

WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 April 2018



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Age Related Housing

Introduction

The UK population is ageing. In mid-2014, the average age exceeded 40 for the first time. By 2040, nearly one in seven people is projected to be aged over 75. Over 70% of the UK population growth between 2014 and 2039 will be in the over 60 age group, an increase from 14.9 to 21.9 million people (“Future of An Ageing Population”, Government Office for Science, July 2016).

The population of Plymouth is ageing. Plymouth has a population of 265,700 of whom 47,600 are over 65 years of age. It is projected that that this number will rise to 59,400 by the year 2030 (a 25% increase of 11,800). The vast majority of older people in Plymouth live in owner occupied accommodation, whilst virtually all specialist older people housing in the city are provided by housing associations.

As a result of the growth in the older population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people there will be an increase in the requirement of an older person requiring care and/or specialist housing. Suitable housing can significantly improve life in older age, while unsuitable housing can be the source of multiple problems and costs. Poor quality housing costs the NHS an estimated £2.5 Billion per year. Homes will be increasingly used as places of work and care. Appropriately designed housing, that can adapt to people’s changing needs as they age, has a number of benefits. These benefits include reducing demand on health and care services, and enabling individuals to work more flexibly in later life.

In February 2017 the Government published its long-awaited Housing White Paper: “Fixing Our Broken Housing Market”. This set out over 150 initiatives grouped under 4 sets of proposals: planning for the right homes in the right place; building homes faster; diversifying the market and helping people now. Under the last of these, the Government set out a policy approach which was focussed on offering older people a better choice of accommodation as a means to help with independent living and reducing costs on social care and health systems. The White Paper indicated that the Government intended to put in place clearer expectations on local authorities about planning to meet the needs of older people including supporting the development of more accessible homes near to local services as well as addressing the barriers to people moving from family homes to more suitable accommodation, including supported housing, sheltered housing, step down and extra care housing.

The provisions of the White Paper were backed up with legislative provisions in Section 8 of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 which require the Secretary of State to provide guidance for local planning authorities as to how they should address housing needs that result from old age or disability.

The issues surrounding housing for older people were further considered earlier in the year when in February 2018 the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee published a report, “Housing for Older People”, setting out 9 key recommendations for improved practice in relation to addressing housing needs in later life in recognition of the diverse range of issues raised by this type of housing provision. These issues included home maintenance, adaptations and repairs, access to housing advice, housing supply, national planning policy, building regulations and provision of extra care.

In March 2018, the Government published its responses to the Housing White Paper consultation, and the further consultation of September 2017 entitled “Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places”, confirming its intention to widen the definition of older people to those approaching retirement age in support of the objective of people living independently for longer. The revised draft National Planning Policy Framework, also published in March 2018, accommodates this new definition.

People are living much longer, which presents opportunities but also results in more specific needs among older people (aged 65 and older), especially in terms of housing, care and support. Nationally, in 2014, just 1% of new builds in the UK were bungalows, according to the National House Building Council, down from 7% since 1996.

Suitable accommodation plays an important role in helping older people to live independently for longer, but the housing needs and aspirations of older people can vary significantly depending on age, health, finances, transport needs, and availability of support from family or other networks.

There is an Older Persons Housing Working Group which seeks to bring together the identification of the specific needs of older people and other groups with the various delivery initiatives the City Council pursues through its planning and housing enabling work. Officers from the Community Connections and Strategic Planning & Infrastructure departments are currently completing a strategic review to provide a methodology by which Plymouth can improve long term planning and provision for a range of older persons housing within the city.

Older Persons Housing Need

Strategic Housing Market Assessment Part 2 – Objectively Assessed Need for Affordable Housing.

The public examination into the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan considered the issue of older people’s housing as part of the wider housing debate. The Planning Inspectors specifically asked the questions: have the needs of particular groups (e.g. older people and those requiring specialist support) been appropriately taken into account in the Objectively Assessed Need? How will the Joint Local Plan help to deliver the housing needs of these groups?

The Objectively Assessed Need is derived from the population projections that are converted into household projections before being adjusted for market signals. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment is the evidence base for the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and sets out the current supply and future requirements for extra care housing and sheltered housing in Plymouth through to 2034.

At present it is estimated that there are 2,485 units in Plymouth built or under construction, specifically for older people.

The future requirement for older person housing has been estimated as 2,178 units:

Type	Affordable	Market	Total
Sheltered/Purpose Built	1,288	752	2,040
Extra Care	93	45	138
TOTAL	1,381	797	2,178

Any new provision needs to be accessible for a range of needs to enable older people live independently in the community. In particular provision must be physically accessible as much of the current sheltered housing units have steps and other accessibility challenges.

As well as the need for specialist housing for older people there is also requirement for Registered Care. There are currently 2,613 registered beds in Plymouth:

- Residential and nursing for people aged 65+ = 2,229
- Learning Disability = 255
- Other (mental health / physical disability) = 129

It is estimated that a further 1,219 spaces in Plymouth will be required by 2034. However it is expected that future requirement will be less given the national and local agendas to support people in the community within their own homes or extra care housing.

Planning Policy Context - Joint Local Plan - Meeting local housing need in the Plymouth Policy Area

Policies DEV7 and DEV9 provide for a range and mix of housing that meets the needs of local communities within the Plymouth Policy Area of the Joint Local Plan (which covers the wider Housing Market Area of South Hams and West Devon). These policies seek to deliver a wide choice of quality homes, with a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures including suitable market and affordable dwellings for older people; recognising the links between appropriate housing, health and social care in reducing on going care and care costs. In order to contribute to the delivery of sustainable linked neighbourhoods it is important that housing development promotes a wide choice of housing types, for both affordable and market housing, to meet the needs of all members of the community, ensuring a better balance between housing demand and supply as well as improving affordability.

