

Policy LPr XX: Housing for the elderly and specialist care

Development proposals providing specialist housing options for older people's accommodation and others with support needs, including sheltered housing, supported housing, extra care housing and residential/nursing care homes will be encouraged. The following types of development will be permitted:

1. bungalows in accordance with 'LP04: Development Boundaries';
2. accessible apartments in accordance 'LP04: Development Boundaries'; and
3. grouped accommodation with appropriate elements of support, shared facilities and/or nursing care/wardening where either:
 - a) it is located within Development Boundaries (LP04), and
 - close to town or village shops, public transport, community facilities and medical services; and
 - these are easily reached by those without access to a car, as appropriate to the needs and level of mobility of potential residents; or
 - b) it is located outside Development Boundaries (LP04), and
 - is reasonably related to the Development Boundary of a Main Town, Growth Key Rural Service Centre or Key Rural Service Centre;
 - a Travel Plan shows how residents without cars will have access to shops, community facilities and medical services, as appropriate to the needs and level of mobility of potential residents. The plan should also demonstrate how visitors and staff without cars can access the premises. Measures included in the plan will need to be secured by planning condition and/or a planning obligation;
 - proposals meet the identified need for older people or people with a care need and;
 - a planning condition restricts the occupancy to older people or people with a need for care.
4. Schemes will be required to provide ancillary, communal facilities to complement those available locally, whilst avoiding duplication. Such facilities might range from small scale provision such as a restaurant, bar or hairdresser, to extensive facilities such as a library, crafts/woodworking room, gym/leisure facilities;
5. The design of housing covered by this policy should be in accordance with other relevant policies of the Local Plan review including but not limited to LP06, LP18 and LP20, and also provide:
 - suitable storage space for items that aid mobility;
 - sheltered external recreational space, and where this cannot be achieved, to the provision of external balconies.

6. Additionally, special consideration in terms of the design, layout and massing will be required for areas which could potentially impact upon the Norfolk Coast AONB and/or its setting;

Policy Justification and Supporting Text

To deliver sustainable communities means to support the needs of the current population and any future populations. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. Paragraph 61 continues: within this context, the type of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including, but not limited to older people, and people with disabilities. Paragraph 127 (point f) of the NPPF states that planning policies should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Housing for older people is defined as social sector 'sheltered' and age-exclusive housing and private sector leasehold retirement housing. This will include schemes, for rent and for sale, with on-site staff support, those with locality-based support services and schemes with no associated support services. Housing with care is defined as it includes extra care schemes, often called 'assisted living' in the private sector, with 24/7 care available on-site and housing schemes that offer bespoke care services, even if these are not full on-site 24/7 care, across both the social and private sector.

The Borough Council takes this responsibility seriously and to support the Local Plan review with up-to-date and proportionate evidence has commissioned and published both a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) (Simon Drummond-Hay, 2020) to supersede the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and in collaboration through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) with the other Norfolk planning authorities a Demand for Specialist Older Persons Housing and Dementia Care Housing Study (Three Dragons, 2020).

These studies illustrate that the Borough has a relatively aged population structure, and this characteristic is likely to become more pronounced in the future, with the number of residents over 75 anticipated to increase from 13,288 in 2020 to 19,166 by 2036. And that those requiring specialist accommodation, due to limiting long term illness and difficulty in performing personal care and tasks, will increase from 3,335 in 2020 to 4,810 by 2036.

It is also noteworthy that the provision of accommodation particularly suitable for older people, whilst meeting their specific needs could also free up existing housing. This could then be available for families and other younger people for whom it may be more suited.

Given the significant need for housing suitable for older people and people in need of care it is necessary to promote and encourage this form of development. The policy seeks to prioritise such development in certain geographic areas which are considered to be more suitable than others. This is based upon the Local Plan review Settlement Hierarchy and the guide produce by Three Dragons as part of their study which looks at services, facilities and the daily needs of people within this group.

It is anticipated that the need for this type of housing will be met through a combination of allocations and windfall developments. The Local Plan provides such an allocation at Hunstanton (Policies F2.3 & F2.5). Other allocations may come forward through future Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. The Borough Council has a duty to assist communities who wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and would very much welcome the delivery of such an allocation and would assist with this process. The Borough Council, subject to this policy, will support and encourage the provision of such housing on windfall sites.

