

This form has two parts:

Part A – contact details

Part B – your representation

Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Ref:

(for official use  
only)

### Part A

1. Personal Details*		2. Agent's Details (if applicable)
<i>* If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in column 2.</i>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Mr</b>	
<b>First name</b>	<b>Ben</b>	
<b>Last name</b>	<b>Ward</b>	
<b>Job title (where relevant)</b>	<b>Strategic Planning Manager</b>	
<b>Organisation (where relevant)</b>	<b>Persimmon Homes</b>	
<b>Address line 1</b>	<b>3 Waterside Way</b>	
<b>Line 2</b>	<b>Bedford Road</b>	
<b>Line 3</b>		
<b>City/Town</b>	<b>Northampton</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Northants</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	<b>NN4 7XD</b>	
<b>Telephone number</b>	<b>01604884603</b>	
<b>Email (if provided we will always contact you this way)</b>	<b>ben.ward@persimmonhomes.com</b>	

**Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation**

Please note all comments will be made publically available. If you do not have sufficient space in the box please continue on a separate sheet or expand the box.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?	Paragraph number	Policy number	Policies Maps
		Draft Policy HO8 Part D iii) and Part D i)	

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: (please tick in the box below as appropriate and then provide details in the space below)				
4. (1) Legally compliant?	Yes	No comment	No	
4. (2) Compliant with the Duty to co-operate?	Yes	No comment	No	
4. (3) Sound?	Yes		No	X
4 (1) Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant, be as precise as possible.				
N/A				
4 (2) Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan does not comply with the duty to co-operate, be as precise as possible.				
N/A				

(continue on a separate sheet/expand box if necessary)

**4 (3) Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not sound, referring to the tests of soundness as appropriate, be as precise as possible.**

In relation to Draft Policy HO8 part D iii) proposing the introduction of the optional nationally described space standards (NDSS), Persimmon objects on soundness grounds as the introduction of the NDSS is not justified or consistent with national policy. There is insufficient evidence to justify the introduction of NDSS in Daventry and we set out the reasons for that below.

Part D iii) of Policy HO8 proposes that the internal floor area of all new build dwellings must meet the NDSS as a minimum. Paragraphs 6.5.10 to 6.5.12 of the supporting text elaborate on the rationale behind this requirement. These state that the introduction of the NDSS would align with the Council's corporate priorities to improve health and wellbeing. It also states that "the Government has introduced a nationally described space standard for new housing, which offers a consistent set of requirements with regard to the internal area of new homes." The latter statement regarding the NDSS is misleading.

The NDSS is an optional standard which can only be incorporated into local plans where there is clear evidence for it. This is confirmed in Government guidance which sets out that where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies taking account of need, viability, and timing. In line with government guidance, Persimmon would expect either the policy or its supporting text to refer back to the parts of the evidence base which justify introduction of internal space standards. Whilst general reference is made to viability evidence, there is no similar citation which points towards the evidence demonstrating need for the internal space standards. The above government guidance states that with regard to need "evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impact of adopting space standards can be properly assessed."

Paragraph 6.5.12 of the supporting text states that "Of a sample of housing developments permitted in Daventry in the period 2011-2014, most individual dwellings met or exceeded the national space standards." While that provides some useful context, it does not explain why internal space standards are necessary given that the market is already delivering dwellings most of which already meet or exceed the space standards. In fact it shows that introduction of space standards are unnecessary.

Additional discussion on internal space standards is provided in the Housing Background Paper Version 2 (July 2018). This broadly confirms what is stated in the supporting text namely that the average unit sizes in the District have been exceeding the minimum sizes set out but also refers to a further review involving a sample of recently constructed or approved properties across seven large housing developments.

The results suggest that while the majority of one, four, and five bedroom dwellings met the internal space standards, fewer two and three bedroom dwellings met the standards (between 25% and 37%). However, these figures cannot be relied upon because they are an oversimplification. Whilst in absolute terms the majority of the two bedroom properties in the Council's very limited sample did not meet the gross internal area requirement, there is no sensitivity testing which looks out how far below the standard these dwellings fell. Of the ten two bedroom properties assessed which did not meet the NDSS, only two fell short of meeting the internal space standards by more than 20%. Six properties only fell short of meeting the NDSS by between 3% and 12% with the remaining two falling short by 16% and 17% respectively.

