wheelchair user for years at a time so that the unit is no longer available for the purposes for which it was designed. The solution would appear to be to continue to require a minimum percentage of properties to be fully wheelchair compatible on each publicly funded development and to encourage developers to consider making some provision for wheelchair housing as part of their market housing offer.

- 1.33 **Dwellings exceeding the minimum standards** should be incorporated into new developments in order to provide a good mix of dwellings. This Supplementary Planning Document should be used to identify minimum requirements and should not inhibit the provision of larger rooms or external spaces where space allows. Use of the document in this way will enable a degree of choice to be maintained, whilst at the same time avoiding development which denies people the degree of comfort and privacy they need for healthy day to day living. The fundamental objective of the standards is to ensure that every new home provided in the Ashford Borough has an acceptable standard of living accommodation including external private or semi private space. **The standards apply to the whole Borough and to both publicly and privately funded housing developments including housing for shared ownership.**
- 1.34 **Extensions and conversions** of existing buildings should follow the guidance where practical for example by applying the standards to new rooms added to a dwelling in the form of an extension. The guidance is also applicable to conversions or subdivision of existing buildings to new habitable units. If buildings to be converted or subdivided to form living accommodation are unable to accommodate the minimum standards, they are in all probability unsuitable for residential use. One exception likely to be necessary in this category of development relates to ceiling height, where a lower standard may be acceptable due to limiting factors associated with an existing building. This is especially likely if the building is of architectural or historic merit and raising the ceiling heights would harm the historic character of the building.

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- 1.35 **Detailed design and appearance** are not covered by this SPD. Reference should therefore be made to other Local Development Framework documents particularly Core Strategy policy CS9 and any future design related LDF Documents. Information on Sustainable Design and Construction is also available in the Council's Core Strategy policy CS10 and in the adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.
- 1.36 **Building for Life** is a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods led by CABI (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment). 'Building for Life' focuses on the Environment and Community; Character; Streets, Parking and Pedestrianisation and Design and Construction. The Council has the expectation that new developments will achieve at least 14 of the requirements of Building for Life. In the case of small and/or rural developments not all of the categories may be relevant. Where this is the case the number of relevant categories should be applied and a minimum of 70% should be attained.
- 1.37 The list below shows the relevant design related documents which impact upon Residential Space and Layout, and which developers are expected to both refer to and be guided by:-
- Sustainable Design and Construction - Ashford Borough Council SPD
  - The Kent Design Guide - particularly with reference to privacy in gardens, maximum use of sunlight and daylight and usable amenity space.
  - Secured by Design - which focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products.
  - 'Safer Places' 2004: The Planning System and Crime Prevention' is a government publication which includes a great deal of design advice related to all kinds of development
  - 'Better Places to Live by Design 2001: A Companion Guide to PPG3 (the predecessor to PPS3)', which considers residential space and layout issues in some detail.
  - The Code for Sustainable Homes is still operational, and remains the Government's national sustainability standard for new homes. The Code supports the government target that all new homes will be zero carbon developments from 2016 and the step changes in Building Regulations Part L leading to this.

# 1 Introduction

- Building for Life - a minimum of 14 out of the 20 criteria achievable should be attained. Building for Life is the national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods, promoting design excellence and celebrating best practice in the house building industry. See paragraph 1.36 above.

## 2 Setting the Standards

### 2 Setting the Standards

- 2.1 A 'Scoping Report' was published by the Council for consultation in 2007 and is a background document to this SPD. The Scoping Report is useful in defining the key issues which this SPD seeks to address. As part of the Scoping Report, the residential space and layout objectives were tested against the 22 Sustainability Objectives which had already been agreed as part of Ashford's Local Development Framework. The objectives originally identified for this Residential Space and Layout SPD were identified in the 2007 Scoping Report as follows:

A	To ensure a high quality living environment for all, by setting high standards of design and layout in relation to individual and small groups of properties and their immediate local environment. (Note. This requirement has largely been fulfilled by the Council's adoption of the Building for Life standards for well designed houses and neighbourhoods.)
B	Ensure properties provide a reasonable standard of internal and external space.
C	Ensure the layout of residential space is of a high standard and provides reasonably sized and spatially distinct rooms/areas for the normal range of day to day activities (e.g. living space, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, external space, laundry space).
D	Ensure that individuals have access to private space
E	Ensure that the relationship of properties (in terms of design and layout) to their close neighbours and immediate environment is conducive to a high quality of life.
F	Promote sustainable living e.g. through features of a dwelling and/or its immediate surroundings which facilitate in the process of household recycling.
G	Provide a range of house sizes to cater for the needs of differing household sizes. (The words 'and lifestyles' could be added to this objective to cover the differing needs of occupants over a lifetime.)

**Table 2.1 Objectives of the SPD identified in the 2007 Scoping Report**

- 2.2 The extensive work that has gone into producing the London Housing Design Guide and the proposed HCA standards form a ready made evidence base for Ashford Borough Council to draw upon. In addition, the former English Partnerships and 'Swing a Cat' standards have all been referred to for information in compiling these space standards. In addition, Ashford Housing Services has

## 2 Setting the Standards

many years of experience to draw upon such as finding that properties built for the private market are sometimes unfit for occupation by clients on the Council's Housing Services waiting list. The table in Appendix 1 compares these various standards.

- 2.3 The Mayor of London's draft Housing Design Guide 2009 did not include single aspect homes or one person homes as these were not considered acceptable. However, the Interim Report and Evidence Summary for the Mayor of London's Housing Design Standards July 2010 does include single aspect homes, although not encouraged, providing the single aspect is not north facing. Similarly the 2009 draft design guide ruled out single person units but these are considered in the 2010 Evidence Summary.
- 2.4 This SPD discourages single aspect homes and north facing single aspect homes are rarely, if ever, likely to be considered acceptable. The minimum floor area for a one bedroom home in this SPD is for a two bedspace home. This allows for the possibility of a partner or young child occupying the same home in reasonable comfort.
- 2.5 Generous ceiling heights help to make a dwelling feel light and airy especially when combined with large windows. The London Housing Design Guide recommendation and the HCA 2010 consultation draft target of not less than 2.6m in all habitable rooms is considered to be an appropriate ceiling height for Ashford and is the **advocated minimum**. Ground floor habitable rooms may suffer from a lack of light resulting from their built up urban context, this could also be the case in Ashford particularly in the town centre. The HCA calculator allows the ceiling height of 2.4m providing this is the only measure that falls below the standard. It is proposed to adopt this lower standard for Ashford as an **essential minimum** and to retain a preference for 2.6m as an **advocated minimum**.
- 2.6 The ability to fit essential furniture into a home including a pushchair, pram or wheelchair, to have a quiet place where children can do their homework or people can work from home, a place to entertain friends, to store possessions including recycling bins, or have private time away from other activities in the home are all aspirations that apply just as much to the people of Ashford as to those living in London. The proposed London Standards are based upon measurements similar to the former Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators but brought up to date plus the Lifetime Homes '16 Key' requirements. Appendix 1 of the London Housing Design Guide Interim edition shows how each type of room was planned around the furniture considered to be essential and listed in appendix 2 of the same document together with access and activity requirements. In view of the

## 2 Setting the Standards

research that has gone into producing these Housing Quality Indicators and the fact that these have been tried and tested and updated over a number of years, the proposed London Standards are considered to be a good model to follow.

