



Local Development Plan 2030

Affordable Housing

Supplementary Planning Guidance 2024

www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/planning



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides guidance specific to the delivery of affordable housing as part of mixed tenure developments in Mid and East Antrim Borough. It is intended for use by developers, the public and by planning officers in the assessment and delivery of planning proposals for new housing developments within the Borough.
- 1.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance represents non-statutory planning guidance that supports, clarifies and/or illustrates by way of example policies included within the current planning policy framework, including development plans and regional planning guidance. The information set out in this SPG is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications and should be read in conjunction with the existing planning policy framework, most notably the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland and the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 (LDP).
- 1.3 Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements will enable the delivery of new homes to meet affordable housing need and also ensure that growth contributes positively to the creation of mixed, diverse, inclusive and sustainable communities. A range of housing in terms of dwelling size, type, tenure, and affordability is central to achieving mixed, balanced communities, and ensuring areas are attractive to people of different ages, lifestyles, and incomes.
- 1.4 In order to aid the effective implementation of Policy HOU5, the Council considers it prudent to produce this guidance. It is aimed at providing further clarity to landowners, developers and agents to enable the efficient and effective delivery of affordable housing, consistently with Policy HOU5. It does not introduce new policy. It aims to ensure that the existing policy is implemented and applied consistently and effectively through the development management process.
- 1.5 Appendix 1 includes a checklist of information that should accompany a planning application where a proportion of affordable housing is required.

2.0 Definition of Affordable Housing

2.1 Consistently with regional policy, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 - Plan Strategy defines affordable housing as comprising of social rented housing and intermediate housing. Each of these terms is defined separately as follows.

Social rented housing: This is housing that is provided at an affordable rent by a registered housing association; that is, one which is registered and regulated by the Department for Communities as a social housing provider. Social rented accommodation should be available to households in housing need and is offered in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme, administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which prioritises households who are living in unsuitable or insecure accommodation.

Intermediate housing: This consist of shared ownership housing provided through a registered housing association and helps households who can afford a small mortgage, but that are not able to afford to buy a property outright. The property is split between part ownership by the householder and part social renting from the registered housing association. The proportion of property ownership and renting can vary depending on householder circumstances and preferences.

2.2 Both the SPPS (2015) and the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 - Plan Strategy recognise that the DfC definition of intermediate housing may change over time to incorporate other forms of housing tenure below open market rates. The Plan Strategy further advises that where this is the case, such additional products will be considered suitable to help meet affordable housing obligations of the policies of the LDP.

2.3 In April 2021, DfC adopted a new overarching definition of affordable housing, which aims to extend the range of affordable housing products. This definition is now adopted by the SPPS. The definition is:

“Affordable housing is:

- a) Social rented housing; or
- b) Intermediate housing for sale; or
- c) Intermediate housing for rent

that is provided outside of the general market, for those whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing which is funded by Government must remain affordable or alternatively there must be provision for the public subsidy to be repaid or recycled in the provision of new affordable housing.”

2.4 This new definition is consistent with the definition of affordable housing as set out in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 - Plan Strategy.

3.0 Key Stakeholders

- 3.1 The delivery of affordable housing requires a collaborative effort from a number of key stakeholders. A broad description of their respective roles is set out below.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

- 3.2 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is the planning authority, with responsibility for preparing the Local Development Plan for the Borough, including associated planning objectives and policies. The Council determines the majority of individual planning applications within the Borough. The Council can negotiate details of affordable housing through the planning system and secure provision by means of conditions or Section 76 planning agreements (s76 Agreements).

Department for Infrastructure

- 3.3 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has primary responsibility for the preparation of planning policy consistently with section 1 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, including the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). They also provide planning oversight and guidance for Councils, including the regional monitoring of performance, under the two-tier planning system. DfI can also act as the planning authority in the determination of regionally significant or 'called-in' planning applications.

