



**Hart Local Plan:**  
**Strategy and Sites 2016 - 2032**  
**Topic Paper: Accessible Housing**

## Introduction

1. Part of the overall vision for the Hart Local Plan Proposed Submission document, 2018 seeks to meet future housing, social and economic needs, with more accommodation for the elderly and other forms of specialist housing. This is reflected in Objective 4 below:-

*‘To provide new homes of a mix of types, sizes and tenures to meet the current and future needs of Hart’s residents, including affordable housing; new homes and care accommodation to meet the needs of an ageing population, and homes for other specialist groups.’*

2. In preparing the Local Plan, the Council has had regard as to whether to include any of the optional housing standards that can be introduced through the development of Local Plan policies. In the light of the evidence available within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other strategies and information, the Council has determined that it is appropriate to introduce relating to accessible housing. These relate to standards under Part M of the Building Regulations:

*Part M4(2) - makes reasonable provision for most people to access a building and incorporates features that make it potentially suitable for a wide range of occupants including older people, those with reduced mobility and some wheelchair users.*

*Part M4 (3) is one which makes reasonable provision either at completion or at a point following completion for a wheelchair user to live in the dwelling and use any associated private outdoor space, parking and communal facilities that may be provided for the use of the occupants.*

3. These standards have been included in Policy H1 Housing Mix: Market Housing and H2 Affordable Housing (Appendix 1). Policy H1 seeks at least 15% of new market housing to be accessible and adaptable as defined by M4(2) of the building regulations, on sites of 5 or more dwellings. Equally, Policy H2 seeks 15% of affordable units to meet this criteria.
4. The policy requirement for Hart has been identified through consideration of relevant statistics, background information and population projections. In the recent Hart Local Plan public consultation, a figure of 5% of dwellings to be accessible and adaptable was included and received representations from Public Health Hampshire who recommended that a higher figure should be sought in order to prepare for meeting the housing needs of an older future population. They emphasised the importance of the Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations to help meet these needs.

## Purpose of this Document

5. This topic paper has been prepared to provide support to the Proposed Submission Hart Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2016-2032. It provides a review of the national planning guidance and background evidence to support the requirement for accessible homes in Policies H1 Housing Mix and H2 Affordable Housing in the Hart Local Plan: Strategy and Sites Regulation 19 document. It may be further updated for Submission following receipt of comments on the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan.

## Background

6. Guidance on the provision of accessible housing is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. This is set out below:

### **What optional technical housing standards can local planning authorities set?**

Local planning authorities have the option to set additional technical requirements exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations in respect of access and water, and an optional nationally described space standard. Local planning authorities will need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting appropriate policies in their Local Plans. Mandatory Building Regulations covering the physical security of new dwellings came into force on 1 October 2015 and planning authorities should no longer seek to impose any additional requirements for security of individual dwellings through plan policies, though designing for security of site layout remains a valid planning consideration. (para 2)

### **How should local planning authorities assess viability concerns for setting optional Building Regulation requirements and the nationally described space standard?**

Local planning authorities should consider the impact of using these standards as part of their Local Plan viability assessment. In considering the costs relating to optional Building Regulation requirements or the nationally described space standard, authorities may wish to take account of the evidence in the most recent Impact Assessment issued alongside the Housing Standards Review.

### **What accessibility standards can local planning authorities require from new development?**

Where a local planning authority adopts a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability they should do so only by reference to Requirement M4(2) and/or M4(3) of the optional requirements in the Building Regulations and should not impose any additional

information requirements (for instance provision of furnished layouts) or seek to determine compliance with these requirements, which is the role of the Building Control Body. They should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements.

Local Plan policies should also take into account site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding, site topography, and other circumstances which may make a specific site less suitable for M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings, particularly where step free access cannot be achieved or is not viable. Where step-free access is not viable, neither of the Optional Requirements in Part M should be applied

### **What issues should local planning authorities consider in determining whether dwellings should be fully wheelchair accessible or adaptable?**

Part M of the Building Regulations sets a distinction between wheelchair accessible (a home readily useable by a wheelchair user at the point of completion) and wheelchair adaptable (a home that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a household including wheelchair users) dwellings. Local Plan policies for wheelchair accessible homes should be applied only to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling.

