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Changes to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) with regard to Older People's Housing September 2018

On the 13th September 2018 the Government revised sections of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to reflect the intentions set out within the Neighbourhood Planning Bill 2017. The below summarises the changes to the various sections, it also highlights useful references which are unchanged within these sections of the PPG for a full picture of the policy background. Where the section is entirely new, it has been quoted verbatim.

Overall the changes are positive and introduce consideration of the need for housing for older people at a national level, even going as far as highlighting the benefits of such housing in terms of health and social care budgets. There is reference to the importance of freeing up under-occupied properties and guidance for local authorities with regard to assessing need for older people's housing. Whilst it is still a disappointment that these elements were not included within the NPPF, their inclusion in the PPG is a step in the right direction and will add weight to arguments being made to Local Planning Authorities to support forthcoming schemes.

HOUSING NEED ASSESSMENT SECTION

Paragraph 020 Reference ID: 2a-020-20180913 Identifying the need for different types of housing - Housing for Older People

This section of the PPG has been substantially updated to reflect the changes to the NPPF in 2018.

The opening paragraph sets the tone for these changes:

"The need to provide housing for older people is critical as people are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. The National Planning Policy Framework glossary provides a definition of older people for planning purposes, which recognises their diverse range of needs. This ranges from active people who are approaching retirement to the very frail elderly. The health and lifestyles of older people will differ greatly, as will their housing needs. Strategic policy-making authorities will need to determine in relation to their plan period the needs of people who will be approaching or reaching retirement as well as older people now."

The guidance continues with an emphasis placed on data for the projection of older populations and the importance of policy makers considering the need for housing for older people. Crucially it highlights the benefits of doing so, such as reducing costs to health and social services and freeing up under occupied houses.

"The age profile of the population can be drawn from Census data. Projection of population and households by age group can also be used. Strategic policy-making authorities will need to consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed in the future for older people in order to allow them to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, or to move to more suitable accommodation if they so wish. Supporting independent living can help to reduce the costs to health and social services, and providing more options for older people to move could also free up houses that are under occupied."

The final change of relevance within this section relates to assessment of needs, with reference to online tool kits and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments. It also acknowledges that older people may not want to move to institutional schemes, instead preferring to remain in housing with care.

"The future need for specialist accommodation for older people broken down by tenure and type (e.g. sheltered, enhanced sheltered, extra care, registered care) may need to be assessed and can be obtained from a number of online tool kits provided by the sector. Evidence from Joint Strategic Needs Assessments prepared by Health and Wellbeing Boards also provide useful evidence for plan-making authorities. The assessment can also set out the level of need for residential institutions (Use Class C2). Many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs. Local authorities will therefore need to identify the role that general housing may play as part of their assessment."

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT SECTION

Within this section, there were some smaller changes as below, Paragraphs which were left unchanged have also been noted to set the scene:

There were no changes within **paragraph 019 Reference ID: 3-019-20140306 – What Factors Should be Considered when assessing the suitability of sites / broad locations for development?** However, it is important to remember that it includes consideration of housing for older people for plan makers.

Paragraph 043 Reference ID: 3-043-20180913 How should authorities count older people's housing completions? Has been revised to state:

"Local planning authorities will need to count housing provided for older people, including residential institutions in Use Class C2, against their housing requirement. For residential institutions, to establish the amount of accommodation released in the housing market, authorities should base calculations on the average number of adults living in households using the published census data."

LOCAL PLANS SECTION

Paragraph 006 Reference ID: 12-006-20150320 How should local planning authorities express the need for different types of housing in their Local Plan? Remains unchanged but is important. It sets out that Local planning authorities should ensure that the policies recognise the diverse types of housing needed in their area and, where appropriate identify specific sites for all types of housing which could include sites for older people's housing. Where no sites are allocated local planning authorities should ensure that there are robust criteria in place to set out when such homes will be permitted, even being supplemented by setting appropriate targets for the number of homes.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed that there will be further planning guidance issued on housing for older and disabled people this Autumn, a further update will be provided once this is issued.

For more information with regard to planning for housing for older people, please do contact:
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