

Appendix 1

Draft DP Policy: Housing Provision for Older People and those with Disabilities and Special Needs

1. The housing needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs will be met in a way that provides choice and importantly complements and facilitates the People's Strategy for Shropshire. A fundamental principle of the People's Strategy for Shropshire is supporting people to remain independent within their own homes and within their existing communities and support networks for as long as possible. The People's Strategy for Shropshire will be facilitated and complemented through the provision of accessible and adaptable housing and appropriate forms of specialist housing in accordance with the requirements of this Policy.

Accessible and Adaptable Housing

2. All housing specifically designed for older people or those with disabilities and special needs will be built to the M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations.
3. On sites of 5 or more dwellings, at least 5% of the dwellings will be built to the M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations and a further 70% of the dwellings will be built to the M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) or higher standard within Building Regulations, unless site-specific factors indicate that step-free access cannot be achieved.
4. All dwellings on sites of less than 5 dwellings and the remaining dwellings on sites of 5 or more dwellings that are not subject to the requirements of Paragraph 3 of this Policy are strongly encouraged to achieve the M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard within Building Regulations or higher.
5. All housing designed to M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations must also be designed to be 'friendly' to those with dementia and to those with disabilities and special needs.
6. All housing designed to M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) within Building Regulations is strongly encouraged to be designed to be 'friendly' to those with dementia and to those with disabilities and special needs.

Specialist Housing

7. All specialist housing for older people or those with disabilities and special needs will be built to the M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations and must also be designed to be 'friendly' to those with dementia and to those with disabilities and special needs.
8. Reflecting the People Strategy for Shropshire, and the principle of supporting people to remain independent within their own homes and within their existing communities and



support networks for as long as possible, new specialist housing provision for older people or those with disabilities and special needs will consist of:

- a. The forms of specialist housing which support independent living, including age-restricted housing; retirement/sheltered housing; or extra care housing; or
 - b. Nursing homes providing high-level care for those with dementia and/or complex needs; or
 - c. A combination of the above.
9. All specialist housing provision will integrate into rather than be apart (gated-off) from existing and new communities, recognising the social and sustainability benefits of multi-generational and inclusive communities.
 10. Ideally, specialist housing should be located where future occupiers can benefit from access to existing services and facilities. Where appropriate services and facilities are not already available, a range of supporting services and facilities will need be provided on sites where specialist housing is provided. Any services and facilities provided should be proportionate in scale to the type of specialist housing and ensure the scheme remains affordable.
 11. When providing specialist housing, opportunities to provide appropriate key worker accommodation for any associated care staff should be proactively considered.
 12. Specialist housing designed to meet the diverse needs of older people or those with disabilities and special needs that is consistent with the requirements of Paragraph 8 of this Policy and the requirements of other relevant Local Plan Policies (particularly Policies SP3-SP10, DP3, DP11 and Policies S1-S20) will be supported in appropriate locations within the development boundaries identified on the Policies Map.
 13. Specialist housing schemes that consist of 100% local needs affordable specialist housing for older people or those with disabilities and special needs that is consistent with the requirements of Paragraph 8 of this Policy, the requirements of Policy DP4 and the requirements of other relevant Local Plan Policies will be positively considered.
 14. Specialist housing that is consistent with the requirements of Paragraph 8 of this Policy and is agreed to be Use Class C2 development, will in addition to meeting the housing needs of older people also constitute a secondary employment use. These forms of specialist housing will therefore be considered an appropriate secondary employment use on mixed-use employment sites, where they are consistent with the requirements of Policy SP13; complement the existing and planned wider employment uses of the site; are served by appropriate infrastructure; and facilitate the delivery of the wider employment site, including through the provision of accesses, servicing and other infrastructure.
 15. On site allocations for 250 or more dwellings and all development sites for 250 or more dwellings (irrespective of whether such sites are brought forward through a series of phases or planning permissions), at least 20% of houses must constitute a form of specialist housing for older people and/or those with disabilities and special needs documented within Paragraph 8 of this Policy.



