

**Sunderland Core Strategy and Development Plan**

**(2015 to 2033)**

**Technical Paper: Optional Standards – Accessible and  
Adaptable Dwellings (2018)**

## **Optional Standards M4(2)**

The Housing Optional Technical Standards were introduced through a Written Ministerial Statement in March 2015<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, these standards were incorporated into the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup> (PPG), and relate to exceeding minimum standards required by building regulations in respect of access, water and space standards. Optional standards can only be brought into force through a policy set out in a Development Plan Document (DPD). This document presents evidence relating to access

The Core Strategy Development Plan Policy (CSDP) Policy H1: Housing Mix, Part 1, iv, sets out a requirement for 10 % of dwellings (on developments of ten units or more) to meet building regulation standard M4 (2) Category 2 - Accessible and adaptable dwellings.

In order to introduce a requirement through the Local Plan a local planning authority must demonstrate that there is both a need for the standards and that they have considered the viability implications of adopting them. The PPG sets out that there is a wide range of factors which Local Planning Authorities can consider in justifying the optional standards.

The purpose of this document is to supplement and highlight existing evidence regarding the Councils optional standard for accessible and adaptable dwellings. The rest of this document explores the various themes in justifying the need for the optional standard.

### **The Likely Future Need for Housing for Older People**

The 2017 mid-year population estimate (MYE) for Sunderland set out a total population of 277,249<sup>3</sup> with 2014 based population projections indicating a relatively modest population growth (+8,500 (rounded)) over the plan period (2015 to 2033), equating to a 3 % population increase<sup>4 5</sup>. However, this limited projected population growth masks significant change in the proportion of the older age population. The number of people across the Sunderland area aged 65 or over is projected to increase from 51,600 in 2015 to 73,400 by 2039. This equates to a 42 % growth<sup>6</sup> in the over 65 age group which is in stark contrast to the overall projected population growth of 3.1 %. This is set out in figure 1.

Of particular note is the growth in the 80+ age cohort. This component of the overall city population was 4.7 % in 2014 and is projected to grow to 8.6 % of the total population by 2039. In real terms, this represents an almost doubling of the 80+ population, a 92 % growth rate between 2014 and 2039, from 12,900 people (in 2014) to 24,800 (in 2039)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-optional-technical-standards>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

<sup>4</sup> Based on the 2014 Sub National Population Projections.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that as part of the CSDP Spatial Vision it sets an overarching vision of a population for Sunderland of in the order of 290,000 people by 2033.

<sup>6</sup> See ONS – Sub National Population Projections and also set out in the Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017).

<sup>7</sup> This is based on projections from the ONS Population Projections – 2014 based.

**Figure 1: Growth of Older Aged Cohorts Relative to Overall Population Growth (Based On 2014 ONS Sub National Population Projections<sup>8</sup>)**

