

DRAFT Accessible housing needs assessment

Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation

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Introduction and Consultation Arrangements

1. This Supplementary Planning Document provides evidence demonstrating the local need for Sites and Policies Part 1: Development Management Policies Policy DM42: “Accessible and adaptable housing and housing space standards.” (Full text of the policy in appendix one). The policy promotes the use of the Category Two housing standards contained in The Building Regulations 2010 Volume 1 M4(2) Category Two: Accessible and adaptable dwellings.
2. Where relevant, information is highlighted which is relevant to the provision of the needs of wheelchair users. (Category Three: Wheelchair user dwellings).
3. Details of the standards are available on the [GOV.UK website](#).
4. Category 2¹ dwellings are broadly comparable to [Joseph Rowntree Foundation “Lifetime Homes”](#) standards and are an optional intermediate standard set out in the Building Regulations. Importantly, there are significant differences which have a positive impact on the costs of implementing the standards, (see section 5).
5. In accordance with), [The National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) the policy aim is, “...to create homes which provide greater choice and independent living over the long term.” (Paragraph 9).
6. The evidence here demonstrates how this will be achieved and the benefit to the community of North Somerset from this approach. Once adopted, this SPD will have statutory weight and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Consultation Arrangements

7. This Supplementary Planning Document was approved for consultation by the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Economic Development. Consultation will be for a six week period ending on 12 October 2017. Comments on the document should be made online by emailing planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk or by writing to:

Planning Policy and Research
PP15
Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
Somerset BS23 1UJ

8. Comments should be submitted by midnight on **12 October 2017**. Please quote the relevant paragraph number you are commenting on.

¹ Covers access into and circulation within a property; bathroom and ground floor wc standards, but does not include through-floor lift or ground floor bedroom provisions.

9. If you have any queries then please contact The Equality and Diversity Team on 01934 634989, or by email: equality@n-somerset.gov.uk
10. Following this consultation any comments made will be addressed and the document amended if necessary. It will then be reported to full Council for adoption and final approval

Methodology

11. Guidance on the preparation of this assessment has been taken from [The Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) which states:

“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that local planning authorities should plan to create safe, accessible environments and promote inclusion and community cohesion. This includes buildings and their surrounding spaces. Local planning authorities should take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need.”

(Revision 27 03 2015).

12. The PPG goes on to state Local Planning Authorities should rely:

“...predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance.”

(Revision date 06 03 2014).

13. Reference here has been made to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), guidance in particular “Estimating housing need” (2010) and a range of Census household projections sources produced by Office of National Statistics (ONS) and research organisations on disability and deprivation.

14. However, it should be noted that a recent study by the London School of Economics (LSE), (2016)² states:

“Estimates based on official data are likely to under-state the number of households needing accessible housing for at least two reasons: they don’t take account of households with disabled children and, as interviews conducted for this research show, disabled people do not always realise the extent of their needs.”

15. The DCLG guidance³ identifies five strands that should be addressed:
 - a. The likely future need for housing for older and disabled people (including wheelchair user dwellings).
 - b. Size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed to meet specifically evidenced needs (for example retirement homes, sheltered homes or care homes).

² The London School of Economics and Political Science/Centre for Analysis of social Exclusion “No Place like an Accessible Home,” 2016.

³ PPG Housing – Optional Guidance “Accessibility and wheelchair housing standards” (Revision 27 03 2015).

- c. The accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock.
 - d. How needs vary across different housing tenures.
 - e. The overall impact on viability.
16. In accordance with the [Inspectors Report on the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies](#), a differentiated approach has been taken to the geographic areas of North Somerset, where data is available to robustly support such an approach. The various strands of evidence may apply more strongly in some areas than others which will be addressed as sites are identified.
17. A number of themes are interwoven across these strands involving personal health, effects of multiple deprivation, the structure and operation of the housing market and the availability of funding to make adaptations to properties to improve access. Making properties of whatever size, adaptable and accessible meets a number of needs. The focus here is on disability. Adaptable and accessible housing, however, is of benefit to households of different ages and lifestyles; families, or people's cultural needs.