Department for Communities

- 3.4 DfC is responsible for setting housing policy at a regional level as well as providing grant funding for the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP). DfC may also provide loan funding for intermediate housing and sets the property value limit for intermediate housing products. In addition, it has responsibility for the registration, inspection and monitoring of Registered Housing Associations (RHAs) and for maintaining the Housing Association Guide, part of which sets the design standards that social rented housing must meet.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

- 3.5 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland and its statutory functions are principally set out in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. These include the examination and assessment of housing need (article 6(1)). NIHE is also landlord to approximately 82,000 social rented dwellings. It is also responsible for the management and delivery of the SHDP. The number of homes to be provided in each programme year is governed by the amount of funding available from central government through DfC. This function involves making payments of the Housing Association Grant to Registered Housing Associations, in respect of the construction and provision of social housing.
- 3.6 NIHE are also named as a consultation body in section 2(1) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and as a consultee in development management, 'where a proposal is likely to require a statement of affordable housing need' as set out in part 1 paragraph 8 of schedule 3 to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Registered Housing Associations

- 3.7 A Registered Housing Association is a society, body of trustees, or company that provides social rented and/or intermediate accommodation and may specialise in accommodation for special needs groups. They are the main developers of new social housing for rent in Northern Ireland, do not trade for profit and are regulated by DfC. The requirement for affordable housing units to be included within market developments provides Registered Housing Associations with the opportunity to acquire units on sites that they would otherwise not have access to. The Registered Housing Associations are listed on the website (www.nifha.org) of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA).

Developers

- 3.8 Developers play a key role in the delivery of affordable housing in partnership with a Registered Housing Association. They are required to engage early in the process with a Registered Housing Association in relation to need and will discuss planning requirements with the Council throughout the process.

4.0 Policy Context

Regional planning policy

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

- 4.1 The RDS aims to “promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities”. This aim is expanded to explain that the provision of more social and affordable housing helps to build strong balanced communities. Specific policy in relation to affordable housing in the RDS is set out under RG6 ‘Strengthen community cohesion’ and RG8 ‘Managing housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development’. RG6 seeks to encourage mixed housing development, with neighbourhoods containing homes in a range of sizes and tenures, to enable to stable communities and to reduce isolation.
- 4.2 RG8 states that ‘the varied housing needs of the whole community need to be met’. This includes affordable housing. Local development plans are required to identify housing land to ensure an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet needs of everyone and to include land for social and intermediate housing.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland

- 4.3 The SPPS includes a core planning principle ‘to improve health and wellbeing’, an important element of which is to support the delivery of homes to meet the full range of housing needs. The SPPS acknowledges the role of the local development plan as the primary vehicle for facilitating identified need for affordable housing. Key aims for housing development to be met through the local development plan, include achieving balanced communities, through the provision of housing in a variety of tenures and types.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy

- 4.4 The Plan Strategy provides the strategic planning framework and planning policies for the plan area as a whole across a range of topics. It sets out the vision for Mid and East Antrim as well as the strategic objectives required to deliver that vision. It also includes a suite of topic-based strategic subject policies, including those relating to housing.
- 4.5 In relation to housing, the Plan Strategy seeks to ensure future housing growth is accommodated by ensuring sufficient land is available to meet housing requirements in sustainable locations. The provision of a range of well-designed house types and sizes and achieving a balance between affordable houses to rent, other types of tenure and market housing for sale are all considered as important factors in building sustainable communities. The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 has an important role to perform by supporting the delivery of this mix of homes to meet the full range of housing needs and creating places that are safe, inclusive, well planned and where people want to live, work and play.
- 4.6 In seeking a proportion of affordable housing alongside general market housing in larger developments, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 will ensure the delivery of an appropriate range of house sizes, types and tenures to meet local needs, whilst minimising future disadvantage often associated with large areas of social housing.
- 4.7 This SPG should be read alongside Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements, which requires (where a need for Affordable Housing is established by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or other relevant housing authority through a Housing Needs Assessment) proposals for housing developments of 10 dwellings or more, or on a site of 0.2 hectare or more, to meet the following quota:
Main and Small Towns: 20% Affordable Housing
Villages and Small Settlements: 10% Affordable Housing.

