

# Guidance for Developers

Version 2

December 2004

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## 1. Introduction and purpose of the Guidance

This document explains how Warwick District Council's Housing & Planning departments will work with developers and others to implement Policy SC9 of the emerging Local Plan, which sets out the affordable housing requirements for all residential development in Warwick District.

The lack of affordable housing has a high profile in the District: a priority target in the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2003-07 is to secure at least 100 new affordable homes per year. The widening gap between house prices and average incomes reduces the ability of local people in housing need to access suitable housing. Availability of affordable housing has been reduced by loss of Council stock through the 'right to buy', and declining financial support from the government for social housing in the District has reduced the role of the Council in funding social housing.

Local Authority SHG (Social Housing Grant) was formerly the Council's main means of funding housing developments via RSLs. This was augmented by direct allocations of Housing Corporation SHG. LASHG was abolished on 1 April 2003, as one of the measures outlined in the government's Communities Plan ("Sustainable Communities: building for the future"). In addition, revised priorities for investment under the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) give little scope for attracting SHG into the District in the future. The majority of such funding will be taken up by higher priority areas within the West Midlands region.

The District has achieved a substantial Housing Corporation allocation in 2004-06, but the likelihood of securing SHG funding for future schemes is small; and as grant-funded schemes become the exception, the Council will become more reliant on planning gain



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agreements, negotiated with private developers, to deliver affordable housing. These planning agreements enable the community to capture part of the increased value of development land which arises from the grant of planning consent.

This approach is consistent with current and evolving Government policy, as set out in Circular 6/98, Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3), and in more recent consultative documents.

Paragraph 14 of PPG3 states that a community's need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing, is a material planning consideration which should be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in deciding planning applications involving housing.

Paragraph 17 states a presumption that affordable housing should be provided on-site rather than off-site or via a financial contribution.

**Failure to meet these requirements may justify the refusal of planning permission.**

## 2. Housing Need in Warwick District

“Warwick District Council carried out a Housing Needs Assessment in 1998 and this identified need within the District up to 2006. In 2001 this was updated to take account of guidance in PPG3: Housing and to roll forward the figure for housing need to 2011. This Study has quantified a need for 7,072 affordable houses between 1998 and 2011 if all housing needs are to be met.”

Policy SC9 (Para. 5.45)

**Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011**  
(first deposit version) November 2003

The previous affordable housing policy (set out in the Warwick District Local Plan 1995) sought to secure that 30% of homes provided on larger sites were affordable. However, in the six years from 1998 to 2004, only 607 affordable dwellings were built in the District – less than 12% of the total new homes provided.

The emerging Local Plan seeks to ensure that affordable housing represents a significantly higher proportion of the new planning consents granted in future. The Local Plan is available on the Council's website and Policy SC9 is summarised in Part 3 of this Guidance.

The Housing Needs Study (HNS) estimated the number of households in need at 3,038 (6.1% of all existing households). This included 92 homeless and 835 concealed



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households. Needs for rented homes were estimated at 575 households (Council), and 2463 (non-Council), with projected annual increases of 50 and 950 respectively.

The study found that the majority of households in housing need – 2,419 households in total – were not registered on the Council's waiting or transfer list. This equates to 79.6% of all households in need, and reflects a great amount of housing need which cannot be seen by analysis of registration lists alone.

The HNS data, together with data from a variety of other sources (including applicants for social housing) was used to build up a clear picture of the need, and to set appropriate targets. After considering the various policy options and resources available to meet the identified needs (and recognising that new provision can be only one element of its overall strategy), the Council set a target of at least 100 new affordable homes per year. The need for affordable housing is clearly much greater than this modest target would suggest, and amply justifies the Council's decision to increase the proportion of affordable housing which will be required under Policy SC9.

The Council will also seek to ensure that on-site provision reflects the Council's priority for 3 bedroom and larger houses for rent. WDC will only accept 1 bedroom flats in exceptional circumstances, and only for Shared Ownership sale – not for rent.

A Choice Based Lettings Policy will be implemented in 2005. This will permit applications for homes with one bedroom in excess of the applicant's current need, ensuring that tenants can remain in their homes as their family grows. The new policy is expected to reduce turnover, and will help to promote balanced communities.

## 3. The Local Plan and affordable housing

The Council's Affordable Housing Policy SC9 is set out in the first deposit draft Local Plan approved by the full Council on 29th October 2003. Affordable housing will be required on suitable housing sites as follows:

Within towns:-

- On sites of 10 or more dwellings and/or 0.4 hectares: a minimum of 30% of total dwelling units;
- On sites of 15 or more dwellings and/or 0.5 hectares or more: a minimum of 40% of total dwelling units.

