

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

# THE NEED FOR MINIMUM INTERNAL SPACE STANDARDS IN HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH – EVIDENCE PAPER

**September 2021**

## INTRODUCTION

* 1. Through the Written Ministerial Statement of March 2015[[1]](#footnote-1), the Government gave Local Authorities the option to set technical standards for new housing. These are additional technical requirements which exceed the minimum standards required through building regulations. One of the optional standards is the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS)[[2]](#footnote-2). The space standards aim to ensure properties have a minimum internal floorspace area as set out in the table below:

Table lifted directly from National Planning Practice Guidance.  It sets the minimum size for dwellings of different sizes by number of bedrooms, occupants and storeys

* 1. For Local Authorities to require these internal space standards, the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)[[3]](#footnote-3) states that they must be referenced in the local authority’s local plan. Furthermore the NPPG sets out that:

*Where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Local planning authorities should take account of the following areas:*

* + *need – evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.*
  + *viability – the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan’s viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.*
  + *timing – there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions.*
  1. The Borough Council are undertaking work on whole plan viability which will consider the additional costs associated with new developments meeting the NDSS. This viability assessment will provide evidence to satisfy the viability aspects set out in the NPPG.
  2. In terms of a transitional period the Hinckley and Bosworth draft Local Plan (June 2021) set out the intention to introduce the NDSS in planning policy for the borough. It is considered that if the space standards form part of the adopted plan, the plan, and the requirement to meet the NDSS, will come into force during 2023. It is considered that this provides sufficient time and notice for developers to consider the impacts of the introduction of the NDSS in the borough.
  3. The purpose of this report is therefore to provide evidence on need to support the introduction of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) in the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan. The need for minimum space standards is demonstrated in two strands of research:
     + 1. Understanding need in terms of health and wellbeing of occupiers. This is taken from a review of secondary sources
       2. Primary research to measure and compare the size of dwellings permitted in the borough with the NDSS

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

* 1. The size of dwellings being built in England has been an issue of concern for many years. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) published “The Case for Space” in 2011. It reported that houses built in the UK were the smallest in Western Europe and outlined the results of their survey on opinions of new houses. This found that people thought newly built homes fail to provide adequate space inside and outside the home. RIBA published further research “Homewise” in 2015 into the size of 3 bedroom dwellings in England. It found that 3 bedroom dwellings in the East Midlands averaged 87sqm, 6sqm smaller than the recommended NDSS size of 93sqm, and 1sqm smaller than the average for England of 88sqm.
  2. Several studies have highlighted the negative impacts that small dwellings have on the health and wellbeing of occupiers, or conversely the positive impacts of larger dwellings. The charity Shelter in its report “Crowded House” documented the effects of overcrowding on the health and wellbeing of occupants using case studies and other research[[4]](#footnote-4). A report by University College London for CABE “Space Standards: The Benefits” undertook a wide ranging review of research concluding on a number of critical benefits of good space standards[[5]](#footnote-5). More recently Julia Park has set out a comprehensive study of the importance of space in dwellings.[[6]](#footnote-6) One of her key messages is that minimum space standards are needed to ensure dwellings and bedrooms are large enough for the intended (full) level of occupancy; without minimum standards people buy dwellings with spare rooms and under-occupy property in order to compensate for inadequate space.
  3. Altogether, these studies highlight repeated themes about the effects of space on health and wellbeing which are set out here:
     + 1. Mental health. There are strong links between small cramped living conditions and poor mental health.
       2. Physical health. Studies have identified links between overcrowded housing and a number of health conditions including respiratory conditions, meningitis and helicobacter pylori.
       3. Family relationships. Stress and tensions between family members are worsened where insufficient space is available. Conversely, adequacy of space contributes positively to family life.
       4. Aggressive and anti-social behaviour is associated with overcrowding.
       5. Education. Adequacy of space helps children to engage in uninterrupted private study and achieve against their potential.
       6. Work from home productivity. Adequacy of space helps with the effectiveness of working from home, but also helps separate work life from home life
       7. Changing physical requirements over people’s lifetimes. Homes need space to respond to changing needs and lifestyles. A three bedroom home with under-sized bedrooms may seem fine for pre-school children but turn out to be wholly inadequate for older children as the family matures.
  4. From a health and wellbeing point of view the need for minimum space standards at a country level is evident and there is no reason why Hinckley and Bosworth should be any different.

