

A REPORT ON THE 'LIFETIME HOMES' STANDARDS

Lead Officer: T Pomfret – Development Services Manager

To inform Members of the 'Lifetime Homes' Standards that can be applied to new housing design.

Recommendation: That Members note the report and the implications for Local Development Framework Policies.

Resource Implications: Nil.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 'Lifetime Homes' concept was developed in the early 1990's following research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. They were particularly concerned about the quality of British housing design and in particular how inaccessible many were for certain users such as young children, older people and those with disabilities.
- 1.2 The Joseph Rowntrees Foundation Lifetime Homes Group identified 16 key design features that would make a new home more accessible and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of a varied and diverse household/users throughout their lifetime.

2.0 PART M OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS AND LIFETIME HOMES STANDARDS

- 2.1 The Lifetime Homes concept influenced amendments/alterations to Part M of the Building Regulations which covers accessibility. In mid 1990's Part M was extended to cover houses in addition to Public Buildings. As a consequence Part M now covers housing accessibility and 'Lifetime Homes' key design features goes one step further and enables the flexibility to be built in to the design that makes peoples homes easier to adapt over peoples lifetimes in response to their changing needs. It enables people to remain in their own homes for the period of a lifetime with in built design features that allow for alterations and adaptations in line with peoples needs. For example should residents develop walking difficulties as they get older then the width, gradient and layout of the staircase in a dwelling designed to lifetime homes standards would permit a stairlift to be fitted without the need for structural alterations. Similarly wider door widths incorporated as standard in housing

design would allow residents, should they become a wheelchair user, to retain independent circulation around their home with minimal alterations/adaptations and this would minimise the stress/cost/inconvenience this can cause.

3.0 KEY DESIGN FEATURES

3.1 The Lifetime Homes Concept embodies the basic principles of 'inclusive design' encouraging improved design at the onset to ensure new homes are built to improved standards which allow greater accessibility for a wide range of users.

3.2 The 16 key design features cover the following areas:-

1. car parking width
2. access from car parking
3. approach gradients
4. external entrance
5. communal stairs
6. doorways and hallways widths
7. wheelchair accessibility
8. living room
9. two or more storey requirements
10. WC
11. bathroom and WC walls
12. lift capability
13. main bedroom
14. bathroom layout
15. window specification
16. fixtures and fittings

For working examples please refer to appended 'Lifetime Homes Diagram'

4.0 PLANNING AND THE LIFETIME HOMES CONCEPT Adopted Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016 Policy

4.1 Paragraph 4.6.6 of the local plan recognises the importance of designing new housing to Lifetime Homes standards to ensure that they are in future more adaptable to long term needs.

4.2 Policy HSG 9: Accommodating Special Needs advocates the following guidelines be adopted:

"In all new housing developments of over 15 dwellings up to 25% of the total may be required to be one or two bedroom forms of accommodation suitable to the needs of first time buyers, single people, the elderly or people with disabilities. The design and layout of all new and refurbished

housing sites must take into account the needs of people with walking difficulties or who use wheelchairs.”

- 4.3 Design and Access Statements are now a statutory requirement and accompany all planning applications for new dwellings. These should identify how ‘inclusive’ access design will be incorporated into the development being proposed.
- 4.4 The adoption of Lifetime Homes Standards, which encourage greater design standards than Part M, it is recognised should be encouraged at an early stage in the planning process in order to encourage greater take up of the standards in the Borough and therefore improved housing design generally.

Contact Officer: Heather Morrison, Senior Planning Officer

Background Papers: ‘Lifetime Homes’ Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Lifetime Homes Diagram

Bathroom planned to give side access to WC and bath

Provision for a future stair lift

Identified space for future platform lift to bedroom

Low window sills

Walls able to take adaptations

Identified space for temporary entrance level bed

Living or family room at the entrance level

Distance from the car parking space kept to a minimum

Easy route for a hoist from bedroom to bathroom

Sockets, controls, etc. at a convenient height

Accessible entrance level WC (opportunity for shower later in 3 bed or larger homes)

Width of doors and hall allow wheelchair access

Turning circles for wheelchair in ground-floor living rooms

Accessible threshold covered and lit

Parking space capable of widening to 3300mm

Level or gently sloping approach to the Lifetime Home

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