### **How should authorities determine whether accessible and adaptable or wheelchair user dwellings (M4(2) or M4(3)) should be required in non-lift serviced flats?**

The Building Regulations for accessible and adaptable or wheelchair user dwellings require that these types of dwelling should achieve step-free access. In setting policies requiring M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings, local planning authorities will need to assess whether this has an impact on non-lift serviced multi-storey development in their local housing mix. Where step-free access in this type of development is not viable, neither of the Optional Requirements in Part M should be applied.

## Supporting Evidence

7. The increase in the older population is linked to a higher level of disability in the population and both older and disabled people are identified as particular groups which have specialist housing needs. When people become older, their housing needs often change and they may also develop higher support needs. Hart is identified in the Hart/Rushmoor/Surrey Heath Housing Market Assessment as having an ageing population, with the number of people in the over 65 age group rising faster than any other age group.

8. Both Hampshire County Council and Hart District Council have developed information and strategies relevant to encouraging adaptive and accessible housing. The Hart Corporate Plan, 2018 identifies as one of the priorities for achieving healthy communities and people is to 'enable people to live independently through the provision of adaptations and accessible housing'. The Hart Housing Strategy, 2015 identifies the need to support people to help them stay in their homes as a key issue. Objective 3 'Making the best use of existing housing' seeks to adopt an approach which combines new build with making the best use of the existing housing stock.
9. Further information on the housing needs of an ageing population is set out in Ageing Well in Hampshire: Older People's Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2018, the Hart Health Report, 2013 and the Hart Ageing Factsheet, 2013 and the Hart Equality and Diversity Profile produced by Hampshire County Council.
10. In line with national trends, the size of the older population has been increasing in the last decade across the Hart/Rushmoor/Surrey Heath Housing Market Area (HMA), both in absolute terms and in the proportional share of overall population. In 2011, around 16% of the population (15,020) in Hart was aged 65+ and 2% was aged over 85 years (Census of Population, 2011. See Appendix 2). 12% of Hart residents were identified as having a long term health problem or disability limiting their day to day activities (Census of Population, 2011).
11. In 2011, Hart's population was 91,000, an increase of 9% from 2001 (Census of Population, 2011). Between 2001 and 2011, this older population increased by 41% (4,400). This follows on from the trend between 1981 and 2011 where the number of people aged 65 and over doubled and the number aged 85 and over almost tripled. This represented the fastest growth of any authority in Hampshire (Hampshire Ageing Profile, 2015).
12. This strong growth trend amongst the older age groups is shown in the table below.

#### **Change in Hart's Population by Age 2001-2011**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Hart</b>	<b>Housing Market Area</b>
<b>0-4</b>	11%	7%
<b>5-9</b>	6%	-4%
<b>10-14</b>	6%	1%
<b>15-19</b>	1%	6%
<b>20-24</b>	1%	5%
<b>25-29</b>	-13%	-9%
<b>30-44</b>	-3%	-4%
<b>45-59</b>	7%	10%

<b>60-64</b>	39%	35%
<b>65-74</b>	44%	26%
<b>75-84</b>	37%	26%
<b>85-89</b>	48%	34%
<b>90+</b>	34%	38%

Source: Census of Population 2001, 2011

13. This trend is set to continue with forecasts showing the Housing Market Area will have a significant increase in the older population. Hampshire County Council's Small Area Population Forecasts, 2016 estimate the population in Hart will increase from 95,000 to 101,300 by 2023 (6.6%). The forecasts show a 15% increase in the over 65's over this time period and by 2023, the over 65's will make up 21% of the district's population.
14. Over the longer period to 2034, a more significant increase in the older age groups is expected with those aged between 65 and 74 increasing by 34%, those between 74 and 84 years increasing by 74% and those over 85 years increasing by 221%. This trend will significantly impact on the provision of health and social care in the district and increase pressure for suitable housing and accommodation to meet the needs of older people.

#### **Projected Change in Population of Older Persons 2012-34**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Hart</b>	<b>Housing Market Area</b>
<b>55-64</b>	10%	15%
<b>65-74</b>	34%	43%
<b>75-84</b>	74%	69%
<b>85+</b>	221%	200%

Source ONS 2012-based SNPP by 5 year age bands.