## DWELLING MEASUREMENT

* 1. The Borough Council has undertaken primary research to understand the degree to which new dwellings are meeting the NDSS standards. The exercise involved the measurement of dwellings permitted in the borough in the last 5 years to ascertain how they compare with the NDSS. As is most well-known, the NDSS set minimum sizes of dwelling depending on combinations of numbers of bedrooms, numbers of occupying persons and number of storeys. But the NDSS also sets standards for size of bedrooms, floor to ceiling heights and storage space. This exercise concentrates on the size of dwellings and size of bedrooms.
  2. Dwellings were measured from 24 residential development schemes permitted between 2016 and 2021 to ascertain how they performed against the NDSS. Findings are set out in terms of overall numbers of dwellings meeting the NDSS and in terms of particular categories of development and size/type of dwelling to identify any trends or associations.

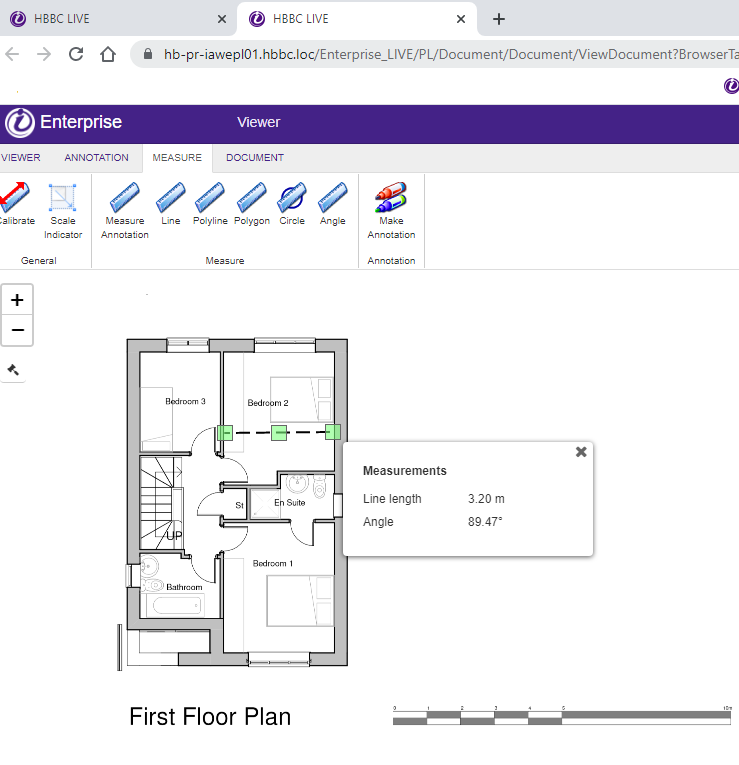
### Sample of Dwellings

* 1. An intention of the study was to measure dwellings from a broad sample of housing development schemes that would be fully representative of the type of housing that is developed in the borough. An attempt was also made to include relatively recent schemes and those that have commenced or completed building. The NDSS were first published in 2015, so no schemes have been included that were permitted before their publication. Variety of scheme was sought in terms of the following:
* geographic location,
* size of scheme,
* greenfield and brownfield land,
* allocated / windfall and
* affordable / market dwellings.  
  1. In total 299 separate dwellings were measured from 24 residential development schemes permitted between 2016 and 2021. Most of the residential developments involved the use of standard house types, so one measured dwelling would be representative of a larger number of that house type permitted on that scheme. Also, for individually designed conversion and apartment buildings, exactly the same dwellings are sometimes stacked so that only one dwelling need be measured that would have the same dimensions as others. As such, the 299 separately measured dwellings are representative of 1,641 total dwellings. This is considered to be a robust sample size for the scale of housing development in the borough. The total of 1,641 is equivalent of 3.7 years supply of housing, given that the annual housing requirement is currently 444 dwellings per annum. The measuring took place between April and June 2021. It should be noted that three schemes in the original sample were not measurable because their drawings did not include a means of calibrating the digital measuring scale.

