

GWYNEDD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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Housing available for purchase, rent or part ownership at an affordable price relative to local income, and which will be safeguarded for this purpose in the future

Types of affordable housing

- Housing offered for purchase at an affordable price, relative to local incomes, house prices and interest rates
- Housing offered for rent from a Registered Social Landlord, or from a private developer on terms similar to social housing
- Housing offered for part ownership with Registered Social Landlords (social affordable housing), the Council, or private developers

Providing affordability

- Plot size and density depend on the number of dwellings on each site; plots should not be excessive, otherwise the rise in value over time may make them unaffordable in the future
- The type and size of individual dwellings will be established through the findings of a local housing needs assessment, and should be compact enough to keep construction costs to a minimum, but not so small as to be considered unacceptable for modern living
- Minimum standards will apply to ensure the dwellings are sustainable, practical, adaptable and economic to run and maintain
- The design requirements of affordable housing will be no less stringent than for open market housing, and developments must be in keeping with the local character to protect and enhance the town or village in which they are built
- On any site, the affordable housing should not be distinguishable from open market housing either in terms of its standard of design and construction, nor its location within the development

Affordability will be safeguarded by

- Restricting sale of the property to people with a genuine local need for affordable housing
- Fixing future sale prices at an agreed percentage of the open market value, to maintain the relationship with local incomes
- Withdrawing the occupier's rights to alter or extend without express planning permission

Eligibility

To qualify for affordable housing, applicants must be able to prove a genuine 'need' and fall within the definition of 'local' to the specific community

For further information on assessment of local need refer to the relevant Gwynedd Council Planning Authority's Development Plans, Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing

Allocated and Windfall Sites

The Authority will negotiate with developers to determine the element of affordable housing required on allocated sites or on large windfall sites. The element of affordable housing will be set on the basis of evidence of need and site suitability.

The agreed percentage of affordable housing within any development on allocated sites and large windfall sites will need to be integrated into the general layout. Whether this is formal – with orderly building lines and plot widths, similar to a typical street in a town – or informal – irregular clusters of dwellings – will depend on the locality and character of the surrounding area, but in either case, affordable homes can be incorporated into groups of dwellings without being identifiable by location, size or design.

Rural Exception Sites

Occasionally a genuine local need for affordable housing may be identified within a village which cannot be satisfied on sites elsewhere. In this case, the Planning Authority may agree to the construction of one or more dwelling(s) on a suitable site immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, provided the special character of the village is not compromised. The following factors will need to be taken into consideration:

- Siting of the housing and density of the layout must relate to the existing settlement pattern as well as landscape features of the site, so that growth of the village is natural and organic
- The height, mass and form of the buildings, should be similar in feel to surrounding buildings to avoid overwhelming them
- Materials and construction details should be appropriate for the locality – good contemporary design incorporating traditional materials in innovative ways should be considered in preference to mock historic styles

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Allocated and windfall sites

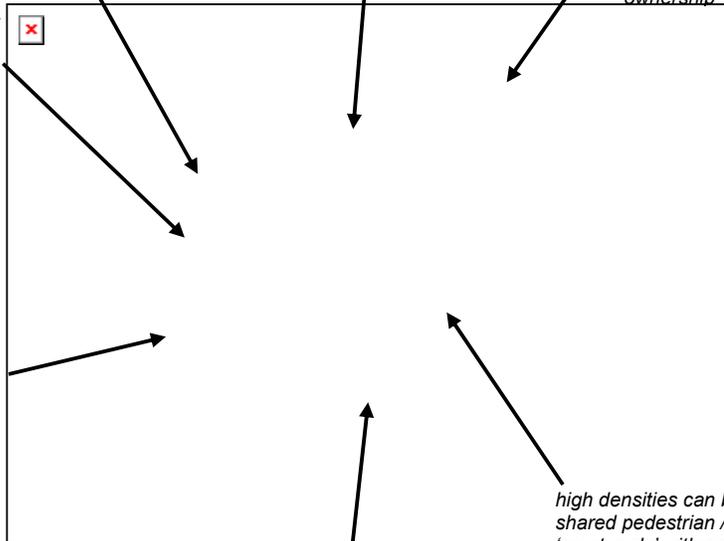
layouts should minimise overlooking, noise or other disturbance, both between dwellings and from roads, adjoining sites and other development

a good social mix produces an active neighbourhood that encourages passive surveillance, personal interaction and a sense of ownership

maintain pedestrian links through the site

retain landscape features – hedges, mature trees, etc – which will provide shelter and screening, and maintain the local character

boundary walls, paving and other public realm elements should reflect the local character



high densities can be achieved with shared pedestrian / vehicle 'courtyards' with appropriate surfacing to keep speeds very low, providing access to, and supervision of, both private areas and public spaces including communal parking

Allocated or unallocated 'windfall' sites in towns and villages should be developed in line with good practice (refer to other sections of the Design Guide).
Where the provision of affordable housing is negotiated with the Authority, units should be integrated into the development so that they are indistinguishable from the open market housing

with 'service' areas such as kitchens and bathrooms to the north, and careful orientation of units, the benefits of solar gain to living rooms can be maximised for energy efficiency



'settlement boundary'

rural exception site

On rural exception sites it is essential to use sympathetic forms, massing and scale, incorporate local materials and detailing, and retain existing landscape features and boundaries, to integrate the new into the fabric of the village. This should not prevent innovation, especially where imaginative design is used to improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of the building



Affordable housing on rural exception sites