15. Increases in the population aged over 65 is linked to expected increased levels of disability and dementia in the overall population. There is projected to be a large rise in the number of people with dementia and mobility problems over the next two decades. In Hart, currently, 20% of households contain someone with a long term health problem or disability. This is expected to increase due to a larger number of older people but also because people are generally living longer. The HMA identifies an increase of 117% in the number of people with dementia and an increase of 91% in those with mobility problems over the next 20 years.

Estimated Population Change for Dementia and Mobility Problems in Hart 2011-31

Type of illness/disability	2011	2031	Change	% increase
<b>Dementia</b>	1,000	2,170	1,170	117%
<b>Mobility problems</b>	2,670	5,140	2,450	91%

Source: POPPI and Demographic Projections

16. The current Government approach for housing older people is to provide support to enable them to continue to stay in their own homes for longer. Housing increasingly will therefore need to be able to meet the housing needs of these groups without the requirement for major adaptations.
17. The HMA identifies the need for a range of specialist types of housing for older people and these are set out in the table below.

Estimated Requirement for Specialist Housing for Older People 2014-35

Shortfall 2014-35	Hart
<b>Sheltered</b>	1,090
<b>Enhanced Sheltered</b>	302
<b>Extra Care</b>	164
<b>Residential Care</b>	685
<b>Nursing Care</b>	472
<b>Total</b>	2,713
<b>Total in care homes</b>	1,157

Source: Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Housing Market Assessment, 2016

18. Residential and nursing care are not classed as residential uses but all other types of accommodation are included as part of the mainstream housing requirement. The HMA cautions against assuming that the proportions of specialist accommodation will remain the same though, as needs may change through, for example, a greater proportion of older people wishing to remain in their own home. The Hampshire County Council Older People's Wellbeing Strategy, 2014-18 identifies that extra care housing is important to help meet the needs of the older population including those with disabilities.
19. The Care Act 2014, strengthened local authorities' duties to provide high quality information and advice about care, support and community facilities in order to help people maintain their independence for longer. (Ageing Well in Hampshire: Older People's Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2018, HCC). In 2013, Hampshire County Council undertook a survey to get the views of older people on their key concerns. This identified 19% of respondents who felt

moving home could support their continued independence. This primarily meant moving to a smaller more accessible property.

20. Hart District Council's Housing Register provides information on the type of affordable accommodation being sought within the district and the number of disabled households seeking accommodation. Currently, the Housing Register contains 201 households aged 65 years or above; 101 households require ground floor accommodation and 125 households are registered as disabled. A significant amount is being spent on the adaptation of existing housing through Disabled Facilities Grants. The figures for the last five years are shown below.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b>Spend in £</b>	340,000	328,000	298,000	283,000	384,000

21. These factors support the provision of an element of accommodation meeting Requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations across all tenures, and M4(3) of the Building Regulations (wheelchair accessible) standards in relation to affordable housing. The costs of building wheelchair accessible dwellings is significantly higher and therefore can only be required as part of the affordable requirement to meet a specified need with the costs considered as part of the overall viability considerations.
22. Policy H1: Housing Mix requires that on sites of 5 dwellings or more that at least 15% of new homes should be accessible and adaptable as defined by M4(2) of the building regulations. The addendum update to the viability study, 2016 demonstrates that such a threshold would not impact on development viability

## Conclusion

23. The size of the older population has increased in Hart and the rest of the Housing Market Area both in absolute terms and in its proportional share of the population and will continue to do so over the Hart Local Plan period, particularly in the 85+ group. A larger number of people with health, disability and mobility issues is also predicted and some of this group will require specialist housing provision increasing with the age of the individual. With the majority of older people choosing to live in their own home as long as possible, an ageing population and Government policy to encourage additional provision for more accessible and adaptable homes, further accessible dwellings should be sought through the Local Plan policies. A figure of 15% has been tested in the addendum to the viability assessment (Adams Integra, January 2017) and is considered to be reasonable and achievable and has therefore been included as a requirement to Policies H1 Housing Mix and H2 Affordable Housing. The Local Plan policy requirement for 15% of new homes on sites of more than 5 dwellings to

comply with the M4(2) standard for accessible and adaptable housing is therefore considered to be fully justified.