Within rural areas:-

- Proposals for 3 or more dwellings: a minimum of 30% of total dwelling units.



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Given the level of housing need in the District, Policy SC9 seeks to maximise the community benefit from private sector development. The developer will be required to provide details of the proposed means of providing affordable housing.

The preferred option will be for the developer to provide completed units on site, for management by an RSL. Alternatively, land may be transferred, enabling the RSL to construct the units. In exceptional circumstances (with the agreement of both the Local Planning Authority and the developer) provision may be made off-site, or a financial contribution in lieu may be made to fund affordable housing elsewhere in the District.

If the planning application is acceptable and supported by the Council's Planning Committee, the consent will be issued only when the applicant enters into a Section 106 Agreement to secure the affordable housing and control occupancy, involving a Registered Social Landlord to ensure that the community benefit represented by the affordable housing will remain available in the long term to those in need.

## ***Planning agreements***

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides the legal basis for using Planning Agreements to regulate development or use of land. Agreements may regulate the use permanently or for a specified period. They are linked to a planning application and need to be signed by both the applicant/developer and the planning authority. They are planning obligations which run with the land and apply to successive owners.

S106 Agreements are normally finalised after the District Council has agreed to grant planning permission, and the consent will not be issued until the Section 106 Agreement has been signed. Applicants should therefore discuss the requirements of the S106 Agreement with Council officers, and ideally agree the principles, before submitting an application. This can help to clarify issues at the start of the process, and enable the local planning authority to agree the principles of the S106 Agreement when the planning application is determined.

A specific timetable will be agreed to cover the conveying of units to an RSL. Other issues relating to the proposed development may also require inclusion in the Section 106 Agreement. The Council is developing standard Heads of Terms for S106 Agreements, which will be appended to this guidance in due course.

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Planning Obligations and Section 106 Agreements are likely to cover the following issues:

- i) The transfer of units or land to the RSL including costs and phasing of handover
- ii) The precise number, size and tenure of affordable housing units to be included on the site whether as a mixed housing development or entirely for affordable housing; or the area of land to be made available to an RSL; or the level of financial contribution for off site provision
- iii) The occupancy of the housing which will be reserved for people in housing need according to criteria determined by the Council
- iv) a requirement that no more than a specific proportion of the site will be sold or occupied before the affordable housing has been conveyed to a Registered Social Landlord
- v) A 'Retention Clause' allowing low cost home ownership properties to be retained in perpetuity.

## ***Planning a Development to Include Affordable Housing***

Before submitting a planning application, developers should enter into negotiations with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), ideally prior to taking an option or purchasing land for residential development. Early contact with the LPA and the proposed RSL is essential to ensure satisfactory progress. In this way the developer will be able to negotiate land values with the landowner in full knowledge of the likely requirement for affordable housing. Some sites will already have options on them or will be in the developer's ownership – the increase in land value of such sites as a result of granting planning permission for housing is what provides the subsidy for social housing.

Once contact with the LPA is established the developer will be notified of the Local Plan requirements regarding affordable housing, and be invited to discuss the application with planning and housing officers. The proportion of affordable housing to be included on any site will be in accordance with Policy SC9 of the Local Plan, but will also take account of the developer's requirements, site characteristics and market conditions (in accordance with Circular 6/98).

In assessing the precise nature of on-site or off-site contributions to be required on individual sites the Council will take into account the economics of provision, and any abnormal development and infrastructure costs. This could include the costs of identifying and remediation of contamination or noise, major service diversions, or other specific planning requirements.

Planning applications will be considered in the normal way, taking into account the scale, design and layout of the residential development, and the inclusion of affordable housing will be material in determining the application. Failure to provide affordable housing on an appropriate site could justify the refusal of planning permission.



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## 4. What we mean by affordable

“The Council will require that to be affordable, housing for rent must be no more than Housing Corporation benchmark rents and be within the limits of those receiving housing benefit. The role for many forms of “low cost” market housing and even shared ownership housing will be limited as it is too expensive for many of those in housing need in the District. Where shared ownership housing is allowed, the total cost of this must be no more than 3½ times the combined income of the household based upon average incomes.”

Policy SC9 (Para 5.52)

**Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011**  
(first deposit version) November 2003

### ***Affordable homes may be for rent or for sale***

The affordable homes delivered under this policy will be allocated to households nominated by the Council who are in need within the District.

