



Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

Equality Impact Assessment



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Name of Policy Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing	This is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New policy <input type="checkbox"/> A change to existing policy <input type="checkbox"/> Existing policy <input type="checkbox"/> A pilot or programme
Screening undertaken by:	
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Policy to be assessed

Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* sets out the Government's national planning for housing policy. The policy should be taken into account by local planning authorities and regional planning bodies in the preparation of their local development documents and regional spatial strategies (this includes the Mayor of London in preparing the spatial development strategy for Greater London). From 1st April 2007 local planning authorities should have regard to Planning Policy Statement 3 policy when making decisions on planning applications for housing developments.

Planning Policy Statement 3 and related advice and guidance replaces previous policy and guidance, in particular Planning Policy Guidance 3: *Housing*.

Assessment analysis

This assessment considers Planning Policy Statement 3 from the perspective of how it may affect different groups in society, and whether the policy could have a disproportionate effect on any particular groups.

The aim of Planning Policy Statement 3 is to contribute to meeting the Government's strategic housing objectives. The key goal is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. To achieve this, the Government is seeking:

- to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community;
- to widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford market housing, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need;
- to improve affordability across the housing market, including by increasing the supply of housing; and
- to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural.

Planning Policy Statement 3 emphasises the need to ensure that the requirements of specific groups are met, in particular:

- disabled people;
- families with children;
- single parent families;
- homeless households;
- older people; and
- students.

Planning Policy Statement 3 will be implemented by local planning authorities and regional planning bodies by putting in place local and regional policies that take account of the diverse range of housing requirements, and by taking decisions on planning applications that are consistent with their policies.

Planning Policy Statement 3 requires that regional spatial strategies should set out the region's approach to achieving a good mix of housing and that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing on the basis of the different types of households that are likely to require housing over the plan period. This will include having particular regard to:

- current and future demographic trends and profiles;
- the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular families with children, older and disabled people; and
- the diverse range of requirements across the area, including the need to accommodate gypsies and travellers.

In addition, the following measures will help to ensure that the policy approach is implemented:

Strategic housing market assessments

Planning Policy Statement 3 requires local planning authorities and regional planning bodies to carry out Strategic Housing Market Assessments¹. These are evidence-based assessments of the level of demand and need for housing, including the needs of specific household groups.

Based upon the findings of the assessments and other local evidence, local planning authorities should set out in local development documents:

- the likely overall proportions of households that require market or affordable housing, for example, x% market housing and y% affordable housing;

¹ *Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance, Communities and Local Government, March 2007, www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1509040*

- the likely profile of household types requiring market housing eg multi-person, including families and children (x%), single persons (y%), couples (z%); and
- the size and type of affordable housing required.

Role of the Planning Inspectorate

Local planning authorities must submit all development plan documents to a Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, who will conduct an independent public examination to consider if the development plan document as a whole is sound.

When examining the development plan document, the Inspector will consider if it sufficiently addresses national planning policy (such as Planning Policy Statement 3), consider all the representations made by members of the community and ensure that the development plan document approach is justified, based on robust evidence.

Annual monitoring reports

Local planning authorities are required to undertake annual monitoring of their performance. As part of preparing their annual monitoring reports, they should consider their housing delivery performance against the objectives set out in their local plan as well as those set out in the regional spatial strategy.

Similarly, regional planning bodies should monitor progress across the region. This process is intended to allow authorities (and regional planning bodies and Government Offices) to assess the on-going impact and implementation of their policies.

Diversity and equality in planning

The Government is committed to changing the culture of planning to make it more responsive, positive and proactive. Diversity and equality are at the heart of this agenda, helping define sustainable and inclusive communities. In 2005, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a good practice guide *Diversity and Equality in Planning*², which intends to ensure that local authorities take account of the planning needs of a diverse population in their policies and practices.

² *Diversity and Equality in Planning: A good practice guide*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, January 2005, www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1505969.

Consultation

A public consultation³ was carried out on draft Planning Policy Statement 3, and the responses⁴ received were taken into account in developing the final policy.

The consultation paper was available on the Communities and Local Government website, as well as in hard copy. It was therefore accessible to everybody with an interest, including organisations representing particular groups and also individuals.

Hard copies of the consultation paper were circulated widely, including to local authorities, various housing organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals. The paper was also sent to members of the Diversity and Planning Sounding Board, which includes members from various different groups, such as the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality.

The consultation paper invited views on whether the policy set out in draft Planning Policy Statement 3 would impact differently on people from different groups.

Seventy three comments were received. Of those people who expressed a view, the responses fell into three categories:

- that the policy should promote accessibility as well as equality of opportunity and good relations;
- that higher housing densities imply more high-rise dwellings which would impact adversely on people with mobility disabilities; and
- that housing development proposals are 'age-proofed' so that they address the ageing profile of the population.

We have considered these carefully in formulating the final policy. Dealing with each in turn:

- *ensuring that the policy promotes accessibility* – Planning Policy Statement 3 requires local planning authorities and regional planning bodies to carry out Strategic Housing Market Assessments. This should identify the particular accommodation requirements of specific groups, including disabled people;

³ Consultation Paper on a New Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing, Communities and Local Government, December 2005, www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162075.

⁴ Consultation on Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) - A summary of responses and key issues, Communities and Local Government, November 2006, www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504611

- *higher densities and the impact on people with mobility disabilities* – Planning Policy Statement 3 promotes good design as a means of ensuring that development is appropriate to meet local needs and makes it clear that building at higher densities does not necessarily imply more high-rise dwellings. The good practice guide *By Design - Better Places to Live*⁵ illustrates a range of examples of higher density housing developments with a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses with gardens; and
- *age-proofing development proposals* – part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment is about identifying the particular accommodation requirements of specific groups, including older people.

Conclusion

It is the Government's view that Planning Policy Statement 3, including the associated measures outlined above, will enable effective local and regional policies to be developed and implemented to ensure that particular groups are not disproportionately affected.

⁵ *Better Places to Live by Design: A Companion Guide to PPG3*, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, September 2001, www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1505061