

## **Policy P7 Wheelchair accessible and adaptable housing**

### **Introduction**

1. This note has been prepared in response to Action 12 on policy P7 following the Part 1 Hearings (Matter 3) on the New Southwark Plan (NSP) Examination in Public. In relation to wheelchair accessible and adaptable housing the Inspectors have requested the following:

*‘Policy P7 clarifications in part 1 of the policy re M4(3)(2a) and M4(3)(2b) and only requiring M4(3)(2b) on 10% of dwellings to which the Councils nominations apply in accordance with the PPG.’*

### **London Plan Policy D7 Accessible Housing**

2. The London Plan 2021 Policy D7 sets out:

*‘A To provide suitable housing and genuine choice for London’s diverse population, including disabled people, older people and families with young children, residential development must ensure that:*

*1) at least 10 per cent of dwellings (which are created via works to which Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations applies) meet Building Regulation requirement M4(3) ‘wheelchair user dwellings’*

*2) all other dwellings (which are created via works to which Part M volume 1 of the Building Regulations applies) meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’.*”

### **New Southwark Plan Policy P7**

3. The Inspectors have asked for clarifications on Part 1 of the policy which currently states:

*“1. New build major residential development must meet Building Regulation M4(3) standard (Wheelchair User Dwellings) in at least 10% of homes (as measured in habitable rooms) and the remaining 90% need to meet Building Regulation M4(2). Where those homes are affordable wheelchair user homes these must meet Building Regulation M4(3b) standard (Wheelchair accessible dwellings).”*

## Modifications to P7

4. In response to the Inspector's Action 12 and in order to ensure further clarity, the following modifications are proposed:

"1. New build major residential development must:

1. meet Building Regulation M4(3) standard (Wheelchair User Dwellings) in at least 10% of homes (as measured in habitable rooms) and;
2. the remaining ~~dwelling must 90% need to~~ meet Building Regulation M4(2) ~~(accessible and adaptable dwellings) and;~~
3. Where those homes are affordable wheelchair user homes, ~~these must~~ 10% of social rented homes must be wheelchair accessible and meet Building Regulation ~~M4(3b)~~ M4(3)(2)(b) standard (Wheelchair accessible dwellings).

2. New build residential development must:

- ~~1. Meet Building Regulation standard M4(2) unless point 1 applies; and~~
2. Provide a mix of dwelling sizes and tenures that meet the above standards, including family homes. Two bedroom three person affordable wheelchair homes will not be acceptable; and
3. Provide wheelchair accessible homes that meet the minimum space standards set out in Table 4; and
4. Provide affordable wheelchair homes that meet the design and access standards set out in Table 5; and
5. Provide access to a second lift where wheelchair accessible or wheelchair adaptable units are above the ground floor; and
6. Provide affordable wheelchair homes which, where unoccupied, must be let as local authority temporary accommodation until a suitable permanent household is identified; and
7. Provide alternative specialist housing to meet specific needs in place of an affordable wheelchair user home where the council has identified a specialist housing need; and
8. Where wheelchair accessible homes cannot be provided on site, a financial contribution will be required towards the provision of new affordable wheelchair homes or the adaptation of existing affordable homes to wheelchair user standard. The financial contribution will be the equivalent to the cost of fitting out a new home or existing homes to a wheelchair user standard.

Table 4: Accessible wheelchair user housing minimum space standards

Number of bedrooms	Minimum space (apartments) (sqm)	Minimum space (houses) (sqm)
1b2p	65	N/A
2b3p	75	80
2b4p	85	100
3b4p	100	110
3b5p	110	120
3b6p	115	125

Table 5: Wheelchair homes design and access standards

Installation of entry phones which allow access to the communal area and private front door where the private door is behind a communal door.
Hand wash basins that are mountable on adjustable height brackets.
Two lifts where wheelchair user homes are situated above the ground floor.
Corridor widths of at least 1,200mm.
Window handles within the 450mm to 1,200mm range.
Wall fitted shower seats with drop down legs, drop down arms and a back rest.
Installation of a side hinged oven.
Accessible storage including drop down shelving and pull out baskets, ensuring storage space, in combination with any shelving layout, provides optimum access to space and to stored items.
Clear open doorways at least 900mm.
Living rooms, bathrooms and shower rooms, kitchens and dining rooms which exceed the minimum space standards in Building Regulations.
600mm x 600mm wheelchair accessible work top for food preparation.

## Reasons

1. There is an unmet need for affordable wheelchair accessible housing and alternative types of specialist housing which meet the needs of people with disabilities that are not met by wheelchair accessible housing. Southwark residents are living longer, with a 79% increase in the population of Southwark aged 65 or more forecast between 2019-2039. This demographic trend includes a gradual increase in the number of older

households with disabled members, and in particular, those with wheelchair needs. To ensure that all potential residents have choice within a development, wheelchair accessible or wheelchair adaptable housing is required across all tenures and housing types. The need for wheelchair accessible homes is particularly concentrated on the social rented tenure, developments providing social rented homes will therefore be required to provide a proportion of homes as wheelchair accessible. The need for social rented wheelchair accessible, wheelchair adaptable or lifetime homes is informed by the council's Housing Register waiting list. We will use planning conditions to specify those social rented homes that must comply with Part M4(3)(2)(b) requirements for "wheelchair accessible" dwellings. The council will use planning conditions to secure wheelchair user dwellings that comply with Part M4(3)(2)(a) requirements for "wheelchair adaptable" dwellings. ~~accessible, wheelchair adaptable or lifetime homes according to the relevant optional requirement of Building Regulation standard Part M4.~~

2. The council recognises that a range of different types of specialist housing is required to meet the needs of people with disabilities; this includes, but is not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs. Accordingly, developers should work with the council, registered providers or other relevant partners to identify and provide for a range of specialist housing needs where appropriate.

3. To ensure the provision of the highest quality and safest wheelchair user homes we have set out minimum space standards which all affordable wheelchair user homes will need to meet."