### Mechanics of Measurement

* 1. The dwellings were measured electronically using the measurement software included with the Information at Work web based program used by Hinckley and Bosworth for managing planning applications. The steps taken to measure a dwelling involved the following:

1. Identifying relevant approved drawings including the site layout plan with a list of house-types and plans of all the different sized dwellings
2. Measuring the size of individual dwellings:
   1. Calibrating the scale of the drawing
   2. Measuring the internal width of bedrooms
   3. Determining the NDSS size category of dwelling according to numbers of bedrooms, persons and stories
   4. Measuring the internal area of bedrooms
   5. Measuring the internal area of each storey
3. Inputting data regarding the scheme and individual dwellings into a spreadsheet with pre-programmed formulae to calculate size measurements against the NDSS



### Assumptions

* 1. The measurement software generated measurements to one centimetre (0.00m). This implies a level of accuracy which perhaps exceeds that achievable using mouse clicks on drawings, most of which were scaled at 1:100. An accuracy to between one centimetre and one decimetre (one tenth of a metre) may be considered more realistic. Sometimes, the drawings or site layout plan listed the internal size of dwellings. For comparative purposes the stated area measurement of dwellings was compared with the measured area. This found an average of only 1% difference in the 110 dwellings where a stated measurement was recorded.
  2. In accordance with the notes of the NDSS, area measurements were made to the internal surfaces of walls. Bedroom widths were measured as the shortest side of the rectangle. On rare instances of irregular non-rectangular shaped bedrooms, judgement was used to determine where to measure the width. Where an initial measurement was very close to the NDSS figure that determines whether a bedroom is a single or a double (or twin), regard was given to how the bedroom was presented on the drawing. Many drawings illustrate a single bed, twin beds or a double bed as an indication of the house builder’s intention for that room. So if the initial measurement of a bedroom width fell on or just over the borderline of the NDSS figure for a double bedroom, but the annotation showed the room as a single bedroom, the small amount of latitude in determining point-to-point measurements was employed to ensure alignment with the house builder’s intentions. In this way, the benefit of the doubt over any borderline cases was given to the house builder / applicant.
  3. The area of bedrooms includes en-suite bathrooms and built-in cupboards. Normally, bedroom widths were measured to the external face of a cupboard, but if the room were illustrated as a double, and the minimum width for a double room was only achievable to the back wall of a built in cupboard, the back wall measurement was used.
  4. In this exercise, very few dwellings had rooms annotated to be studies as opposed to bedrooms. In practice, such rooms may be used interchangeably as bedrooms and when considering planning applications against policy it will make sense to treat such rooms as bedrooms, because that will always be an available option. However, for this exercise, rooms labelled as studies were not recorded or measured as bedrooms. This generated a lower size requirement than if the rooms had been regarded as bedrooms, making it easier for dwellings to meet the NDSS.
  5. Whole floor measurements were made by measuring around the inside face of external walls and through any internal walls. Integral garage space was excluded. As a general rule, chimney breasts were excluded and bay windows included; the reveals of windows and doors were excluded.
  6. The determination of the NDSS size category used the following assumptions: one bedroom flats were recorded as 2 person dwellings and studio flats (no separate bedroom) were recorded as 1 person dwellings. This exercise set 37sqm as the minimum for a studio apartment whether equipped with a bath or shower. In the event all the studio apartments measured were found to have a shower. On the occasions where 5 bedroom dwellings had more than 3 double bedrooms, creating an arrangement for 9 or 10 person occupation, because the NDSS has no standard for 9 or 10 persons, these were recorded as 5 bed, 8 person dwellings. In effect a lower size requirement is used for such dwellings rather than attempting to generate new standards that are outside of the published NDSS.
  7. The NDSS are well known for the minimum size of dwelling matrix and minimum bedroom standards, but also sets minimum standards for storage and heights of rooms. This exercise only examined the overall size of dwelling and bedroom widths and areas. No checks were made of whether minimum storage provision was included or whether ceiling heights were achieved in area measurements. Where the area of attic rooms was measured, the room area shown on floorplans was followed; attic rooms are normally drawn to exclude the areas towards the eaves that have insufficient height. No checks of sectional drawings were made to determine minimum roof heights. It was generally assumed that all living space shown on drawings had sufficient floor to ceiling heights.