The likely future need for housing for older and disabled people

Number of disabled people in North Somerset.

18. Of the total population in North Somerset (208,154), 8.6% (17,335) have a disability that 'limits their day-to-day activities a lot' (limited a lot) and 10.6% (21,405) have a disability that 'affects/limits their day-to-day activities a little' (limited a little)⁴. (Source 2011 Census).
19. Those aged over 65, for whom the prevalence of disability is greatest, with a limiting long-term illness are set to increase at a similar rate to the overall increase in the older population and those living alone.
20. There is a predicted 3.4% annual increase in those whose activities are 'limited a lot', to reach 14,429 people by 2030.
21. For those people whose activities are 'limited a little' the increase is at a rate of 2.8% annually and will reach 17,284 people by 2030.
22. The rate of increase is particularly high in the over 85s at 5.8% for both indicators.
23. Nationally, the same age related disability pattern is evident with around 6% of children being disabled compared to 16% of working age adults and 45% of adults over state pension age. (Family Resources Survey 2010/11).
24. The age structure of an area has a significant impact on the numbers of people with activity limitation. When the population of North Somerset is age standardised the overall number of people with activity limitations is 17.7%. (Source ONS 2013). It is ranked 181

⁴ Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources Primary Principles, ONS, 2015.

out of 324 in local authority Total Activity Limitation indices.

25. In comparison the Public Health England – Local Health database (2015) states that 19.1% of the population are estimated to have a limiting long-term illness or disability compared to the average in England of 17.6% within a Local Authority range of 11.2% up to 25.6%.
26. The PANSI (Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information) 2016 data⁵ provides estimates of the numbers of people, aged 18-64 years old who have or are likely to have a moderate or serious physical disability, between 2014 and 2030.

Table 1: Comparison of North Somerset with England of prevalence of disability

27. Degree of disability	29. Moderate physical disability	30. Serious physical disability	31. Combined total all physical disabilities
28. Area			
32. England	33. 5.6%	34. 7.9%	35. 13.5%
36. North Somerset	37. 7.5%	38. 9.5%	39. 17.0%
40. Difference	41. 1.9%	42. 1.6%	43. 3.5%

Source: PANSI 2016

27. All these estimates are within a close range and to a degree dependent on responses and the methodology and the definitions used.

Needs of families with disabled children

28. Households with disabled children, (up to 18 years old), in family housing are a relatively small percentage of the total number of households containing a disabled person, but they face significant issues and so should be seen as a key issue, particularly in terms of tenure.

“One issue relates to the difficulty of adapting existing housing due to their design, which is often unsympathetic to the needs of disabled people.” (Joseph Roundtree Foundation 2002).

“This issue remains and is demonstrated by the overall numbers of adaptation grant applications involving children. The Right-to-Buy scheme resulted in larger family houses in (the social housing sector) being sold and those households with disabled children in (private) rented accommodation do not have a wide range of suitable accommodation on offer.” (JRF 2002).

29. Though the lack of access and inadequacy of functional rooms is highlighted in research (JRF 2009), Beresford with Rhodes (2008) pinpoint a range of necessary features of a family’s accommodation from bathrooms and kitchens to access to the property itself.

⁵ PANSI (Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information) can be found at www.pansi.org.uk

30. Providing adaptations for families with children is complex and often in practice is a series of adaptations as the needs of a child (and their family) change over time (Oldman and Beresford 1998).

Impact of wider deprivation

31. Of note is that the percentage of residents with day-to-day activities which are 'limited a lot' was strongly related to the level of deprivation experienced by the authorities' residents, (source ONS 2013). North Somerset as a whole has an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Rank of 200 out of 324, but it has areas e.g. parts of Weston-super-Mare, where the IMD is significantly higher (over 60%), than the national average for Health Deprivation and Disability in 15 of the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs).