Local Policies Plan

- 4.8 The Local Policies Plan sets out site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land in the Borough. It contains local spatial policies applicable to particular local zonings or local designations. Where Council considers it necessary to provide a higher proportion of affordable housing, to that set out in Policy HOU5, the Local Policies Plan may seek to deliver this through key site requirements attached to specific housing zonings.

5.0 Affordable Housing Policy

5.1 The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 will identify land for affordable housing using two mechanisms:

1. **LDP policy delivered through Development Management:** The Plan Strategy Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements sets the proportion of affordable housing required for all residential developments of a certain threshold or more.

Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements

Where a need for Affordable Housing is established by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or other relevant housing authority through a Housing Needs Assessment; proposals for housing developments of 10 dwellings or more, or on a site of 0.2 hectare or more, will only be permitted subject to meeting the following quota:

- Main and Small Towns: 20% Affordable Housing
- Villages and Small Settlements: 10% Affordable Housing

Where it is demonstrated that a development is not viable a reduced or alternative provision of affordable housing may be acceptable.

All proposals for residential development will also be required to meet the General Policy and accord with other provisions of the LDP.

2. **Key Site Requirements:** Where Council consider it necessary the Local Policies Plan can set key site requirements (KSR) and zone land for affordable housing. KSRs can specify a number or proportion of the units to be provided for affordable housing.

5.2 For both approaches the following will apply:

- Where a planning application is submitted to Council and is subject to an affordable housing requirement, Council will liaise with NIHE to confirm if affordable housing on the site is required. NIHE will advise the Council on the proportions of social rented housing and intermediate housing for each site required. If social rented housing need or intermediate housing demand, in the local area, has been met or has decreased, the affordable housing requirement can be lowered or removed. NIHE will also advise on the mix, size and type of affordable housing required on the site.
- The social rented housing provided by a Registered Housing Associations is part funded by government grant and part funded by private finance.
- The intermediate housing may be funded by government, through Registered Housing Associations, in conjunction with private sector finance.
- Applicants are encouraged to engage with a Registered Housing Association, at an early stage of the design and application process, to discuss layout and the financial and technical regime, and the transfer of the completed affordable housing units. Details on social rented housing design can be found in DfC's Housing Association Guide (<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/housing-association-guide>). Once constructed, the affordable housing units shall be transferred to a Registered Housing Association, for allocation and management.
- Sites should not be artificially divided to circumvent affordable housing policies but can be phased to assist meeting affordable housing requirements. Where there is a phased approach to the development of a site, this should be discussed with the Council at the outset to ensure that the affordable housing requirement can be developed in a comprehensive way over the whole scheme, within an appropriate time. Where a large-scale development proposes a phased approach to the delivery of housing over the course of a considerable number of years, it may be appropriate to include within a Section 76 agreement a review mechanism which allows the parties to the agreement to keep the delivery of affordable housing in later stages of the development under review.

6.0 Amplification

Pre-Application Discussions

- 6.1 The SPPS advocates the use of Pre-Application Discussions (PADs) in order to support the preparation of high standard applications. PADs can provide advice on policy requirements and the information that should be contained within an application, which should streamline the application process.
- 6.2 A PAD service is available from Council's planning team. Applicants are encouraged to use this service if they are proposing development on a site that is required to provide a proportion or number of affordable housing units. Applicants may also invite their chosen Registered Housing Association to a PAD meeting. Council may invite NIHE to provide written comment, or attendance for more complex proposals, to provide advice on housing need and housing mix of the affordable units. If an applicant envisages making a case for reduced or no affordable housing provision on grounds of viability, then they are encouraged to raise this during the PAD process so that the evidence required to demonstrate this can be agreed in advance.

