Background Paper Housing – Optional Technical Standards Blaby District

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[Information from NPPG on housing optional technical standards extracted 5/1/2016]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government has rationalised the approach for setting of technical standards for new housing. The Deregulation Act 2015 brought this approach into legislation.
- 1.2 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. The optional building regulations must be based on evidence and the impact of using these standards be considered as part of the Local Plan viability assessment.
- 1.3 This paper considers the evidence and the viability assessment for the optional standards in Blaby District.

2. Accessible and Adaptable and Wheelchair Homes

- 2.1 It is compulsory to meet Building Regulation M4(1) Visitable Dwellings. Local authorities can consider requiring the optional Building Regulations: M4(2) Accessible and adaptable dwellings, and / or M4(3) Wheelchair user dwellings.
- 2.2 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. They should clearly state in their Local Plan what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The Planning Practice Guidance suggests that the following information is considered when deciding whether or not to introduce the optional standards:
 - the likely future need for housing for older and disabled people (including wheelchair user dwellings).
 - size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed to meet specifically evidenced needs (for example retirement homes, sheltered homes or care homes).

- the accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock.
- how needs vary across different housing tenures.
- the overall impact on viability.
- 2.5 The Planning Practice Guidance provides a link to a data sheet providing sources of information that local authorities can draw on to inform their assessments. The information presented in Appendix 1 is based on these data and information sources.
- 2.6 The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017 (HEDNA) considers:
 - Projected changes in the population of older persons
 - Housing needs for people with disabilities
 - Wheelchair adapted housing.
- 2.7 Council data on Disability Funding Grants shows that both owner occupiers and tenants require assistance to modify their homes.

Disability Funding Grants	Disability Funding Grants and Applications for Blaby Distric							
	2014/15 2015/16 2016							
Number of Applications	157	180	145					
Completed Applications	94	54	23					
Owner Occupiers	116	129	91					
Tenant - Housing Association	35	42	48					
Tenant - Private	6	7	5					

2.8 Where appropriate this additional information has been used to support the data suggested by the Planning Practice Guidance.

Key evidence findings

- 2.9 The <u>local authority housing statistics on social lettings</u> for 2015/16 tells us that 13.9 % of applicants moved as their current property was unsuitable due to ill health or disability. 1.4% of applicants require a fully wheelchair accessible property, 18.5% require level access and 6.5% require other disability related requirements.
- 2.10 Of the properties let, 30.5% are built or adapted to wheelchair user needs, and 5.3% are fitted with aids or adaptations. A significant proportion of these properties are supported housing rather than general needs housing.

- 2.11 Of the properties let, 28.5% are let to a retired head of household and 12% are let to a sick or disabled head of household.
- 2.12 There are currently 1036 <u>Personal Independence Payments</u> made in the District. PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long term health or disability for those aged 16-64 years. It replaces Disability Living Allowance. It is difficult to draw anything meaningful from this data.
- 2.13 <u>Census data</u> shows that at 2011, 15.8% of residents have a long term health problem or disability and that 29.7% of households include a person or persons with a long term health problem or disability. A growing older population is likely to increase the number of people with disabilities. HEDNA data shows that by 2036, the proportion of residents with a long term health problem or disability will rise to 19.2%.
- 2.14 <u>Population estimates and projections</u> show an increasingly aging population in Blaby District. In 2014, 19.7% of the population was aged over 65 years. By 2029, this is predicted to increase by 6,200 people to 32% of the population. A large increase in the older population will inevitably lead to an increase in the need for suitable housing that can be adapted to allow people to stay in their homes longer.
- 2.15 <u>Household projections</u> show that there will be increases in the number of households with significant increases for households headed by those aged 75-84 and 85 and over. In 2039, 15.4% of total households will be headed by a person aged 65-74, 15.5% will be headed by a person aged 75-84 and 9.6% by a person aged 85 or over.
- 2.16 Information about the need for housing for wheelchair users is more difficult to obtain, particularly at the local level. The local authority housing statistics for 2015/16 show that 1.4% of lettings in Blaby District required a fully wheelchair accessible property.
- 2.17 The <u>HEDNA</u> considers this issue. It notes that at the national level, a research report for Habintag 'Mind the Step: An estimation of housing need among wheelchair users in England' (2010) provides data. The report estimates that there is an unmet need for wheelchair adapted dwellings equivalent to 3.5 per 1000 households. Using this measure, the HEDNA calculates an unmet need of 1,368 for the HMA at 2011. Moving forward the report estimates a wheelchair accessibility need for around 3% of households. The HEDNA calculates that if 3% is applied to the household growth

in the 2014-based Household Projections (2011-31) and added to the unmet need there would be a need for around 3923 wheelchair adapted homes. This approximates to 4% of the total households.