32. In assessing the geographic location of future sites the level of deprivation in specific areas and the overall characteristics of households may significantly influence dwelling types and tenures.

Size, location, type and quality of dwellings to meet evidenced specific needs

Location: a geographic differentiated approach

33. Taking a geographic approach may result in the need to assess individual schemes, where they are for large numbers of dwellings and may have a strategic impact in an area. However, for small schemes a more generalised approach can be taken to assist in assessing more locally based needs. These are often designed specifically to fit the site and the developers preferred market.

The council's housing and economic land availability assessments identifies five broad areas which are useful.

- a. Weston-super-Mare town and Weston Villages
- b. Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead
- c. Service villages (Backwell, Banwell, Churchill, Congresbury, Easton-in-Gordano, Long Ashton, Winscombe, Wrington and Yatton).
- d. Infill villages and countryside (Bleadon, Claverham, Cleeve, Dundry, Felton, Flax Bourton, Hutton, Kenn, Kewstoke, Locking, Sandford, Uphill and Winford).

34. There was very little difference between built-up areas and non-built up areas in the percentage of usual residents whose day-to-day activities were 'limited in some way', but built-up areas had a slightly higher percentage of usual residents whose activities were 'limited a lot' than non-built-up areas, (nine per cent compared with seven per cent)⁶.

35. Within built-up areas there was also generally very little difference, but major built-up areas had a slightly lower percentage of usual residents whose day-to-day activities were

⁶ Source 2011 Census: Characteristics of Built-Up Areas

'limited in some way' than the other types of built-up area (16 per cent compared with 19 per cent).

36. Taking the crude ward boundaries figures for prevalence of a limiting long-term illness or disability, there is no clear pattern to the prevalence. For example: Weston-super-Mare South and Weston-super-Mare have levels of 25% and 26% respectively, but Weston-super-Mare Central is 30.5%, whereas conversely Weston-super-Mare East is 16.3%. Gordano is only 12.8%. Portishead has wards ranging from 13.7% to 18.7%, but has a higher than national average number of older people living longer.

37. The characteristics of the type of housing historically provided in some areas can itself lead over time to an apparent imbalance of housing types to meet specific households needs, (see example of [Nailsea Town Council Baseline Review 2015](#)). It is difficult to predict movement in a local housing market which may lead to housing need. There may therefore be a geographic consideration that would need to be addressed as the overall population churn is shown to have an impact and is not one that can be necessarily predicted at this stage. This would be dependent on a number of parameters:

- i. Household circumstances e.g. disability, income, family networks etc.
- ii. Availability of other more attractive tenures
- iii. Willingness to "downsize" to alternative tenures or dwellings
- iv. Accessibility of alternative dwellings and tenures
- v. Space standards
- vi. Financial support (or availability in local market), to purchase or rent dwellings
- vii. Availability of funding for adaptations
- viii. Wider market issues e.g. employment opportunities, wage levels etc.; and
- ix. Services and networks in local neighbourhood.

38. To assist with this process, applicants for residential development will be asked to demonstrate in their Design and Access Statement how they consider, using their own market expertise that their particular proposal will fit in the context of the local area.