Site size and threshold

- 6.3 Policy HOU5 requires affordable housing to be included on all sites of 0.2 hectare or greater or on sites for 10 or more units. Where a site is smaller than 0.2 hectare, but 10 or more units are proposed, the requirements of Policy HOU5 will apply. Equally, the requirements of Policy HOU5 also apply where a site is 0.2 hectare or greater, but fewer than 10 residential units are proposed. This is most likely to involve a mix of uses within a single development.
- 6.4 Council will be alert to proposals that seek to avoid the requirements of Policy HOU5, being deliberately designed to remain below the threshold when they would otherwise be promoted as larger schemes. This has been taken into account in the wording of Policy HOU5. This issue is likely to arise in cases where, for example:
- The site is zoned for housing and adjoins a broader area of residential zoning;
 - The subject site has another similar planning application for residential development from the same applicant in close proximity; or
 - The subject site and surrounding lands are in the same ownership, or are divided into multiple ownership in advance of making a planning application.
- 6.5 Council will consider site capacity and whether a proposal makes optimum use of the land and will take account of the development potential of all adjoining zoned or un-zoned sites to ensure that development proposals do not take place in a piecemeal fashion. Where the sub-division of land has resulted in two or more sites that fall below the policy thresholds, the Council will treat them as one site for the purposes of applying Policy HOU5.

Proportion

- 6.6 Policy HOU5 requires a minimum of 20% of units to be provided as affordable housing in main and small towns and a minimum of 10% in villages and small settlements. Where 20% or 10% (where applicable) of the total number of units would result in a fraction of a unit, this should be rounded to the nearest whole unit i.e. where the calculation would equate to 0.4 or less this should be rounded down and where it would equate to 0.5 or more it should be rounded up.
- 6.7 However, it should also be noted that where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary and viable to provide a higher proportion of affordable housing, the Council will expect developments to do so. In this context, it is important to note that KSRs pertaining to certain larger housing sites in the plan may seek a higher contribution of affordable housing.
- 6.8 In exceptional circumstances, there may be cases where abnormal costs or constraints and/or the mix of house types and tenures required may result in a proposal being unviable and, therefore, unable to meet the above requirements in full. As with all proposals for development that trigger the requirements of Policy HOU5, this should be discussed with the Council at an early stage as part of the PAD process. As explained below, the onus will rest on the applicant to submit a fully evidenced viability appraisal supporting any

argument that the development would be unviable if affordable housing was to be required to be delivered at policy compliant levels.

- 6.9 Proposals for residential institutions i.e. care homes and nursing homes will normally be exempt from the requirements of Policy HOU5.

What can be included as affordable housing?

- 6.10 Section 2.0 above outlines the definition of social rented and intermediate housing as detailed in the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and as revised by DfC on 1 April 2021. If an applicant is unsure about whether a particular product meets the definition of affordable housing, this should be raised in the first instance with the Council which may, if appropriate, consult NIHE for advice.
- 6.11 DfC explain that affordable housing is available to households who otherwise could not house themselves, for example, because they would struggle to afford the cost of housing in the open market, or they need a specific type of house which is not commonly available. It is provided outside the general market i.e. it is not a home bought privately or a home rented from a private landlord. It is therefore not available to households who can meet their own housing needs without government support.
- 6.12 Affordable homes are generally delivered via specially designed products, such as those detailed below, which are operated according to specific criteria to ensure that, where government funding is provided, it is targeted based on objective need. The criteria are specific to each product.

Social rented housing

- 6.13 Social rented housing is housing provided at an affordable rent by a Registered Housing Association; that is, one which is registered and regulated by DfC as a social housing provider. Social rented accommodation should be available to households in housing need and is offered in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme, administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which prioritises households who are living in unsuitable or insecure accommodation. Social rented housing can only be assigned to applicants registered on the common waiting list, in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme, in priority of need and must be controlled and managed by a Registered Housing Association.

Intermediate housing for sale

- 6.14 Intermediate housing for sale is provided through a Registered Housing Association and helps households who can afford a small mortgage, but that are not able to afford to buy a property outright. The property is split between part ownership by the householder and part social renting from the Registered Housing Association. The proportion of property ownership and renting can vary depending on householder circumstances and preferences.