Whether for rent or sale, affordable homes will normally be managed by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) nominated by the Council.

If rented, they must be let at rent levels which comply with the Housing Corporation’s target rent regime. This requirement will apply regardless of whether Social Housing Grant (SHG) is available. Indicative target rents are set out in Annexe 3.

The Council would wish to ensure that these homes are discounted sufficiently to make them affordable to local people whose earnings are at or below the average for newly-forming households.

The maximum affordable mortgage for newly forming households in the District can be calculated as follows:

**Average annual earnings x 3.5 = maximum affordable mortgage**

Affordable homes for sale must be sold at prices which generate a mortgage requirement that is affordable to newly-forming households. This will normally be achieved by an RSL acquiring the homes at a discount and selling them to owner-occupiers on shared ownership terms, with an initial equity stake of no more than 75% (see Table 1).

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**Table 1.** Calculating maximum affordable prices

Using the relevant income figures for Warwick District (updated to July 2004):	
£24,433 pa x 3.5	= £85,515 (maximum affordable mortgage)
<b>Maximum affordable price</b>	<b>= £90,000 (assuming a 5% deposit)</b>
Income requirement	= £24,285 (95% mortgage - £85,500)

This calculation implies that the **maximum affordable market value** (for homes sold on a shared ownership lease with an initial stake of 75%) is £120,000.

For homes sold with a 50% initial equity stake, a theoretical maximum market value of £180,000 would apply. However, few households on average earnings could afford this, as in addition to the mortgage, the buyer would have to pay around £1,800 pa rent to the RSL holding the remaining 50% equity, plus any service charges which may apply.

In practice, sales at a 50% initial equity stake will normally be appropriate only for small units at lower values.

**Table 2.** Change in house prices 1999 (Quarter 1) to 2003 (Quarter 2)

Detached		Semi-Detached		Terraced		Flat or Maisonette		Overall	
Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales
161467	140	92571	179	86799	124	67790	119	103212	562
304589	177	169838	208	161160	159	118146	109	195621	653

## Property prices by type – Warwick District

Source: Land Registry

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Overall, average house prices in Warwick District increased by almost 90% over the 5 years to 2003. The Centre for Urban & Regional Studies (CURS) estimated the average cost of a non-detached house at £139,105 in July 2003 – requiring an income of more than £39,000 to obtain a 95% mortgage. Meanwhile, the average annual earnings for newly-forming households in the District stood at £23,448.

Rapid house price inflation creates significant barriers to ownership, particularly for newly-formed households and key workers. In the year to July 2004, average earnings increased by 4.2%. While overall average house prices increased by a similar amount (4.4%), the average price of the cheapest homes rose by 12.3% (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Prices and percentage change 2003 (Quarter 2) to 2004 (Quarter 2)

Detached		Semi-Detached		Terraced		Flat or Maisonette		Overall	
Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales	Av Price £	Sales
304589	177	169838	208	161160	159	118146	109	195621	653
+ 7.2%		+ 6.6%		+ 8.6%		+ 12.3%		+ 4.4%	
326740	184	181056	283	175118	192	132712	145	204259	804

## Property prices by type – Warwick District

Source: Land Registry

The growing mismatch between average earnings and house prices creates an affordability gap which can only be addressed through provision of affordable housing. Affordability is the critical issue for people in housing need, whether they wish to rent or buy a home.

Affordable housing may be subsidised by grant (where available) or the subsidy may be funded entirely by developer contributions (which reflect the increase in land value resulting from planning permission). Grant will not be substituted for developer contributions which are properly due under policy SC9.

Due to changes in national and regional housing strategies, it is anticipated that little public subsidy will be available in Warwick District. Where grant is available, it will be used to increase the proportion of rented homes which can be delivered on a given site.



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The Council's highest priority overall is for 3 bedroom and larger houses to rent, and this factor will be taken into account in considering the size and tenure mix of affordable housing required on development schemes.

Without substantial savings (or equity from a previous property sale) outright purchase of the cheapest homes for sale in the District requires household incomes of around £35,000 pa. Consequently, even shared ownership housing may fail to meet the Council's definition of affordability, especially where family homes are required.

Affordable shared ownership homes are acceptable, and must be sold with an initial stake of not more than 75%. They are most likely to be affordable where equity shares of 50% are available on initial sale. However, with the exception of small starter homes, this may not be a viable option unless substantial discounts are available from the developer. The rental element payable under a shared ownership lease is correspondingly higher for buyers of smaller equity stakes, and this will be taken into account in assessing the affordability of the homes to be provided.