Size, type and quality of dwellings

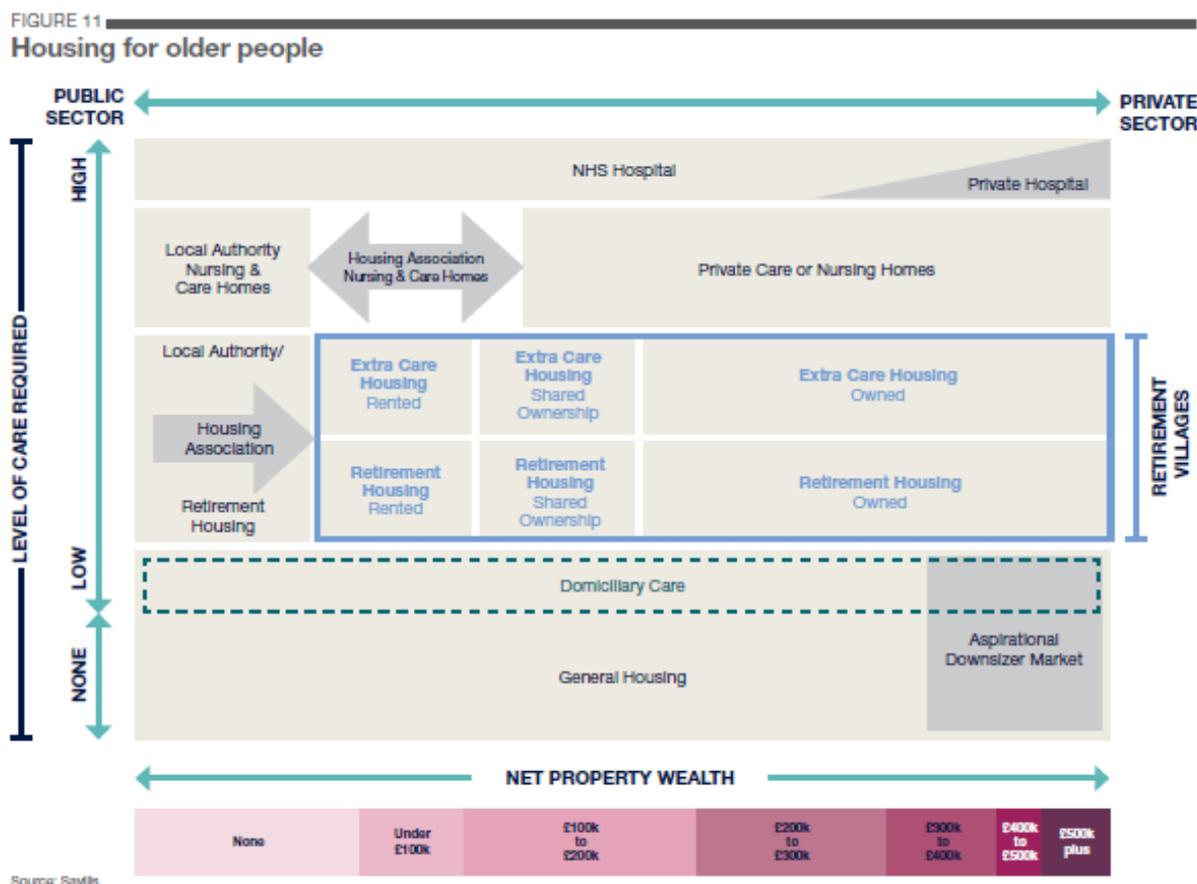
39. The higher numbers of older and disabled people in the North Somerset area focuses attention on the provision that is likely to be made for their housing needs. This might be as "downsizers", (households wishing to remain in general purpose housing); people wish to move into more specialised accommodation, e.g. extra care or retirement, (sheltered), housing, or people requiring specialised care and so looking for specific forms of care establishments.

40. All of these have an impact on the rest of the housing market which has its own demands, as has been illustrated above in the case of the Nailsea area and younger households.

41. Savills Research has produced this useful diagram to explain the options⁷.

⁷ Housing an Ageing Population, Savills World Research 2015.

Table 2: Housing options for older people



42. Savills go on to state in terms of future needs that many developers are looking to meet the needs of older people wanting to downsize. Rather than building for specific markets they comment that;

“Instead it is important that housing is future-proofed; that is in terms of building homes that can adapt to future needs with wiring for systems or space for stair lifts or downstairs showers...”

43. Whether older owner occupiers can afford to downsize will depend on whether developers provide housing of a suitable type in the right price bracket (typically currently up to £250,000⁸).

44. In the wider context, evidence from the Wider Bristol HMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)⁹ indicates that:

“An additional 4,600 homes specifically for older people with varying levels of support ranging from leasehold schemes for the elderly through to housing for people suffering from dementia will be required over the period 2016–36.”