Intermediate housing for rent

- 6.15 DfC has developed a new Intermediate Rent Policy¹ (March 2023) to create an additional supply of affordable homes. It intends to provide an additional rental choice for lower to moderate income households, providing longer-term, higher quality, well-managed homes. Intermediate Rent is not a form of social rented housing and offers private rental tenancies, at a below market rate of rent. Intermediate Rent can provide a solution for households struggling to meet open market rental costs, and those wishing to enter low cost home ownership in the future.
- 6.16 Intermediate Rent homes are intended to remain as Intermediate housing for rent for the longer term. By offering tenancies of up to five years at a time with the option to renew, (subject to agreement of the landlord and tenant), these homes can be offered for rent to multiple households over time. Given the indicative tenancy durations, it would be expected that a dwelling operating as Intermediate Rent would continue to operate for a minimum period of ten years (i.e. two consecutive five-year tenancies). Any Intermediate Rent homes which are developed using Government funding would be expected to be retained as Intermediate Rent in line with any funding agreement conditions.

¹<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-homes-for-intermediate-rent-design-standards.pdf>

Design of Affordable Housing

- 6.17 Where the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 has identified an affordable housing requirement, applicants/developers should contact a Registered Housing Association partner of their choice, who can advise them on housing mix and costs for the development of affordable housing, before drawing up and submitting a development proposal. Registered Housing Associations can be contacted directly or through the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA)².
- 6.18 Design standards in respect of social rented housing are contained within the Housing Association Design Guide, which is included within the Housing Association Guide³, maintained, and published by DfC. Social rented housing development that is not purpose designed may mean Registered Housing Associations are unable, or unwilling to take delivery of the housing units, increasing the likelihood of the development not complying with the relevant requirements.
- 6.19 Intermediate housing for sale should be designed in accordance with building regulation standards and Policy HOU7 Adaptable and Accessible Homes. Developers proposing Intermediate housing for rent should be aware of the draft DfC Homes for Intermediate Rent Design Standards⁴ document (and any subsequently finalised document) which has been produced to outline expectations on the development and acquisition of properties to be offered as Intermediate Rent. Intermediate Rent homes developed with government funding are required to meet the design standards in the document, and homes delivered without funding are strongly encouraged to meet the standards outlined.
- 6.20 On mixed tenure sites, a common design approach between tenures should be used. The affordable housing should be indistinguishable from market housing provided on the same site, in terms of external design. The layout should optimise residential amenity for all tenures.

Financing Affordable Housing

- 6.21 Social rented housing is typically funded through a combination of DfC grant funding (administered by NIHE), and a Registered Housing Association's own funding. Social rented housing development is controlled within financial parameters, set out by DfC under Total Cost Indicators (TCI), an 'all-in' forecast on unit costs based on land and property costs from Land and Property Services. Grant is only payable to Registered Housing Associations, who will acquire properties from the developer; therefore, the developer should discuss proposals, TCI levels and financing with a Registered Housing Association. Intermediate housing may be funded by a private capital and loans e.g. loans from DfC such as Financial Transaction Capital.

Viability

- 6.22 Where the developer seeks to reduce or not comply with Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements, due to viability concerns, the applicant must provide Council with a full viability appraisal of the submitted proposal. It should be noted, that the viability appraisal may be made available to the public and published alongside other application documents. If a developer wishes to make the case that a viability appraisal should not be made available to the public and published alongside other application documents, it should clearly explain the basis for this and provide a proposed redacted version for publication. The final decision on whether to make a viability appraisal public will be a matter for the Council. If a developer can achieve a minimum profit, (normally 15%) across the whole scheme, the affordable housing requirement will be considered financially viable.
- 6.23 Negotiations to reduce an affordable housing requirement are ordinarily expected only to arise where site circumstances will require exceptional or abnormal costs to be borne by the developer. However, the presence of these issues should reduce land value. The price paid for land will not be considered in the assessment of viability, rather land value will be the current value as independently calculated.

² <https://nifha.org/who-we-are/nifha-members/>

³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/collections/housing-association-guide>

⁴ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-homes-for-intermediate-rent-design-standards.pdf>

- 6.24 The assessment of viability should be carried out using industry standard methodologies and drawing upon robust and representative data. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from qualified professionals when undertaking these assessments. Council will assess the information provided. It will typically expect the following information to be included in any assessment (this list is not exhaustive and does not preclude the Council from asking for additional information during the application process):
1. Developers/applicants development appraisal;
 2. All fees incurred;
 3. Development Sales Revenue and Unit Sales Prices;
 4. Build costs;
 5. All other costs;
 6. Gross Development Value;
 7. Profit;
 8. Costing of any developer contributions; and
 9. Any other issue considered relevant.

