

# Self Contained Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

## 2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Full Council on DATE for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available on request.
- 2.2 These Notes have been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales; Unitary Development Plans (Wales); Technical Advice Notes.

## 3 BACKGROUND

- In Denbighshire in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of large houses which have been subdivided into flats, bedsits and other forms of multiple occupation.
- The County Council recognises that whilst this type of accommodation may meet a limited housing need in certain areas, the cumulative impact of a cluster or concentration of such uses may have a resultant adverse impact on the existing residential character.
- Planning policies and standards play an important role in the control of subdivided and self-contained accommodation.

## 4 PLANNING POLICY

- Reference should be made initially to the Housing Chapter of the Council's Unitary Development Plan which relates to the consolidation of or conversions to self contained flats or houses in multiple occupation. The broad aims of the policy are:
  - to prevent the further subdivision of premises into non-self contained accommodation in areas where there is already an over provision.
  - outside such areas, to establish criteria against which proposals for self-contained or non-self contained accommodation may be assessed.
- Areas of east and west Rhyl have a significant number of properties in use as flatlets and bed sits which do not provide fully self-contained residential accommodation.
- Proposals for conversions of properties within these specified areas will only be permitted if it is fully self-contained accommodation which is being provided.

**5 DEFINITION AND STANDARDS**

**5.1 SELF CONTAINED FLATS**

- There are various definitions under different legislation for self contained flats; the one below is the most relevant for planning purposes.

*“A fully self-contained flat is defined as residential accommodation providing a minimum of one habitable room with a separate kitchen with the exclusive use of an inside bath/shower, sink and toilet.”*

- Guidance on minimum floor space standards for self-contained flats is set out below:

**• 1 Person**

Bedroom	6.5 square metres (70 sq.ft)
Kitchen	4.5 square metres (48 sq.ft)
Living Room	11.5 square metres (124 sq.ft)

**• 2 Person**

Bedroom	10 square metres (108 sq.ft)
Kitchen	5 square metres (54 sq.ft)
Living Room	13 square metres (140 sq.ft)

**• 3 Person**

Main bedroom (double)	10 square metres (108 sq.ft)
Bedroom (small)	6.5 square metres (70 sq.ft)
Kitchen	7 square metres (75 sq.ft)
Living Room	16 square metres (172 sq.ft)

The subdivision of a large single dwelling house into a number of self contained units means that additional parking may be required to be provided within the site at a rate of 1 to 2 spaces per unit.

N.B. - Parking provision should meet the LPAs approved standards - set out in a separate SPG - which are intended to be a maximum not a minimum. Access to means other than the car - i.e. public transport or within walking distance of local facilities - is preferred . Where the parking requirements cannot be met on site due regard will be given to the need for and merits of the conversion compared to the resultant over spill parking on street and its impact on the surrounding area.

**5.2 NON-SELF CONTAINED ACCOMMODATION**

- Accommodation which involves the sharing of certain facilities, such as a kitchen will only be permitted after assessment against the following criteria:
- Is the proposed property located within the East/West Rhyl restricted area?
  - If YES then conversion must be providing self-contained accommodation only.
- What is the size of the building?
  - The building would need to be of a suitable size for subdivision without the need for major alterations or extensions in order to accommodate the units. In certain areas, providing no harm to the locality occurs, certain buildings in spacious grounds may meet a demand for suitably designed bedsit accommodation.
- Could the property be used for alternative beneficial uses?
  - The property may be more suited to conversion to a use which reflects the character of the area. (i.e. employment/office uses) or retained in its current use eg hotel

- What are the characteristics of the locality?
  - The sub division of a property within an area of mainly single dwelling houses or other specific land use characteristics would be unlikely to be allowed as it may adversely affect the reasonable and generally accepted standards of residential amenity in the locality
- Would the number of units proposed cause detriment to the area?
  - The sub division of a property invariably results in an intensification of use and often an increase in noise levels which may cause disturbance to neighbours and other occupiers. The potential increase in noise and traffic in the area would be assessed on an individual application basis. In addition the cumulative effect will be a consideration
- Can external facilities be catered for on site?
  - The provision of additional residential units would require the provision of further residential facilities on site such as bin stores, drying areas etc. In addition it may be necessary, to comply with building/fire regulations, to provide a separate means of escape from the new units. This may require the provision of external stairwells etc which may also need planning permission.
- Is the internal layout/floor space acceptable
  - The internal arrangement of the sub divided units should follow the floor space guidance given above (ie as if a self contained unit) and should be designed to provide an acceptable degree of residential amenity for its future occupiers. Generally, the following principles relating to the internal arrangements of rooms should be followed:
    - (i) Kitchens and bedrooms in adjacent units should ideally be located next to each other (both vertically “stacking” and horizontally).
    - (ii) Hallways should be used as “buffer zones” between units.



**6 APPLYING FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

- Converting or subdividing a property into self-contained flats requires a full planning application. An existing residential use converted to 4 self contained flats would, therefore, be creating 3 additional residential units, thus 3 times the current fee. The following details would be required;
  - Application forms
  - Plans:     Site Location Plan  
                   Floor Plans (Existing and Proposed)  
                   Elevational Details (if external alterations are proposed)

Applicants are advised to contact the Council’s Building Control Section (or an Approved Inspector) regarding compliance with Building Regulations.

- Applicants wishing to obtain formal authorisation of a long standing HMO use of a property (10 years or more) may apply to the Council for a Certificate of Lawful Use. The onus of proof is on the applicant and details required would be as follows:
  - Application forms
  - Precise date when use commenced
  - Plans showing precise area of property where use is carried out.
  - Factual records or information about the present and previous use of the property from your own knowledge or those of other people and organisations.



**Environment Directorate • Planning & Public Protection Services**

**Contacts:**

Development Control Team North  
Ty Nant, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn, Denbighshire LL19 9LL  
Tel: 01824 708111 • Fax: 01824 706533  
Web site: [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)

Development Control Team South  
Trem Clwyd, Canol y Dre, Ruthin, Denbighshire LL15 1QA  
Tel: 01824 708111 • Fax: 01824 708039  
Web site: [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)

**Planning & Public Protection Services can also be contacted by e-mail [dcc\\_planning@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dcc_planning@denbighshire.gov.uk)  
The Building Control North and South Area Teams can also be contacted at the above.**