## RESULTS

* 1. The exercise resulted in 299 dwellings being measured for overall size and size of bedrooms from 24 housing developments. These measured dwellings represent a total of 1,651 dwellings of the same type.
  2. In this exercise there was potential for each dwelling measured to have the following failures against the NDSS:

1. Overall area of dwelling smaller than the NDSS minimum – possibility of 1 failure.
2. Area of bedroom smaller than the NDSS minimum – possibility of up to 5 failures depending on the number of bedrooms
3. Width of 1st bedroom smaller than the NDSS minimum for the first double bedroom – possibility of 1 failure.
4. Width of 2nd – 5th bedrooms being less than the NDSS minimum for a single bedroom – possibility of 4 failures.
   1. The maximum number of bedrooms of dwellings measured in this exercise was 5; no 6 bedroom dwellings formed part of the development schemes that were measured. Consequently for each dwelling the maximum number of failures possible against the NDSS was 11. It should be noted that the NDSS expects a dwelling with 2 or more bedspaces to have at least one double bedroom, and the first double bedroom must have a width of at least 2.75m; subsequent double bedrooms require a width of at least 2.55m. Of course, a room presented as a double bedroom with insufficient width does not fail, but is regarded as a single bedroom. Thus, the first bedroom could fail with a width less than 2.75m whilst bedrooms 2 – 5 could only fail with a width less than 2.15m (the minimum for a single bedroom).

### Overall Results

* 1. Looking at the results, the key finding is that most dwellings measured (87%) failed in some way against the NDSS. When considering the percentage of total dwellings with failings as represented by the measured dwellings, the percentage rises to 95%. Only 38 of the 299 dwellings measured (representing 79 of the 1641 total dwellings) passed the NDSS completely. Most dwellings measured had 1-3 failures against the NDSS. Only 8 measured dwellings (representing 40 of the total dwellings) had 5 failures, only one measured dwelling (representing 20 total dwellings) recorded 6 failures and no dwellings recorded more than 6 failures.
  2. Please note that percentages are usually rounded up to whole numbers for ease of reading. Where the rounding up of the percentage figures would result in the total not adding up to 100%, the figures are shown to one decimal place.

Overall result: overall number of fails

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall Number of fails** | **Measured dwellings** | **Total dwellings** | **Measured dwellings Percent** | **Total dwellings Percent** |
| 0 | 38 | 79 | 12.7% | 5% |
| 1 | 71 | 312 | 23.7% | 19% |
| 2 | 80 | 381 | 26.8% | 23% |
| 3 | 65 | 422 | 21.7% | 26% |
| 4 | 36 | 387 | 12% | 24% |
| 5 | 8 | 40 | 2.7% | 2% |
| 6 | 1 | 20 | 0.3% | 1% |
| **All** | **299** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** |

### Size of Dwelling

* 1. Arguably the most important measurement is that of the overall size of dwelling against the NDSS standard. In terms of dwelling size alone, 62% of measured dwellings and 73% of total dwellings failed to meet the minimum size expected by the NDSS. The difference between measured and total can be explained by the fact that smaller dwellings which have a higher failure rate are more numerous whereas larger 4 & 5 bedroom dwellings which have a lower failure rate are less numerous. It should be noted that most of the size of dwelling failures were emphatic; only 11 of the 185 measured dwellings that failed had a margin of failure of less than 1sqm.

Dwelling size: pass (Yes/No)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dwelling Size Pass y/n** | **Measured dwellings** | **Total dwellings** | **Measured dwellings Percent** | **Total dwellings Percent** |
| N | 185 | 1205 | 62% | 73% |
| Y | 114 | 436 | 38% | 27% |
| **All** | **299** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** |

### Bedroom Size

* 1. Bedrooms were measured for width and area against NDSS standards. Width of bedroom is important for determining whether a bedroom can be regarded as a single or double with consequences for the number of persons that can occupy a dwelling and the overall size expectation for the dwelling. The NDSS sets minimum widths for the first double bedroom and any subsequent bedrooms. The width of subsequent bedrooms can only fail against the NDSS if they measure smaller than the minimum width for a single bedroom.
  2. The results show that most bedrooms measured were of a sufficient width. The 3rd bedroom was found to have most failures against the NDSS minimum width requirement with 35 fails of 148 3rd bedrooms measured.

Bedroom size: pass (Yes/No)

| Bedroom Width  Pass y/n | Bed 1 | Bed 2 | Bed 3 | Bed 4 | Bed 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| N | 17 | 7 | 35 | 5 | 0 |
| Y | 282 | 227 | 113 | 70 | 15 |
| Total | 299 | 234 | 148 | 75 | 15 |

* 1. Regarding the area (Sqm) of bedrooms there are interesting differences between first (master) bedrooms and additional bedrooms. The vast majority (88%) of first bedrooms exceed the NDSS minimum of 11.5sqm. However, the position is reversed for additional bedrooms, with the majority failing against the NDSS minima. The 3rd bedroom has most failures with 91% of bedrooms below the required standards.

