

Review of SG SHN1: Development for particular needs

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to examine SG Special Housing Needs 1: Development for particular needs in light of changes in the national policy and local context. It will consider whether it meets the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and other national planning documents, and whether it forms a sound basis for a policy for making planning decisions on suitable development to cater for older people with additional support needs, people with physical impairment and people with learning difficulties in Aberdeenshire.

2. Approach

- 2.1 SG SHN 1 aims to support the provision of housing for people with particular needs. Where there is an identifiable need the current policy promotes development within a settlement or exceptionally on the edge of a settlement or within a redundant building outwith the settlement.
- 2.2 SG SHN1 also states that the applicant must demonstrate that the development is compatible and respects the character of the surrounding area. Proposed developments of this nature must also demonstrate that a range of local services and public transport are readily accessible or provide a justified reason as to why they are not required. The proposed site's topography and access must be appropriate for those with disabilities. Proposals for Continuing Care Retirement Communities must prove that they would not have an adverse impact on the facilities enjoyed by local residents.

3. Background

National context

National Planning Framework 2

- 3.1 NPF2 highlights Population and Households as a "Key Challenge" and indicates that the region of Aberdeenshire will experience a significant growth of + 19% over the next 30 years. NPF 2 also asserts that "The number of people over 75 is projected to increase by 81% over the period 2006 to 2031. The planning system must ensure that the implications of our changing demographic profile are fully reflected in the provisions for housing, transport and community facilities" (Scottish Government, 2009:para 32,pg 9). SG SHN1 is designed to support provision of housing for the particular needs of older people.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 3.2 Other housing requirements is identified as one of the headings in the "Housing" subject policy contained within SPP. SPP requires Development plans to address the housing needs of sections of the community such as Gypsies and Travellers and travelling showpeople, and consider the need for houses in multiple occupation. These identified groups of people are catered for in other supplementary guidance attached to Policy 7

Strategic/regional context

Draft Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan

- 3.1 The proposed Strategic Development Plan has the objective under the heading sustainable mixed communities “To make sure that new development meets the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and makes the area a more attractive place for residents and businesses to move to”. The Proposed Strategic development plan acknowledges the fact that there is an aging population and that new development should meet the changing needs of society. SG SHN1 is compliant with the wider aims of the Proposed Strategic development plan as it would assist in the creation of sustainable mixed communities as, if possible, development for specific needs would be integrated into existing settlements.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment, update March 2011

- 3.2 The housing need and demand assessment (HoNDA) provides the evidence base to inform the new Strategic Development Plan and Aberdeenshire’s Local Housing Strategy.
- 3.2 The HoNDA identifies that there may be specific housing requirements for specific household groups. It identifies the same particular needs that SG SHN1 identifies but also a range of other groups, some of which are taken account of in Policy 7, SG SHN2 and SG SHN3. These groups are: people with mental health or substance misuse, families and lone parents, ethnic minorities, EU migrants, homeless households, young vulnerable adults (especially those 16-17 years old), and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender households (LGBT).
- 3.4 The other groups identified above may find themselves in need of social housing and may require support from the housing authority, particularly if they are subject to harassment in their current accommodation. However the housing needs for these groups are social, rather than based in land use planning and are a matter for the Housing Authority and not the Planning Authority. These groups do not currently require development for their specific needs though would all benefit from living in sustainable mixed communities with good access to a range of services, public transport, open space and access to employment. SG SHN1 does not need to explicitly cater for these groups as layout siting and design policy as well as affordable policy all urge developers to consider a mix of housing types and integration of social housing.

Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017

- 3.5 Aberdeenshire Council is required by law to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) informed by Housing need and demand assessment. The LHS provides strategic direction to tackle Housing Need and Demand.
- 3.6 Strategic outcome statement 5 refers to particular needs groups. The SOS identifies that affordable LDP housing policy and supplementary guidance is clear that affordable housing includes smaller house types and supported accommodation which provides opportunities for people with particular needs who required specific accommodation to meet their needs.
- 3.7 Statement 5 identifies that Aberdeenshire has an aging population and that a general increase in population is likely to increase overall demand by particular

needs groups. Statement 5 contains Key Action 1- Ensure there is sufficient diversity in all housing, all sizes and tenures to meet the changing needs of Aberdeenshire residents; by ensuring a minimum of 15% of new build affordable homes are developed each year for those with a particular need.

- 3.11 Key Action 1 also highlights that there may be future issues with a shortfall in capital for particular needs housing and recommends that an innovative approach must be taken to produce house types that are flexible to meet the needs of those with particular need. This is not in the remit of SG SHN1, however other affordable housing policy and layout siting and design policy all promote sustainable mixed communities and a range and mix of house types in order to accommodate housing need.

4. Drivers of change

- 4.1 The increased use of the social model of disability rather than the medical model of disability provides a particular perspective on this policy. SG SHN1 defines particular needs to include older people as well as people with physical disability and learning difficulties. The reasoned justification should be clear that the “special needs” appropriate to the application of this policy are associated with the need to overcome physical and social barriers within the environment. The language used in the reasoned justification should provide this explanation and describe particular needs to include older people and people with physical disabilities or learning difficulties.
- 4.2 There is an increasing aging population so there is likely to be a rise in the number of applications for specific needs housing for older people. The model of a “care community” thus remains valid, and is an increasingly popular and viable means of meeting these needs.
- 4.3 There is predicted to be a 19% rise in population in the Aberdeenshire region over the next 30 years this is likely to mean there will also be a rise in people who will require housing for specific need.
- 4.4 There are issues with the current economic climate which has led to a shortfall in funding for this type of housing provision.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 There should be some minor re-wording of the policy in line with the social model of disability.
- 5.2 SHN1 does not need any further changes in order to cope with the current economic climate and funding deficit. It is a sufficiently flexible policy which will respond to change in demand for particular needs housing.

6. Summary of main points

- 6.1 No major changes to SG SHN1 are recommended apart from minor rewording. SG SHN1 is sufficiently robust that it will support development for particular needs in the future even if demand for this type of development increases.

7. References

Aberdeenshire Council (2012) *Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012*

Scottish Government (2010) *Scottish Planning Policy*

Scottish Government (2009) *National Planning Framework 2*

Strategic Development Planning Authority (2009) *Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan*

Strategic Development Planning Authority(2011) *Housing need and demand assessment*

Strategic Development Planning Authority (2012) *Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan*

Aberdeenshire Council (2012) *Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017*