- 2.18 The above evidence suggests that the optional building regulation M4(2) for accessible and adaptable homes could be justified in Blaby due to the proportions of people and households with a long term health problem or disability, the ageing population and the projected increase in the number of people with long term health problems and disability.
- 2.19 Given the need to carefully justify the introduction of such a requirement consideration has been given as to whether it would be appropriate to apply the requirement to all new housing or a proportion of it. It is considered that it would be desirable and beneficial for all new housing in the district to meet the requirement but acknowledged that given the PPG guidance it may be difficult to justify such a requirement. In considering a suitable minimum proportion of new homes that should be required to meet the optional standard evidence on the proportion of the population projected to have mobility issues or limiting illnesses was used as a starting point:
 - The 2011 census shows that 15.5% of people currently report themselves as having a have a long term health problem or disability and that 29.7% of household currently in a person or persons with a have a long term health problem or disability.
 - The HEDNA forecasts that by 2036 over 19.2% of the population is likely to have a long term health problem or disability.
 - Currently, 15.8% of all households have a household representative aged 75 or over. It is predicted that this will increase to 25.1% by 2039.
- 2.20 All of the above evidence suggests that a requirement of 15% of new homes to meet the optional building regulation M4(2) for accessible and adaptable homes would be the minimum considered appropriate.
- 2.21 It is also considered that the optional building regulation M4(3) could be justified in Blaby due to the evidence from the local authority housing statistics and the HEDNA. The evidence from the HEDNA suggests a requirement of 4% of new homes to meet the optional building regulation M4(3) for wheelchair homes would be the minimum considered appropriate.

2.22 The data from the Disability Living Grant indicates that there is a need for accessible and adaptable and wheelchair housing in all tenures.

<u>Viability</u>

- 2.23 When introducing a new policy requirement for the optional building regulations M4(2) and M4(3) it is necessary to consider the viability impacts of introducing the requirement.
- 2.24 A Local Plan Viability Study (Cushman & Wakefield, 2017) has considered the proposed policies of the Delivery DPD, including those for accessible and adaptable and wheelchair homes. The Viability Study draws on the EC Harris Report 'Housing Standards Review, Cost Impacts (DCLG, 2014). This reports considers the impact of considering the M4(2) and M4(3) building regulation standards in terms of 'extra over' costs, the enhanced space requirements of implementing these standards and the impact on the sales value of the property (which may offset some or all of the additional build costs).
- 2.25 Overall, the Local Plan Viability Study raises issues about the viability of some of the development site examples where there is a 15% requirement for the M4(2) accessible and adaptable homes standard. This would have implications for the provision of affordable housing. It is therefore proposed to take forward a 5% requirement for the M4(2) standard.
- 2.26 In addition, the Local Plan Viability Study raises issues about the viability of the development sites where the 3% requirement for M4(3) wheelchair homes is required. This would have implications for the provision of affordable housing. It is therefore proposed that no requirement is taken forward for the M4(3) standard.

3. Water Efficiency Standard

- 3.1 All new homes already have to meet the mandatory national standard set out in the Building Regulations (of 125 litres /person /day).
- 3.2 Where there is a clear local need, local planning authorities can set out Local Plan policies requiring new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres /person /day.
- 3.3 The Planning Practice Guidance indicates that the optional standard should be applied where there is a clear need based on:
 - existing sources of evidence.
 - consultations with the local water and sewerage company, the Environment Agency and catchment partnerships.
 - consideration of the impact on viability and housing supply of such a requirement.
- 3.4 The Planning Practice Guidance recommends the primary sources of evidence which might support a tighter water efficiency standard for new dwellings:
 - The Environment Agency Water Stressed Areas Classification (2013) identifies areas of serious water stress where household demand for water is (or is likely to be) a high proportion of the current effective rainfall available to meet that demand.
 - Water resource management plans produced by water companies
 - River Basin Management Plans describe the river basin district and the pressure that the water environment faces. These include information on where water resources are contributing to a water body being classified as 'at risk' or 'probably at risk' of failing to achieve good ecological status, due to low flows or reduced water availability.