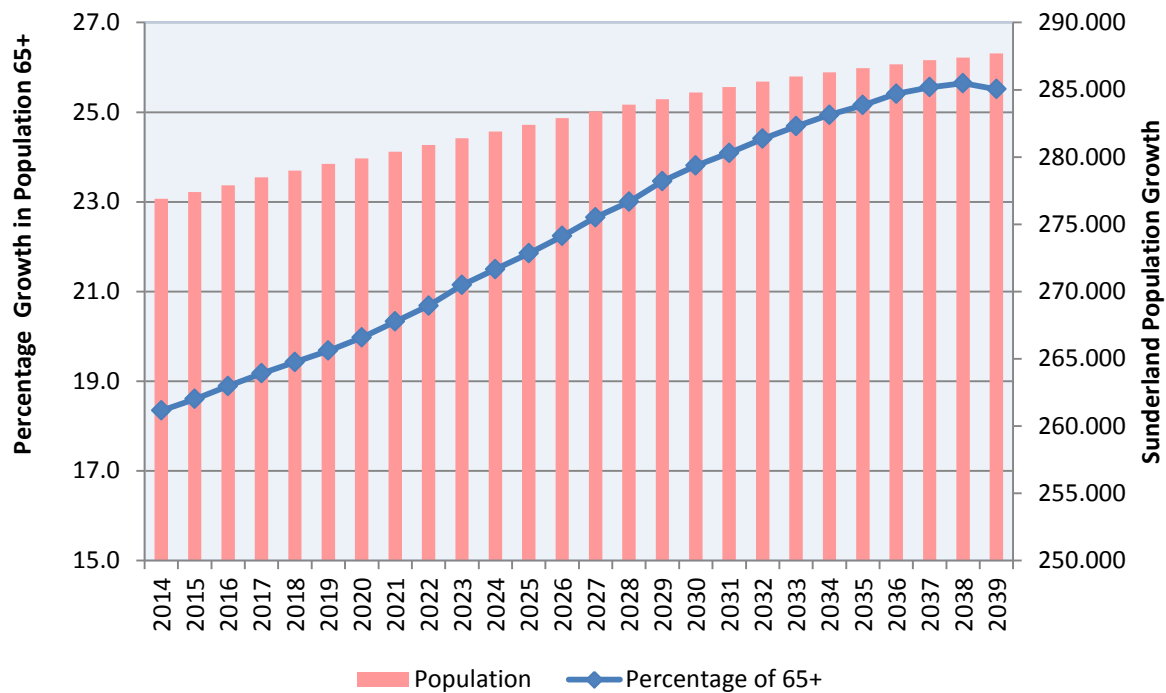


Figure 1 above demonstrates the striking growth of Sunderland’s ageing society in the context of relatively modest population expansion. This is likely to have a number of; health, housing and social care service implications. One such impact is the need for adaptive homes and home adaptations in order to enable older people to remain living independently at home.

It should be noted that a similar trend in terms of the growth of the older aged cohorts is identified across the North East. For example, within Newcastle and Gateshead an identified population growth of 13.1 % was identified over the period 2010 to 2030, with the 65 and over population projected to grow by 39.5 % over the plan period<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, for North Tyneside, the over 65 age cohort are projected to increase by 20,155 (56.6 %) by 2032 with the overall population increasing over the North Tyneside plan period by 11.4 %<sup>10</sup>. Also, South Tyneside is projected growth in older cohorts with a 48 % growth in their over 65 population between 2014 and 2039<sup>11</sup>. Whilst it is noted that the above data is taken from different sources with different methodological approaches.

<sup>8</sup> ONS 2014 Sub National Population Projections:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/subnationalpopulationprojections2014basedprojections>

<sup>9</sup> SHMA Newcastle Gateshead. (2011) <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/2017/NewcastleGateshead-SHMA-Final-April-2011/pdf/NewcastleGatesheadSHMAFinalApril2011.pdf?m=636343438593300000>

<sup>10</sup> See North Tyneside Housing Optional Standards Paper <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/web-page-related-files/Housing%20Optional%20Technical%20Standards.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Based on ONS 2014 Based Population Projections

