

# Calderdale Local Plan Examination

## STAGE 2 - HEARINGS

### Matter 10 Other Housing Needs

#### Evidence on how delivery of M4(2) dwellings affects residential density

#### January 2020

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 At the Stage 2 Hearings into the Calderdale Local Plan, the Inspector asked the Council to consider how the requirement to deliver 100% of dwellings to M4(2) (accessible and adaptable homes) standard may affect residential density. This note sets out the Council's response to this request.

#### 2. Delivery of Accessible and Adaptable Homes in Calderdale

2.1 The level of delivery of accessible and adaptable homes in Calderdale has been very limited over recent years. Table 10.2 in the Council's Matter 10 Hearing Statement sets out the number of units delivered to both Lifetime Homes Standard/M4(2) and M4(3) standard since 2014/15, and for ease is replicated below.

Table 1 - Number of Units Completed to Lifetime Homes/M4(2) and M4(3) Standard<sup>1</sup>

	Additional M4(2) or Lifetime Homes	Additional M4 (3) Wheelchair accessible	<b>TOTAL Additional M4 (2 &amp; 3) Dwellings Provided</b>	<b>Gross Dwelling Completions</b>	% M4(2) and M4(3)
2014/15	9	3	<b>12</b>	419	3%
2016/17	0	0	<b>0</b>	409	0%
2017/18	0	0	<b>0</b>	395	0%
2018/19	10	0	<b>10</b>	578	2%
2019/20	34	6	<b>40</b>	416	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>2560</b>	<b>2%</b>

<sup>1</sup> There is a difference between the figures in Table 1 above and Table 10.2 in HS10.1 as it has been confirmed that a scheme in Shelf by Together Housing Group did not fully meet M4(2) requirements.

2.2 The table below provides detail on these. The delivery of accessible and adaptable homes has been very limited in Calderdale, and is focused on affordable housing provision by registered providers. The table below includes delivery of Lifetime Homes/M4(2) and Wheelchair User Dwellings (M4(3)).

Table 2 - Details on Schemes Delivered to M4(2)/Lifetime Homes and M4(3) Standard

Planning Application	Location	Proposal	Type	M4(2)/Lifetime Homes or M4(3)	No Bedrooms	Site Area (ha)	Units	Density (dph)
17/01404/FUL	Land rear of Clifton Mills, Baliff Bridge	Ten affordable houses with associated parking and landscaping	Terraced	All units to M4(2)/Lifetime Homes	Mix of 2 and 3	0.24	10	42
17/01454/FUL	Industrial Road, Sowerby Bridge	Construction of 7 apartments	Apartments	1 unit to M4(3)	1	0.04	7	175
13/00038/FUL	Site of Barker House, Siddal, Halifax	Demolition of Barker House and construction of residential development of nine new build properties.	Terraced	All units to M4(2)/Lifetime Homes	Mix of 2 and 3	0.23	9	39
13/01195/FUL	2 Beverley Place, Halifax	Change of use and internal alterations from C2 resource centre to C3 housing creating 3 no. 1 bed wheelchair apartments and 3 no 1 bed general needs apartments	Apartments	3 units to M4(3)	1	0.04	6	150
17/01107/FUL	Birks Lane, Walsden	Residential development of six two	5 Terraced, 1 detached	All units to M4(2)/Lifetime Homes	2	0.2	6	30

		bedroomed bungalows for retired persons						
16/01652/FUL	Rooley Heights, Sowerby, Sowerby Bridge	28 new dwellings comprising 14no. 3 bed houses, 12no. bed houses and 2no. 2 bed bungalows along with associated access road and landscaping	Semi Detached	All units to M4(2)/Lifetime Homes	2 and 3	0.89	28	31
17/01557/FUL	Ward Court, Chapel Croft, Brighthouse	Five bungalows with associated garden spaces and infrastructure	2 Semi Detached, 3 Terraced	All units to M4(3)	1	0.17	5	29

- 2.3 The Council acknowledges that the data on the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes in Calderdale is limited, but the table above does show that schemes can be delivered with little impact on achieving the minimum net density of 30dph set out in Policy HS2 of the Local Plan.
- 2.4 A review of a number of lifetime homes and M4(2) developments in Calderdale compared with recent development proposals by Registered Providers has been undertaken by Housing Services. Lifetime Home and M4(2) developments (5 schemes) averaged 34.98 dph. The average for just houses was 38.75dph and that for bungalows was 29.33dph. All of these are based on the gross site area. This can be compared with three conventional developments for Registered Providers which are currently under construction. These schemes have an average of 36.12dph. Although a very small sample, densities are comparable.

