

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET 06/01/22

HOMES FOR ALL – PROVIDING SPECIALIST, SUPPORTED AND ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION IN TELFORD & WREKIN

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

LEAD CABINET MEMBERS CLLR DAVID WRIGHT AND CLLR ANDY BURFORD

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 Housing is a major contributor to good health and well-being. It is also the foundation upon which individuals can achieve quality of life and maintain healthy ageing. The Council's vision is of homes and communities that are inclusive, offering people places to live that meet their needs and provide them with independence, choice and control over their daily lives.

1.2 The Council is leading the field in delivering better housing, adopting a positive policy framework for better housing and making the cross sector and services links required for better housing. The Council are delivering now and its approach aligns with and pre-empts proposals set out by the Government in the White Paper '*People at the Heart of Care*'. The paper recognises the need to enable people to live independently for longer, this objective is at the heart of the Councils approach to social care, health and housing.

1.3 The Council has an excellent track record of delivering affordable housing in the borough. It consistently meets its affordable housing target with 30% of all new homes in the borough being available for affordable rent, social rent or shared ownership. This clearly demonstrates the Councils commitment and performance in delivering quality homes for all residents. In the last 10 years the supply of affordable housing has increased significantly to, on average, 300 homes per annum.

1.4 Over the next decade and beyond there will be an increase in the older and more vulnerable people in the borough with support needs. Planning now for a mix of housing that meets the needs of older people, residents

with disabilities, homeless and care leavers will help deliver better health and social care outcomes and relieve pressure on local NHS and social care services.

1.5 In March 2020 the Council adopted its Supported & Specialist Accommodation Strategy. The purpose of the strategy was to provide an evidence base around supported and specialist accommodation needs as well as an 'ask / offer' to developers and providers to encourage investment into a wider range of housing in the borough.

1.6 'The Homes for All – Providing Specialist, Supported and Accessible Accommodation in Telford & Wrekin' Supplementary Planning Document (or SPD) is consistent with Local Plan Policies and provides more detailed guidance on how the relevant policies in the Local Plan can be implemented. Further, it supports the delivery of the Councils strategy of providing better homes for all. The SPD provides guidance on accommodation to meet the needs of older people, for people with disabilities, people with care/support needs (such as dementia) as well as more accessible general needs housing, building standards, design and site selection. The SPD applies to affordable and open market housing provision.

1.7 The Council are already leading on delivery through the creation of an intergenerational community at Donnington Wood, via Nu Place with affordable homes, extra care and supported living accommodation. The SPD will drive delivery to meet need, provide certainty to developers and investors and empower the most vulnerable in our community.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Cabinet approve the use of Homes for All Supplementary Planning Document for use in determining planning applications within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

3. IMPACT OF ACTION

3.1 The SPD will assist in the implementation of relevant Local Plan Policies.

3.2 The SPD will aid the delivery of much needed specialist, supported and accessible housing in the borough by providing developers and scheme promoters with a clear understanding of the Councils requirements.

3.3 The SPD will support the wider efforts of the Council to plan for and deliver better social care and health services in the borough by enabling independent supported living.

4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community • All neighbourhoods are a great place to live • A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The SPD will help deliver housing to meet the needs of a range of residents including older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable people such as care leavers.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	SPD will come into force following adoption at 6 January Cabinet.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The Supplementary Planning document will provide additional detailed guidance for developers, providers, landowners and the community to assist in delivering specialist, supported and accessible housing within the Borough.</p> <p>It will also influence the funding and investment decisions of others which will help shape the development of appropriate specialist housing to benefit the community with improved outcomes for individuals.</p> <p>The SPD will allow the Council to continue to make the most effective use of its resources and support the efficient delivery of the Planning application process and will not require additional resources to implement the SPD.</p> <p>AEM 01/12/2021</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	SPDs cannot introduce new Local Plan Policies but they can provide more detailed guidance on

		<p>how policies in the Local Plan can be implemented. The more consistent they are with the related Local Plan policies, the more weight they will have in any determination. SPDs must not conflict with the Local Plan.</p> <p>The policies within the Council's Local Plan attract significant weight when determining planning applications because proposals should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, SPDs are not Local Plan policies. In their preparation, SPDs are not subjected to the same consultation/examination etc process as Local Plans and do not form part of the Council's Development Plan. As a consequence, if approved, this SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications but would not have the same weight in decision making as a Local Plan Policy.</p> <p>Approval of an SPD is a Cabinet function. (IR01.12.21)</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>The SPD will help increase the supply of specialist, supported and accessible homes within the borough.</p> <p>The introduction of planning guidance through the SPD will help applicants when considering how best to comply with the requirements of the relevant housing Local Plan policies and so reduce the level of officer engagement on planning applications that would otherwise be required to assess development schemes.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impacts.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5. INFORMATION