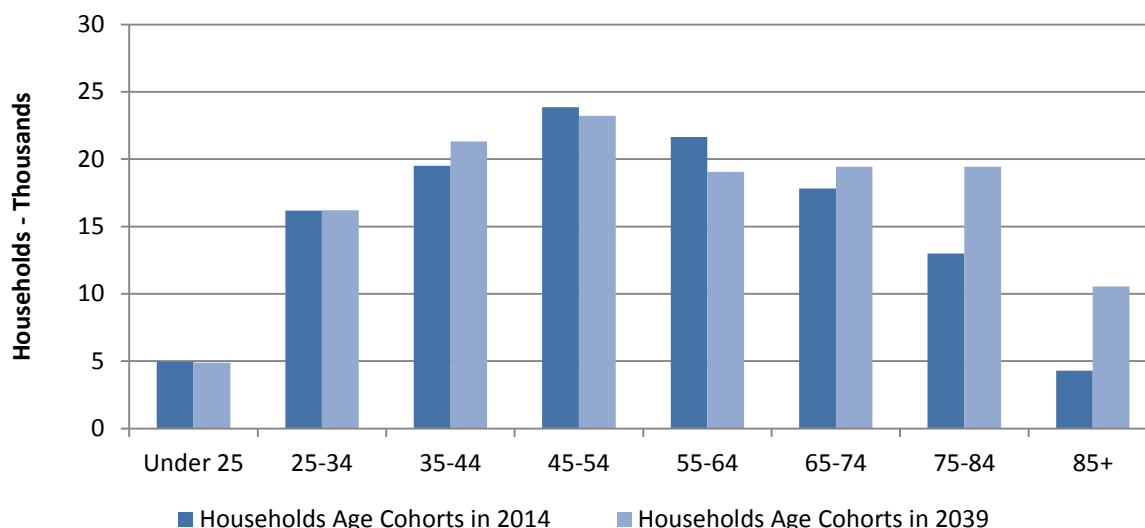
Nevertheless, there is a clear trend of significant growth in the older cohorts across neighbouring authorities.

### Older Households

As can be seen in figure 2, utilising 2014 DCLG household projections and comparing the household age cohorts between 2014 and 2039 demonstrates a significantly ageing household structure<sup>12</sup>. It identifies only limited change in the younger household groups (under 25 and 25 to 34 cohorts), maintaining their levels of 5,000 and 16,000 respectively between the two time frames with modest growth in the 35 to 44 cohort of 1,000. Decline is noted in the following cohorts; 45 to 54 and 55 to 64<sup>13</sup>. Almost all growth in household growth<sup>14</sup> is allocated to the older aged cohorts. The 65+ households increasing by 14,000 between 2014 and 2039 equates to 40 % growth<sup>15</sup>. The growth in the 65+ cohort (14,000) over the period 2014 to 2039 exceeds the growth in households in Sunderland across all cohorts (13,000) this is due to younger cohorts declining over this period. It should be noted that this analysis looks purely at the outputs set out within the MHCLG 2014 round household projections.

Figure 2 below also identifies striking growth in the 85+ age cohort, increasing from 4,000 to 11,000 (over the 2014 to 2039) period, equating to 175 % increase. As the 85+ age cohort tend to need higher levels of care intervention and often have more specialised housing need due to age, the projected increase in older people is likely to have a number of housing, health and social care service implications which must be planned for accordingly. Housing implications include increased demand for both specialist accommodation for older people and for increasing the quantum of dwellings built and redeveloped to accessible and adaptive standards.

**Figure 2: Household Age Composition – 2014 – 2039 – DCLG 2014 Household Projection Based**



<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that figures presented here are rounded.

<sup>13</sup> Decrease in the 45 to 54 cohort from 24,000 in 2014 to 23,000 in 2039 and decrease in the 55 to 64 22,000 (2014) to 19,000).