- 2.7 Another aspect of space standards, and one that is not addressed by the HCA, is the separation and/or combination of kitchen dining and living areas. The London Housing Design Guide recommends the provision of at least 2 separate rooms to serve these functions in larger family homes. However, examples of new 1 and 2 bed flats have come to light in Ashford, where a combined kitchen, dining room and living area is so dominated by kitchen units that there is insufficient space remaining for lounge or dining room furniture. The positioning of radiators, windows and electrical sockets can also give rise to problems for accommodating furniture even where the minimum floor area has been provided. Separation of at least one of these functions can help provide privacy for example for study. An applicant with children whose name appears on the Council's housing list would be awarded 15 points due to not having a living space that is separated from the kitchen. This recognises the problems that arise from having these uses combined in one room and suggests that it is unwise to permit the building of new homes which are deemed to be unsatisfactory from the point of view of 'liveability' and could only be utilised for publicly funded housing by 'under occupation'. For this reason it has been decided that in any home with three or more bedrooms, which could reasonably be expected to be occupied by a family, there should be a living space that is separate from the kitchen. This is an 'essential' minimum. The 'advocated' minimum standard is a separate living area in homes with two or more bedrooms.
- 2.8 It is expected that flats will have some communal outdoor areas and this should include an area that is protected from public view, for example, the street or other public areas but is overlooked by occupants of the flats. However, private outdoor space is considered to be highly valued and conducive to well-being and should be part of every home. Research undertaken by the Housing Corporation by S Davis and R Capie (2008) entitled 'Planning for the future, Life in affordable housing,' found that the demand for safe usable outdoor space is common to all life-stage groups in both market and affordable housing. Balconies and terraces are the usual form of provision for flats. The minimum dimensions for balconies and terraces suggested in the HCA draft and London Housing Design Guide, depending upon the number of bed spaces are followed in this SPD. However, for houses, a larger area is considered necessary to accommodate a shed for garden implements, cycles, hobby/play items etc a sitting out area, washing line/rotary drier, play space, trees, shrubs and borders that make a garden an attractive environment for people and wildlife. An incident of small gardens provided for market housing and transferred to affordable housing in Ashford resulted in gardens becoming unusable because the requisite garden shed for 'dirty storage' occupied most of the garden.

## 3 The Standards

### 3 The Standards

- 3.1 These standards have been prepared to address the transition period whilst advice on the proposed Local Standards Framework, which the Government envisages will be developed and maintained by the building industry and Councils, is being drawn up.
- 3.2 Barring the exceptions described below, the **essential** minimum standards should be met in all cases. The **advocated** minimum standards should be met to achieve the Ashford Borough Residential Space and Layout Standards in full and developers will be encouraged to meet them. It is anticipated that the **advocated** standards will become **essential** minimum standards in due course as the SPD is revised over time. Compliance with the standards will be a material consideration.

#### Exceptions for schemes which already have outline planning permission

- 3.3 Exceptions may be made where outline planning permission has been granted for a development and detailed drawings have either been submitted for planning approval or, in exceptional cases, schemes which have not been formally submitted for planning permission or reserved matters consent but which have undergone in-depth informal negotiations with planning officers. The degree of tolerance against a particular minimum standard is something which will be negotiated by planning officers and is likely to vary from one scheme to another taking into consideration the relative merits of the scheme.
- 3.4 The same principle will be applied to other external minimum standards requirements such as the provision of private outdoor space. There will be a degree of tolerance regarding the size of private gardens, balconies and terraces but schemes which provide very little or no private outdoor space are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

#### Essential and Advocated standards

<b>Essential</b> minimum standards apply to:
GIA (gross internal area)
CEL (cooking, eating, living)
CEL provided in 2 or more rooms in family units with three or more bedrooms.
Minimum width of living area
Bedroom area (double / 2 bedspaces and single / 1 bedspace)
Number of bathrooms/WCs

### 3 The Standards

<b>Essential minimum standards apply to:</b>
Internal general storage
Specified area for dirty storage
Appropriate external storage for dustbins and recycling boxes
Minimum ceiling height 2.4m
Balcony or terrace (flats)
Individual private garden 10m x width of unit or equivalent (houses)
No north facing single aspect dwellings
<b>Advocated minimum standards apply to:</b>
CEL provided in 2 or more rooms in family units with two or more bedrooms.
Minimum bedroom width and length
Minimum bathroom and WC floor areas
Minimum ceiling height 2.6m
Lifetime Homes standards 1 - 16

**Table 3.1 Application of Essential and Advocated minimum standards**

#### **A) Minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) - Essential minimum standard**

- 3.5 The GIA is the overall area which includes bathroom accommodation, circulation space, storage areas, space to play and work/study at home and includes the area occupied by internal walls and partitions, columns, piers and other internal projections, internal balconies, stairwells, toilets, lift lobbies, and fire corridors. This figure is literally the space enclosed between the external walls on each floor and gives the most basic indication of what is likely to be acceptable. These measurements reflect the areas in the HCA consultation document March 2010 and those in the Mayor of London's Housing Design Standards Evidence Summary July 2010 using whichever is the higher figure. No figure is included for homes with a single bedspace as it is considered preferable to design the smallest home to accommodate 2 people, which would allow space for a partner, a child, temporary carer or visiting friends and relatives. The table below shows the required GIA for individual dwellings and excludes communal areas in blocks of flats.

### 3 The Standards

<b>Minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) - <i>Essential</i> minimum standards</b>	
<b>Type of dwelling</b>	<b>Area in square metres</b>
<b>Flats</b>	
1 bed 2 bedspaces	50
2 bed 3 bedspaces	61
2 bed 4 bedspaces	70
3 bed 4 bedspaces	74
3 bed 5 bedspaces	86
3 bed 6 bedspaces	95
4 bed 5 bedspaces	90
4 bed 6 bedspaces	99
<b>2 Storey Houses</b>	
2 bed 3 bedspaces	71
2 bed 4 bedspaces	83
3 bed 4 bedspaces	87
3 bed 5 bedspaces	96
4 bed 5 bedspaces	100
4 bed 6 bedspaces	109
<b>3 Storey Houses</b>	
3 bed 5 bedspaces	102
4 bed 5 bedspaces	106
4 bed 6 bedspaces	114

- 3.6 For dwellings designed to accommodate more than 6 people, at least 10 square metres should be added for each additional bedspace.

#### **Lifetime Homes Standards (General Points) - (*Advocated* minimum standards )**

##### **Lifetime homes Criterion 6 - Internal Doorways and Hallways**

- 3.7 Movement in hallways and through doorways should be as convenient to the widest range of people, including those using mobility aids or wheelchairs, and those moving furniture or other objects.
- 3.8 As a general principle, narrower hallways or landings will need wider doorways in their side walls.

## 3 The Standards

### Lifetime Homes Criterion 7 - Circulation Space

- 3.9 There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and basic circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere.

### Lifetime Homes Criterion 12 - Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings

- 3.10 The design within a dwelling of two or more storeys should incorporate both:-
- a. Potential for stair-lift installation; and ,
  - b. A suitable identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the entrance level to a storey containing the main bedroom and a bathroom satisfying criterion 14.

### Lifetime Homes Criterion 15 - Glazing and Window Handle Heights

- 3.11 Windows in the principal living space (typically the living room) should allow people to see out when seated. In addition, at least one opening light in each habitable room should be approachable and usable by a wide range of people - including those with restricted movement and reach (see Note 1 in Revised Lifetime Home Standards 5th July 2010)

### Lifetime Homes Criterion 16 - Location of Service Controls

- 3.12 Service controls should be within a height band of 450mm to 1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

## **B) Cooking Eating and Living (CEL) areas - *Essential* and *Advocated* minimum standards**

- 3.13 This is an area where storage and areas for play and study are also likely to be incorporated in addition to the basic functions of each of these areas. Although one large room is sometimes provided to accommodate all 3 of these functions, a home with more than 1 bedroom but without subdivision between the kitchen and main living area is regarded as substandard by the Council's Housing Services for a family with children under 16. It is therefore considered that this arrangement should not be regarded as acceptable in either privately or publicly funded housing. Alternatives would be 3 separate rooms, a kitchen/diner with separate lounge or a lounge/diner with separate kitchen. Provision of at least two separate rooms to fulfil the CEL functions is an ***essential*** minimum standard for dwellings

### 3 The Standards

with 3 or more bedrooms and an **advocated** minimum standard for dwellings with 2 or more bedrooms.

- 3.14 Unless a separate area such as a utility room or outside shed is provided, space for storing materials for recycling prior to collection or disposal will be required. A utility room will not be counted as part of the CEL area but will be counted as part of the overall GIA.