Reported GIA (sqm)	NDSS GIA req (sqm)	Percentage lower than NDSS req
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<b>60.91</b>	70	-12%
<b>64</b>	70	-8%
<b>57</b>	70	-22%
<b>62</b>	70	-12%
<b>68</b>	79	-16%
<b>66</b>	79	-11%
<b>71</b>	79	-11%
<b>67</b>	79	-17%
<b>76</b>	79	-3%
<b>64</b>	79	-23%

The same analysis shows that a similar conclusion can be drawn in respect of those three bedroom properties which did not meet the NDSS requirement, summarised in the table below. This shows that out of the 12 properties which didn't comply with NDSS, none were over 20% less than the NDSS GIA standard and only one dwelling was over 15% less. The majority (seven out of the 12 properties) were only 10% less than the NDSS GIA standard and one dwelling included as not meeting the standard in the Council's table actually exceeded the standard.

<b>Reported GIA (sqm)</b>	<b>NDSS GIA req (sqm)</b>	<b>Percentage lower than NDSS req</b>
<b>86</b>	93	-7%
<b>80.5</b>	93	-13%
<b>84.6</b>	93	-9%
<b>86</b>	93	-7%
<b>78</b>	93	-16%
<b>85</b>	93	-8%
<b>94</b>	93	Higher
<b>88</b>	93	-5%
<b>83</b>	84	-1%
<b>79</b>	93	-15%
<b>91</b>	93	-2%
<b>79</b>	93	-15%

As illustrated above, whilst the majority of two or three bedroom properties do not comply with the NDSS GIA requirements, in the majority of cases the shortfall is very marginal and not sufficient to have a noticeable impact on quality of life. The figures reported by the Council do not in Persimmon's view illustrate a need for the introduction of internal space standards and in fact demonstrate the opposite. The figures also only consider GIA and do not look at the performance of existing development against other parts of the NDSS such as bedroom size.

To properly evidence the need for NDSS, Persimmon would highlight the need for a much larger sample of dwellings from a wider variety of sites over a longer time period. The Council has only looked at 73 dwellings from large housing developments granted planning permission or recently built since 2013. This means that small and medium sized developments have not been considered at all despite the fact that these kinds of developments generally do not have to deliver their own infrastructure making economies of scale less essential often leading to a more bespoke approach in terms of dwelling size.

The adequacy of the existing stock or the second hand market has also not been considered in the Council's most recent NDSS evidence. However, the Daventry Local Plan (Part 2) Viability Report by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) conducted an audit of new properties sold within the district over the past two to three years. From this more extensive analysis, PBA concluded that "the average unit sizes of new houses in Daventry district has been exceeding the minimum size for the prescribed NSS, and more closely resembles the floorspace sizes required for building regulation M4 CAT2 homes, which reflect units design for wheelchair access and lifetime living." The results of this analysis clearly demonstrated that introducing the NDSS is unnecessary.

In addition to the deficiencies in the limited and flawed evidence which the Council has presented in support of the NDSS, there appears to have been no consideration of other indicators which might test whether non-NDSS housing is fit for purpose. Such indicators could include a slow rate of sales or local surveys to gauge satisfaction with non-compliant house types. There is similarly no evidence adduced from previous consultations to suggest that house size is perceived to be a significant problem Daventry. Rather, the Council's evidence appears to solely relate to the fact that certain types of homes (namely two to three bedroom homes) are falling marginally short of meeting the NDSS. This is not sufficient evidence of need.

The Council's evidence shows that a good variety of house types are currently being constructed in Daventry District, some of which exceed the NDSS and some of which are marginally lower. This is providing choice in the market and allowing for the provision of smaller, more affordable homes that would not come forward if NDSS was introduced. This is important in the context of Daventry District given the fact that house prices are the second highest in Northamptonshire. The affordability ratio for the district reported by the Office for National Statistics shows a 2017 figure of 10.11 for Daventry, meaning that median house prices are 10 times to median gross annual earnings whereas this number should be closer to 4. Introduction of the NDSS will suppress choice and competition in the market which is delivering a sufficient variety of house sizes, including some smaller-sized more affordable dwellings but even these are not drastically below the level set out in the NDSS.

For the above reasons Part D iii) of Policy HO8 is unsound as it is not justified as it is not based on sufficient evidence nor is it consistent with national policy since national policy is clear that the need for the NDSS must be evidenced. Persimmon therefore strongly objects to Part D iii) of Policy HO8. Part D iii) of Policy HO8 should be deleted in order for the plan to be sound.

Part D i) of Draft Policy HO8 requires that 50% of all dwellings be built to enhanced accessibility standards. In market housing, 45% are required to be built to Category M4(2) and a further 5% to M4(3). 40% of affordable dwellings are required to be built to M4(2) and a further 10% built to M4(3). Part D i) of Draft Policy HO8 is unsound as it is not consistent with national policy owing to insufficient evidence nor is it properly justified.