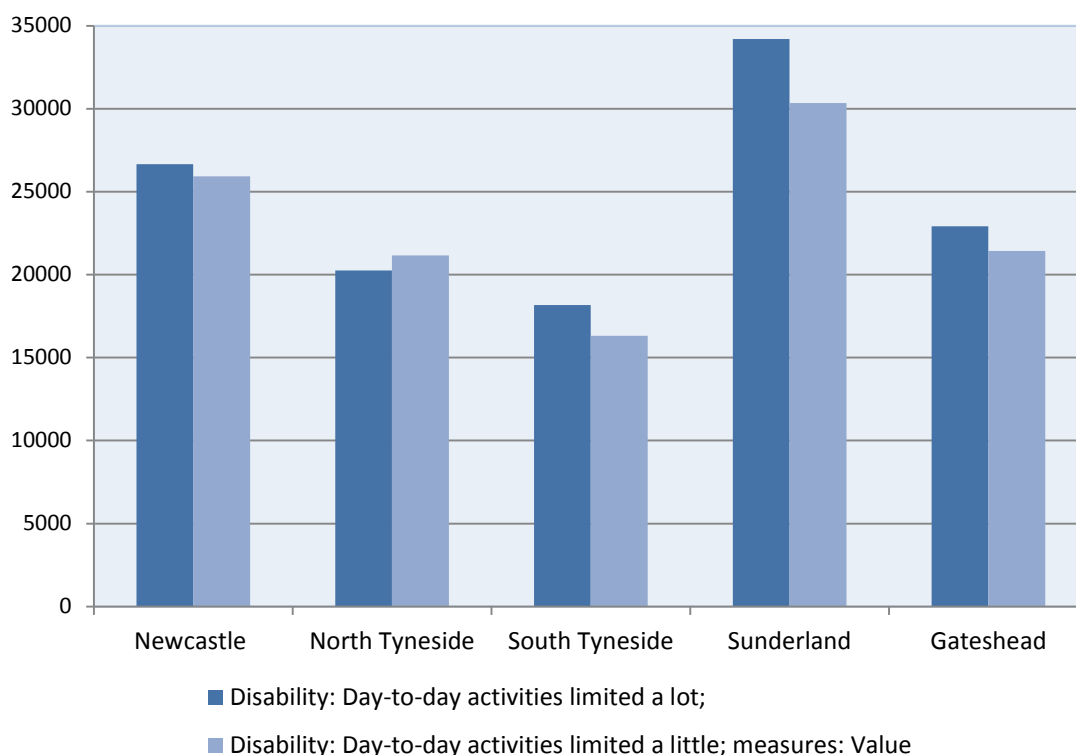
<sup>14</sup> Based on the 2014 MHCLG Household Projections: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-household-projections#based-live-tables>

<sup>15</sup> 65+ households grew from 35,000 (2014) to 49,000 by 2039.

## People Living With Illness and Disability

According to the 2011 Census<sup>16</sup>, 12.4 % of Sunderland residents considered themselves to have a disability which limited their activities a lot (equating to 34,206 persons). Sunderland has the fifth highest rate in England<sup>17</sup> and higher than any other Tyne and Wear authority, as shown in figure 3 below. Furthermore, the rates identified in Sunderland are significantly higher than the England average of 8 %.

**Figure 3: Disability Rates (Census 2011) Comparing Tyne and Wear Local Authority Areas**



Research set out in the English Housing Survey 2011 to 2012 report<sup>18</sup> found that, 30 % of households in England have a reference person with a long term illness or disability. Almost half of these (49 %) live in social rented housing, around 27 % are owner occupiers and around 22 % live in private rented housing.

Data from the Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI)<sup>19</sup> sets out additional data projections on the quantum of physical disability at the local authority level for those aged 65 or under. For Sunderland PANSI sets out that 17,833 people aged under 65 have a serious or moderate physical disability. This is highlighted below in figure 4.