<b>Cooking Eating and Living (CEL) areas - <i>Essential</i> minimum standards</b>	
<b>Number of bedspaces</b>	<b>Area in Square metres</b>
2 bedspaces	23
3 bedspaces	25
4 bedspaces	27
5 bedspaces	30
6 bedspaces	33
CEL to be provided in 2 or more rooms in family units with 3 or more bedrooms.	
<b>Minimum width of living area (<i>essential minimum standard</i>)</b>	
3.2m	
<b>Cooking Eating and Living (CEL) areas - <i>Advocated</i> minimum standards</b>	
2 bedspaces	23
3 bedspaces	25
4 bedspaces	27
5 bedspaces	30
6 bedspaces	33
CEL provided in 2 or more rooms in family units of 2 or more bedrooms	

- 3.15 The figures in this table are based on the Mayor of London's Housing Design Standards Evidence Summary July 2010 and the HCA consultation document, and uses whichever is the higher figure. The **essential** minimum standard of two or more rooms to comprise the CEL area is based on the London Housing Design Standards Evidence Summary July 2010, which requires at least two rooms to comprise the CEL in dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms. The **advocated minimum** standard is higher to reflect Ashford Borough Council's Housing Services Lettings policy 2009, which considers accommodation for a family which includes a child under 16 to be unsatisfactory unless there is a living area which is separate from the kitchen.

## 3 The Standards

- 3.16 The **essential** minimum of 3.2m width for the living area is in order to avoid narrow constricted areas which make circulation around furniture difficult.

### Lifetime Homes Standards - *Advocated* minimum standards

#### Criterion 7 - Circulation Space

- 3.17 There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining and living areas and adequate circulation space for wheelchairs elsewhere.

#### Criterion 8 - Entrance level living space

- 3.18 The living room / living space should be provided on the entrance level of every dwelling.

### **C) (i) Area of bedrooms, single / 1 bedspace and double / 2 bedspaces - *Essential* minimum standards.**

- 3.19 Bedrooms will be expected to comply with the minimum areas set out below. En-suite bathrooms, if required, must be additional to the minimum bedroom areas. Fitted wardrobes and walk-in wardrobes can be included in these minimum areas but should not impinge upon the minimum width and length dimensions over the major part of the room.

Minimum bedroom areas - <i>Essential</i> minimum standards			
Bedroom	Area in Square Metres	Minimum width in metres	Minimum length in metres
Single (1 bedspace)	8	Not specified	Not specified
Double (2 bedspaces)	12	Not specified	Not specified

### **C) (ii) Dimensions of bedrooms - *Advocated* minimum standards.**

- 3.20 To fulfil the **advocated** minimum standards it is necessary to satisfy both the minimum floor area and minimum dimensions. The minimum width of 2.6m for a double bedroom is required to accommodate furniture that could reasonably be expected to be found in a double or twin bedded room and the minimum depth of

### 3 The Standards

3m for all bedrooms is in order to comfortably accommodate the length of a bed and allow circulation space around the furniture. A double bedroom should also be capable of accommodating a cot.

- 3.21 Some bedrooms are not rectangular and may be 'L' shaped or have narrow sections however the core area of such rooms should achieve the minimum dimensions.

<b>Bedroom dimensions - <i>Advocated</i> minimum standards</b>			
<b>Bedroom</b>	<b>Area in Square Metres</b>	<b>Minimum width in metres</b>	<b>Minimum length in metres</b>
Single (1 bedspace)	8	Not specified	3m
Double (2 bedspaces)	12	2.6m	3m

#### **Lifetime Homes standards - *Advocated* minimum standards**

##### **Lifetime Homes Criterion 9 - Potential for entrance level bed space**

- 3.22 In dwellings of 2 or more storeys with no permanent bedroom on the entrance level, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient temporary bed space.

##### **Lifetime Homes Criterion 13 - Potential for future fitting of hoists and bedroom/bathroom relationship.**

- 3.23 The structure above a main bedroom and bathroom ceilings should be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and the design should provide a reasonable route between this bedroom and the bathroom.

#### **D) Storage space - *Essential* minimum standards**

- 3.24 This is basically cupboard space and may be counted as part of the minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA). Walk-in wardrobes would also fall within this category. As well as the storage of personal possessions, storage of items for recycling and household goods including tall items such as vacuum cleaners,

### 3 The Standards

brooms and mops, ironing boards and tall items of sports equipment need to be accommodated.

- 3.25 Built-in general internal storage space with a minimum internal height of 2m and a minimum floor area of 1.5 square metres should be provided for dwellings with two bedspaces. For each additional bedspace, an additional 0.5 sq.m. of storage space should be provided. Cupboards occupied by a boiler, water tank, vent, meters or other fixed bulky equipment are not considered adequate to meet the requirement for storage.
- 3.26 So-called 'dirty storage' of bicycles, gardening equipment, etc, is additional to general storage and may need to be provided internally if there is no access to a conveniently located and reasonably secure outside storage building. The dirty storage area may require an addition to the GIA particularly in dwellings with more than 2 bed spaces unless secure convenient cycle parking is provided elsewhere. In the case of flats, a secure easily accessible communal store may be appropriate. A balcony or habitable room is not a suitable location for 'dirty storage'.
- 3.27 In a kitchen or elsewhere, floor area taken up by items such as a washing machine, cooker, boiler, water tank or dishwasher and kitchen units should not be counted as general storage. Kitchen units and furniture with a storage function do not form part of the minimum amount of general storage for the purposes of this SPD and must be additional to the provision of general storage.
- 3.28 Submitted plans should indicate how kitchen units, as well as fittings such as boilers, radiators and household equipment such as fridge, cooker, washing machine would be accommodated. Drawings should also indicate where so called 'dirty' storage for items such as bicycles, sports equipment or garden equipment can be accommodated either internally or externally.
- 3.29 General storage areas occupying the space between floor and ceiling should be provided in accordance with the table below. It is important to note that the storage area applies to 'floor area' and not to 'shelf area'.

<b>General Storage Area - <i>Essential</i> minimum standards</b>					
<b>Number of bedspaces</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Square metres of floor space	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5
0.5 square metres to be added for each additional bedspace.					
NB general storage is in addition to kitchen units, airing cupboards and areas allocated for dirty storage.					

## 3 The Standards

### E) Number and size of bathrooms - *Essential* and *Advocated* minimum standards

- 3.30 Every dwelling must have bathroom and WC accommodation in accordance with the number of bedspaces the home is intended to accommodate. A dwelling for more than 4 bedspaces should have at least 2 WCs - this is the essential minimum standard. The WC accommodation may be provided separately or combined with bathroom accommodation. In a dwelling of more than one storey, it will be necessary to provide an additional WC at entrance level in order to comply with Lifetime Homes. All Lifetime Home compliant dwellings of 2 or more storeys will therefore have at least 2 WCs regardless of the number of bedspaces accommodated. Additional bathrooms are optional but there should be 1 bathroom on the same floor as the main bedroom to comply with Lifetime Homes.
- 3.31 The ***advocated*** minimum size for a bathroom is 5.2m<sup>2</sup> and 3.3m<sup>2</sup> for a WC (room without bath or shower). These areas allow for the inclusion of wheelchair turning circles or ellipses.

#### Lifetime Homes Standards - *Advocated* minimum standards

##### **Criterion 10 - Entrance level WC and shower drainage**

- 3.32 Where an accessible bathroom in accordance with Criterion 14, is not provided on the entrance level of a dwelling, the entrance level should have an accessible WC compartment, with potential for a shower to be installed - as detailed in Revised Lifetime Homes Standard, 5th July 2010.

##### **Criterion 11 - WC and Bathroom walls**

- 3.33 Walls in all bathrooms and WC compartments should be capable of firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails.

##### **Criterion 14 - Bathrooms**

- 3.34 An accessible bathroom, providing ease of access in accordance with the specification in the Revised Lifetime Homes Standard 5th July 2010, should be provided in every dwelling on the same storey as a main bedroom.