In circumstances where the costs of shared ownership exceed the Council's affordability definition, consideration will be given to fixed equity sales as an alternative to conventional shared ownership. However, the developer contribution (or discount) required to support low cost home ownership may not be significantly lower than that required to fund rented homes.

Housing for low-cost market sale (LCMS) is frequently suggested as a means of meeting affordable housing requirements, but this is generally not acceptable in Warwick District.

LCMS housing is typically sold at between 80% and 95% of market value, resulting in sale prices well above affordable mortgage levels. LCMS homes will only be acceptable where sale prices are well below market levels. On larger sites, the Council may seek to negotiate LCMS housing in addition to the normal affordable housing requirement, to help meet the needs of households with sufficient income to buy, but who nevertheless cannot access the local market without assistance. Where this form of provision is agreed, the Council will closely monitor the affordability of such homes.

## 5. Resourcing & delivering affordable housing

### *Resourcing a development to include affordable housing*

This part of the Guidance seeks to establish an equitable framework for assessing affordable housing requirements for each site, and to enable developers to know in advance the likely level of contribution which will be required by the Council. It also sets out the delivery arrangements which are likely to be acceptable.



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Developer contributions will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis. The total contribution required by the Council will reflect both the economics of the development, the need to achieve affordability, and the availability of grant (if any).

## **Is Social Housing Grant available?**

Social Housing Grant (SHG) is allocated by the Housing Corporation, in line with priorities set out in the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). The provision of affordable housing without public subsidy is in line with the Corporation's policy, as detailed within Circular F2 42/98:

“The basic objective of developer contributions, whether or not the scheme also receives SHG funding, is to provide additional affordable housing, either directly or by reducing SHG requirement. In some cases where a developer provides affordable housing directly on site for sale to an RSL, the price will be set at a level where no SHG is required. Similarly, where a cash payment is made in lieu of affordable housing, either directly or via the local authority, the subsidy must be sufficient to avoid the need for SHG.”

In order to achieve affordability in line with the Council's policy, a planning gain contribution is always required over and above any grant which may be available.

However, the Housing Corporation's has now hardened its stance on grant-funding for s106 sites, as guidance issued on 10 December 2003 indicates:

“Our starting point in approaching s106 agreements is that planning gain should be the first port of call to provide subsidy for affordable housing on the site. Capital funding from the Corporation will only be made available - and only at the minimum level we find acceptable - if a sufficiently sound case is made. Essentially, we are looking to provide capital grant only in exceptional cases where planning gain is insufficient to provide the subsidy necessary.”

Normally there will be no SHG for s106 sites, and additional developer contributions may be required to replace the grant element.

Without grant, homes for rent can only be purchased by an RSL if the price equates to the mortgage supportable from the future rental stream. The Total Cost Indicators (TCIs) and grant rates which are published annually by the Housing Corporation therefore provide a useful indication of the levels of additional subsidy which will be required.

Full details of TCI, grant rate calculator and methodology can be found on the Corporation's website <http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/>



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Annexe 2 to this Guidance is extracted from the TCI tables. It sets out the Total Cost Indicators for different sizes of affordable dwellings, and the applicable grant for each – this is the grant which would apply to each unit if it were funded by SHG. An applicable grant per unit of 64%, is typical for “norm grant” schemes in Warwick.

The TCI figures are an indicative average across the District, which falls in the Housing Corporation’s cost group Area B3. The TCI is the notional cost of providing a dwelling of a given size, including land acquisition and legal/development costs.

Clearly, in future, norm grant will be the exception, not the rule. If grant is available, it will be at the minimum level which the Housing Corporation finds acceptable. Normally there will be no grant, and this restricts the prices which any RSL can pay to a developer for completed properties. RSLs are normally unable to pay more than the TCI figure (less the notional figure shown as the “applicable grant”), for each unit of affordable housing.

## **What kind of affordable homes?**

In most cases it is likely that the principal housing need will be for family houses to rent.

The Council’s current assumption is that, on average, 70% of the affordable homes provided on a given site should be for rent, and 30% for Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO). Any homes for low cost market sale will be additional to this provision.

In Warwick District, it is likely that low cost home ownership will require a level of developer contribution close to that required for rented units if they are to be genuinely affordable.