Introduction

5.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is taking a proactive and positive role in delivering 'better homes for all'. To support the Council's strategic approach to ensuring people have access to the type of homes they need it has adopted an overall Housing Strategy 2020-25. The housing strategy has three key objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To create sustainable, accessible, affordable and integrated communities
- **Objective 2:** To make best use of our existing homes
- **Objective 3:** To provide homes to support and empower our most vulnerable people

5.2 To further support the Council's overall housing strategy a Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy has been adopted. This sub strategy sets out:

- The Council's vision for supported and specialist accommodation in the borough
- Investment & development opportunities for supported and specialist accommodation in the borough
- Why developers should invest in Telford & Wrekin and what support the Council can offer; and
- A comprehensive assessment of supported and specialist accommodation needs in the borough

5.3 The '*Homes for All*' SPD furthers the Council's strategy and provides planning guidance and a basis for care providers, registered housing associations and developers bringing forward the development of specialist, supported and accessible homes.

5.4 The Council have an excellent track record on meeting housing needs including affordable housing with on average a third of all new homes being either social / affordable rent or shared ownership (circa 300/pa). The Council will continue to work with registered housing providers to deliver homes that are not only affordable but also meet the need for specialist, supported and accessible accommodation. The Council deliver 40% of its affordable housing through Section 106 agreements and 60% through other sources including Homes England Grant funding.

5.5 The Government White Paper '*People at the Heart of Care*' is out for consultation. The document sets out a national approach which follows the

work the Council have been leading on locally to align housing, health and social care agendas. This includes direct delivery of supported, specialist and accessible housing through Nu Place and Telford & Wrekin Homes, the creation of an intergenerational community and Donnington Wood, the Independent Living Centre, the Virtual House and the adoption of the Supported and Specialist Accommodation Strategy

5.6 The White Paper is focussed on making every decision about care a decision about housing which is welcomed by the Council and is aligned to the approach the Council are currently delivering on. The paper includes funding proposals, but these do not go far enough to address the gap in provision. These include:

- £300m to integrate housing into local health and care strategies to develop local strategic leadership, innovative models of delivery and widen the range of supported housing options.
- £150m of additional funding to drive greater adoption of technology and digitisation to support independent living
- £210m for Care and Supported Specialised Housing up to 2025

5.7 The Council are awaiting the outcome of the Governments '*Raising accessibility standards for new housing*' consultation that concluded in September 2020. The consultation set out five options to help raise the standard of accessibility in new homes based on the standards set out in the building regulations. These largely focussed on the option to make M4 (2) standards apply to all new homes or to increase the minimum M4 (1) standards. The Government are yet to report on the outcome of the consultation. The Council are supportive of the proposals to make all homes more accessible by applying M4 (2) standards as a minimum to all new housing developments.

Summary of needs

5.8 The Supported and Specialist Strategy set out the level of need arising the borough, by 2040 this includes the need for circa:

- 2,560 homes for older people for sale / shared ownership / rent
- 1,210 extra care / nursing care spaces to meet older people's needs
- 125 homes for residents with learning difficulties
- 130 homes for adults with physical difficulties
- 55 homes of adults with complex and challenging learning disabilities
- 600 homes for people at risk of homelessness or non-assessed mental health needs.
- 190 homes for vulnerable young people

5.9 The assessment of need summarised above was based on; identification of current and future supply, intelligence from local stakeholders and identification of factors driving demand for accommodation locally.

5.10 Local Plan policy 'HO4 Housing Mix' states *"The Council will require major developments to deliver a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet a range of household needs"* it goes on to say that *"The Council will require major development to deliver housing that will meet the changing needs of households over time including the needs of an ageing population"*. The level of identified need provides a clear evidence base for the introduction of the SPD including the need to enable and support delivery of housing to meet this need across the borough.

5.11 The Council are directly investing and supporting the delivery of a number of developments that include specialist, supported and accessible accommodation through its wholly owned housing company Nu Place.

5.12 This approach helps to demonstrate; feasibility of delivery and the Council leading by example. A summary of schemes is included below:

- **Maples Fields, Wellington** – included 19 specialist homes targeted to older residents and / or those requiring an accessible property or wheelchair access.
- **Donnington Wood Way** – An intergenerational community of 329 homes with 57% made up of 186 affordable homes. The affordable housing includes - 76 bed Extra Care facility (including 12 specialist dementia care apartments) and a 20 bed supported living accommodation.
- **Former New College site** – Proposals for a mixed community retirement apartments, retirement bungalows and open market homes close to Wellington Town Centre

Support for adult social care and health & wellbeing outcomes

5.13 The SPD supports the improvement of social care and health & wellbeing outcomes in the borough. Not least enabling residents across a range of ages to live independently for longer. Supported independent living improves mental and physical health and provides the additional benefit of reducing financial pressures on public services including the NHS and the Council.