### F) Ceiling heights - *Advocated* and *essential* minimum heights

- 3.35 The **essential** minimum standard ceiling height is 2.4m. Exceptions will be considered in particular circumstances such as the conversion of an historic building or where a low ceiling height is necessary for a dwelling to assume a low profile in a particular landscape or streetscape.
- 3.36 For new homes, a ceiling height of 2.6m is generally preferable and so this is stipulated as an **advocated** minimum ceiling height. The minimum height required by the Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide Interim Edition is 2.5m with a recommendation for 2.6m in habitable rooms. The HCA consultation document standard also has a minimum standard of 2.6m although the HCA's proposed 'calculator' will accept 2.4m. The 2.6m minimum standard is considered reasonable for Ashford especially in the newly developed town centre sites where dwellings may be in close proximity to tall buildings. Dwellings with unusually large rooms may appear unbalanced unless ceiling heights exceed the minimum standards.
- 3.37 Exceptions may be made where particular circumstances apply such as rooms within a roof space. Minimum ceiling heights will usually apply to all habitable rooms but in the case of rooms in the roof with sloping ceilings, such as bedrooms in the roof space, at least 50% of the floor to ceiling height should be 2.4m (**essential**) or 2.6m (**advocated**) and the remainder at least 2m in height. Any areas of a habitable room with a floor to ceiling height of less than 2m should not be counted as part of the minimum floor area for that room. It will not normally be acceptable for the main living area to have a reduced ceiling height.

Ceiling Heights	
Minimum ceiling heights of habitable rooms* (between finished floor and finished ceiling levels)	Rooms within the roof space with sloping ceilings
2.4m <b>essential</b> minimum	At least 50% of the floor to ceiling height to be full height and the remainder not less than 2m. Areas where the floor space is less than 2m can be used for cupboards etc but will not count towards the minimum floor area of a room.
2.6m <b>advocated</b> minimum	

\*Kitchens are not always regarded as habitable rooms but they are rooms where some members of a household spend a good deal of time especially if the kitchen is combined with a dining area. Natural daylight, a pleasant outlook and good ventilation are considered important aspects for such a well used part of the home. Therefore, for the purposes of this SPD, kitchens are included as habitable rooms but bathrooms, hallways, walk-in wardrobes and photographic dark rooms, for example, are not.

## 3 The Standards

### **G) Communal hallways and stairs in flats, doorways and entrances in all homes.**

- 3.38 In flats, shared corridors and staircases need to be wide enough for people to pass each other comfortably and common entrances should lead into a hall which is spacious enough for people to manoeuvre shopping, buggies, wheelchairs, walking aids and small children without undue difficulties. All communal circulation areas should have natural light and ventilation.

#### Lifetime Homes standards - *advocated minimum standards*

##### **Criterion 4 – Entrances**

- 3.39 All entrances should:-
- Be illuminated
  - Have level access over the threshold
  - Have effective clear opening widths and nibs as specified in the Revised Lifetime Homes Standard July 2010.
  - Have adequate weather protection
  - Have a level external landing

##### **Criterion 5 - Communal stairs and lifts**

- 3.40 5a - Communal stairs should provide easy access in accordance with the specification in Revised Lifetime Homes Standard July 2010, regardless of whether or not a lift is provided.
- 3.41 5b - Communal Lifts. Where a dwelling is reached by a lift, it should be fully accessible in accordance with the specification in the Revised Lifetime Homes Standard July 2010

### **H) External private space (excluding parking and turning) - Essential minimum standards**

- 3.42 It is important for both children and adults to have access to some private or at least, semi-private outdoor space. In the case of non flatted developments, this can most easily be provided in the form of a private enclosed garden. The provision of a garden also makes it easier to provide outside covered storage for

### 3 The Standards

items such as bicycles, garden tools, garden furniture and outdoor toys. In the case of flats, balconies may take the place of a garden but easily accessible communal areas will also be required for relaxing and play as well as areas for hanging washing.

- 3.43 A private outdoor space is one which is not overlooked from the street or other public place. Private balconies on the front elevation of flats may be acceptable if the building is set back from the street onto which they face. If the building is sited on or close to the back edge of the pavement, a balcony on the front elevation, where the activities of the occupants can be observed by passers by, is not likely to provide an acceptable private outdoor space. This may be less of an issue for balconies at higher levels depending upon its distance back from a road. It may therefore be necessary to provide alternative forms of private outdoor space for some first floor flats, which could be in the form of side or rear facing balconies or access to a terrace. Aside from the issue of privacy, fumes and noise from vehicles, would spoil any enjoyment of a balcony in close proximity to a heavily trafficked road.
- 3.44 Communal gardens should provide an attractive area for residents to relax without being overtly in the public gaze but nevertheless should be overlooked by residents in the interests of security. Plans should indicate how the space to be provided allows for the provision of overlooking by residents.
- 3.45 In the case of private gardens attached to a house, a minimum area based on the 10m long 'rule of thumb' x the width of the dwelling provides a helpful starting point. This standard can be flexible providing it can be adequately demonstrated that alternative solutions provide a sufficient area of private outdoor space. There should be a direct entrance from the dwelling into the garden and this should preferably be from a lounge dining room or kitchen.
- 3.46 A minimum depth of 10 metres provides a very modestly sized garden but in most cases can accommodate a sitting out area, clothes drying area, small shed and area of play as well as space to plant shrubs and small trees. There is little benefit in having a garden if it cannot comfortably accommodate these important functions. Although the width of the private garden will normally be the width of the dwelling, in circumstances where a garden tapers to a narrow point it will be necessary to compensate for the loss of area by extending the length of the garden. A garden needs to have room for some planting to make it an attractive place to be, to encourage wildlife and provide a green outlook. An individual private garden should preferably include an area which is not directly overlooked by other residents this is usually referred to as the 'patio area'.
- 3.47 The minimum 10m depth of garden when coupled with that of an adjoining garden to the rear can also fulfil a useful function in maintaining a reasonable 'privacy' distance between overlooking properties. Although a distance of 21m between overlooking rear windows is a widely accepted standard, the Council recognises

### 3 The Standards

that there may be equally effective means of reducing overlooking and subsequent loss of privacy through careful use of layout and design. Drawings showing private garden areas of less than 10m x the width of the dwelling should demonstrate how privacy and adequate amenity area for occupants is achieved either by separation or design and layout.

<b>Minimum sizes for individual private open spaces (not overlooked from the road or other public spaces) - flats and houses - <i>Essential</i> minimum standards.</b>			
Number of Bedspaces	Minimum depth of balconies	Minimum area of private outdoor space per flat (balcony, roof garden or ground level patio or open space).	Minimum depth of private garden area for houses (the width will normally be the width of the dwelling).
2 bedspaces	1.5m	5m <sup>2</sup>	10m
3 bedspaces	1.5m	6m <sup>2</sup>	10m
4 bedspaces	1.5m	7m <sup>2</sup>	10m
5 bedspaces	1.5m	8m <sup>2</sup>	10m
6 bedspaces	1.5m	9m <sup>2</sup>	10m

- 3.48 Communal outdoor spaces should be private from the street or other public areas but overlooked by the occupants of the dwellings they serve. Guidance on the amount and type of open space provision to be made in conjunction with residential development will be available in the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

#### **I) Refuse - *Essential* minimum standards**

- 3.49 Accommodation of refuse bins and recycling materials must be conveniently sited close to an external door and accessible for collection but should not be allowed to dominate or spoil the appearance and design of the development. Bin storage should not be located where it will obstruct parking spaces or access to a garage. The location for refuse and recycling bins should be decided early on in the planning stages of the development in order to avoid an unsatisfactory compromise at a later stage.

### J) Issues of privacy, noise, sunlight, daylight and access

- 3.50 Achieving adequate privacy for the occupants of new dwellings, especially those built in higher density neighbourhoods, depends upon good design and layout. Similarly, ensuring that gardens and habitable rooms have sufficient sunlight, daylight and that windows have a pleasant outlook are requirements that are dependant upon good design and layout. These aspects are dealt with on pages 30, 92, 93 and 96 of the Kent Design Guide and are not repeated in this document.
- 3.51 It is unlikely that single aspect homes will be considered acceptable especially if the single aspect is north facing as no rooms would benefit from sunlight at any time. The avoidance of single aspect north facing dwellings is therefore an **essential** minimum standard. South and west facing single aspect homes are liable to suffer from overheating in sunny weather and unless the building design takes this into account this type of home does not provide a comfortable environment. Single aspect homes are therefore best avoided. Design layouts should seek to reduce the number of single aspect dwellings in a development as much as possible and preferably exclude them altogether. Avoidance of single aspect homes is an **advocated** standard.
- 3.52 Insulation against noise transmission between dwellings is a function of the Building Regulations. However, layouts of flats will be expected to show that quiet areas such as bedrooms are not located beside, underneath or above living areas of adjoining flats.

