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SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE



the **moray** council

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING



MORAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this Supplementary Guidance (SG) is:
- To assist the Council, the NHS and the Moray Health and Social Care Partnership to meet the challenges presented by our ageing population, and the shared aim of helping people to live well at home or in a homely setting.
 - To provide increased choice of tenure to people with physical disabilities or mobility impairments, by increasing the supply of accessible housing in the private sector.
- 1.2 It is widely acknowledged that accessible/adapted housing can promote independence and wellbeing for older or disabled people; can facilitate self-care, informal care and unpaid care, potentially prevent falls and hospital admissions, and can delay entry into residential care.
- 1.3 All proposals for new build or converted housing should set out details of how they will comply with this policy in their planning application.

2 Status of Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2.1 This Guidance has been prepared in support of policy H9 of the Local Development Plan 2015.

3 Context

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy 2014 states that “28. *The planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. The aim is to achieve the right development in the right place; it is not to allow development at any cost*” and “**that policies and decisions should be supporting delivery of accessible housing**”
- 3.2 The Moray HNDA 2011 is the key evidence base on housing matters for the Local Development Plan. The HNDA 2011 found:
- that Moray’s population is ageing and that there is a **trend towards older and smaller** households.
 - a mismatch between the size and type of housing required, and the size and type of housing available across all tenures, and that accessible housing for market sale, tended to sell quickly and at premium prices.
 - that this mismatch, along with increasing housing needs associated with physical disability, were the likely drivers of **owner occupiers seeking public sector accessible housing** to meet medical needs. Demographic change is likely to increase demand for this type of housing.
 - that although the Council and local housing associations have, and will continue to, provide accessible social rented housing, current economic conditions mean it is **unlikely that the public sector will be able to provide sufficient accessible housing.**

- 3.3 The HNDA 2011 uses the Council's Housing List as the primary data source when assessing the housing needs of older and disabled people. Although individual households on the Housing List change, snapshot analysis of housing list data consistently shows that:
- Over 80% of applicants assessed as requiring ground floor accommodation, currently living in owner occupation, would prefer a 1 or 2 bed property.
 - Over 60% of applicants assessed as requiring ground floor accommodation, currently living in owner occupation, would not accept an offer of a ground floor flat.
- 3.4 The Integrated Occupational Therapy Service report that it is their policy to encourage service users to consider moving to more suitably designed accommodation to meet their needs, because many existing homes are unsuitable for disabled adaptation, or the cost of adaptation would be prohibitive. The Integrated Occupational Therapy Service reports anecdotally that their service users are more likely to find a move to bungalow style accommodation acceptable and positive, than other house types.
- 3.5 Full details of the context and drivers for this Policy are available at Appendix 1.

4 Policy Requirements

- 4.1 Policy H9 Housing Mix/Accessible Housing requires that housing proposals of 10 or more units must provide a proportion of wheelchair accessible housing. This policy applies to new build and conversion/redevelopment projects. Flexibility may apply on less accessible sites for example where the site is in a remote location or has very challenging topography. For the purposes of this Guidance, 'remote' locations are defined as being rural areas outside settlement and Rural Grouping boundaries as defined in the Local Development Plan.
- 4.2 Policy H8 Affordable Housing of the Local Development Plan requires 25% (rounding up) of housing units to be provided as affordable housing, for developments of 4 or more units. This policy applies to new build and conversion/redevelopment projects. These will usually be provided on site as housing for affordable rent from the Council or from a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association).
- 4.3 **This SPG requires that 10% of private sector housing units, (rounding up) are built to wheelchair accessible space standards. At least 50% of the wheelchair accessible units must be delivered as a single storey dwelling with no accommodation in the upper roof space, i.e. a bungalow.**
- 4.4 Details of the locational requirements and design features of the accessible units are available at Section 7. Worked examples of this policy are available at Appendix 2.
- 4.5 A lesser requirement will only be considered where exceptional site development costs or other project viability issues are demonstrated. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of these issues.

5 Housing for Varying Needs and Building Regulations

- 5.1 Housing for Varying Needs is a design guide, published at the request of the Scottish Office (now the Scottish Government), which has been used as the design benchmark for affordable housing since 1999. Housing for Varying Needs (HfVNs) sets out design standards for mainstream housing to achieve “barrier free” design, which aims to ensure a home is flexible enough to meet the existing and changing needs of most households, including those with temporary or permanent physical disabilities, especially as the occupants age. but also provides further details of design standards for ambulant disabled people and for wheelchair users.
- 5.2 Successive changes in Building Regulations has sought to bring “barrier free” standards to new housing in all tenures.
- 5.3 **“Barrier free” homes, while offering choice for some people with disabilities, will not provide the ease of access required by many older people, nor the additional space required by wheelchair users.**

6 Wheelchair accessible housing

- 6.1 HfVNs states “people who use a wheelchair for most or all of the time, have this particular feature in common but otherwise their needs will vary considerably. They may or may not have upper body strength, which affects their reach, their dexterity and their possible need for additional technological aids and/or resident carers. Some people have multiple disabilities. Some will have a progressive illness. A wheelchair user may live alone, or with a carer or partner or be part of a family unit. In family housing it can be an adult or a child that uses a wheelchair or in some instances there will be more than one member of the household who uses a wheelchair. The design need is for a home that provides a completely step-free environment, space for a wheelchair to circulate and access all rooms, a kitchen and bathroom that suits the occupant's particular needs and fittings and services that are within reach and easy to use.”
- 6.2 Wheelchair accessible housing can be of any size. However, developers should minimise the number of 1 bed units. Flats provided above ground floor level must have access to a lift.
- 6.3 These units are expected to be in a location which provides convenient access, in terms of distance, gradient and available public transport, to reach the facilities needed for independent living. **Small, low maintenance, gardens are generally regarded as a positive feature** by this customer group.
- 6.4 It is expected that new wheelchair accessible housing in any tenure will comply with HfVNs standards, including the standards specific to “dwellings for wheelchair users”.
- 6.5 Developers are encouraged to provide adaptations which facilitate independent living as part of their marketing literature e.g. lower/adapted kitchen units, level access showers/wet rooms, either as part of the basic design, or as available options.