5.14 The Council has been at the forefront of addressing these issues across a number of services including social care, public health, housing and children services. This includes innovations such as the Independent

Living Centre and Virtual House which allow users to test adaptations in a household environment.

5.15 Further to this there is a general trend that supports the need for specialist, supported and accessible accommodation including:

- Over half of the population increase the borough will experience over the next decade is expected in the over-65 age group.
- The proportion of working age adults who report having a long term illness or disability is higher than the national average and increases with age, rising from 7.6% of 25-34 year olds to 29.6% of 55-64 year olds.
- People aged 65+ also report higher levels of long term limiting illness or disability than the national average and rates increase with age, from 39% of people aged 65-69, to 86% of those aged 85+.

Purpose and content of SPD

5.16 The purpose of the SPD provides additional detailed guidance to developers, providers, landowners and the community on the Council's approach to assist in the delivery of specialist, supported and accessible housing. The purpose of the SPD is to help implement Local Plan policy and drive the market in delivering supported and specialist housing that meets the evidenced needs in the borough. The guidance will help shape investment opportunities through the type, location and design of accommodation provided.

5.17 The following definitions from the Council's Supported & Specialist Housing Strategy will also be used:

- **Supported Living** - where care and/or support is a core part of the housing offer.
- **Specialist accommodation** - housing that is specifically for people with particular needs or characteristics, e.g. age-designated housing or adapted/wheelchair accessible but where there may not be care or support directly linked.
- **General needs/mainstream housing** - designed for all but where it might also suit those with particular needs and characteristics, for example with the addition of appropriate care and/or floating support or minor adaptations could accommodate some of our vulnerable residents.

5.18 The key areas of guidance and support the SPD addresses includes:

- Providing **greater clarity about the need for and the different types of specialist, supported and accessible housing** sought in the borough for older people, for people with disabilities, people with care/support needs as well as more accessible general needs housing;

- The **building standards** that apply to specialist and supported housing;
- **Design and site selection guidance** for specialist and supported housing schemes;
- **Guidance on the location of accessible housing** on development sites; and
- Setting out **how the Council will work with partners** to deliver specialist and supported housing.

5.19 The SPD can be applied to a range of application types recognising that adaptations for supported, specialist and accessible housing will be needed across a range of developments. This includes the need for small scale residential alterations to enable residents to live in their homes for longer. The guidance in the SPD can also be applied to the regeneration and re-use of existing building through applications of ‘change of use’. This will help support the delivery of sites in accessible locations such as town and district centre locations which are more accessible, close to shops, services and care needs such as GP’s.

5.20 The SPD sets out the Councils requirements for the delivery of accessible housing as defined in the Part M of the Building Regulations, this includes M4 (2) for accessible homes and M4 (3) for wheelchair accessible homes. Policy HO4 in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan sets out the need for a mix of homes that meet the ‘changing needs of household’s overtime’, the clarification of accessible housing requirements supports this objective.

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

- 5.21 The SPD provides additional detail to that set out in policies within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan this includes:
- **Policy HO 4 – Housing mix** – major developments are required to deliver a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet a range of household needs, including the needs of an ageing population, with properties built to the government’s nationally described space standard, provided this meets a specific need and does not threaten viability overall.
 - **Policies HO 5 and HO 6** – set out affordable housing requirements and delivery. Policy HO 5 requires schemes of 11 dwellings or more to deliver 25% affordable housing in Telford and 35% in Newport and the rural area. Policy HO 6 presumes on-site delivery of affordable housing, unless there are reasons why this would be inappropriate. The SPD applies for affordable housing schemes.
 - **Policy HO 7** – Specialist housing needs: Proposals within Class C2 and other forms of residential accommodation including retirement homes will be supported, provided it: Meets the specific need for

residents; is located in close proximity to community and support facilities, shops and services, and public transport connections; and Relates well to the local context in design, scale and form.

5.22 Registered housing providers and developers are reminded that where in place they should also take account of Parish led neighbourhood plans which provide further 'local' detail to policies contained in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan.

Consultation

5.23 A 4 week consultation period was undertaken, this was targeted at registered housing providers, scheme providers, developers and Parish Councils. Respondents were supportive of the Councils approach.

5.24 The requirement to deliver accessible housing was raised at the consultation stage. Clarification of the Councils position in line with Local Plan policy HO4 has been provided. This sets out that where site constraints impact on the delivery of development and a developer can demonstrate a viability case the Council may vary the proportion of accessible housing requested.

Monitoring and review

5.25 The Government consulted on 'raising accessibility standards in new homes' in September 2020. They are yet to issue anything as a result of that consultation, however the Council recognise that the issue of accessible housing is clearly a matter of national importance that needs to be addressed now. The Council will address the implementation of consultation findings in any future updates of the SPD document.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Telford & Wrekin Council – Supported & Specialist Accommodation Strategy (March 2020).

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