24. The information from Hart's Housing Register supports the inclusion of a policy requirement for an element of affordable housing to meet the M4(3) standard for wheelchair users, though this would be dependent upon on establishing the suitability of individual development sites.

## Appendix I Relevant Hart Local Plan Proposed Submission Version Policies

### Policy H1 Housing Mix: Market Housing

Proposals for new homes will be supported where:

- a) they provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes having regard to the most up to date evidence on housing need, and the size, location and characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
- b) on sites of 5 or more dwellings, at least 15% of new market homes are accessible and adaptable homes as defined by requirement M4(2) of the building regulations<sup>1</sup>;
- c) provision is made for specialist/supported accommodation where appropriate;
- d) on sites of 20 or more dwellings, 5% of plots are for self and custom build homes, subject to site suitability and the need shown on the self and custom build register.

Development proposals for new homes must be supported by an explanation of the proposed mix of new homes, in the context of the criteria above.

Proposals that do not meet one or more of the criteria may be supported provided they are justified in relation to evidence of housing need, viability, or to site-specific physical or environmental constraints.

### Policy H2 Affordable Housing

On developments of 11 or more dwellings (gross), or of greater than 1,000 square metres gross residential floorspace irrespective of the number of dwellings, the Council will require no less than 40% of the new homes to be affordable housing, to be provided in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) the affordable housing will be provided on site, and interspersed and distributed throughout the development mixed with the market housing;
- b) The affordable housing will be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need;
- c) the tenure mix of the affordable housing will be 65% social/affordable rented and 35% shared ownership unless superseded by the most up to date housing evidence;

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<sup>1</sup> Or as otherwise amended by the Building Regulations

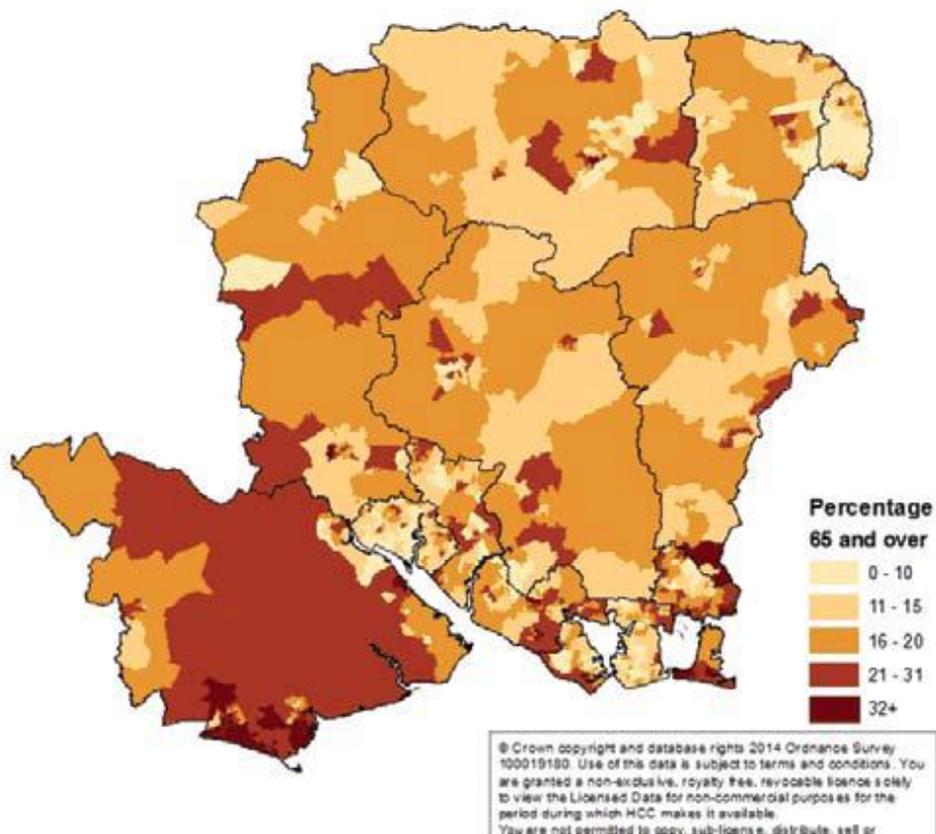
- d) at least 15% of the affordable units will be accessible and adaptable as defined by requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations**
- e) where evidenced by local need, a proportion of affordable dwellings will be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3);**
- f) in cases where the 40% calculation provides a part dwelling a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part dwelling.**