Evidence

TABLE 2 – Evidence	for the Water Efficiency Standard.	
Evidence	Summary	Outcome
Environment Agency Water Stressed Areas Classification (2013)	The Severn Trent Water Area is classified as being under 'Moderate Stress' at present and in a range of future scenarios. It has a final stress classification of 'Not Serious'.	Blaby is not within an area of serious water stress.
Severn Trent Water:	Blaby is within the Strategic Grid	Supportive of water
Final Water	water resources zone. In terms of	efficiency but no specific

3.5 Table 2 sets out the evidence for Blaby District.

TABLE 2 – Evidence	for the Water Efficiency Standard.	
Evidence	Summary	Outcome
Resources management Plan 2014	water supply and demand, the Strategic Grid is likely to require significant future investment because of the need to reduce environmentally unsustainable abstractions and to meet the longer term challenge of future climate change impacts.	targets to justify the optional G2 water efficiency requirement.
	The strategy for the Strategic Grid is to increase the focus on reducing leakage and demand for water, while providing an increase in sustainable deployable output and a more flexible supply system.	
Humber River Basin Management Plans 2015	 Measures that help prevent deterioration and protect the many uses of the water environment and the benefits it provides. Many of these measures also help improve the quality of the water environment: Managing pollution from waste water Managing pollution from cities, towns and transport Changes to natural flow and levels of water Manage pollution from rural areas Main programmes of measures which will improve the water environment by 2021: Water company investment programme Countryside stewardship Highways England's environment fund Water resources sustainability measures 	Supportive of water efficiency but no specific targets to justify the optional G2 water efficiency requirement.

3.6 There are no major constraints with regards water resources and Blaby District is not in an area of water stress. There is no clear need to introduce the optional water efficiency building regulations standards in Blaby District.

4. Nationally Described Space Standard

- 4.1 The nationally described space standard replaces the existing different space standards used by local authorities. It is not a building regulation and remains solely within the planning system as a new form of technical planning standard.
- 4.2 The requirements of the space standard are set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard document. The standard deals with internal space within new dwellings. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.
- 4.3 The optional regulations and space standard can only be applied where there is a local plan policy based on <u>evidenced local need</u> and where the viability of development is not compromised.
- 4.4 The Planning Practice Guidance states that where a need for internal space standards is identified local authorities should take account of need (based on evidence on the size and type of dwellings currently being built), viability of imposing the standards, and timing to allow a reasonable transitional period.

Evidence

- 4.5 In general, the Council does not monitor the size of completed units other than by number of bedrooms and it would therefore be an onerous task to determine the specific sizes of recently permitted and completed units to determine how they would compare with the national standards.
- 4.6 As an alternative to considering the need to adopt the nationally described space standard it is relevant to consider whether there is an issue of overcrowding in the District. Generally, this is not the case. Data from the Census 2011 shows 81% of all households had one or more spare bedrooms across the District. However, there are differences across tenure types with 87% of owner occupied households having one or more spare bedrooms compared to 39% for social rented and 66% for private rented.
- 4.7 Many households are choosing to occupy dwellings that have more bedrooms than is needed for the size of the household or family that lives there. Such households and families achieve acceptable space standards by choosing to occupy a dwelling with more bedrooms that it could be considered are necessary. However, when

considering households within the social rented sector, 56.6% do not have spare bedrooms and a further 4.5% have one bedroom less than is needed to accommodate the size of the household/family. It is more important in this situation that, at a defined level of occupancy, that the floor areas and dimensions of key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height, are adequate.