45. Partnership working between registered providers and private developers will enable the delivery of affordable housing. North Somerset Council currently has a target to deliver a minimum of 150 affordable homes per year and the recent SHMA indicated a need for

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Volume 2 “Establishing the need for all types of housing”.

4,800 homes over the period 2016–36 (an average of 240 per year). This includes rented housing as well as intermediate housing solutions such as shared ownership products.

46. 2-3,000 dwellings are specifically proposed as a part of the regeneration of Weston town centre. The aim is to diversify the traditional range of housing, including the provision of student accommodation.
47. The private rented sector (PRS) has grown by 16% since 2011. As less people can afford to buy their own home or access social housing, this tenure will continue to play an important role in the supply of housing, but many people on a low income are finding it harder to access this sector. North Somerset Council's housing strategy states it will review the opportunities to increase the supply of lower cost homes for those in most need, including through the possible development of a private sector leasing scheme, joint work with other services and the provision of incentives (to PRS landlords).

Accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock.

48. There is no local assessment of the total number of people in need of adaptations to their existing home, or any indication of the accessibility works that have been undertaken as a part of the construction of any new dwellings.

Local information

49. The (Health) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment's¹⁰ housing chapter, identifies that there is an increasing demand for home adaptations to enable people to live in their own homes and to meet their needs. "Over 200 households have benefited from major adaptations through Disabled Facilities Grants in 2013/14 at a cost of over £1m. Demand for adaptations has increased significantly in recent years, which places considerable pressure on the limited resources available to fund this work." This suggests that 200 households does not represent the full need as these are only the homes that have secured grants.
50. In the South West as a whole, 5,140 grants were made in 2010/11, having risen from 2,160 in 1996/97, an increase of 138%. (DCLG 2014)¹¹. Changes in the availability of resources and the absence of details about differing needs in these applications, makes the adaptations picture unclear, except to say that the pressure for grants and loans is high and historically been rising.

National position

51. Information on potential need is available nationally through the English Housing Survey Adaptations and Accessibility Report, 2014-15 using the overall existing picture. It states that:

"Households with a person aged under 55 who had a long-term limiting disability were more likely (32%) to state their accommodation was unsuitable than their counterparts in other age groups (24% or less). Those aged 75 and over with a long-term limiting

¹⁰ North Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2015

¹¹ DCLG English Housing Survey: Adaptations and Accessibility 2014-15

disability were least likely to state their accommodation was unsuitable (12%). These findings had not changed since 2011-12.”

“The four most common adaptations that households needed were inside their home: grab hand rail inside the dwelling (40%); a bath or shower seat or other bathing aids (30%); a specialist toilet seat (25%); a shower to replace a bath (19%).”

“In 2014, just 7% (1.7 million) of homes in England had all four accessibility features that provide visitability: level access to the entrance, a flush threshold, sufficiently wide doorsets and circulation space, and a toilet at entrance level. (Minimum standard in The Building Regulations 2015, Volume 1, M4(1) Category One: Visitable dwellings). Around two thirds (64%) of homes had a toilet at entrance level, but the presence of the other three visitable features was less common, especially level access (18%).”

52. Of note though is that:

“The proportion of homes with each of the accessibility features that provide visitability was much higher in homes built from 2001 onwards compared to those built before 2001. This is due to the version of Part M of the Building Regulations which came into force in 1999 and started to have an impact in 2001. For example, the provision of level access was five times more likely to exist in homes built from 2001 onwards (68%) compared with those built before 2001 (13%).”

53. Whilst a range of home adaptations are provided for disabled people including through Disabled Facilities Grants and Loans, it's recognised that there is a need for supported housing solutions, for example for people who are suffering from progressive and limiting conditions.¹²

54. The provision of adaptations and the construction of accessible new dwellings work hand in hand as a part of an overall national policy to meet both the needs of older people and younger people with disabilities.