Policy DEV7

The LPAs will seek to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes which widen opportunities for home ownership, meet needs for social and rented housing, and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. The following provisions will apply:

1. A mix of housing sizes, types and tenure appropriate to the area and as supported by local housing evidence should be provided, to ensure that there is a range of housing, broadening choice and meeting specialist needs for existing and future residents. The most particular needs in the policy area are:

- i. *Smaller dwellings most suited to younger and older people.*
- ii. *Housing suitable for households with specific needs.*
- iii. *Larger three and four bedroom houses, and executive homes at appropriate locations.*

2. For developments of above ten homes, at least 30 per cent of the total number of dwellings should be affordable homes without public subsidy, subject to viability. These homes should be provided on-site, except in the case of sites of between 11 and 14 dwellings where the requirement can be met by providing an off-site contribution to deliver affordable housing elsewhere in the policy area.

Policy DEV9

The following additional provisions for the delivery of a range and mix of housing to meet local housing needs shall apply to the Plan Area:

1. Affordable housing could include social and affordable rent, shared ownership, and innovative housing models that meet the local demand/need, such as rent-to-buy, starter homes and shared equity as appropriate.
2. Self and custom build housing will be supported providing they meet the over-arching sustainable development, general amenity and design policies. The LPAs will:
 - i. *Negotiate the identification of suitable plots on major development sites to meet this need.*
 - ii. *Encourage the provision of serviced plots and co-housing schemes.*
 - iii. *Be proactive in exploring ways to ensure sufficient plots are consented to meet the duty set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations.*
3. The LPAs will support development which increases choice in housing by greater utilisation of the private rented sector, including new build private rented accommodation (Build to Rent).
4. A mix of accessible housing units will be sought in new housing schemes, representative of the wider housing mix of the development including:
 - i. *Requiring at least 20 per cent of dwellings on all schemes of five or more dwellings (including conversions), where possible, to meet national standards for accessibility and adaptability (Category M4(2) of Building Regulations).*
 - ii. *Requiring at least 2 per cent of dwellings on all schemes of 50 or more dwellings (including new build housing and conversions) to meet national standards for wheelchair user homes (Category M4(3) of Building Regulations). Category M4(3) dwellings will be counted as contributing towards the category M4(2) dwelling requirement.*

Housing Delivery

The City Council has a strong track record in enabling the delivery of extra care for older people through strategic partnerships with landowners and providers, Section 106 negotiations and the Plan for Homes.

Key projects meeting the needs of older people include:

Extra Care Scheme	Provider	Units
Runnymede Court, Estover	Hanover	38
St Barnabus, Stoke	Aster	32
St Pauls, Efford	Aster	51
Aster Court, East End	Sovereign	30
The Rise, Plympton	Pocklington Trust	76
Devonport Views, Devonport	DCH	42
River View, Ernesettle	Aster	40
Millbay (under construction)	Abbeyfield	80
Total		389
Sherford (planned)	TBC	100

There are also delivery of purpose built accommodation suitable for older people such as the 33 apartments at the HUB in North Prospect, as well as the plans for a similar scheme as part of the future regeneration at Barne Barton.

The delivery of accessible and adaptable housing is a requirement on most new schemes, and officers explore opportunities to also deliver wheelchair user housing where possible and viable. The City Council has been able to secure a number of these types of homes that will also suit the needs of older people, on a number of our Plan for Homes sites.

Staying Put: Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

There is high demand for means tested DFGs. On average the City Council receives 550 enquiries for DFGs each year. Approximately 250-280 homes each year benefit from adaptations to support people remaining in their own home. 70% of applicants are owner-occupiers who are unable to move due to limited supply of other housing that meets their mobility and other needs.

The DFG allocation is specified via the Better Care Fund and is for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes to help them to live independently for longer. For 2017/18, Plymouth's allocation was £2.126 Million, an increase from £1.954m in 2016/17. The 2015 Autumn Spending Review included a commitment of £500 million nationally by 2019-20 for the DFGs. Plymouth's allocation has seen an increase year on year reflecting this commitment.

Discussion Issues

There are a number of policy options and initiatives in this area which could be taken forward which are suggested below for discussion.

Provision for increased extra care: consideration could be given to an inter-generational and mixed tenure model for extra care housing that is fully accessible and suitable for people with dementia.

Innovative models of older persons housing delivery: consideration of alternative and innovative older persons housing schemes, such as retirement villages, with various forms of peripatetic and other forms of support.

Improved links with Health and Well-Being Hubs: consideration of how existing and new developments could be better aligned with Health & Wellbeing Hubs development.

Direct provision of specialist housing: consideration of how more purpose built accommodation for older persons, including fully accessible and wheelchair user homes, could be provided directly by the City Council.

A Downsizing Programme: consideration could be given to more proactively enabling downsizing by working with partners to understand the needs of older people living in larger properties and what support is needed to help people to move into smaller, more suitable accommodation, which in turn releases larger family housing.

A Bungalow Building Programme: consideration could be given to directly providing bungalows on infill sites to support the overall housing plan for older people, similar to how the Birmingham Housing Trust have provided bungalows allowing larger properties to be freed up.

A review the existing sheltered housing stock in the city: consideration of how to more proactively work with partners to understand what work has already been done to look at the viability of the current stock with a view to exploring opportunities to modernise this stock to meet current needs.

A review of the role of planning – consideration of how the planning system can do more to deliver age-related homes once the planned new Government guidance is issued.

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Date: 28th March 2018