- 4.8 It was therefore considered to be appropriate to further investigate the need for space standards for the affordable housing element of housing proposals. Currently the Council uses the Housing Corporation's Design and Quality standards (HQIs), published in April 2007. These indicate that each individual unit funded by grant, within the development must satisfy the internal environment core standard. The HCA standards have been compared against those in the nationally described space standards. Whilst there is some variation, for a large number of cases the floorspace requirements are higher for the nationally described space standard than for the HCA standards. For the other cases, the standards are equal or broadly equal.
- 4.9 The Council consulted with local Registered Providers about the nationally described space standards. The Registered Providers raised concerns about the viability of proposals and indicated that given a choice where other Local Authorities did not use the standards and Blaby did it would may choose to direct investment outside of the District.
- 4.10 The Council is not seeking to require new national space standards for market housing. Adopting the new national space standards for affordable housing may impact on viability. There is no clear case to adopt the new national space standards.

Source	What's available	Data				
Local Authority Housing Statistics	Numbers of households that are on the housing waiting list that have had to move on	Household with people who need to move on med welfare grounds			n medica	l or
0	medical grounds or welfare grounds,	Blaby	Number	Pe	ercent	
	including grounds relating to disability	2015/2016				
		2014/2015	39	5.	6	
		2013/2014	151	7.	9	
		2012/2013	96	5.	5	
		2011/2012	43	2.	9	
REcordings (CORE) The statistical release provides information on lettings of social housing in England provided by local authorities and	• Reason for housing: property unsuitable due to ill health/disability		ivate Registered Pro ousing: Property uns ty Social Rent Affordable Rent Social Rent		to ill Total 205 64 148	% 7.3 3.1 27.7
private registered		Housing				
providers and reflects			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
data on social		TOTAL		58	417	13.9
housing lettings given by providers for the						

Source	What's available	Data				
	Requirements: fully wheelchair accessible,	2015/2016 Pr	vivate Registered Pro	vider		
	level access, other disability related	Require fully	wheelchair accessibl	le		
	requirement			Number	Total	%
		General Needs	Social Rent	0	205	0
			Affordable Rent	0	64	0
		Supported Housing	Social Rent	6	148	4.1
			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		6	417	1.4
		General Needs	Social Rent	6	205	2.9
		Needs				
			Affordable Rent	3	64	4.7
		Supported Housing	Social Rent	68	148	45.9
			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		77	417	18.46
			rivate Registered Pro er disability related re			
				Number	Total	%
		General Needs	Social Rent	18	205	8.8
			Affordable Rent	1	64	1.6
		Supported	Social Rent	8	148	5.4

ource	What's available	Data				
		Housing				
		C	Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		27	417	6.5
		2015/2016 Pr	ivate Registered Pro	vider		
	• Does the dwelling meet wheelchair standard	Property built	or adapted to wheel	chair user r	needs	
				Number	Total	%
		General Needs	Social Rent	11	205	5.4
			Affordable Rent	14	64	21.9
		Supported Housing	Social Rent	102	148	68.9
			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		127	417	30.5
	Does the dwelling meet wheelchair standard Does the dwelling meet mobility standards	Property desi General Needs	ivate Registered Pro gned to accessible g Social Rent Affordable Rent		Total 205 64	% 0 0
		Supported Housing	Social Rent		148	0
			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		0	417	0

ource	What's available	Data				
	Is the dwelling fitted with aids or adaptations	2015/2016 Pr	vivate Registered Pro	ovider		
		Fitted with aid	ds or adaptations			
				Number	Total	%
		General Needs	Social Rent	0	205	0
			Affordable Rent	0	64	0
		Supported Housing	Social Rent	22	148	14.9
		<u>v</u>	Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		22	417	5.3
	people.	General Needs	Social Rent	15	205	7.7
	people.	Needs				
			Affordable Rent	3	64	4.7
		Supported Housing	Social Rent	101	148	68.2
			Affordable Rent	0	0	0
		TOTAL		119	417	28.5
		2015/2016 Pr	ivate Registered Pro	wider		
			itus of person 1 – Sic		ed	
				Number	Total	%
		General Needs	Social Rent	30	205	14.6
			Affordable Rent	6	64	9.4
		Supported	Social Rent	14	148	9.5