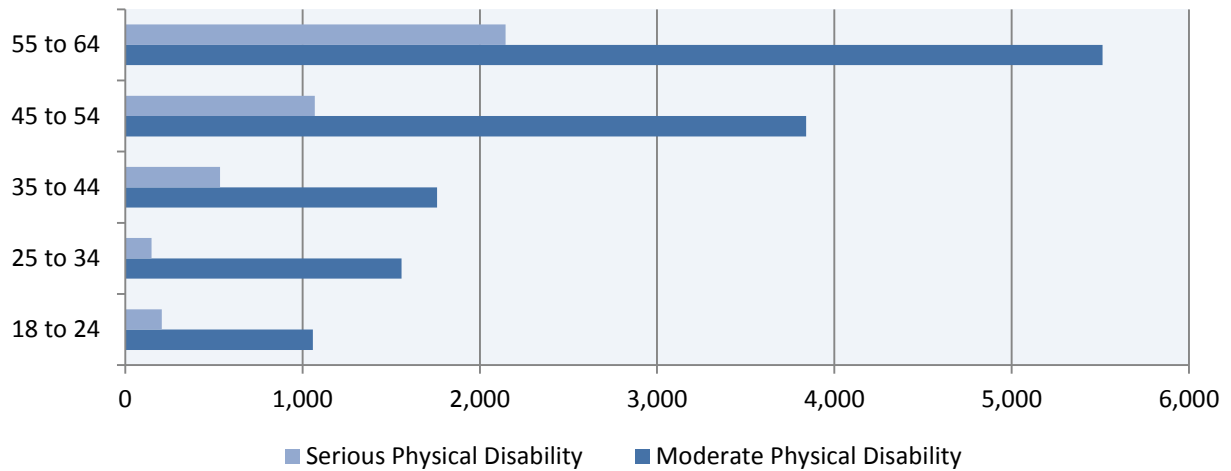
<sup>16</sup> Table ID QS303EW

<sup>17</sup> Only four other Local Authorities in England had higher rates of significant disability; Knowsley, Blackpool, Liverpool and Barnsley.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report>

<sup>19</sup> An information system developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC) for the Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme (CSED). The system is now provided solely by the [Institute of Public Care](http://www.pansi.org.uk/index.php?pageNo=354) on licence from the Department of Health. <http://www.pansi.org.uk/index.php?pageNo=354>

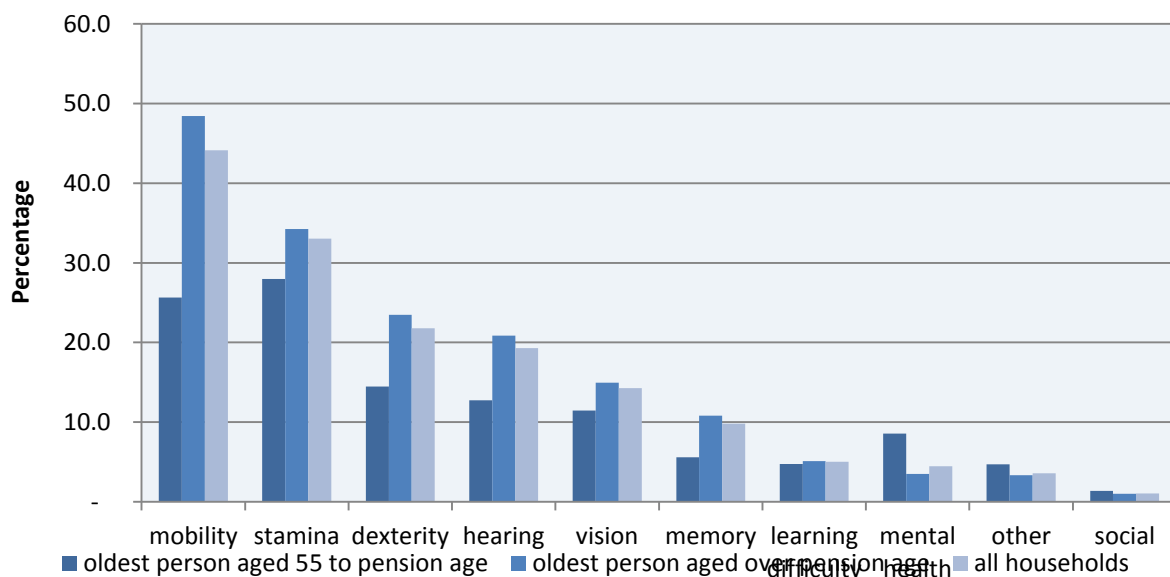
**Figure 4: People aged 18-64 in Sunderland with a Physical Disability (PANSI Data)**



**Disability and Owner Occupied Households**

The English Housing Survey 2013 to 2014 report found that almost half<sup>20</sup> of owner occupied households, where the oldest person was aged over pension age contained someone with a long term illness or disability. As can be seen in figure 5, mobility issues impact upon 44 % of older households. Also identified through the English Housing Survey is the predominance of mobility issues impacting older owner occupied households. The above demonstrates the striking levels of illness and significant mobility issues within English households. This is likely to be more pronounced in Sunderland given Sunderland higher rates of disability and older cohorts (as highlighted above).