6.6 HfVNs is available at <http://www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/content/index.html>

6.7 The specific design specification required to meet the terms of this policy are;

External requirements

- Location(s) convenient for amenities and facilities e.g. public transport, local shops etc.
- Car parking space as close as possible to the entrance door and at a maximum distance of 15m (HfVNs Para 7.13.4 refers)¹
- Step free paths within curtilage, ramp gradients preferably of 1:20 but no steeper than 1:12 (HfVNs Para 7.7.1 refers)

Internal requirements

- Hallways - minimum 1200mm wide (HfVNs Para 10.2.3 refers)
- Door frames – minimum 926mm wide door leaf, giving a clear width of 870mm (HfVNs Para 10.5.7 refers)
- Bathrooms/Wetrooms – 1500mm wheelchair turning circle required (HfVNs Para 14.9.2 refers).

6.8 Accessible housing requirement figures will be rounded up.

7 Project Viability

7.1 The impact of the policy requirement to provide accessible housing should be considered along with all other policy and developer obligations in any viability assessments.

¹Housing for Varying Needs available at

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nobanner/20131205100653/http://www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/start.htm>

National Context

National Records of Scotland Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2010 based) show that there will be 27% more people of pensionable age, and only 3% more people of working age, in Moray by 2035.

Scottish Planning Policy requires that local authorities consider the need for specialist provision that cover accessible and adapted housing, wheelchair housing and supported accommodation. This supports independent living for elderly people and those with a disability.

Under the **Disability Discrimination Act 2005**, the Council has a duty, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for disabled persons.

Scottish Governments' Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People 2012 - 2021 states "Scotland needs more homes to meet the needs of our changing population. Building new, affordable and sustainable housing is a priority for government, with a range of house types and sizes that encourages mobility in the housing system. This will enable downsizing for those who wish it. Owner occupancy remains higher among older people than the general population, with 75% of people aged 60 and over being home owners. This gives them options for moving home, if suitable and attractive properties are available. Availability of suitable housing for older people can be a particular problem in remote and rural areas. It is, therefore, important that the housing that is built makes the maximum impact, meeting the needs of an ageing population, in terms of its potential to accommodate people with particular mobility needs. Many local authorities and housing associations now include a proportion of wheelchair accessible properties in new developments. We encourage early engagement between house builders, local authorities and communities in development planning to ensure new housing meets the needs of the local population, including older people."

Local Context

Increasing the supply of housing, and improving the operation of Moray's housing market, are key priorities for the Moray Council and this is reflected in the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). Moray's population is ageing. Older people are the group most likely to live in owner occupied housing, but are also the group most likely to have some degree of mobility impairment.

The **Moray HNDA 2011** found:

- that Moray's population is ageing and that there is a trend towards older and smaller households.
- a mismatch between the size and type of housing required, and the size and type of housing available across all tenures, and that accessible housing for market sale, tended to sell quickly and at premium prices.
- that this mismatch, along with increasing housing needs associated with physical disability, were the likely drivers of owner occupiers seeking public sector accessible housing to meet medical needs. Demographic change is likely to increase demand for this type of housing.
- that although the Council and local Housing Associations have, and will continue to, provide accessible rented housing, current economic conditions mean it is unlikely that the public sector will be able provide sufficient accessible housing.

Appendix 1

Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018

The Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018 states that the Council will continue to allocate a significant proportion of available housing investment funding to provision of accessible housing for people with mobility problems, including fully wheelchair accessible housing and extra care housing. Providing housing with appropriate features and design attributes will contribute significantly to the Council's ability to provide good quality services to its older and disabled citizens.

The HNDA, LHS and SHIP are available on the Council website at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1917.html

Moray Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

Developed in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, 2014, the Plan covers all adults 18+ who use health and social care services. Public sector housing providers are fully engaged in the strategic planning process.

The Plan states *"housing has become a key partner in our joint commissioning process. The Partnership acknowledges the vital contribution that housing can make to improving health and wellbeing outcomes"*. When estimating future demand on resources the Plan states *"when population projections are applied to the current financial position, it confirms that current ways of working are not sustainable. There is a shared understanding across the partnership that increasing demand on health and social care services will have financial implications if services continue in their current form. The partnership is committed to ensuring the fullest use of all the available resources in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. There is a need for efficiencies, smart solutions and new ways of working in this new integrated environment."*

The Plan is supported by Appendices which includes a **Housing Contribution Statement**.

The Strategic Plan and Housing Contribution Statement are available on the Council's website at:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_100287.html and

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file102793.pdf>

Worked Example

Examples		Housing Units to be developed					Housing mix determined by	
		4	10	50	100	250		
Total Units, all tenures		4	10	50	100	250		
Affordable housing	25%	1	3	13	25	63	Head of Housing and Property, through Policy H8, Affordable Housing, SG and Section 75 Agreement	
Private sector housing	Private sector wheelchair accessible bungalows	10%	0	1	2	4	10	Policy H9
	Private sector wheelchair accessible (other house types)		0	0	2	4	9	
	Private sector mainstream family sized housing		3	6	33	67	168	Developer
	Total	75%	3	7	37	75	187	
Total Units, all tenures		4	10	50	100	250		





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