In relation to market housing, it appears that the proposed percentages have been reached through a crude extrapolation from the demographic projections over the remainder of the of the plan period. Paragraph 5.27 of the Housing Background Paper (July 2018) sets out that the number of people aged 65 or over are expected to account for half of the overall population growth in West Northamptonshire to 2029. However, it also acknowledges that "Most of these older people will already live in the area and many will not move from their current homes; but those that do move are likely to need accessible housing."

This acknowledgement points to the need to carry out an analysis of the accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock in Daventry District, which is referenced in government guidance (Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 56-007-20150327) as an example of information which the local planning authority could take into account in demonstrating need. It is noted that the Council has referenced the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People Across Northamptonshire (March 2017), but this does not deal in any detail with justifying the need for enhanced accessibility standards generally. Rather, it relates to the recommended provision of specific housing types and tenure (care homes etc.) and the remit of Draft Policy HO8 is clearly much broader than that.

The only evidence adduced in support of the proposed Category M4(2) standard across 45% of market and 40% of affordable dwellings is that West Northamptonshire has an aging population which is not in and of itself sufficient justification without a more nuanced consideration of existing stock, planned provision for specialist retirement accommodation and care homes over the remainder of the plan period, and consideration of how this need is distributed across different housing types and tenures. All these factors are referenced in government guidance but none appear to have been rigorously considered in arriving at at draft Policy HO8.

Paragraph 5.32 of the Housing Background Paper (July 2018) sets out that the Category 2 requirements referenced in the policy should be altered to take account of the Category 3 requirements rather than being additional, because dwellings built to Category 3 will also be at the Category 2 standard. This approach, which is not explained in the policy or its supporting text, has the potential to cause confusion for decision-takers because M4(2) and M4(3) are two separate categories and the way the policy is currently drafted clearly requires 45% of market dwellings to be built to M4(2) and a further 5% to M4(3) If that's not actually the Council's intention then the policy should be redrafted at the very least.

Notwithstanding the above, the policy requires that 5% of market dwellings comply with M4(3). M4(3) relates to "wheelchair user dwellings." The Planning Practice Guidance clearly states that

"Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes should be applied only to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling." (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 56-009-2015032). Requiring 5% of market homes to be built to Category M4(3) is therefore clearly not compliant with national policy.

It appears that while considering the need for a certain proportion of M4(3) dwellings the Council has relied in part on the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People Across Northamptonshire (March 2017). As referred to above, however, this report does not appear to systematically consider the evidence for or against the introduction of the optional accessibility standard in line with Government guidance apart from identifying the housing needs of older persons which is reported at 89 dwellings per annum. However, part E of draft Policy HO8 contains a positively worded and flexible provision to encourage the delivery of specialist accommodation. There appears to be no consideration of how this will diminish the quantitative need to secure Category M4(3) dwellings through typical housing developments.

The Housing Background Paper (July 2018) quantifies the modelled need for wheelchair adapted dwellings but in common with M4(2) there is no consideration of how this need is already met by the existing stock which is either adapted or adaptable. Consideration of this is all the more important given the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People Across Northamptonshire (March 2017) findings that "Northamptonshire's social rented older persons housing stock is generally fit for purpose" and that "There is a significant additional stock of retirement bungalows for social rent."

Overall, it is considered that need for the introduction of optional accessibility standards has not been evidenced or justified rendering the policy unsound. Furthermore, the drafting of Policy HO8 in this respect is not compliant with national policy because it requires Category M4(3) dwellings in market housing. Given the above, Persimmon objects to Part D i) which should be deleted in order for the plan to be sound.

(continue on a separate sheet/expand box if necessary)

**5. Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the matter you have identified at part 4(1) or 4(3) above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to cooperate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound.**

**It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.**

**As referenced above, Part D iii) and Part D i) of Draft Policy HO8 should be deleted in order for the plan to be sound.**

(Continue on a separate sheet/expand box if necessary)

**Please note** your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.

**After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matter and issues he/she identifies for examination.**

**6. If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?** (please tick as appropriate)

~~No, I do not wish to participate at the oral examination~~

Yes, I wish to participate at the oral examination

X

**7. If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary.**

**Adoption of the proposed optional technical standards represent a severe cumulative burden on developers and one that has been insufficiently evidenced. As a large national developer active in the Northamptonshire and Daventry areas Persimmon requests an opportunity to appear at any hearing sessions relevant to the above mentioned policy so the Council's evidence can be appropriately interrogated, tested, and discussed in sufficient detail. This cannot be undertaken adequately through written representations alone.**

**Please note** the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.

**8. Please tick the box if you wish to be notified of further progress of the Local Plan.**

X



<b>9. Signature</b>	<b>Ben Ward – Persimmon Homes</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018</b>
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**Thank you for taking the time to complete the form.  
Please return it to the Local Strategy Service at Daventry District Council  
by 4.30pm on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018.  
Responses received after this time will not be accepted.**