#### **Lifetime Home standards which relate to access to dwellings**

##### **Criterion 2 - Approach to dwelling from parking**

- 3.53 The distance from the car parking space of Criterion 1 to the dwelling entrance (or relevant block entrance or lift core) should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping. The distance from visitors' parking to relevant entrances should be as short as practicable and be level or gently sloping (this should also apply to any unallocated parking for residents).

##### **Criterion 3 - Approach to all entrances**

- 3.54 The approach to all entrances should preferably be level or gently sloping, and in accordance with the specification set out in Revised Lifetime Homes Standard July 2010.

## 3 The Standards

### Parking

- 3.55 The Council has published its own SPD on parking for new developments. However, the Lifetime Homes Standard does include a requirement for parking spaces so that at least one parking space can be made wider if at any time in the lifetime of the occupant the use of a wheelchair becomes necessary.

### Lifetime Home Standards

#### **Criterion 1a - On plot (non communal) parking**

- 3.56 Where a dwelling has car parking within its individual plot (or title) boundary, at least one parking space length should be capable of enlargement to achieve a minimum width of 3300mm.

#### **Criterion 1b - Communal or shared parking**

- 3.57 Where parking is provided by communal or shared bays, spaces with a width of 3300mm, in accordance with the specification set out in Revised Lifetime Homes July 2010, should be provided.

## 4 Implementing the Standards

### 4 Implementing the Standards

- 4.1 In order to implement the standards, floor plans submitted as part of a planning application will need to have clearly legible dimensions and a scale so that room areas and dimensions can be easily checked. This is a standard requirement in any case. Not all developers submit sections which show ceiling heights and therefore this is something that needs to be included at the planning stage. Internal cupboards for general storage as well as kitchen cupboards and appliances and areas for dirty storage either internal or external, need to be clearly shown on submitted schemes as do areas for the siting of refuse and recycling bins for collection. Equally important is an indication of how materials for recycling can be accommodated within the dwelling. Table 4.1 below shows an example of how a planning application for a 2 storey house could be checked for compliance with the standards.

<b>2 storey house 2 bed / 4 bedspaces</b>	<b>Standard required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b><i>Complies with essential minimum standard ?</i></b>
GIA	83m <sup>2</sup>	92m <sup>2</sup>	yes
CEL	27m <sup>2</sup>	25m <sup>2</sup>	no
Living area	Separate living area (homes with 3 or more bedrooms)	Combined with kitchen and dining area	yes
Minimum width of living area	3.2m	3m	no
Double bedroom 1	12m <sup>2</sup>	13m <sup>2</sup>	yes
Double bedroom 2	12m <sup>2</sup>	11m <sup>2</sup>	no
Single bedrooms	None	-	-
General storage	2.5m	2.2	no
Dirty Storage	Space for bicycles and outdoor toys/gardening tools etc	Shed	yes
Recycling	Space usually in kitchen or utility room for materials for recycling to be stored.	none	no
Number of bathrooms	1	1	yes
Number of WCs	1	1	yes
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms with level ceilings (includes kitchen)	2.4m	2.6	yes

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>2 storey house 2 bed / 4 bedspaces</b>	<b>Standard required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b><i>Complies with essential minimum standard ?</i></b>
Rooms with sloping ceilings, % under 2.4m but over 2m in any habitable room. (Specify rooms separately) eg Bedroom 1	<50%	20%	Yes
Private (individual) outdoor space	10m x width of house	10m x more than the width of the house	yes
Communal outdoor space (flats)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Refuse	Location for refuse and recycling bins close to exterior door and not dominating appearance of development.	Screened corner in front garden Not in parking space	yes
Privacy	Minimum of 21 metres from nearest opposite overlooking window at the rear <i>or</i> design which restricts overlooking	Overlooking of habitable rooms and, private area in garden mitigated by design of adjoining house.	yes
Aspect	Single aspect discouraged, north facing single aspect not acceptable	Dual aspect	yes
Sunlight and daylight	Some habitable rooms receiving sunlight all habitable receiving daylight.	Sunlight to kitchen/dining/lounge area and rear bedroom. Daylight to all rooms except bathroom.	yes
Layout and Noise (in flats)	Not applicable	Not applicable	N/A

**Table 4.1 Example for Implementing the Essential minimum Standards**

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>2 storey house 2 bed / 4 bedspaces</b>	<b>Standard required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b><i>Complies with advocated minimum standard ?</i></b>
Living area	Separate living area (homes with 2 or more bedrooms)	Combined with kitchen and dining area	No
Double bedroom 1, width	2.6m	3m	yes
Double bedroom 1, length	3m	4.3m	yes
Double bedroom 2, width	2.6m	3m	yes
Double bedroom 2, length	3m	3.6	yes
Number of bathrooms	1	1	yes
Number of WCs	2	1	no
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms (includes kitchen)	2.6m	2.6m	yes
Rooms with sloping ceilings, % under 2.6m but over 2m in any habitable room. (Specify rooms separately) eg Bedroom 1	<50%	20%	yes
Lifetime homes Criteria 1 parking	See lifetime homes	Space provided for additional parking space width	yes
Lifetime homes Criteria 2 approach to dwelling from parking	See lifetime homes	Level access	yes
Lifetime homes Criteria 3 approach to all entrances	See lifetime homes	Level approach	yes
Lifetime homes Criteria 4 entrances	See lifetime homes	Opening width insufficient	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 5 Communal stairs and communal lifts	See lifetime homes	N/A	N/A
Lifetime homes Criteria 6 internal doorways and hallways	See lifetime homes	Insufficient hallway width	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 7 circulations space	See lifetime homes	Insufficient space for wheelchair circulation	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 8 entrance level living space	See lifetime homes	yes	yes

## 4 Implementing the Standards

2 storey house 2 bed / 4 bedspaces	Standard required	Proposed	Complies with advocated minimum standard ?
Lifetime homes Criteria 9 potential entrance level bedspace	See lifetime homes	Insufficient space	No
Lifetime homes Criteria 10 entrance level WC and shower drainage	See lifetime homes	No	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 11 WC and bathroom walls	See lifetime homes	Details not supplied	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 12 stairs and potential lift	See lifetime homes	Details not supplied	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 13 potential hoist to bathroom	See lifetime homes	Details not supplied	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 14 bathroom	See lifetime homes	Not wheelchair accessible	no
Lifetime homes Criteria 15 glazing and window handle heights	See lifetime homes	yes	yes
Lifetime homes Criteria 16 location of service controls	See lifetime homes	Details not supplied	no
This house does not comply with the essential CEL area and one of the bedrooms is too small to accommodate 2 bedspaces comfortably. There is no provision for recycling materials to be stored in the house and general storage is poor. The number of bathrooms/WCs is sufficient for meeting the <b>essential</b> minimum standards but would not meet Lifetime Homes which requires an entrance level WC and therefore does not meet the <b>advocated</b> minimum standards. Bedroom dimensions (but not the area in one bedroom) meet with the <b>advocated</b> minimum standards. Advocated ceiling heights are met and several of the Lifetime Homes requirements are satisfied.			

**Table 4.2 Example for Implementing the Advocated minimum standards**

- 4.2 Compliance with the 16 criteria of Lifetime Homes should be declared by the applicant or agent at the time of submitting the planning application. Scheduled information on Lifetime Homes should also be backed up with annotated drawings indicating compliance. For example, 1a) parking space capable of being enlarged to 3300mm width with arrow as appropriate, 4a - e ) entrance ease of access with drawing showing clear opening widths and nibs and weather protection. An indicative diagram is included on the Lifetime Homes website and can be used as a guide to ensure that all the points are covered although the scaled drawings submitted for a planning application will need to include finer detail. Although

## 4 Implementing the Standards

some of the Lifetime Home requirements will be picked up at the Building Control stage, accurate plans capable of showing the degree of detail necessary to comply with Lifetime Homes should be submitted at the planning stage. This should reduce the number of amendments that need to be submitted at a later stage.