**Figure 5: Owner Occupied Older Households and Illnesses – English Household Survey 2013 to 2014<sup>21</sup>**



<sup>20</sup> 46%. See page English Household Survey – Households – 2013 to 2014 (page 67)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/461439/EHS\\_Households\\_2013-14.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461439/EHS_Households_2013-14.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Taken from English Household Survey (EHS) 2013 to 2014 Appendix Table 3.19

## The Accessibility of the Existing Stock

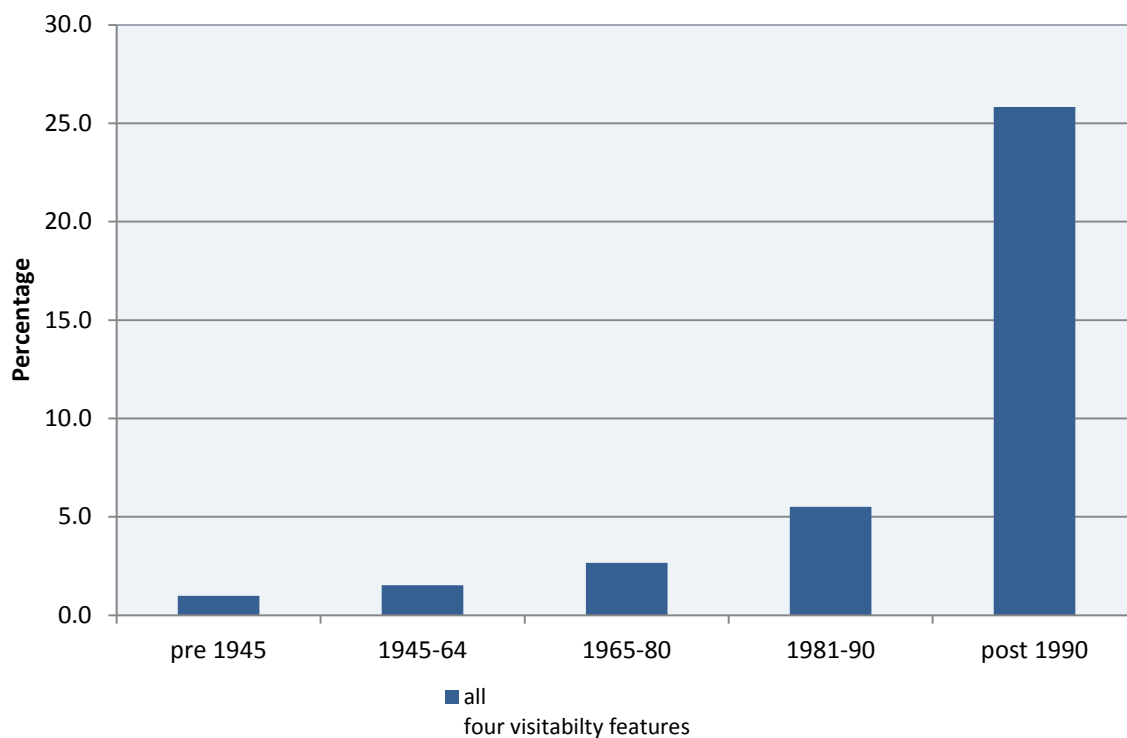
There is a limited amount of data regarding the accessibility of the current housing stock in relation to the standards set out in building regulations M4(2).

The Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment update, 2017<sup>22</sup>, identified that 7.4 % of homes across the City have been adapted or purpose built for a person with long term illness, health problems or disability, with the highest proportions reported in social and affordable tenure. It should be noted though that there is a distinction between the description of adapted homes set out here and the requirements set out in M4(2). However it sets a relatively good indication regarding the overall composition of homes which have been adapted to some degree in Sunderland.