- 6.25 In exceptional circumstances, it may not always be possible to fully meet the required affordable housing quota. This may be due to the affordable housing requirement being determined to be unviable or, for example, if the proposal is the conversion of a listed building. In these instances, the following sequential approach should be taken:
1. A change in housing mix and/or timing of the affordable housing provision.
 2. In consultation with NIHE the potential for reducing the affordable housing quota will be examined.
 3. Offsite provision - this must be within the same housing need assessment area. Such sites need to be uncommitted so that conditions or planning agreements to provide affordable housing can be attached to the permission. Offsite provision needs to have a realistic prospect of gaining planning permission, be within DfC financial parameters for both social and intermediate housing, within the same time frame as the original proposal and accommodate a mix of units to meet needs/demand. Offsite provision should not lead to an over concentration of affordable housing in one location as the new site will have to accommodate its own required proportion of affordable housing, as well as the offsite requirement. The offsite provision should be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement.

Delivery and implementation

- 6.26 The justificatory text of Policy HOU5, states that “the delivery of affordable housing will be secured by way of a planning condition or a formal planning agreement between the Council and the developer” (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 – Plan Strategy, paragraph 8.1.41 (page 175)). It will ultimately be a matter for the Council at the development management stage to decide in the exercise of its judgement which mechanism(s) are more appropriate on the facts of a particular case. Where a planning condition is used the Council may register it on the Statutory Charges Register of the Land Registry.
- 6.27 Where a Section 76 is required it is recognised that a number of possible methods exist for the delivery of the affordable housing, therefore clauses within the Section 76 Agreement will need to be tailored to reflect the proposed delivery methods, products used and circumstances in each case. To assist this process, the Council is developing template model Section 76 Agreements for the most common approaches. These model planning agreements can then be tailored to the specific circumstances of each development, with the most important consideration from a Council perspective being a workable solution between all parties that results in affordable housing being delivered to meet identified need/demand. Planning permission will not be issued until the final Section 76 agreement has been signed by all relevant parties.
- 6.28 There may be occasions where development is delivered over a number of phases, based on an agreed concept masterplan. In such circumstances, the Council will normally include specific triggers in the Section 76 agreement to ensure that the affordable housing will be delivered at key stages and will not be delivered significantly in advance of, or later than, market housing.

Monitoring

- 6.29 The Council will monitor the delivery of affordable housing to ensure the effectiveness of the policy approach and the findings incorporated in the LDP’s Annual Monitoring Report. This will record the number of affordable homes approved and built per annum and the size of the units.

7.0 Process Guide

Pre-Application

1. If Policy HOU5 Affordable Housing in Settlements applies to a planning application, the applicant will ordinarily be required to provide affordable housing.
2. From the feasibility stage of the design process, developers should:
 - consult the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 – Plan Strategy and any associated supplementary planning guidance for housing policy and affordable housing requirements;
 - consult DfC’s Housing Association Design Guide on social rented housing, lifetime homes and wheelchair user unit standards; and
 - check the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Local Policies Plan for additional Key Site Requirements.
3. If Policy HOU5 is applicable, the applicant should contact a Registered Housing Association to seek advice on the tenure, housing mix, design, and costs of affordable housing for the specific location.
4. The applicant is recommended to contact Council for a PAD. NIHE can advise the PAD on the housing need requirements, if requested.
5. Advice given by NIHE will be without prejudice and current at the date of the PAD. The applicant should be aware that advice might change, for example, if there is a change in housing need.
6. An affordable housing proposal form (Appendix 1) should be completed (parts 1-13), by the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the affordable housing requirement. This will also act as a checklist of requirements.