The transfer prices for any LCHO units provided will be calculated by reference to market value, with developer contributions set at the level required to achieve the Council’s affordability definition, as set out above (see Part 4 of this Guidance).

## ***Delivery and procurement methods***

The Council expects affordable housing to be delivered on site as the preferred option. This supports the government’s objective of seeking balanced and sustainable communities. However, there may be circumstances where on-site provision of affordable housing would not be practical or desirable, and off-site provision may then be acceptable. It should be provided as near as possible to the applicant site.

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In descending order, the Council's preference is as follows:

- i) on site provision
- ii) off-site provision
- iii) a mix of on-site provision and financial contribution
- iv) a mix of off-site provision and financial contribution
- v) a financial contribution alone

A financial contribution (or commuted sum) will be considered where there is agreement between the developer and the local authority that this is the preferred option. Commuted sums received may be used to support affordable housing provision anywhere in the District. The disadvantage of financial contributions is that they do not allow the creation of a mixed and balanced community on the applicant site, and will not necessarily provide affordable housing in the immediate area. The developer will have to demonstrate that there are good reasons for a financial contribution as opposed to the direct provision of housing on- or off-site.

The commuted sum calculation will reflect the finance required ie the total inclusive development cost for land and buildings. The assumed procurement cost will be drawn from the annually published Housing Corporation Total Cost Indicators and grant rates. The precise sum sought by way of commuted sum payments will also depend upon the particular circumstances of the case (eg costs associated with development of the site).

## **Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)**

In order to ensure that affordable housing is provided for current residents and remains affordable in the long term, the Council has nomination arrangements with various RSLs, operated through a Common Housing Register.

A list of contacts for the Council's preferred partner RSLs is set out in Annexe 1. Preferred partner RSLs have a local management presence, and/or experience of housing development.

Whether or not Social Housing Grant is available, affordable housing must be managed by an RSL, registered with the Housing Corporation, and approved by the Council.

The Council does not stipulate the form of contract between the developer and RSL – that is a matter for the two parties. However a contract must be entered into and the Council will require evidence that such an agreement has been reached.

The Council expects all affordable homes to meet the standards set out in Annexe 4. In addition, RSLs usually have a brief outlining their own requirements for space standards, energy efficiency ratings, design standards (e.g. secured by design), sustainable construction etc. These issues will need to be considered as early as possible in planning and designing the scheme.



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## ***Annexe 1 – Contact Details For Preferred Partners***

### **Bromford Housing Group**

Contact: David Owen, Development Manager: 01926 485373  
OR Sarah Flaherty, Development Officer: 01902 393709

Holly Farm Business Park  
Honiley  
Kenilworth  
CV8 1NO

### **Jephson Housing Association**

Contact: Mark Bridge OR Jo Welch: 01384 231516

1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Trafalgar House  
King Street  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY2 8PS

### **Orbit Housing Association**

Contact: Alan Quinlan, Development Manager: 024 7643 8094

Garden Court  
Harry Weston Road  
Binley Business Park  
Binley  
Coventry  
CV3 2SU

### **Servite Houses**

Contact: Frances McConnell, Development Manager: 0121 441 6012  
OR Rob Pusey, Acting Development Manager: 0121 441 6016

41 Poplar Road  
Kings Heath  
Birmingham  
B14 7AA

### **Warwickshire Rural Housing Association**

Contact: Richard Moore, Development & Maintenance Manager: 01530 276545

Whitwick Business Centre  
Stenson Road  
Coalville  
Leicestershire  
LE67 4JP

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## **Annexe 2 – Total Cost Indicators (TCIs)**

Extracted from TCI base table 2004/2006: self-contained accommodation

Unit floor area	Cost group: B3	Applicable grant per unit at 64% (£)	WDC size standards	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
	TCI per unit (£)		Bed/Person	
Up To 25m <sup>2</sup>	57,879	37,043		
25–30m <sup>2</sup>	64,419	41,228		
30–35m <sup>2</sup>	70,959	45,414		
35–40m <sup>2</sup>	77,499	49,599		
<b>40–45m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>83,930</b>	<b>53,715</b>	1 bed 2p flat or bungalow	45
45–50m <sup>2</sup>	90,470	57,901		
50–55m <sup>2</sup>	97,010	62,086		
<b>55–60m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>103,550</b>	<b>66,272</b>	2 bed 3p flat or bungalow	58
60–65m <sup>2</sup>	110,090	70,458		
65–70m <sup>2</sup>	116,521	74,573		
70–75m <sup>2</sup>	123,061	78,759		
<b>75–80m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>129,601</b>	<b>82,945</b>	3 bed 4p house or maisonette	80
<b>80–85m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>136,141</b>	<b>87,130</b>	3 bed 5p house or maisonette	85
85–90m <sup>2</sup>	142,681	91,316		
90–95m <sup>2</sup>	149,112	95,432		
95–100m <sup>2</sup>	155,652	99,617		
<b>100–105m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>162,192</b>	<b>103,803</b>	4 bed 6p house	105
105–110m <sup>2</sup>	168,732	107,988		
110–115m <sup>2</sup>	175,272	112,174		
115–120m <sup>2</sup>	181,703	116,290		