### **3. National Research**

- 3.1 There is limited evidence available on the impact of building accessible and adaptable homes has on factors such as residential density. This may be due to the fact that the Optional Building Regulations were introduced in 2015 and it will take time for adoption of Local Plan policies and policy compliant dwellings to be delivered.
- 3.2 However, research was published in July 2012 on 'Impact on Site Density of Lifetime Homes'<sup>2</sup>. The research was commissioned by the Government to provide an initial assessment of the likely impact of Lifetime Homes on private sector housing. The research focused on 2 and 3 storey house types in suburban developments of 30-60 dph.
- 3.3 The main conclusions arising from this research were as follows:
- Other related research, undertaken on behalf of CLG, indicates that Lifetime Homes (LTH) has spatial implications for the design of most current market sale house types.
  - These spatial implications inevitably have some impact on site density but this research suggests that these impacts can be mitigated, or even eliminated, by alternative design approaches albeit that these would need market testing.
  - Lifetime Homes has more impact on the density of 2/3 storey suburban developments (typically in the range of 30-60 dwellings per hectare) than on the density of schemes above or below this range.
  - Inclusion of Lifetime Homes Standards in the design of housing typologies is only one factor amongst a wide range of issues which tend to reduce actual site density well below the theoretical maximum possible for an equivalent mix of dwellings.

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<sup>2</sup> [Impact on site density of Lifetime Homes.PDF \(housinglin.org.uk\)](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/impact-on-site-density-of-lifetime-homes.pdf)

- Other factors include choices made by the developer to maximise marketability (eg in relation to frontage and parking) as well as site and planning constraints over which there is often little control. These other factors are likely to have significantly more impact on site density than Lifetime Homes – in some cases, effectively capping potential density, even before house types and internal layouts are considered.
- In general terms, the results of this initial investigation suggest that the likely impact of Lifetime Homes is equivalent to the loss of 1-1.5 dwellings per hectare for schemes with a typical mix of 2-4 bedroom, 2/3 storey house types, in the middle of the suburban density range (ie 40-50 dwellings per hectare).

3.4 The research highlighted areas of design and layout which could be considered to maximise densities, whilst still delivering to Lifetime Home standard. These included replacing garages with open parking, adopting alternative internal dwelling layouts, and extending the range of dwelling typologies by including small/medium rise blocks of flats or efficient courtyard housing which would enhance suburban densities and increase housing choice (and potentially benefiting certain sectors including older people). The research did acknowledge that some of the measures taken to counter impact on reduced densities, could have some impact on the marketability of the dwellings.

#### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 This note has set out local evidence and conclusions of national research regarding the impact of delivering accessible and adaptable homes on residential density. It is clear that evidence is lacking in this area, both in terms of demonstrating that delivery of accessible and adaptable homes does or does not result in impacts on residential density. In addition, reliance has been had on data on Lifetime Homes rather than accessible and adaptable homes (defined as those homes meeting Requirement M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2015).

4.2 Given the lack of evidence which suggests that delivery of accessible and adaptable homes has a significant effect on residential density, Calderdale Council consider the approach set out in the Local Plan is sound. The policy acknowledges that in some circumstances it may not be possible to achieve M4(2) standard due to issues including topography and flood risk, and the Council will consider reducing or waiving the requirement. As set out in the Council's Matter 10 Hearing Statement and at the Stage 2 Hearings, the Council considers it particularly important to consider this policy in the context of challenging topography where it is particularly important to maximise the delivery of accessible and adaptable homes on sites where it can be achieved.

4.3 Overall, in terms of delivering the housing requirement figure and the potential impact this policy could have on achieving the indicative capacities set out in Policies SD6 and SD7, it is important to consider that on those sites where topographical challenges may make it very difficult or impossible to deliver accessible and adaptable homes, the policy does contain flexibility for the Council to consider reducing or waiving the requirement if the delivery of M4(2) dwellings is not possible to achieve. It is most likely that on sites with topography issues where a strict implementation of Policy HS4 would result in achieving lower densities than set out in Policies SD6 and SD7. But it is these sites where the Council would most likely consider reducing or waiving the requirement. It may therefore be the case that accessible and adaptable homes can only be delivered on sites without topographical issues, and as shown in the table above and in national research may have no or a very small effect on achieving an acceptable residential density.