

PE1554/D

Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

13 April 2015

Dear Sir / Madam,

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1554 / RESPONSE FROM FIFE COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 1st April 2015 addressed to the Chief Executive of Fife Council requesting information around the level of disabled friendly housing in Fife. I can respond to the specific requests for information as follows:

- **Local authority views on what the petition seeks**

The principle of building all new homes to fully meet all the Lifetime Homes Standards and at least 10% of new homes to full wheelchair accessibility is supported by Fife Council. However, the Council would encourage further research and broader consultation around the impacts of such policy, for example the impacts on the cost of new homes, rate of new house building, deliverability of the technical standards across all building projects. Fife Council would welcome the opportunity to participate in such discussions and would help facilitate these with local stakeholders, as required.

- **Percentage of new build homes within your local authority area which are adapted to full wheelchair accessibility standards**

Current building standards already include the accessibility requirements that the Scottish Government considers are appropriate for Scotland. Good practice guidelines are provided through Scottish Government Planning Advice Notes (PANs), including PAN 68 – Design Statements, PAN 77 - Designing Safer Places and PAN 78 - Inclusive Design. There is no current requirement for local authorities to assess the delivery of a higher 'wheelchair accessibility' standard across the general housing stock.

The majority of affordable units built by Fife Council and Registered Social Landlords through the Affordable Housing Programme will comply with 'Housing for Varying Needs' standard, meaning they will be accessible to wheelchairs and adaptable for varying needs into the future. Fife Council has established a target to ensure that 27% of new social rented homes are provided to that standard. A proposal is contained within the draft Local Housing Strategy 2015-2020 to increase this to 30% for new homes delivered after 2017.

How many people are within the local authority area are:

(i) On a waiting list for disabled friendly housing

The Fife Housing Register shows that 580 out of 11,166 applicant households (5.2%) have indicated that one of more household member has a physical disability impacting on their need or aspiration for new housing. More generally, the Scottish House Conditions Survey 2011-2013 also indicates that 6,480 of 162,000 households (4%) require a housing adaptation.

(ii) Accommodated in disabled friendly housing

The Scottish House Conditions Survey 2011-2013 indicates that around 34,000 of 162,000 households (21%) are living in homes adapted to meet the needs of a household member with a physical disability.

The social housing stock in Fife (Fife Council and Registered Social Landlords) contains the following number of homes provided to some standard of accessibility (2013 data):

310	Adapted for wheelchair use
1,133	Provided for ambulant disabled
2,083	Other forms of housing adaptation provided
466	Very sheltered / extra care housing
1,563	Sheltered housing
10	Wheelchair adapted within sheltered housing

I trust that this addresses the queries, however do not hesitate to contact me if you require more information.

Yours Faithfully,

John Mills
Head of Housing Services