

(Informal Joint) Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Technical Advice Note: Space Standards for Residential Development	
Report No:	CAB/SE/17/059	
Report to and date:	SEBC/FHDC (Informal Joint) Cabinets	14 November 2017
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Purpose of report:	To seek approval from Cabinet to introduce an interim Technical Advice Note on space standards for residential development that we will seek to require housing developers to adhere to.	

Recommendations:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Cabinet: (1) approves the adoption of an interim Technical Advice Note on Space Standards for Residential Development, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/17/059, in line with the Government's Nationally Described Space Standards; and (2) notes that when a new joint West Suffolk Local Plan is produced it is proposed to include requirements around space standards as part of a specific design policy.
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation has been carried out with Leadership Team, the relevant SEBC and FHDC Portfolio Holders, the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group and both SEBC and FHDC Development Control Committees
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Suffolk councils could choose not to introduce Technical Advice Note on Space Standards for Residential Development and continue to have to negotiate on every scheme with developers.
Implications:	
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> •
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •
Risk/opportunity assessment:	<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
No minimum space standards in place – Developers continue to build units below Government’s Nationally Described Space Standards	High	Technical Guidance note introduce so developers are aware of West Suffolk’s aspirations around space standards	Medium
Introducing a minimum space standard will discourage developers from building in west Suffolk	Medium/Low	Having a clearly defined Space Standards policy will make it clear to developers what they will be expected to adhere to in West Suffolk	Low
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward/s		
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	None		
Documents attached:	Appendix A - Technical Advice Note: Space Standards for Residential Development		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Rationale for introducing Technical Guidance Note

1.1.1 Currently neither Forest Heath nor St Edmundsbury Councils have within their development plans a policy that requires developers to adhere to constructing properties to a minimum space standard. Recently issues have arisen with developers building, or proposing to build properties, both open-market and affordable, which are well below the Government's Nationally Described Space Standards. This is causing issues where a number of Registered Providers have not been willing to make offers to purchase the S106 affordable units, subsequently leading to the risk that the Council may lose these properties as affordable units.

1.1.2 Additionally, national research has raised concerns over the potential long-term negative impact of the small sizes of some of the "open market" houses on the occupant's health and wellbeing, and/or an inability for the houses to be future-proofed. In West Suffolk, for example, issues have arisen recently with developers proposing small sized properties on sites in Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Red Lodge.

1.1.3 The table below provides a comparison for some of the more common house sizes currently being built or proposed:

	Builder Average across West Suffolk	Government's Technical Standard	Minimum sizes Registered Providers will accept
1BF 2P	43 m ²	50 m ²	50 m ²
2BH 4P	60 m ²	79 m ²	75 m ²
3BH 5P	80 m ²	93 m ²	88 m ²
4BH 6P	102 m ²	106 m ²	102 m ²
5BH 8P	153 m ²	128 m ²	128 m ²

1.1.4 Unfortunately it is not possible to apply a new policy to which we can require housing developers to comply with, until the new joint West Suffolk Local Plan is produced. We can, however, produce a technical advice note setting out our preferred minimum space standards, which developers will be advised to have regard to. It is proposed that West Suffolk adopt the Government's Nationally Described Space Standards, as the minimum standard to which we would want builders/ developers to aspire to build new properties.

1.1.5 Evidence from other authorities across the country who have included a minimum space standards as policy within their Local Plan is that this has not discouraged developers from continuing to build within their area.