

Addendum to the HCA Affordable Homes Programme prospectus 2015-18

The prospectus launched in January 2014 set out that future requirements for affordable housing would be subject to the outcomes of the Housing Standards Review. Ministers announced on 13 March the next steps in that review and this addendum is intended to provide clarification as to the technical requirements that bidders for the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme will be expected to meet or consider in submitting their bids. A link to the written ministerial statement, related annex and press notice is provided below;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/stephen-williams-announces-plans-to-raise-housing-standards>

The Review has not in itself been completed, and there will be subsequent further announcements during the course of the year. This addendum is intended to provide greater clarity to bidders in assembling their bids.

Further announcements will be made in the summer with significant progress being made in consolidating standards into the Building Regulations by the end of the year. This will include setting out a transitional period and how current requirements in local plans will be expected to conform over time.

Because of the necessary period of transition to the government's preferred approach, bidders will need to make reasonable assumptions about other factors likely to impact on their proposed developments, including in some cases taking into account local authority planning policies which will be permitted to continue in similar form as a result of the review process (where aligned with outcomes of the housing Standards Review), or which may remain in force at the time that development comes forward.

Grant funding Requirements

This addendum clarifies as far as possible the technical requirements for grant funding.

Code for Sustainable Homes

No requirement to meet any specific level of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Energy Performance

Compliance with the relevant standards set out in Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations.

Water Efficiency

Bidders will not be required to meet targets higher than 110 l/p/ day (litres per person per day). No requirements for rainwater or grey water harvesting.

Security

Bidders should put forward bids based on Publicly Available Specification 24:2012 doors and windows.

Accessibility

No additional requirements above Part M (Access to and use of buildings) of the Building Regulations for access standards for grant funding purposes. Any provision of adaptable homes or Wheelchair Accessible homes should be in line with outcomes of the Housing Standards Review proposals. These consolidated technical requirements are likely to be substantially similar to the technical requirements published at consultation stage in the Housing Standards Review set at Levels 2 and Level 3. As part of bids, bidders outline whether any homes on a scheme will be wheelchair accessible.

Space Standards

Bidders are required to submit the space standards they are proposing for individual homes which the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will benchmark against the requirements of the Level 1 Space Standard set out at the consultation stage of the Housing Standards Review. An extract from the consultation document is available from the HCA website, for information, alongside this addendum. This will allow unusually large or unusually small homes to be identified, and where necessary, the HCA will seek to understand the reasons for any significant variations. Future bids through on-going market engagement would need to comply with any updates on space standards once further decisions have been made, including any local plan standards once determined and in place at the point that future bids are submitted. Government, through the HCA will set out suitable transitional periods where any future requirements for affordable housing programmes are to be introduced.

Other elements

Other elements are outlined in the table at **Annex A** below. While the HCA will not set requirements with regard to elements of layout, or lighting, it may continue to gather information on some aspects (such as bedroom sizes) at detailed scheme stage so that it holds data on elements included in the review proposals, pending further detail on the outcome of the Review. It will also continue to gather data on Building for Life 12 assessments, but will not set requirements in this area.

Comparison of Current Affordable Homes Programme standards and Housing Standards Review proposals

Issue	Current	2015-18 AHP
Energy Efficiency	Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3	Building regulation Part L only.
Security	Secured By Design physical elements (through mandatory points for security contained in Code for Sustainable Homes)	At most Publically Available Specification 24: 2012 doors and windows.
Water Efficiency	105l/p /day (litres per person per day)	Applicable Building Regulation – at most a maximum water efficiency standard of 110 l/p /day
Space Standards	Required	Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will benchmark proposals against Level 1 Housing Standards Review space standard
Internal layout requirements such as furniture layouts and storage	Required	HCA will gather data at detailed scheme submission stage on bedroom sizes and storage space
External elements – location, visual impact, open space, routes and movements.	Required (through Building for Life minimum scores)	Report score achieved against Building for Life 12 (Red / Amber/ Green).