- 4.3 Examples of the various minimum standards in this SPD in practice are set out in the tables below. Table 4.3 below is a development of 9 flats granted planning permission in 2009. The building fits well with the street scene but some of the space and layout standards are inadequate and there is no private outdoor space except for a small terrace which serves one ground floor flat. Compliance with Lifetime Homes has not been assessed as insufficient information is shown on the application. However, it is clear that where the size of the bathroom falls below the standard floor area, it is most unlikely that it would accommodate a wheelchair dependent person in accordance with Lifetime Homes.
- 4.4 It will be noted that in some cases the minimum bedroom dimensions are complied with but the overall area is insufficient. The minimum dimensions are to provide adequate manoeuvring space around furniture whereas the additional floor area provides additional space for a cot or home study area for example.

<b>1 bedroom flat with 2 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated Standard (encouraged)</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'Advocated' Standard ?</b>
GIA	57.47m <sup>2</sup>	50m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
CEL	18.66m <sup>2</sup>	23m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Minimum width of living area	3.6m	3.2m	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Double Bedroom	15.98m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom width	3.18m	Not an essential standard	2.6m	yes	yes
Bedroom length	4.7m	Not an essential standard	3m	yes	yes
Bathroom	4.8m <sup>2</sup>	Not an essential standard	5.2m <sup>2</sup>	N/A	no
Ceiling height	Not shown	2.4m	2.6m	Not known	Not known

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>1 bedroom flat with 2 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated Standard (encouraged)</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'Advocated' Standard ?</b>
General storage	0.69m <sup>2</sup>	1.5m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	No
Private Outdoor space	12.05m <sup>2</sup>	5m <sup>2</sup> (for a balcony or terrace)	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Refuse store	Acceptable location	Convenient/not dominating development	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Aspect	N, E, W	Dual	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
In this example the flat complies with the 'essential' standards except for the CEL which is too small and the lack of storage provision. No details of 'dirty storage' eg bicycles are given and ceiling heights are unknown. Room dimensions are in compliance with 'advocated' standards.					

**Table 4.3 Example Development 1, Ground Floor flat no.1**

<b>2 bedroom flat with 4 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'advocated standard' ?</b>
GIA	76.9m <sup>2</sup>	70m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
CEL	22.25m <sup>2</sup>	27m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Separate living area				yes	no
Minimum width of living area	3.8m	3.2m	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom 1	16.38m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom width	3.2m	N/A	2.6m	yes	yes
Bedroom length	4.57	N/A	3m	yes	yes
Bedroom 2	12.97m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom width	2.7m	N/A	2.6m	yes	yes
Bedroom length	4.1m	N/A	3m	yes	yes
Bathroom	4.08m <sup>2</sup>	N/A	5.2m <sup>2</sup>	N/A	no

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>2 bedroom flat with 4 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'advocated standard' ?</b>
Ceiling heights	Not shown	2.4m	2.6m	Not known	Not known
General Storage	2.8m <sup>2</sup>	2.5m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Private Outdoor space	None	7m <sup>2</sup> (balcony or terrace)	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Refuse store	Acceptable location	Convenient/ not dominating development	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Aspect	Single aspect south facing mitigated by bay window and 'set back' of bedroom windows	Single aspect discouraged	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Sunlight/daylight and privacy issues - no problems identified					
This flat complies with room dimensions but the CEL area is below the minimum. General storage is acceptable but no dirty storage is shown. There is no private outdoor space and the bathroom does not comply with the advocated standard. As a 2 bedroom flat a separate living area is not essential but would be necessary if, for example, the dwelling were to be let to a family by the Council.					

**Table 4.4 Example Development 1, Ground floor flat no. 2**

<b>Bedroom, flat with 3 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'Advocated' Standard?</b>
GIA	69.19m <sup>2</sup>	61m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
CEL	20.2m <sup>2</sup>	25m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Minimum width of living area	3.8m	3.2	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom 1 - Double	15.2m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Bedroom width	3.3m	N/A	2.6m	yes	yes
Bedroom length	4.75m	N/A	3m	yes	yes

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>Bedroom, flat with 3 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential Standard required</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets 'Essential' Standard?</b>	<b>Meets 'Advocated' Standard?</b>
Bedroom 2 - Single	9.3m <sup>2</sup>	8m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	Yes
Bedroom length	3.5m	N/A	3m	yes	yes
Bathroom	5.01m <sup>2</sup>	N/A	5.2m <sup>2</sup>	N/A	no
Ceiling heights	Not shown	2.4m	2.6m	Not known	Not known
General Storage	1.25m <sup>2</sup>	2m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Recycling	Area indicated in kitchen			yes	yes
Private Outdoor space	none	6m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	no
Refuse store	Acceptable location	Convenient/not dominating development	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Aspect	Dual	dual	(the same as essential standard)	yes	yes
Sunlight/daylight and privacy issues - no problems identified					
This flat meets most of the essential standards but the CEL is undersized, storage is insufficient, there is no 'dirty storage', and no private outdoor space. The bathroom would not meet the advocated area.					

**Table 4.5 Example Development 1, 2nd floor flat**

4.5 The flats in example 2 below are above a retail store and add interest to the external appearance of the building but like the flats in example 1 above, do not meet all of the Council's standards.

<b>2 bedroom, flat with 3 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential standard</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets essential standard ?</b>	<b>Meets advocated standard?</b>
GIA	62m <sup>2</sup>	61m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
CEL	24.35m <sup>2</sup>	25m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	-

## 4 Implementing the Standards

<b>2 bedroom, flat with 3 bedspaces</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Essential standard</b>	<b>Advocated standard</b>	<b>Meets essential standard ?</b>	<b>Meets advocated standard?</b>
Separate living area	No	Not Essential	Advocated	yes	No
Minimum width of living area	3.5m	3.2m	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
Bedroom 1 - double	13.65m <sup>2</sup>	12m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
Minimum width	3.1m	-	2.6m	-	yes
Minimum depth	3.9m	-	3m	-	yes
Bedroom 2 - single	7.82m <sup>2</sup>	8m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	-
Bedroom depth	2.8m	-	3m	-	no
Bathroom	4.17m <sup>2</sup>	-	5.2m <sup>2</sup>	-	no
Ceiling heights	Not shown	2.4m	2.6	Not known	-
General Storage	2.46m <sup>2</sup>	2m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
Recycling	Area in kitchen shown	Area specified	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
Private outdoor space	None	6m <sup>2</sup>	(the same as essential standard)	no	-
Refuse Store	acceptable	Convenient/not dominating development	(the same as essential standard)	yes	-
Aspect	Single West	dual		No	-
Sunlight/daylight and privacy issues - no problems identified. This flat meets many of the essential standards and only just fails on room areas but no information is supplied about Dirty storage, Lifetime Homes or ceiling height. A similar flat on the north facing elevation would not meet the essential minimum standard as it would be single aspect and north facing. None of the flats in this development have any individual private outdoor space.					

**Table 4.6 Example development 2, upper floor flat**

## 5 Annual Monitoring Report

### 5 Annual Monitoring Report

- 5.1 The Council carries out an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in order to assess the impacts of its policies. The impact of the SPD can be assessed by reference to the number of new residential properties granted planning permission per year after the SPD is adopted and the number of these properties which either do or do not comply with the standards. The longer term effects such as whether or not people are more inclined to remain in a neighbourhood because they are content with the standard of their home and its ability to adapt to their lifestyle, will be harder to assess.
- 5.2 A report prepared by University College London for CABE in April 2010 entitled 'Space standards: The Benefits' lists a number of benefits to health and well being to individuals and to society. Whilst it may not be possible to measure the less tangible benefits and attribute them to better housing, it may be possible to obtain feedback from the Council's Housing Services and from Local Estate Agents about the how new housing built to the standards in the SPD meets with the aspirations of its occupants.