Given the need and recognising that it may be difficult to secure this accommodation on windfall sites within the defined Development Boundaries, the policy also allows for accommodation for older people and people with care needs outside of Development Boundaries but which are reasonably related to the more sustainable settlements within the Borough. For such sites it will be necessary to ensure that they are able to provide good access to services and facilities for those with no access to a private car. To demonstrate good accessibility, such housing will need to be appropriate for the intended users, for example by providing ramps, lifts and stair lifts. It is also key that what is proposed and provided actually meets the identified need.

The design standards should have regard to the principles set out in the 'Housing our Aging Population Panel for Innovation' (HAPPI) report which published in 2009 sought to consider what reforms were needed to ensure that new build specialised housing meets the future needs and aspirations of older people.

In addition to this policy, the Borough Council is applying a requirement in Policy XX that all new housing should be to 'M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings' standards where practical. The intention of this approach will be to maximise the flexibility of new housing to accommodate a wider spectrum of housing needs. This will support housing needs of older people but also those with specialist needs such as those who are disabled and some wheelchair users.

It is strongly recommended that prior to submitting a planning application, applicants discuss the level of specific elderly or vulnerable users' housing need with both the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council.

Design

Schemes will be required to meet the development criteria established for other residential developments relating to high quality sustainable design including LP06, LP18 and LP20.

Whilst there is likely to be a minimum scale of provision for schemes in order for the particular model of care to retain viability, proposals should nevertheless be well related to their local surroundings in respect of size and design.

The Borough Council wishes to ensure that schemes and their accommodation maintain longevity in terms of appearance, cyclical maintenance, running costs, responses to climate change and adaptability to meet future lifestyles and technologies throughout the life of the building and is therefore future-proofed to ensure such adaptability.

The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers a significant portion of the Borough. The statutory purpose of designating an area of land as an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. This comprises the area's distinctive landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity, historic and cultural environment. With this in mind and in line with the NPPF, Policy LPXX Norfolk Coast AONB, and taking into consideration the Norfolk Coast Partnership's management strategy 'Norfolk Coast Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty Strategy'

special consideration will need to be given should the proposed development have the potential to impact upon the AONB and/or its setting.

Affordable Housing

The obligation to make an affordable housing contribution will depend on which Use Class Order the Borough Council considers the scheme to be. The particular characteristics of housing with care and extra support are likely to make it more expensive to deliver than general market housing, which may affect its ability to provide a full affordable housing contribution. However, this may be offset by other planning obligations, such as contributions towards education, which may not apply. Where viability is an issue, it will be assessed in the same way as any other scheme.

Housing with care and extra support can take a variety of forms which can influence whether it is classified as C2 or C3. The nature and type of service and accommodation in a scheme will determine the Use Class and therefore whether or not it needs to accord with the provisions of LP25 in providing an affordable housing contribution where this is viable and appropriate.

The Borough council will usually regard the following factors as indicating that a development falls within Use Class C3 and therefore subject to the affordable housing requirements of policy LP25:

- Units within a scheme consist of single, self-contained units of occupation being used as a single dwelling for an individual household;
- Units are designed, or adapted, for residential purposes - containing the normal facilities for cooking, eating and sleeping associated with use as a dwelling house i.e. they afford the facilities required for day to day private domestic existence.

In relation to housing with care and extra support schemes, the factors which differentiate C2 and C3 are those relating to the predominant level of care provided and whether it is provided as a condition of residency, which is more likely to indicate a C2 classification. However, receiving a care service does not in itself necessarily determine it as C2 accommodation if it is not a requirement. If the level of care provided is high or equivalent to the service normally associated with residential care homes, a C2 classification would be indicated.

The Borough Council will take all the characteristics of a scheme into account in determining the Use Class and will not consider any one factor as the defining criterion.

Where the development of housing with care and additional support forms part of a larger development, for example in a retirement community which might contain C2 residential nursing home accommodation, the individual parts of the development will be treated separately in determining their use class, providing they are in separate buildings.

The composition of the affordable housing will be the subject of negotiations and may be Extra Care Housing or General Needs housing or a mixture of both. Factors influencing affordable housing type will include the physical nature of the development, the flexibility of the site in providing for a range of needs, and the assessed housing need.

A reference to the policy in LP04 Development Boundaries is required – add this to the list of exceptions