Other sources of relevant information include, the English Housing Survey (EHS) (2012 to 2013) which explored the number of 'visitability' features<sup>23</sup>. These features do not align fully to M4 (2) requirements but information presented below offers a rough approximation to what level of the existing stock is of partial adaption of the standard. It identified only 5 % of the existing stock (at England level) is considered to offer full visitability standards.

The English Housing Survey (2012 to 2013) also identified the likelihood of a home being fully visitable, which varied by age tenure and type. It identified that homes built after 1990 were most likely to be fully visitable. Housing built pre 1945 and those built between 1945 and 1964 were more likely to have no visitability features.

**Figure 6: Percentage of Homes Featuring All Four Visitability Features By When Housing Was Built – English Housing Survey 2012 – 2013**

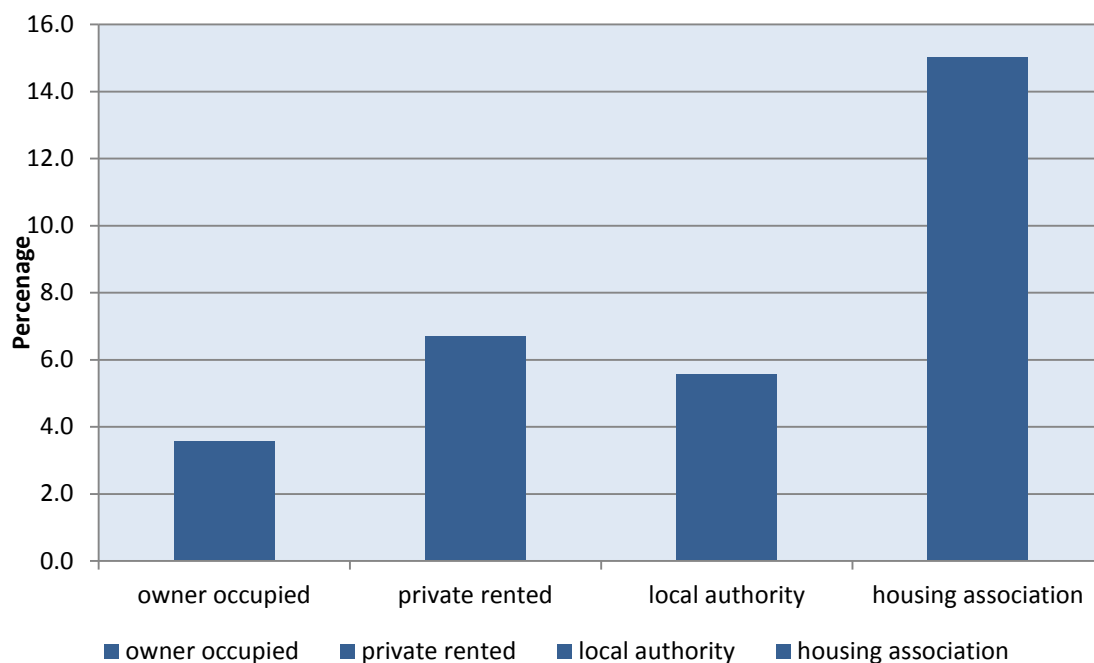


<sup>22</sup> See Sunderland SHMA, 2017 para 7.52.

<sup>23</sup> Visitability features include; level access, flush threshold, sufficiently wide doors and circulation space and WC at entrance level.

The English Housing Survey also found that owner occupied stock was the least likely to be modified with all four viability features as outlined in figure 7 below:

**Figure 7: Percentage of Homes Featuring All Four Viability Features**



In order to assist people who need adaptations to the existing housing stock the Council has spent £11 million over last four years to provide aids and adaptations through its Home Improvement Agency to allow sick and disabled people to remain in their homes<sup>24</sup>.