16. On site allocations for 150-249 dwellings and all development sites for 150-249 dwellings (irrespective of whether such sites are brought forward through a series of phases or planning permissions), at least 15% of houses must constitute a form of specialist housing for older people and/or those with disabilities and special needs documented within Paragraph 8 of this Policy. At the lower end of this category, it is likely that this provision will consist of age-restricted housing or retirement/sheltered housing in the form of apartments or a small group of bungalows which can be delivered in smaller numbers, as they generally have lower operational and staffing costs and requirements.
17. On site allocations for 50-149 dwellings and all development sites for 50-149 dwellings (irrespective of whether such sites are brought forward through a series of phases or planning permissions), at least 10% of houses must constitute a form of specialist housing for older people and/or those with disabilities and special needs documented within Paragraph 8 of this Policy. It is likely that this provision will consist of age-restricted housing or retirement/sheltered housing in the form of apartments or a small group of bungalows which can be delivered in smaller numbers as they generally have lower operational and staffing costs and requirements.
18. Specialist housing provided in accordance with Paragraphs 15-17 of this Policy that is consistent with the definition of affordable housing can also represent all or part of the contribution to affordable housing required in accordance with Policy DP4 of the Local Plan. However:
 - a. The mix of specialist housing provided across Shropshire should include both open market and affordable housing.
 - b. Affordable housing provision should not be concentrated only in affordable specialist housing, as it is important that the other forms of affordable housing are delivered, including for key workers such as the care staff for specialist housing.
 - c. As such, if it is considered that completions and commitments of specialist housing is concentrated in affordable tenures or if it is considered that affordable housing completions and commitments are concentrated in forms of specialist housing, specialist housing provision on a site may be required to be open market and similarly the affordable housing provision may be required to be general housing.
19. On site allocations, provision of a level of housing which results in the relevant settlements housing guideline being exceeded and/or the site allocations approximate site provision figure within the relevant Settlement Policy (S1-S20) being exceeded will be positively considered where:
 - a. This over-provision is a direct result of the provision of a significant quantity of specialist housing in excess of that required within Paragraphs 15-17 of this Policy,
 - b. Over provision is specialist housing of a type documented within Paragraph 8 of this Policy,
 - c. The development proposed remains an appropriate form of development on the site having regard to its characteristics and the character of the surrounding area, and



- d. The proposed development complies with the wider policies of the Local Plan, particularly Policies SP3, SP5, SP6, DP1, DP2, DP3, DP11, DP12, DP14-DP17, DP25, DP27, and DP28.
20. Proposals that result in the loss of existing specialist housing designed to meet the needs of older people or those with disabilities and special needs will be resisted unless:
- a. There is no longer an identified need for the existing form of specialist housing in the settlement and Shropshire as a whole; or
 - b. The needs will be met elsewhere within the settlement, preferably close to the existing specialist housing or in a preferential location for specialist housing; or
 - c. Redevelopment would provide an improved quality of a comparable category of specialist housing and associated facilities; or
 - d. Redevelopment would provide an alternative form of specialist housing which is identified within Paragraph 8 of this policy, demonstrably of greater need in Shropshire, and the provision of the specialist housing and associated facilities is of a high quality.

Explanation

Introduction

1. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Shropshire demonstrates that there is a higher proportion of older people living in Shropshire than the national average. Furthermore, it anticipates that over the plan period to 2038, the proportion of older people living in Shropshire and the number of single person households will increase at a faster rate than the national average.
2. The health and lifestyles of older people living within our communities inevitably varies and it is expected that this will remain the case in the future. Similarly, the housing needs and aspirations of older people in our communities will also inevitably differ.
3. Those with disabilities and special needs can include those with physical and/or mental health needs. Like older people, their health and lifestyles are diverse and this is reflected in their housing needs and aspirations.
4. The housing needs and aspirations of older people and those with disabilities and special needs will likely include:
 - a. The provision of appropriate adaptations to their homes.
 - b. Moving to new accessible and adaptable general needs housing.
 - c. Moving to an appropriate form of specialist housing.
5. Further information on accessible and adaptable general needs housing and specialist housing is provided later within this Explanation.
6. National Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People specifies that *“Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected*



to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.” It also specifies that “The provision of appropriate housing for people with disabilities, including specialist and supported housing, is crucial in helping them to live safe and independent lives.”

