

Meeting:	Strategic Planning Advisory Panel
Date:	14 th March 2006
Subject:	Draft Accessible Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – consideration of responses to the statutory consultation
Responsible Officer:	Executive Director (Urban Living)
Contact Officers:	Ali Kashmiri, Access Officer Sukhpreet Khull, Planner
Portfolio Holder:	Planning, Development and Housing
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

The Accessible Homes SPD has been through two rounds of consultation. The initial informal four weeks consultation period on the draft SPD began on the 16th September 2005 and ended on the 14th October 2005. Necessary changes were made to the documents before they were subject to statutory consultation between the 2nd December and 30th December 2005.

During the statutory consultation stage, the main alterations required to be undertaken to the SPD have been the further clarification of policy content, and expansion of the explanation of the difference between Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessible Homes. There have also been changes in the grammar, colour and design of the SPD to achieve easier customer reading of the document. The accompanying SA report has been finalised to reflect the development of the SPD. This report informs the Panel of the comments/representations received and highlights how necessary changes to the two documents have been made.

The Panel are asked to recommend that the Portfolio Holder agrees the content of the final documents which now are at the adoption stage. The Council is also required to publish a summary report entitled the 'consultation statement' which

summarises the comments/representations that were received and what action has been taken in response. Details of the comments and proposed changes can be seen in the consultation statement (Appendix 1). The adoption statement is also attached (see Appendix 2).

Decision Required

The Panel is invited to: -

- i) Agree the proposed changes to be made to the draft Accessible Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA) following consideration of representations received as detailed within the Consultation Statement, Appendix 1.
- ii) Recommend that the Portfolio Holder clear and agree the Accessible Home SPD and its accompanying SA Report.
- iii) Recommend that the Portfolio Holder adopt the Accessible Home SPD and its accompanying SA Report. (See Appendix 2-Adoption Statement).

Reason for report

Consideration of representations received represents the last stage prior to the adoption of the Accessible Homes SPD.

A key objective of the Accessible Homes SPD is to demonstrate the links between the Council's planning process, government planning policy and nationally recognised housing standards. The Accessible Homes SPD supports the principles of sustainable design, by actively discouraging design that potentially involves future costly and disruptive adaptations. Furthermore, the SPD actively demonstrates that homes which are ostensibly mainstream in design, can also be accessible to wheelchair users. The SPD introduces design trends which encourage improved social inclusion of disabled people through accessible housing that is integrated across the whole borough.

Benefits

The SPD will ensure that new residential developments, including conversions and extensions, are of good quality in order to maintain and enhance the residential component and character of the Borough. More importantly it aims to provide and retain a range of housing types and sizes, of a high standard and design, to meet the varied physical and economic needs of the Borough's residents.

Cost of Proposals

The cost of producing the SPD and associated SA will be met within the approved Planning Services budget.

Risks

Failure to carry out the procedures set down in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulations would render the Council open to legal challenge. Delay in meeting the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable milestones may also lead to a reduction in the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG).

Implications if recommendations rejected

This will lead to a failure to meet the approved LDS timetable milestone.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

The title of the Accessible Homes SPD was previously Mobility and Wheelchair Housing SPD and the re-naming of the SPD was proposed for at the time of adoption. This change was outlined in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and agreed by the Government Office for London (GoL). The previous title Mobility and Wheelchair Housing was considered out-dated and out of step with current terminology. The new title is a more accurate representation of the subject matter of the document and will reflect the relevant Policy title in the Unitary Development Plan.

Statutory consultation on the draft Accessible Homes SPD and its accompanying sustainability appraisal took place for 4 weeks from 2nd December 2005 to 30th December 2005. Eight responses were received on the SPD. Comments were received from the following bodies: -

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES REPRESENTATIONS

1. Environment Agency (Tricia Lloyd)
2. The Countryside Agency (Landscape Access Recreation –LAR) (David Hammond)

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS & INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIONS

3. RPS Planning on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd (John Wachter)
4. Jewish Community Housing Association Ltd (Albert Samuelson)
5. Harrow Churches Housing Association (R.E Goodman)
6. George Wimpey West London (W.G Luck)
7. Access Consultant (Jacqueline Lockyer)
8. Graham Nickson

IN-HOUSE REPRESENTATIONS

Access Officer
Urban Designer
Graphic Designer
Planner
Legal

A summary of the responses received and the suggested changes made to the two documents can be seen in Appendix 1- Consultation Statement. References to new page numbers are made to demonstrate where the changes have been incorporated.

Next stages

Having considered the responses and agreed any necessary changes, the Accessible Homes SPD and Sustainability Appraisal report now require adoption.

2.2 Options considered

The LDS agreed by Cabinet on 23rd June 2005 identified production of an SPD as being the most appropriate option in Harrow.

2.3 Consultation

The initial community engagement and statutory consultation stages for producing this SPD have followed the appropriate procedures and timetable as set down in the approved LDS, and including the means of engagement set down in the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

2.4 Financial Implications

Costs are contained within the approved Departmental budget.

2.5 Legal Implications

Once adopted, the authority should include the Accessible Homes SPD in the LDF as it will form part of the planning framework for the area. It will not be subject to independent examination and will not form part of the statutory development plan, however the authority should carry out the same publicity process for the adopted SPD as applies to a DPD. The authority must also include with the SPD a statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and their response to those representations, together with a copy of the final statement of sustainability appraisal.

2.6 Equalities Impact

Both the SPD and SA promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Background Documents:

Accessible Homes SPD and Sustainability Appraisal