55. Encouraging older people to remain in their own homes and with support from family and health, social or wider housing services can improve the quality of life for older people and reduce costs to local services. By providing more options for older people to move to more suitable housing, when they want to, can also help to free up larger homes for use by families and movement in the local housing area.¹³ Research and publish reports do not though suggest anywhere that adaptations are not a substitute for meeting basic dwelling design standards.

56. The Government's reforms of Health and Adult Social Care is underpinned by a principle of sustaining people at home for as long as possible.

¹² SHMA Chap. 6

¹³ Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) Housing Update: Written statement - [HLWS419](#)

Staying put and flexible space

57. The “Ready for Ageing” report produced by the House of Lords (2013) highlighted the need for housing to meet the needs of older people and the requirement for this to be accessible and suitable for their needs. Paragraph 37 states:

“Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.”

58. The opportunity to remain in one’s own home when older contributes to a positive feeling of well-being and overall quality of life, including being in control and be able to manage uncertainty¹⁴. Private new build providers state that there has been a clear divide between specialist housing for older people and mainstream housing until recently,¹⁵ echoing the Savills Research report, (see above). This needs to change if older people to be able to remain in a property or move to a smaller dwelling if they choose to. Properties will need to be adaptable given the oft quoted arbitrary lifespan of a typical house of approximately 60 years (BS7543). In practice 39% of existing houses are already over 65 years old. (BRE Trust).

59. To put this need in context, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), highlighted that adaptable or flexible space is desirable amongst all new home buyers than say a large number of bedrooms¹⁶. Adaptable or flexible space is not only an older person’s issue.

60. The [English Housing Survey \(2012\)](#) found that 95% of the total housing stock is not even fully visitable¹⁷ (as opposed to meeting liveability standards), by disabled people. It noted only moderate work was required in 45% of dwellings to make them suitable.

61. It is noteworthy that the most commonly reported impairments affect mobility, lifting or carrying which the standards would be particularly applicable to. (Family Resources Survey 2010/11).

62. If access needs are met it can lead to greater feelings of dignity, independence and choice. (LSE 2016, see above). There are also recorded benefits in terms of greater social well-being and a greatly reduced need for assistance from carers etc. Added to this is the comment made in an older person’s housing review for Wales that stated “... the housing environments in which we age can play a determining role in ensuring that people remain engaged in their local communities and maintain a sense of autonomy and independence”, (Public Policy Institute, 2015¹⁸).

¹⁴ Market Assessment of Housing Options for Older People, New Policy Institute 2013

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ What homebuyers want CABE 2013

¹⁷ Visitable is defined in M4(1) as opposed to Category Two housing described in M4(2) of Building Regulations Part M 2015

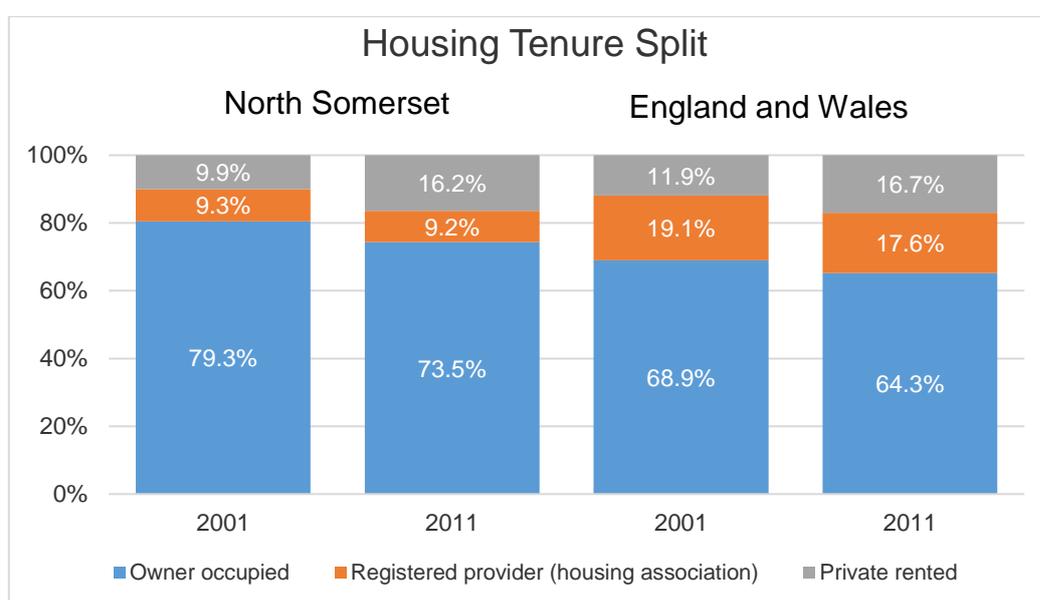
¹⁸ Public Policy Institute, “Housing for Older People in Wales: An evidence Review”, 2015.