The floor areas shown in bold represent the relevant bands complying with Warwick District Council minimum floor areas for the unit sizes indicated.

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## ***Annexe 3 – Target Rents (2004/06)***

The following indicative weekly target rent levels are drawn from “**Source 66: guide to local rents 2003**” (Housing Corporation, December 2003):

### **RSL Average Target Rents**

#### **Local Authority: Warwick**

Bedsit (1 person)	£46.76
1 bed (2 person)	£56.18
2 bed (3 person)	£65.48
3 bed (5 person)	£70.91
4 bed (8 person)	£75.26

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## **Annexe 4 – Warwick Social Housing Design Standards**

These are the minimum standards which Warwick Council is seeking to achieve on Social Housing developments. RSLs have their own design standards/ criteria that may enhance the following requirements. Developers are encouraged to consult RSLs at an early stage in the scheme design/development process.

### **1. Type of Development:**

Where the option of flats or houses exists, houses would normally be preferred. In addition, such houses wherever possible should be semi-detached.

### **2. Size of Units:**

Floor to ceiling height should be a minimum 2.35m.

Minimum floor areas (assuming the dwelling is well designed):-

1 bed 2 person flat/bungalow	45m <sup>2</sup>
2 bed 3 person flat/bungalow	58m <sup>2</sup>
2 bed 4 person house/maisonette	75m <sup>2</sup>
3 bed, 4 person house/maisonette	80m <sup>2</sup>
3 bed 5 person house/maisonette	85m <sup>2</sup>
4 bed 6 person house	105m <sup>2</sup>

**“Wheelchair” standard dwellings, where required, will be developed in accordance with the latest Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards**

### **3. General Standard:**

All goods and materials should be referenced to a British Standard as a minimum level of quality.

### **4. Features to be included to make dwellings more accessible for the disabled:**

- Entrance path gateways provide minimum 850mm clear opening.
- Dropped kerbs where main paths meet roads or drive.
- Level or gently sloped dwelling approaches
- Lifts, where provided, are wheelchair accessible
- Paths of 900mm minimum width with a raised edging
- A level standing area outside front doors
- Entrances have a max. 15mm upstand threshold
- External doorways to have **800mm** minimum clear opening and internal doorways **775mm** minimum clear opening
- Passageway widths to provide wheelchair access at entrance level (assume 900mm clear)

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- Staircases are suitable for future stair lift provision. Please ensure the width is adequate and power is available.
- An entrance level WC and wash hand basin for houses and maisonettes (as well as a first floor bathroom) large enough for a person using a zimmer frame to manoeuvre.
- Space to turn a wheelchair in all habitable ground floor rooms, i.e. 1,500mm turning circle
- Bathroom layouts allowing ease of access, probably from a side approach to the bath and WC with accessible wash hand basin
- Living room at entrance level with enough space for a bed in addition to other basic requirements.
- Good kitchen design with easily operated and accessible units
- Covered entrance doors with external light to front door

## 5. Conversions:

Where conversions take place it is recognised that a number of conflicts may arise between:-

- conservation/architectural issues v's future repair obligations/guarantees of future life/modern construction techniques
- available space in existing premises v's minimum floor areas/desirable internal layout.
- number of bedrooms at first floor and above v's future target group for lettings e.g. families with children.

It is important that discussions are had with officers of both Housing and Planning Departments at the earliest stages of considering such schemes.

## 6. N.H.E.R. Minimum 8

## 7. Gas Supply:

Wherever there is a gas supply available, a service must be taken to the dwelling in low rise accommodation.

- Kitchens should offer tenants the option of gas or electric cooking.
- Even if there is central heating, there should be a gas point in the living room as well as an electric point for a fire.

## 8. Secured by Design

Whenever possible, schemes should reflect the standards in the guidance provided by the Local Crime Prevention Officer.