

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE



the moray council

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING



MORAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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1 Context Summary

- 1.1 Moray's population is ageing, and ageing faster than the Scottish average. The Moray Housing Need and Demand Assessment 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 rented housing, current economic conditions mean **it is unlikely that the public sector will be able to provide sufficient accessible housing.**
- 1.2 Scottish Government policies covering planning, housing and health and social care require that action is taken to meet the needs of our ageing population. Moray 2023 reflects this. It is widely acknowledged that accessible/adapted housing can promote independence and wellbeing for older or disabled people and delay entry into residential care.
- 1.3 Full details of the context and drivers for this Policy are available at Appendix 1.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The aim of this Supplementary Guidance (SG) is 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 as well as in the public sector.

3 Status of Supplementary Guidance

- 3.1 This Guidance has been prepared in support of policy H9 of the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 and forms part of the statutory plan.

4 Policy Requirements

- 4.1 This policy will contribute to the Council's ability to meet the challenge of delivering quality services to Moray's older and disabled people, in the climate of pressure on public sector spending.
- 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 as housing for affordable rent from the Council or from a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association).
- 4.3 Policy H9 Housing Mix/Accessible Housing requires that housing proposals of 10 or more units will be required to provide a proportion of wheelchair accessible housing. Flexibility may apply on less accessible sites and/or where an alternative acceptable housing mix is proposed. This policy applies to new build and conversion/redevelopment projects.
- 4.4 This SPG requires that, of the 75% private sector units, 10% (rounding up) of housing units are built to wheelchair accessible space standards. This policy applies to new build and conversion/redevelopment projects. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on sites remote from public transport and local services and where the site topography is considered to be incompatible with the aims of Policy H9.
- 4.5 Details of the locational requirements and design features of the accessible units are available at Section 6 below. Worked examples of this policy are available at Appendix 2.

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 have 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 are encouraged to minimise the number of 1 bed units.
- 6.3 In Moray, wheelchair accessible housing has usually been built as semi-detached or detached bungalows. However this does not preclude flats, provided the level external access requirements, parking requirements, and internal space standards can be met. Flats provided above ground floor level must have access to a lift.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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”.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 HfVNs is available at <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/content/index.html>

- 6.8 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)
- 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

- **The whole property must be accessible to a wheelchair user.**
- 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).

Applicants are required to submit a statement of compliance to demonstrate these points have been addressed in their application.

Appendix 1

National Context

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.

Also, 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.

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 Government's 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.

Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018

The Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018 states that the Council will continue 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

Worked Example

		Housing Units to be developed					Housing mix determined by
Total Units, all tenures			4	10	50	100	
Affordable housing		25%	1	3	13	25	Head of Housing and Property, through Affordable Housing SG and Section 75 Agreement
Private sector housing	Private sector wheelchair accessible housing (as defined by Housing for Varying Needs)	10%	0	1	4	8	Development Management, through application of this SG
	Private sector mainstream family sized housing		3	6	33	67	Developer
	Total	75%	3	7	37	75	
Total Units, all tenures			4	10	50	100	





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