Applications

7. The developer has responsibility for the design of the development, and to ensure that the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council LDP 2030 affordable housing requirements are met.
8. An affordable housing proposal form, see Appendix 1, should be completed by the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the affordable housing requirement. This will also act as a checklist of requirements.
9. At planning application stage, the applicant should state how the proposal complies with the standards outlined at step 2, within a design and access statement or concept plan. This should contain information including the number of proposed new homes, the dwelling size, location, mix and type (bedrooms/occupancy) belonging to each tenure.
10. Developers and architects can seek advice from a Registered Housing Association on finance, and dwelling numbers, to meet the affordable housing requirement.
11. The location and design of all affordable dwellings must be shown on the plans submitted with a full or reserved matters planning application.
12. Council will consult NIHE on receipt of an application where affordable housing is proposed/required.
13. If there is a requirement for the provision of affordable housing, NIHE will confirm the need, numbers, and mix of units to be provided, in its consultation response.
14. Council will determine the application taking into consideration NIHE and all other consultees’ advice.
15. A Section 76 planning agreement should be signed or conditions requiring the development of the affordable housing units should be applied to all approvals.
16. The case officer may consult with NIHE over the content of a planning agreement, if they consider it appropriate.

Acquisition

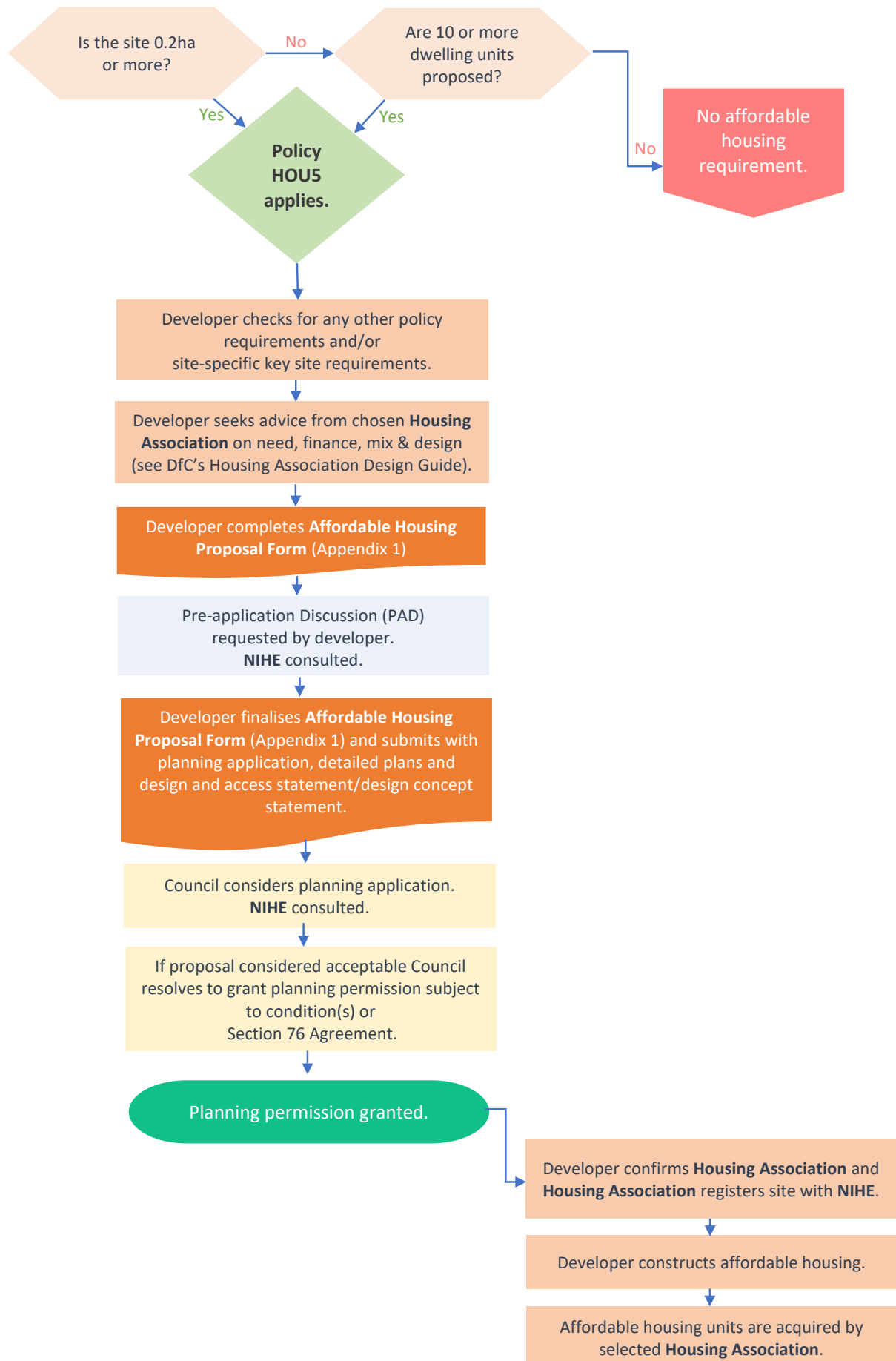
17. The developer and the Registered Housing Association will sign a sale/purchase agreement.
 18. The developer will build the affordable housing units, as outlined within the planning agreement.
 19. NIHE can only release housing association grant to a Registered Housing Association; not directly to a developer.
- 7.1 The Registered Housing Association and the developer are advised to enter into a performance agreement to determine the timing of the delivery of the affordable housing units, the maintenance and management of communal areas and any associated service charges and structural warranties.
 - 7.2 If the developer does not commence development of the affordable housing units within the statutory expiry period of the planning permission or does not complete the affordable housing units within a specified time agreed with a Registered Housing Association, the developer will be developing at their own risk.