Bedroom area: pass (Yes/No)

| Bedroom Area | Total Number | | | | | Percentage | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pass y/n | **Bed1** | **Bed 2** | **Bed 3** | **Bed 4** | **Bed 5** | **Bed1** | **Bed 2** | **Bed 3** | **Bed 4** | **Bed 5** |
| N | 197 | 981 | 951 | 357 | 39 | 12% | 66% | 91% | 78% | 71% |
| Y | 1444 | 516 | 98 | 101 | 16 | 88% | 34% | 9% | 22% | 29% |
| Total | 1641 | 1497 | 1049 | 458 | 55 | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

* 1. When looking at the results for particular categories of housing development and house type, there are few discernible differences in terms of failures against the NDSS. The findings are explored in terms of both *size of dwelling* and *number of overall failures* against the NDSS.

### Size of Scheme

* 1. In order to help analysis, housing schemes were grouped into small, medium and large categories. Small includes schemes of less than 20 dwellings, medium includes schemes of between 20 and 49 dwellings and large includes schemes of 50 or more dwellings. In terms of size of dwelling failures, medium and large schemes have higher failure rates of 81% and 76% respectively whereas small schemes have a much lower failure rate of only 36%.

Size of scheme: pass (Yes/No)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size of Scheme** | **Number** | |  |  | **Percentage** | |  |  |
| **Dwellings** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Pass y/n** | **Large** | **Med** | **Small** | **All** | **Large** | **Med** | **Small** | **All** |
| N | 1020 | 144 | 41 | 1205 | 76% | 81% | 36% | 73% |
| Y | 330 | 34 | 72 | 436 | 24% | 19% | 64% | 27% |
| **All** | **1350** | **178** | **113** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |

* 1. In terms of overall number of failures against the NDSS, large and medium schemes have more failures than smaller ones. Even still, only 19% of dwellings from small schemes had no failings at all.

Size of scheme: number of fails

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size of Scheme** | **Number** | |  |  | **Percentage** | |  |  |
| **Number of Fails** | **Large** | **Med** | **Small** | **All** | **Large** | **Med** | **Small** | **All** |
| 0 | 46 | 11 | 22 | 79 | 3% | 6% | 19% | 5% |
| 1 | 228 | 33 | 51 | 312 | 17% | 19% | 45% | 19% |
| 2 | 315 | 38 | 28 | 381 | 23% | 21% | 25% | 23% |
| 3 | 362 | 49 | 11 | 422 | 27% | 28% | 10% | 26% |
| 4 | 345 | 41 | 1 | 387 | 26% | 23% | 1% | 24% |
| 5 | 34 | 6 | - | 40 | 3% | 3% | 0% | 2% |
| 6 | 20 | - | - | 20 | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| **All** | **1350** | **178** | **113** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |

### Size of Dwelling Analysis

* 1. The results for different sizes of dwelling have been analysed. In terms of size of dwelling failures, the larger dwellings of 4 & 5 bedrooms have a much lower failure rate of 38% and 0% respectively than 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings. The highest failure rates lie with 2 and 3 bed dwellings at 89% & 91% respectively.

Size of dwelling analysis: pass (Yes/No)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size of Dwelling (Beds)** | **Number** | |  |  |  |  | **Percentage** | | | |  | |  | |  |
| **Dwellings** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |
| **Pass y/n** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **All** | **1** | **2** | | **3** | **4** | **5** | | **All** | |
| N | 116 | 398 | 540 | 151 | - | 1205 | 76% | 89% | | 91% | 38% | 0% | | 73% | |
| Y | 36 | 50 | 51 | 244 | 55 | 436 | 24% | 11% | | 9% | 62% | 100% | | 27% | |
| **All** | **152** | **448** | **591** | **395** | **55** | **1641** | 100% | 100% | | 100% | 100% | 100% | | 100% | |

* 1. In terms of overall number of failures against the NDSS, 3 bed dwellings have the worst failure rate with 86% of dwellings having 3 or more failings followed by 4 bed dwellings with 64% of dwellings having 3 or more failings.