Tenure

63. There are disabled people within the general open market housing needs group as well as in all other tenures such as affordable housing, retirement accommodation, etc. This could include both younger and older households at different life stages as well as income levels. Given the backlog of a lack of accessible accommodation nationally it is likely the competition for accommodation will be great.

64. The North Somerset Housing Strategy 2016 - 2021¹⁹ identifies the following tenure profile.

Table 3: Housing tenure split in North Somerset



Source: Census 2001 and 2011, excludes living rent free so does not add to 100%; owner-occupied includes shared ownership

65. Key tenure issues include the following themes.

Affordability

66. The average price of a property to purchase in 2015 was £197,528 or almost seven times the average full time earnings²⁰. Of significance is that mortgage lending requirements changes since 2008 have resulted in an increase in the level of deposit required by a prospective purchaser compounding affordability problems.²¹ Maintaining or growing equity in properties for older people will determine their willingness to downsize or change tenure where they may have increasing needs.

67. The HomeChoice register records the number of eligible people needing affordable housing. In the period 2014-2015 the number of new applicant households applying to

¹⁹ [North Somerset Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021](#),

²⁰ North Somerset Housing Strategy 2016-2021, Chp. 3

²¹ *ibid*

join the register with at least one priority housing need,¹⁷ was 928, which compares to an average 444 lettings per year.

The rental sector

68. The majority of the private rented sector which includes housing stock built before 1985, is largely inaccessible in that it fails to meet the minimum standards of accessibility set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document Part M which were introduced in their original form that year. Some features of some properties will no doubt be of value to some disabled or older people. They do not though include the key features that feature in Part M in any significant numbers.²²
69. With the announcement in the July 2015 central government budget of a reduction in social housing rents by 1% from 2016/17 for four years, registered provider partners have concerns that they will not be able to develop as many affordable rented homes as they had planned. Many registered providers are currently reviewing their business plans and associated development programmes.²³ It is likely that the historically accessible social rented sector will be less available with increased pressure on the need for accessible private rented accommodation.

Household formation

70. The Wider Bristol Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2015 has assessed for the 2016-2036 period the population and household formation rates across the housing area. It concludes:²⁴

“Considering the increase in households, over three-fifths (51,000 out of 82,100 households, 62%) are likely to have household representatives aged 65 or over. Given this context, the evidence supports the need for at least 60% of all dwellings to meet Category 2 requirements...”

Needs of older people

71. The majority of older people continue to live in general needs housing, partly due to the limited supply of accommodation where care and support is available. In addition, some of the sheltered housing provided in the district is no longer suitable for meeting today's needs and suffers from low demand.²⁵ In light of this, it will be important that a wider range of housing solutions are offered to allow older people to live independently for as long as they wish.

The overall impact on viability

72. National guidance requires that the cost of compliance with the policy has to be understood when setting the specific requirements of the policy to ensure it does not render development unviable. In a report commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government published in September 2014²⁶ the cost of meeting

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid Chp.2.