### **Projecting Future Need Requirements Adaptable Dwellings**

The Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Addendum (2018)<sup>25</sup> utilising the Housing Survey (2012)<sup>26</sup> identified 9,100 households living in properties which were adapted or purpose built<sup>27</sup>. Utilising the household projections and factoring in the existing composition of households living in an adapted properties, the SHMA established future needs for adaptable homes over the plan period (2015 to 2033). This is set out in table 1 below<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>24</sup>Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2017 – Para 7.50

<sup>25</sup>Sunderland Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum, 2018

<sup>26</sup> Which was rebased to 2015 households see SHMA for more details

<sup>27</sup> See paragraph 3.8, of the SHMA Addendum (2018).

<sup>28</sup> This is taken from table 1.4 of the SHMA Addendum (2018).



**Table 1: Projecting Adaptable Homes Requirements**

Household Age Group	% Living in Adaptive Properties	2015	2033
15 to 24	5.3%	261	260
25 to 34	1.3%	260	194
35 to 44	5.6%	1,081	1,280
45 to 54	3.8%	897	781
55 to 59	7.3%	858	687
60 to 64	7.4%	752	795
65 to 74	9.9%	1,788	2,081
75 to 84	16.1%	2,089	2,852
85+	26.4%	1,170	2,306
Total	Av 7.4%		

This analysis suggests that an additional 2,143 adapted properties are required over the plan period. The SHMA addendum noted that in order to plan positively for the future need for adapted dwellings, it is recommended that the Council seeks a 10 % of new development to meet the optional accessibility standards subject to viability<sup>29</sup>. This reflects that some of the need identified will be met through adaptations to the existing housing stock which would allow residents to stay within their own homes.

### **The Overall Impact on Viability**

The PPG sets out the need for plans to take into account the impact of additional costs associated with the optional standards. With regards to this, the Council undertook a Whole Plan Viability Assessment<sup>30</sup>, the output of this was that the optional requirements set out within M4(2) would have a marginal impact on scheme viability. The costs associated with M4 (2) are set out below and were inputted into the appraisals for the Whole Plan Viability Assessment.

<sup>29</sup> Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Addendum 2018, page 19.

<sup>30</sup> Sunderland Viability Assessment, 2017

**Table 2: Additional Costs Associated With the Optional Standard M4(2)**

Housing Typology	Additional Costs (£)
1 Bedroom Apartment	£940
2 Bedroom Apartment	£907
2 Bedroom Terrace	£521
4 Bedroom Detached	£520

The supplementary Sunderland Viability Note (2018)<sup>31</sup> also confirmed that the standards set out above were inputted into the whole plan viability appraisal and that introducing the M4(2) requirement should not have an adverse impact on the viability and deliverability of individual sites and the overall plan.

#### **Is There Sufficient Justification For the M4(2) Requirement**

The Council has demonstrated the need for the M4 (2) optional standard set out in CSDP Policy H1 both through this document and the evidence base assembled. As noted above, the City is projected to have a significant growth in older aged cohorts over the plan period. Added to this is Sunderland's very high rate of disability, as with, Sunderland ranks the fifth highest levels of disability in England<sup>32</sup>. PANSI data sets out striking levels of disabilities within the working population.

Data from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and English Housing Survey, demonstrates the low rate of adaptations in the existing housing stock. The SHMA sets out that only 7.4 % of homes across the City had been adapted. Both the SHMA and EHS confirm the higher levels of adaptations to the social housing stock and with the owner occupied stock and households facing lower levels of adaptations. This again provides evidence for the need for the optional standards. The SHMA provides analysis of the need for adapted properties utilising future projections as base to understand the likely requirement. It concludes a base need for some 2,143 adapted properties. Furthermore the viability study sets out that factoring in the additional costs of the policy requirements should not have an adverse impact on the viability and deliverability of individual sites.

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<sup>31</sup> Sunderland Viability Note, 2018

<sup>32</sup> Based on activity which limits their activities a lot (Census, 2011).