Size of dwelling analysis: number of fails

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Size of Dwelling** | **Number** | |  |  |  |  | **Percentage** | |  |  |  | |  |
| **Number of Fails** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **All** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | | **All** |
| 0 | 28 | 24 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 79 | 18.4% | 5% | 1% | 2.5% | 18% | 5% | |
| 1 | 69 | 187 | 17 | 31 | 8 | 312 | 45.4% | 42% | 3% | 7.8% | 15% | 19% | |
| 2 | 53 | 153 | 60 | 101 | 14 | 381 | 34.9% | 34% | 10% | 25.6% | 25% | 23% | |
| 3 | 2 | 84 | 259 | 62 | 15 | 422 | 1.3% | 19% | 44% | 15.7% | 27% | 26% | |
| 4 |  |  | 234 | 145 | 8 | 387 | 0% | 0% | 40% | 36.7% | 15% | 24% | |
| 5 |  |  | 14 | 26 |  | 40 | 0% | 0% | 2% | 6.6% | 0% | 2% | |
| 6 |  |  |  | 20 |  | 20 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5.1% | 0% | 1% | |
| **All** | **152** | **448** | **591** | **395** | **55** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** | | **100%** |

### Affordable / Market Housing

* 1. Of the 299 measured dwellings 87 are affordable and 212 market, representing a total of 676 affordable and 965 market dwellings. In terms of the failure rates between market and affordable dwellings, looking first at size of dwelling failures, there are significantly higher failures for affordable dwellings with a failure rate of 92% against 60% for market housing.

Affordable/market housing: pass (Yes/No)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Affordable/Market** | **Dwellings** | |  | **Percentage** | |  |
| **Pass y/n** | **Aff** | **Mkt** | **All** | **Aff** | **Mkt** | **All** |
| N | 623 | 582 | 1205 | 92% | 60% | 73% |
| Y | 53 | 383 | 436 | 8% | 40% | 27% |
| **All** | **676** | **965** | **1641** | 100% | 100% | 100% |

* 1. However, when considering all failures, including width and area of bedrooms, market dwellings have a higher rate of failures with 84% of market dwellings having 2 or more failures against 64% of affordable dwellings.

Affordable/market housing: number of fails

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Affordable / Market** | **Dwellings** | |  | **Percentage** | |  |
| **Number of Fails** | **Aff** | **Mkt** | **All** | **Aff** | **Mkt** | **All** |
| 0 | 40 | 39 | 79 | 6% | 4% | 5% |
| 1 | 195 | 117 | 312 | 29% | 12.1% | 19% |
| 2 | 176 | 205 | 381 | 26% | 21.2% | 23% |
| 3 | 139 | 283 | 422 | 21% | 29.3% | 26% |
| 4 | 96 | 291 | 387 | 14% | 30.2% | 24% |
| 5 | 10 | 30 | 40 | 1% | 3.1% | 2% |
| 6 | 20 |  | 20 | 3% | 0% | 1% |
| **All** | **676** | **965** | **1641** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |

### Greenfield / Brownfield

* 1. Comparing size of dwellings between schemes on greenfield sites and schemes on brownfield land there is little difference. In terms of size of dwelling failures, greenfield and brownfield failure rates are similar at 74% and 68% respectively; in terms of number of failures, the greenfield and brownfield rates are very similar. Greenfield failures are slightly higher.

Greenfield/brownfield: pass (Yes/No)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Greenfield / Brownfield** | **Dwellings** | |  | **Percentage** | |  |
| **Pass y/n** | **BF** | **GF** | **All** | **BF** | **GF** | **All** |
| N | 206 | 979 | 1185 | 68% | 74% | 68% |
| Y | 96 | 337 | 433 | 32% | 26% | 32% |
| **All** | **302** | **1316** | **1618** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |

Greenfield/brownfield: number of fails

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Greenfield / Brownfield** | **Dwellings** | | | **Percentage** | |  |
| **Number of Fails** | **BF** | **GF** | **All** | **BF** | **GF** | **All** |
| 0 | 38 | 41 | 79 | 13% | 3% | 4.9% |
| 1 | 83 | 229 | 312 | 27% | 17% | 19.3% |
| 2 | 82 | 290 | 372 | 27% | 22% | 23% |
| 3 | 48 | 371 | 419 | 16% | 28% | 25.9% |
| 4 | 49 | 331 | 380 | 16% | 25% | 23.5% |
| 5 | 2 | 34 | 36 | 1% | 3% | 2.2% |
| 6 |  | 20 | 20 | 0% | 2% | 1.2% |
| **All** | **302** | **1316** | **1618** | **100%** | **100%** | **100%** |

