

PE1554/CC

Housing, Regeneration and Welfare Directorate
Housing Supply and Innovation Division

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Ms Sigrid Robinson
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Committee



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Dear Ms Robinson

Please find below the Scottish Government response to the follow up question to petition PE1554, arising from the committee meeting held on 9 June 2015.

The committee asked the Scottish Government if it considered that local authorities are provided with adequate guidance about how to assess accessible housing demand in the private, as well as, the public housing sector; whether it views the action taken by some local authorities to develop voluntary targets as a positive development; and whether it considers more could be done to promote the benefits of taking action on both of these issues.

Local authorities are required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) setting out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related services in its area. The Act states that the LHS must be supported by an assessment of need, referred to as a Housing Need and Demand assessment (HNDA). The HNDA is an evidence base for current and future need within the local authority area, including the requirement for accessible housing. Revised guidance on how to undertake a HNDA was published in 2014 and is available at:

<http://www.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/chma/hnda/HNDAPG>

The Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) appraises all completed HNDAs to ensure that the evidence base is 'Robust and Credible' for use in preparing Local Housing Strategies and Development Plans.

Each local authority prepares a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) every 5 years using guidance provided by Scottish Government. The guidance was revised in August 2014 and is available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/08/3070/downloads#res458185>.

The guidance has a section dedicated to the consideration of specialist provision, including the support required to allow individuals to live independently within their own homes for as long as possible. The requirement for both new and adapted accessible accommodation,

based on the HNDA evidence base, should be fully considered and addressed as appropriate.

A review of local housing strategies by Scottish Government officials and local authority peers, allows areas for improvement to be highlighted to the relevant authority for consideration and future action and for any good practice to be shared more widely.

As noted in the Scottish Government's response of 28 April to the Committee, Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), finalised in June 2014, recognises that as part of the HNDA, local authorities are required to consider the need for specialist provision that covers accessible and adapted housing, wheelchair accessible housing and supported accommodation, including care homes and sheltered housing. This supports independent living for elderly people and those with a disability. Where a need is identified, planning authorities should prepare policies to support the delivery of appropriate housing and consider allocating specific sites.

The needs of people with disabilities were raised during the public consultation on draft Scottish Planning Policy. This resulted in a policy on specialist housing that specifically referred to people with disabilities and a need to support independent living.

Consultation responses also suggested that local authorities should use their powers to require a specialist housing contribution from developers. In response to this, SPP confirms that where a HNDA identifies a need for specialist housing provision, planning authorities should prepare policies to support the delivery of appropriate housing to address that need. SPP does not require new housing to include a quota of wheelchair accessible housing within new developments. However, the Committee will be aware from the paper PPC/S4/15/12/8, provided for its 9 June 2015 meeting, of the range of actions being taken local authorities

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Meeting%20Papers/20150609_Papers.pdf

Scottish Government officials are in regular dialogue with representatives from Disabled People's Organisations to discuss the issues surrounding housing, housing accessibility and housing related support for those with a disability. These discussions will continue and officials will give full consideration to suggested improvements as they arise.

Yours Sincerely

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