**In exceptional circumstances, if it is clearly demonstrated that the provision of affordable housing on site is impractical, the Council may accept off-site provision, or a financial contribution of equivalent value in lieu of on-site provision.**

**Only in exceptional circumstances, and only when fully justified, will the Council grant planning permission for schemes that fail to provide at least 40% affordable housing, or fail criteria a) to f) above. Any such proposals must be supported by evidence in the form of an open book viability assessment, demonstrating why the target cannot be met. In such cases the Council will commission an independent expert review of the viability assessment, for which the applicant will bear the cost. The Council will then negotiate with the applicant to secure the optimum quantity and mix of affordable housing that is viable and meets the identified housing need.**

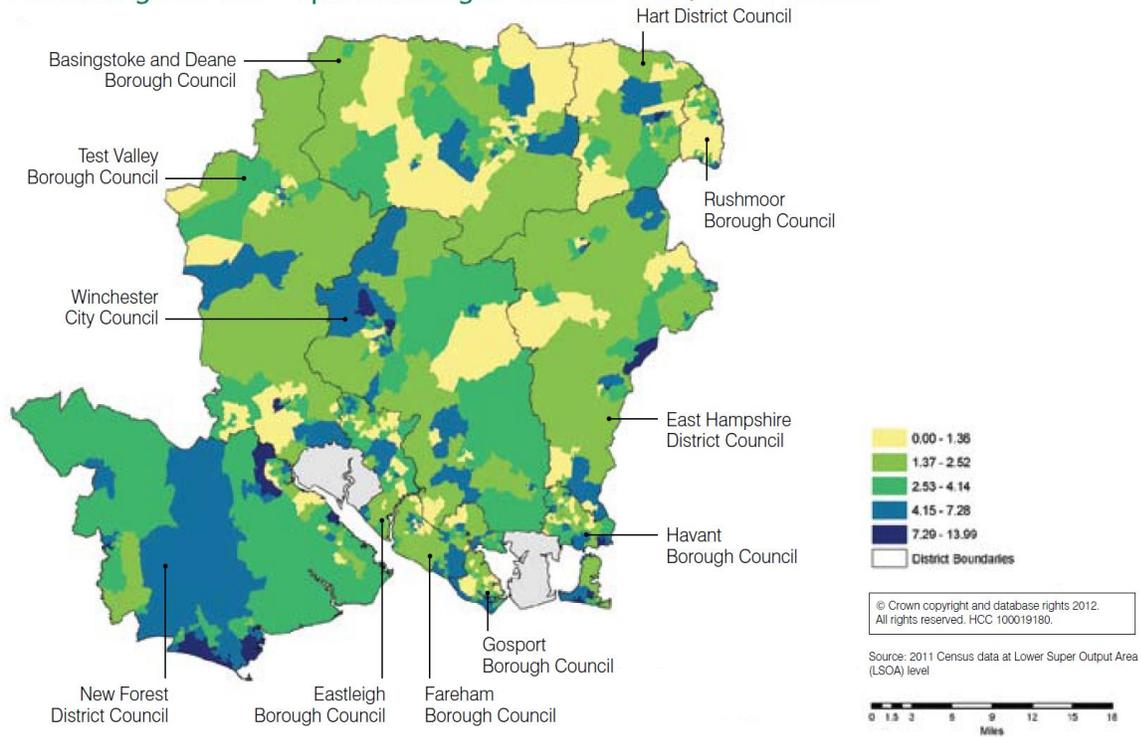
**Developments which appear to artificially restrict the site area, or level of development proposed in order to avoid the provision of affordable housing will be refused.**

## Appendix 2 Percentage of the Population aged 65 and over, 2011 Census



Source: Ageing well in Hampshire Older People's Well Being Strategy: April 2014 – March 2018, Hampshire County Council

## Percentage of the Population aged 85 and over, 2011 Census



**Ageing well in Hampshire** Older People's Well-Being Strategy: April 2014 – March 2018