### Settlement Geography

* 1. The schemes selected for measurement were chosen to provide a broad geographic distribution across the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. However, it has not been possible to include schemes from every settlement. Also, many of the settlements with measured schemes had only one measured scheme. Therefore, there is not sufficient statistical validity to give much significance to differences between individual settlements.
  2. There does not appear to be any obvious correlation between urban / rural geography and dwellings meeting/failing the NDSS. The rural settlement of Wellsborough may be regarded as exceptional because its results are made up of one development of untypical very large exclusive dwellings at Hornsey Rise.

Settlement geography by settlement: percentage of dwellings pass/fail against NDSS minimum dwelling sizes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **By Settlement: Percentage of dwellings pass/fail against NDSS minimum dwelling sizes** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Pass y/n** | **Barlestone** | **Barwell** | **Burbage** | **Desford** | **Earl Shilton** | **Groby** | **Hinckley** | **Markfield** | **Newbold V** | **Ratby** | **Twycross** | **Wellsboro** | **All** |
| N | 95% | 64% | 57% | 81% | 65% | 97% | 77% | 38% | 83% | 94% | 40% | 0% | 73% |
| Y | 5% | 36% | 43% | 19% | 35% | 3% | 23% | 62% | 17% | 6% | 60% | 100% | 27% |
| **All** | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Settlement geography by settlement: percentage of numbers of dwelling fails against NDSS

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **By Settlement: Percentage of numbers of dwelling fails against NDSS** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Number of Fails** | **Barlestone** | **Barwell** | **Burbage** | **Desford** | **Earl Shilton** | **Groby** | **Hinckley** | **Markfield** | **Newbold V** | **Ratby** | **Twycross** | **Wellsboro** | |
| 0 | 5.1% | 0% | 6.8% | 0% | 2.5% | 3.3% | 4% | 0% | 3% | 6% | 0% | 83% | |
| 1 | 2% | 50% | 20% | 19.6% | 9.6% | 23.3% | 19% | 38.5% | 24% | 38% | 15% | 17% | |
| 2 | 46.5% | 7% | 30.6% | 25% | 24.6% | 10% | 27% | 38.5% | 8% | 0% | 30% | 0% | |
| 3 | 20.2% | 43% | 27.9% | 33.8% | 31.4% | 0% | 17% | 15.4% | 26% | 31% | 55% | 0% | |
| 4 | 20.2% | 0% | 14% | 18.9% | 28.8% | 63.3% | 29% | 7.7% | 36% | 13% | 0% | 0% | |
| 5 | 6.1% | 0% | 0.8% | 2.7% | 3.1% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | |
| 6 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 12% | 0% | 0% | |
| **All** | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |

## CONCLUSIONS

* 1. The key message from the results of the measuring exercise is that a very high proportion of dwellings are failing to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). A significant proportion of dwellings (73%) are not of a sufficient internal size and when the wider set of NDSS measures of bedroom widths and areas are included, 95% of dwellings had one or more failing against the NDSS.
  2. It is also a concern that a high proportion of 2nd, 3rd 4th and 5th bedrooms are below the minimum area expected by the NDSS. The first (master) bedrooms tend to comfortably exceed the NDSS minimum area, whereas secondary bedrooms fall short.
  3. When assessing the space standards by different categories of development, there are few discernible trends. Small schemes tend to achieve better space standards than larger schemes – maybe this is due to the more bespoke / individually designed nature of small schemes? It is surprising that affordable dwellings do not present better space standards than market housing because Registered Providers normally seek the best standards for their tenants and shared owners, but it will have been difficult for RPs to demand better than market space standards, particularly as this is not yet a planning policy requirement.

1. Written Statement to Parliament: Planning Update March 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard, DCLG March 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-optional-technical-standards#internal-space-standards [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Crowded house: Cramped living in England’s housing, Shelter, 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Space Standards: The Benefits. UCL for CABE, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. One Hundred Years of Space Standards, Julia Park, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)