Source	What's available	Data				
	_	Housing				
			Affordable Rent	0 0	0	
		TOTAL		50 417	12.0	
Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	Numbers claiming Personal Independence Payments (Personal Independence Payment started to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64 from 8 April 2013)	1036 PIP clair	ns in payment (Octob	er 2016)		
Labour Force Survey	Data on workforce characteristics including		Survey data is unava			
Labour Force Survey	Data on workforce characteristics including whether people are sick or disabled, and the kind of disability benefit claimed		The Census 2011 give ents.	es details of econo	omically	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011	es details of econo Number	Percent	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74	Number 68,558	Percent 100.0	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi Economically	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74 / Inactive	Number 68,558 17,897	Percent 8 100.0 7 26.1	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi Economically Economically	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74 / Inactive / inactive: Retired	Number 68,558 17,897 10,721	Percent Percent 100.0 26.1 15.6	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi Economically Economically	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74 / Inactive	Number 68,558 17,897	Percent Percent 100.0 26.1 15.6	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi Economically Economically (including ful	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74 / Inactive / inactive: Retired / inactive: Student l-time students) / inactive: Looking aft	es details of econo Number 68,558 17,897 10,721 2,495	Percent Percent 100.0 26.1 15.0 3.0	
Labour Force Survey	whether people are sick or disabled, and the	sample size. T inactive reside Economic Ac All usual resi Economically Economically (including ful Economically home or fam	The Census 2011 give ents. ctivity 2011 dents aged 16 to 74 / Inactive / inactive: Retired / inactive: Student l-time students) / inactive: Looking aft	es details of econo Number 68,558 17,897 10,721 2,495 er 1,914	Percent Percent 2 100.0 2 26.1 15.6 3 .6 4 2.8	

Source	What's available	Data					
		Working Age Client Group – Main benefit claimants					
		May 2015			May 2016		
			Number	Perce	nt Numb	er Percent	
		TOTAL claimants	4330	7.3	4170	7.0	
		Job seekers	450	0.8	320	0.5	
		ESA and incapacity benefits	2170	3.7	2190	3.7	
		Lone parents	330	0.6	330	0.6	
		Carers	640	1.1	720	1.2	
		Others on income related benefits	90	0.1	60	0.1	
		Disabled	520	0.9	420	0.7	
		Bereaved	130	0.2	120	0.2	
		Main out-of-work benefits	3040	5.1	2910	4.9	
Census Data	Self reported information on long term health problems and disabilities	QS303EW - Long residents (2011)	-term healt	h proble	em or disab	ility – Usual	
		Disability			Number	Percent	
	Whether day-to-day activities are limited a lot	All categories: Long-term health problem or disability		alth	93,915		
		Day-to-day activities limited a lot		a lot	6,464	6.9	
	Whether day-to-day activities are limited a	Day-to-day activiti	es limited a	a little	8,334	8.9	
	little	Day-to-day activiti			79,117	84.2	

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Source	What's available	Data					
		DC1301EW - Household composition by number of per household with a long-term health problem or disability households (2011)					
		Persons with illness in household Number Percent					cent
		All categories: Nu in household with health problem or	a long-ter		38,686		
		No people in hour long-term health i disability	sehold wit		27,196	70.3	
		1 person in house term health proble		0	8,899	23.0	
		2 or more people in household with a long-term health problem or disability				6.7	
Population Estimates	Population estimates, including breakdown	2014-based Sub	national P	opulatio	n Projection)S	
	by age cohort		2014		2029		% change 2014 to 2029
			No	%	No	%	
		Aged 65+ years	18,900	19.7	25,100	23.8	32.8
		Total population	95,900	100	105,400	100	9.9

Source	What's available	Data				
Household	Household projections based on population	2014 based Hous	ehold Projec	tions by Ag	е	
projections estimates, including breakdown by age cohort.	3333333333333	Households (000s)	2014	2039	Change	% Change
	Under 25	0.642	0.725	0.083	12.9	
	25-34	4.360	3.878	-0.482	-11.0	
		35-44	6.778	7.320	0.542	8.0
		45-54	8.431	8.846	0.415	4.9
		55-64	6.639	6.681	0.042	0.6
		65-74	6.440	7.127	0.687	10.7
		75-84	4.486	7.157	2.671	59.5
		85+	1.779	4.444	2.665	149.8
		Total	39.555	46.178	6.623	16.7