



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Proposed Policy Approach

Consultation Paper – March 2023

Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines Proposed Policy Approach March 2023

Prepared by the Department of
Housing, Local Government and Heritage
gov.ie



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
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Planning and Development SPC
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Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

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- Proposal to **replace** the **Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities** (the ‘Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines’) published in 2009 with **new Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities**.
- Provides summary of the emerging policy approach in relation to **density and development standards for housing**.



National Policy Context

This consultation paper outlines the evolution of wider policy since the publication of the Section 28 Guidelines including the following:

- National Planning Framework 2018
- National Development Plan 2021-2030
- Housing for All 2021
- Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23)
- National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022
- Town Centre First (TCF) Policy (launched in February 2022)

The Proposed Policy approach **is aligned to NPF priorities for compact growth** and to **Action 9 of Housing for All** priorities to provide a greater range of high-quality housing options.



Proposed Policy Approach: Densities

The proposed policy approach is as follows:

- **Cities:** Densities of 100-300 dwelling per hectare (dph) in central areas, densities of 40-200 dph in urban areas and densities of 40-80 dph in suburban and edge areas.
- **Metropolitan Towns:** Densities of 40-150 dph in town centres and urban areas and densities of 35-80 dph in suburban and edge areas.
- **Large Towns** (10,000+ population): Densities of 40-150 dph in town centres and urban areas and densities of 30-80 dph in suburban and edge areas.
- **Small and Medium Sized Towns** (>1,500 to 10,000 population): Densities that respond to existing context in town centres and urban areas, and densities of 25-30 dph in edge areas.
- **Rural Towns and Villages** (>1,500 population): Densities that respond to existing context.



Proposed Policy Approach: Housing Standards

The proposed policy approach includes the following recommended standards:

- **Separation:** A minimum separation distance of **16 metres** between opposing upper floor windows that serve habitable rooms at the rear of houses and duplex units. Provision for further reductions where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms, and where suitable privacy measures are designed into the scheme to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms and private amenity spaces. (Currently 22 metre with some flexibility in certain circumstances e.g. infill development)
- **Private Open Space:** A minimum private open space provision of **10 sq. metres per bedspace**, with provision for further reduction where an equivalent amount of semi-private open space is provided in lieu of private open space, subject to an absolute **minimum provision of 5 sq. metres** private open space per bedspace. (currently no figure specified)

The recommended standard also includes greater flexibility in relation to the design and location of private open space, to allow for terraces, patios and balconies at ground or upper levels.



Recommended Standards of Proposed Policy Approach

- **Public Open Space:** A minimum public open space requirement of **10%** of the total site area (net) for new residential development in statutory development plans. (Currently in greenfield sites minimum of 15% of the total site area and in other cases such as large infill sites or brown field sites minimum 10% of the total site area or 20% on sites characterised by large private or institutional building set in substantial open lands)
- **Car Parking:** In order to meet the targets set out in the National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022 and in CAP23 for reduced private car travel it will be necessary to apply a graduated approach to the management of car parking within new residential development.
 - In 'Cities', 'Metropolitan Towns' and 'Large Towns (10,000+ population)' car parking should be graduated based on location and access to services by public transport, walking and cycling. In areas of high accessibility, car-parking provision should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated, while in areas of medium accessibility, car-parking provision should be substantially reduced. (Currently Car parking standards need to be set at realistic levels (having regard, inter alia, to proximity to public transport) in order to avoid parked vehicles causing obstruction on residential streets in the evenings or at weekends. Parking can be provided in an on-curtilage arrangement or in a grouped format depending on the type of layout proposed).



Proposed Policy Approach: Guidance on Quality Design and Placemaking

To include **indicators** of quality design and placemaking that should be applied in the preparation and consideration of individual planning applications.

This includes indicators relating to:

- Sustainable and efficient movement,
- The mix and distribution of land uses,
- the integration of natural assets and green infrastructure and built form.



Proposed Policy Approach: Guidance on Quality Design and Placemaking

The proposed policy approach highlights that the quality of design and placemaking will be particularly important in the case of compact housing.

- The layout, position and composition of buildings,
- the interface with streets and open spaces and
- the integration of car parking

will all be key to ensure the overall quality and amenity of the development and a satisfactory relationship with the site surroundings, including the impact on neighbouring occupiers.



Observations

- What is meant by “Urban Area”
- Any Guidelines should be accompanied by a Design Manual showing examples of how what is being asked can be delivered.
- How is Good Accessibility or Reduced Accessibility defined?
- Densities should be derived from a strong evidence base.
- DMURS would need to be updated to reflect new requirements.
- Guidance required on infill/small scale sites/brownfield sites.
- Provision of Community Facilities
- How to deliver Universal Design/Housing for Older People/Special Groups
- Need for a low-density category similar to current Medium C (5-20 dwellings per hectare)



Consultation period on Proposed Policy Approach

Submissions can be made during the period of **30th March 2023 to 27th April 2023** which will be taken into consideration when finalising the Draft Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines.

A submission or observation can be made by email to the following address:

nrupconsultation@housing.gov.ie



Consultation on finalised Draft Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

On completion of the environmental assessments (SEA and AA), the **finalised Draft Sustainable and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities** and the associated environmental reports will be published for consultation (no dates provided at this stage)



THANK YOU