Appendix 1: Proposal form and checklist

Affordable Housing Proposal Form			
1	Name of Development		
2	Site Address/Location of development		
3	Affordable Housing Policy Reference		
4	Housing zoning reference, if applicable		
5	Planning policy numbers/proportion, if applicable		
6	Total number of dwellings proposed		
7	Site size		
8	Total number of affordable dwellings proposed		
9	Number of social rented housing dwellings proposed		
10	Number of intermediate dwellings proposed		
11	Drawing numbers of plans showing the location and designs of the affordable housing		
12	Breakdown of Social Housing Types		
	Size: Bedrooms/occupancy	Houses	Apartments
	1 bed/1 person		
	1 bed/2 persons		
	2 bed/2 persons		
	2 bed/3 persons		
	3 bed/3 persons		
	3 bed/4 persons		
	3 bed/ 5 persons		
	4 bed+		
	Wheelchair units		

13	Breakdown of Intermediate Housing Types		
	Size: Bedrooms/occupancy	Houses	Apartments
	1 bed/1 person		
	1 bed/2 persons		
	2 bed/2 persons		
	2 bed/3 persons		
	3 bed/3 persons		
	3 bed/4 persons		
	3 bed/ 5 persons		
	4 bed+		
	Wheelchair units		
14	Discussion with Council's Planning Department (Please fill out this section if you have had initial discussion about affordable housing)		
	Name of Planning Officer		
	If discussion was through a PAD:		
	Date of meeting		
	Name all attendees		
	Outline of discussion:		

Appendix 2: Process Flow Chart



Glossary

Affordable housing	Affordable housing comprises of social rented housing and intermediate housing (see Section 2.0)
DfC	Department for Communities
Dfi	Department for Infrastructure
KSR	Key Site Requirement
LDP	Local Development Plan
NIFHA	Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
PAD	Pre-Application Discussion
RDS	Regional Development Strategy (2035)
RHA	Registered Housing Association: A housing association is a society, body of trustees or company that provides rented accommodation and specialise in accommodation for special needs groups.
SHDP	Social Housing Development Programme
S76	Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This section refers to planning agreements.
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland
TCI	Total Cost Indicators. DfC sets 'benchmark' TCI area cost bands for all social housing, funded or part funded by Housing Association Grant to optimise value for money within a limited budget. TCI are used to achieve value for money in the provision of social housing and to ensure that the appropriate level of grant is paid.