## 6 References / Bibliography

### 6 References / Bibliography

Para.1.2 Homes for Today and Tomorrow (1961)  
Para.1.2 Housing Quality Indicators no.4 Published by the former Housing Corporation  
Para.1.2 Places Homes People-former English Partnerships Revised (Nov 2007)  
Para.1.3 CABE report by UCL 'Space Standards: the Benefits' (2010)  
Para.1.5 CABE publication 'Space in new homes - what residents think'.  
Para.1.5 Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide Interim Report (Aug 2010)  
Para.1.5 HCA's Draft proposed standards 2010  
Para.1.13 CABE report 'Resident satisfaction with space in the home' by HATC Ltd & Ipsos MORI (Jul 2009)  
Para.1.15 Housing Space Standards HATC for the GLA (2006)  
Para.1.32 GLA Wheelchair standards and BRE Wheelchair standards  
Para.2.9 'Planning for the future' S Davis & R Capie for the former Housing Corporation (2008)

#### Other useful publications

Ashford Strategic Housing Market Assessment by DTZ  
Ashford Borough Council Housing Lettings Policy  
Better places to live by design - A companion guide to PPG3  
CABE publication 'Simpler and better - Housing design in everyone's interest'.  
CABE Improving the design of new housing. What role for standards?  
CABE improving the quality of new housing. Technical background paper  
CABE report by Scot Wilson Dwelling size survey (Apr 2010)  
Draft London Housing Design Guide: Cost and Delivery Impact Assessment  
HCA Proposed Core Housing Design and Sustainability Standards Consultation (Mar 2010)  
Housing Corporation Housing Quality Indicators Version 4 (Apr 2007)~  
Levitt Bernstein - easy guide to good housing practice  
Lifetime Homes and wheelchair housing design - For Professionals Lifetime Homes  
Lifetime Homes Standard. Published 5th July by Habinteg  
London Design Guide Draft for consultation July 2009  
Mapping existing housing standards. A report prepared for CABE by Richard Partington Architects May 2010. (includes a summaries of Code for Sustainable Homes; Lifetime Homes; Secure by Design; Building for Life; Building Regulations Approved Documents and a summary diagram)  
National Housing Federation London Development Group - Response to Draft London Housing Design Guide Sept 2009  
Residential Dimensions Planning Crystal Palace Community Association  
Room to swing a cat ? - The amount and use of space in new dwellings in London and the South East (Mar 2010)Swingacat <http://www.swingacat.info/>

## Appendix 1: Examples of various minimum standards

### Appendix 1: Examples of various minimum standards

The table below compares suggested minimum standards produced by:

1. The Mayor of London's draft Housing Design Guide 2009 Interim Report and Evidence Summary July 2010 or SPG
2. Swing a Cat' the website for Gentoo Group Ltd (Registered Social Landlord) designed to help the public understand how property measures up to their needs.  
(<http://www.swingacat.info/index.php>)
3. HCA consultation document March 2010;
4. English Partnerships;
5. Residential Space & Layout Standards SPD - Ashford Borough Council (2011)

	1	2	3	4	5
Type of dwelling	Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide SPG	Swing a Cat	HCA consultation March 2010	EP	Ashford SPD
<b>Flats</b>					
1b 2p	50	57	48	51	50
2b 3p	61	65	61	66	61
2b 4p	70	80	70	77	70
3b 4p	74	80	-	77	74
3b 5p	86	98	86	-	86
3b 6p	95	100	-	-	95
4b 5p	90	80	-	-	90
4b 6p	99	100	99	-	99
<b>2 storey houses</b>					
2b 3p	71	-	71	66	71
2b 4p	83	80	80	77	83
3b 4p	87	80	-	-	87
3b 5p	96	98	96	93	96
4b 5p	100	98	-	93	100

## Appendix 1: Examples of various minimum standards

	1	2	3	4	5
Type of dwelling	Mayor of London's Housing Design Guide SPG	Swing a Cat	HCA consultation March 2010	EP	Ashford SPD
4b 6p	107	100	109	106	109
<b>3 storey houses</b>					
3b 5p	102	98	101	93	102
4b 5p	106	98	-	-	106
4b 6p	113	100	114	106	114

**Gross Internal Area (GIA) in square metres**

The table shows that the standard in the HCA consultation document is lower than the London Housing Design Guide in some cases such as a 1bed 2 person flat, 2 bed 4 person 2 storey house, 3 bed 5 person 3 storey house but the standard is higher for a 4 bed 6 person house.

Number of occupants/bedspaces	London	Swing a Cat	HCA 2010	Ashford
2 person/bedspaces	23	>22	22	23
3 person/bedspaces	25	>24	24	25
4 person/bedspaces	27	>27	27	27
5 person/bedspaces	29	>30	30	30
6 person/bedspaces	31	>33	33	33

**Cooking Eating and Living (CEL) in square metres**

### Bathrooms

- Mayor of London - 5 persons or more - minimum number of 1 bathroom and 1 additional WC
- HCA 2010 - minimum size of 5.2 square metres for a bathroom and 3.3 square metres for a WC (room without a bath or shower).

Both of these standards are used for Ashford in this SPD.

## Appendix 1: Examples of various minimum standards

### Storage and utility

Number of bedspaces	2	3	4	5	6
Square Metres	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5

**London Housing Design Guide and Ashford - a minimum of 1.5 square metres for 2 bedspaces and 0.5 square metres for every additional bedspace.**

The measurement proposed by the HCA based on a % figure is far greater than that set out in the Swing a Cat and London Housing Design documents. However, the Swing a Cat web site makes it clear that this figure is additional to furniture and kitchen units. The London Housing Design Standards Evidence Summary refers to storage and utility being built-in general storage which is in addition to storage provided by furniture in habitable rooms. For the purposes of the Ashford SPD it is proposed to use the figures from the London Housing Design Guide making it clear that kitchen units and 'dirty storage' areas will be additional requirements.

Number of occupants	2	3	4	5	6
Square Metres	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25
Cupboards	4	5	5	6	7

**Swing a Cat**

Number of occupants	2	3	4	5	6
Square metres	2.5	3	3.5 - 4.3	4.3 - 5.3	4.9 - 5.7

**The HCA consultation draft proposes a percentage of the overall internal floor area. A figure of 5% is suggested**

	London Housing Design Guide	Swing a Cat	HCA 2010	Ashford
Single	8	-	7.5	8
Double	12	-	11.5	12

**Bedroom Floor Areas in square metres**

From the above tables it can be seen that the various indicators do vary from one set of standards to another but on key criteria such as Cooking Eating and Living areas for a 2 person/bedspaces dwelling, there is general agreement. In other cases, there are wide discrepancies. In addition to the floor areas in the above table, there are other important dimensions in the London Housing Design Guide draft such as the recommendation that the narrowest part of a the main lounge should not be less than 3.2 m in dwellings designed for 4 or more people, for smaller dwellings (2 - 3 person) 2.8m is cited. The London Housing Design Guide also has a requirement that double and twin bedded rooms need to be a minimum of 2.75m wide (London Housing Design Standards Evidence Summary). The Crystal Palace Community Association Residential Dimensions state that all bedrooms should have a minimum length of 3 metres and

## **Appendix 1: Examples of various minimum standards**

double or twin bedded rooms should have a minimum width of 2.6m. Whilst it is important not to complicate the standards to be used by Ashford Borough Council, without minimum distances, a room complying with the minimum area can be awkward to furnish or circulate around. Although the HCA 2010 consultation draft does not include minimum room dimensions they are included in this SPD as part of the Ashford Borough minimum standards.

## Appendix 2: Checklists for essential and advocated minimum standards

### Appendix 2: Checklists for essential and advocated minimum standards

#### Checklist – Essential and Advocated Minimum Standards

**Advocated** minimum standards are additional to **essential** minimum standards, it is therefore always necessary to complete the checklist for **essential** standards.

Where a number of different dwelling types are proposed, a separate checklist headed with the dwelling type (or name), number of floors, number of bedspaces the dwelling is intended to accommodate and number of bedrooms, should be provided for each type of dwelling.