²⁴ SHMA p.61

²⁵ Ibid Chp. 6

²⁶ Housing Standards Review, EC Harris for DCLG 2014

Category 2 was estimated to be £520 to £940 per dwelling. This compares to the cost of compliance with Lifetime Homes of between £1,082 and £1,100. This indicates that the cost burden is actually being reduced in this policy area compared to previous policy.

73. Habinteg Housing Association have criticised the DCLG's assessment of the cost impact as being "seriously misleading."²⁷ They state that many of the costs associated with specific features of Category 2 housing would be provided anyway, e.g. outside porch light. In addition, Habinteg highlight the "process costs" that are taken into account relating to staff design time etc. These costs they believe would be absorbed over time as the developer builds more houses to the standards and so would be seen in the same way as the DCLG assessment views building to the Category 1 standards.
74. In Habinteg's view, it is likely therefore that the DCLG assessment is at the upper level and would be lower on most sites for volume housebuilders or companies with experience of Category 2. Where smaller builders are constructing small numbers specifically designed for a site and the local market, these costs may be absorbed as a part of the expected regulatory process.

Drawing conclusions from the evidence of need

75. Four conclusions can be drawn.

- i. The need for accessible housing is driven by different groups in society across all age groups and tenures.
- ii. It is considered that residential development that falls within the scope of this policy should provide at least 17% of all dwelling units to the required standard set out in the policy. This would reflect the number of households able to benefit from the features and principles underpinning the policy and the national standards. This is an age standardised figure and as such would apply to all house types and tenures
- iii. The evidence suggests that the need for accessible housing is likely to increase as people live longer and models of care seek to allow people to stay in their own homes longer. The implementation of the policy needs to reflect this by offering a range of accessible and adaptable dwelling sizes and types in different locations.
- iv. Accessible housing needs vary between areas across North Somerset. A range of data to assess needs exists. Many of the urban areas may be the ones requiring greater accessible housing provision to meet local needs.

²⁷ Access and the review of housing standards Habinteg 2014

Appendix One

Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policy DM42: “Accessible and adaptable housing and housing space standards”

85. The policy links to [Core Strategy](#) policy, CS2: “Delivering sustainable design and construction”. This will update the Core Strategy policy reflecting changes to national policy and practice in this area.

86. The aim of Policy DM42 is, “to create homes which provide greater choice and independent living over the long term”.

87. The policy states:

“In instances where the council can demonstrate evidence of need, proposals for residential development should incorporate an appropriate proportion of those dwellings constructed to the optional Category 2 standard as set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M.

The appropriate proportion will be based on the evidence of need and will be subject to feasibility and viability.

Where practical and viable, the council expects all new build market and affordable housing (across all tenures) to comply with the DCLG’s ‘Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard’. In relation to accessible and adaptable housing the policy will be reviewed within two years of adoption to establish specific targets in line with paragraph 009 of the planning practice guidance.”

Justification

Category 2 homes are broadly comparable to Lifetime Homes Standard and are an optional intermediate standard set out in the Building Regulations. Changes to the national context mean that the delivery of accessible housing has been made optional requiring local planning authorities to prepare local policies to require need and take viability into account. Category 2 standards provide a higher level of accessibility and adaptability than Category 1 dwellings. The Nationally Described Space Standard is the appropriate space development standard for new build market and affordable housing. These new standards are broadly in line with the space standards currently contained within our existing AH SPD (2013) which were widely consulted on during the AH SPD adoption process. Furthermore, our development standards were viability tested as part of the Core Strategy.

Delivery and monitoring

The standard set out in this policy will be required through planning condition where considered necessary and subject to viability. The Core Strategy Monitoring Framework currently monitors the percentage of new dwellings on sites of 10 or more houses that are delivered to Lifetime Homes Standards. This will be updated to reflect the number of homes built on sites of 10 or more to Category 2 standard set out in the Building Regulations. These will be reported on annually in the North Somerset Council Annual Monitoring Report.”

References

1. “Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings, volume 1: dwellings”, Dept. for Communities and Local Government, HMSO, 2015. Available from; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>
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