An example heading would be:

*'The Mayflower' (or unit type E)*

2 storeys

4 bedspaces

3 bedrooms

The **proposed** column should be filled in for each of the criteria in the check list. In some instances the proposed column will need a brief description (such as the location of the refuse store) rather than a figure. Where a dimension or area is required, the figure should be given in metres or square metres.

The proposed figures/descriptions should be checked for compliance against the standards set out in Chapter 3. For ease of reference a summary of the standards is set out in Appendix 3.

The **complies** column should be completed with a **yes or no** answer.

## Appendix 2: Checklists for essential and advocated minimum standards

### Checklist - Essential Minimum Standards

	Dwelling type _____	
	_____storey/s	
	_____bedspaces	_____bedroom/s
	Proposed	Complies essential minimum
GIA		
CEL		
Separate living area (homes with 3 or more bedrooms)		
Minimum width of living area 3.2m		
Bedroom 1 area		
Bedroom 2 area		
Bedroom 3 area		
Bedroom 4 area		
General Storage (area)		
Dirty Storage (location)		
Recycling (inside and outside storage)		
Number of bathrooms		
Number of WCs		
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms (includes kitchen)		
Rooms with sloping ceilings % under 2.4m specify rooms separately		
Private (individual) outdoor space		
Communal outdoor space (flats)		
Refuse store (location)		
Privacy distance (between overlooking windows or balconies)		
Aspects (N,S, E, W) i) Sunlight and ii) daylight (to habitable rooms)		
Layout for minimal noise transmission (flats)		

## Appendix 2: Checklists for essential and advocated minimum standards

### Checklist - Advocated Minimum Standards

	Dwelling type _____	
	_____storey/s	
	_____bedspaces	_____bedroom/s
	Proposed	Complies advocated minimum
Separate living area (homes with 2 or more bedrooms)		
Bedroom 1 width		
Bedroom 1 length		
Bedroom 2 length		
Bedroom 3 length		
Bedroom 4 length		
Bathroom area		
WC area		
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms (includes kitchen)		
Rooms with sloping ceilings % under 2.6m specify rooms separately		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 1 parking		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 2 approach to dwelling from parking		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 3 approach to all entrances		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 4 entrances		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 5 Communal stairs Communal lifts		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 6 internal doorways and hallways		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 7 circulations space		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 8 entrance level living space		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 9 potential entrance level bedspace		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 10 entrance level WC and shower drainage		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 11 WC and bathroom walls		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 12 stairs and potential lift		

## Appendix 2: Checklists for essential and advocated minimum standards

	Dwelling type _____	
	_____ storey/s	
	_____ bedspaces _____ bedroom/s	
	Proposed	Complies advocated minimum
Lifetime Homes Criteria 13 potential hoist to bathroom		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 14 bathroom		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 15 glazing and window handle height		
Lifetime Homes Criteria 16 location of service controls		

## Appendix 3: Summary of the standards to assist with checklists

### Appendix 3: Summary of the standards to assist with checklists

Summary of standards to assist with completing check lists - Minimum <b>Essential</b> Standards		
GIA (gross internal area)	<b>Flats</b>	
	1 bedroom 2 bedspaces	50m <sup>2</sup>
	2 bedrooms 3 bedspaces	61m <sup>2</sup>
	2 bedroom 4 bedspaces	70m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedroom 4 bedspaces	74m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedroom 5 bedspaces	86m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedroom 6 bedspaces	95m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 5 bedspaces	90m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 6 bedspaces	99m <sup>2</sup>
	<b>2 Storey houses</b>	
	2 bedroom 3 bedspaces	71m <sup>2</sup>
	2 bedroom 4 bedspaces	83m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedroom 4 bedspaces	87m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedroom 5 bedspaces	96m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 5 bedspaces	100m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 6 bedspaces	109m <sup>2</sup>
	<b>3 Storey houses</b>	
	3 bedroom 5 bedspaces	102m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 5 bedspaces	106m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedroom 6 bedspaces	114m <sup>2</sup>
	For every additional bedspace add at least 10m <sup>2</sup>	
CEL (Cooking eating and living)	2 bedspaces	23m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedspaces	25m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedspaces	27m <sup>2</sup>
	5 bedspaces	30m <sup>2</sup>
	6 bedspaces	33m <sup>2</sup>

## Appendix 3: Summary of the standards to assist with checklists

Summary of standards to assist with completing check lists - Minimum <b>Essential</b> Standards		
Separate living area	homes with 3 or more bedrooms require a living area separate from the kitchen	
Minimum width of living area	3.2m	
Bedroom area Double Bedroom	12m <sup>2</sup>	
Single bedroom	8m <sup>2</sup>	
General Storage floor area additional to kitchen units, recycling space, furniture and dirty storage.	2 bedspaces	1.5m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedspace	2m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedspaces	2.5m <sup>2</sup>
	5 bedspaces	3m <sup>2</sup>
	6 bedspaces	3.5m <sup>2</sup>
	For every additional bedspace add 0.5m <sup>2</sup>	
Dirty Storage (bicycles, outside toys, garden tools)	Location described (and measurable area shown on plans)	
Recycling (inside and outside storage)	Location described (and measurable area shown on plans)	
Number of bathrooms	1 (additional bathrooms are optional)	
Number of WCs	2 WCs if more than 4 bedspaces	
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms (includes kitchen)	2.4m	
Rooms with sloping ceilings	At least 50% over 2.4m specify rooms separately	
Private (individual) outdoor space	Flats, balconies 1.5m deep	
	2 bedspaces	5m <sup>2</sup>
	3 bedspaces	6m <sup>2</sup>
	4 bedspaces	7m <sup>2</sup>
	5 bedspaces	8m <sup>2</sup>
	6 bedspaces	9m <sup>2</sup>
	Individual private gardens 10m x width of dwelling, or equivalent	

## Appendix 3: Summary of the standards to assist with checklists

Summary of standards to assist with completing check lists - Minimum <b>Essential</b> Standards	
Communal outdoor space (flats)	Area out of public gaze but overlooked by residents for hanging washing, quiet relaxation and play.
Refuse store	Location described and area shown on plans
Privacy distance (between overlooking windows or balconies)	21m unless mitigated by design (explain if the latter)
Aspects (windows facing)	Describe (N, S, E, W) Majority of units at least dual aspect, no single aspect North facing i) Sunlight and ii) daylight (to habitable rooms)
Layout for minimal noise transmission (flats)	Quiet areas e.g. Bedrooms not over, under or beside noisier areas such as lounge of adjoining flat.

Summary of standards to assist with completing check lists - Minimum <b>Advocated</b> Standards	
Separate living area	Homes with 2 or more bedrooms require a living area separate from the kitchen.
Double Bedroom (2 bedspaces) width	2.6m
Double Bedroom length	3m
Single bedroom (1 bedspace) minimum length	3m
Bathroom area	5.2m <sup>2</sup>
Number of WCs	1 at entry level as well as bedroom level regardless of number of bedspaces (see Lifetime Homes).
WC area	3.3m <sup>2</sup>
Ceiling heights in habitable rooms (includes kitchen)	2.6m
Rooms with sloping ceilings	At least 50% 2.6m (specify rooms separately)

## Appendix 3: Summary of the standards to assist with checklists

Summary of standards to assist with completing check lists - Minimum <b>Advocated</b> Standards	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 1 parking	See Lifetime homes - The <i>Lifetime Homes</i> standard is a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. ... <a href="http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/">www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/</a>
Lifetime Homes Criteria 2 approach to dwelling from parking	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 3 approach to all entrances	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 4 entrances	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 5 Communal stairs Communal lifts	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 6 internal doorways and hallways	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 7 circulations space	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 8 entrance level living space	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 9 potential entrance level bedspace	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 10 entrance level WC and shower drainage	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 11 WC and bathroom walls	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 12 stairs and potential lift	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 13 potential hoist to bathroom	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 14 bathroom	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 15 glazing and window handle height	
Lifetime Homes Criteria 16 location of service controls	

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