People’s Strategy for Shropshire

7. The People’s Strategy for Shropshire includes the strategy for meeting the care and support needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs. This strategy is underpinned by the key principle of:
Wherever possible, seeking to support older people and those with disabilities and special needs living in Shropshire to remain independent within their own homes, within their existing communities and with access to their established support networks.
8. This key principle is considered to be consistent with Government’s reform of Health and Adult Social Care, which is underpinned by a principle of sustaining people at home for as long as possible.
9. Importantly, this key principle has also been directly informed by and is responsive to our understanding of the needs and aspirations of the older people living in our communities, including through consideration of the Housing Need Survey undertaken for Shropshire and the ‘Right Home, Right Place Surveys’ undertaken for Parishes in Shropshire.
10. Furthermore, this key principle is responsive to the geography and characteristics of Shropshire. Specifically, Shropshire is a large, diverse and predominantly rural County with a very low population density across much of its geography. As such, the vast majority of our settlements are small both in terms of population and number of households. In these settlements it is not always appropriate to provide new adaptable and accessible housing or specialist housing – due to their size and location.
11. However, older people and those with disabilities and special needs living within these small rural settlements often have a very strong connection to their community and a clear preference to remain within it. In circumstances where these individuals have support or care needs, the only practicable means of meeting these needs, whilst also respecting their preference to remain within their existing community, it to provide support within their existing home.
12. As such, in implementing the People’s Strategy, where older people and those with disabilities and special needs require support, in the first instance this will be achieved through the provision of appropriate adaptations, equipment, assistive technology and if necessary domiciliary care to support them to continue to live independently within their existing home.
13. Given the rapid advancements to assistive technologies, it is considered that over the plan period to 2038, the ability to effectively provide support in this way will expand.



14. These various measures are generally outside the scope of the planning system. However, by seeking to positively influence the types of housing delivered in the future, the planning system can positively facilitate this strategy moving forwards.
15. Specifically, to facilitate this strategy in the future and also provide genuine choice for those older people and people with disabilities and special needs that require support and do wish to move to alternative general housing, it is essential that new development includes a significant quantity of properties designed to M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) or M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations.
16. The National Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People explains that *“Accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently, while also saving on health and social costs in the future. It is better to build accessible housing from the outset rather than have to make adaptations at a later stage – both in terms of cost and with regard to people being able to remain safe and independent in their homes.”*
17. It is considered that this strategy can also be complemented by the provision of appropriate quantities and forms of specialist housing that support independent living, as such provision allows support and care to be provided within the home, albeit not the current home. It also provides genuine choice for those older people and people with disabilities and special needs that require support and wish to move to a form of specialist housing whilst still maintaining independence.
18. However, if accessible and adaptable housing and specialist housing provision is to be capable of accommodating those that require support they must be of the right size, type, tenure and affordability. Crucially it must also be in appropriate locations.
19. Whilst the key principle of the strategy for meeting the care and support needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs is to seek to support them to remain independent within their own homes (generally their existing home unless the individuals preference is either new adaptable and accessible housing or specialist housing including for such reasons as moving closer to their wider family or moving to more accessible locations with better provision of services and facilities), the strategy equally recognises that unfortunately this is not always possible.
20. As such, there remains an important role for nursing homes, which provide high level care (including dementia care) for those individuals who cannot be supported to remain independent within their own home.
21. However, conversely it is considered that there will be a reduced role for residential homes that do not provide high level care (including dementia care) in the future – as increasingly more older people and people with disabilities and special needs that would have moved to residential homes will be supported within their own home.



Accessible and Adaptable Housing

22. Part M of the Building Regulations¹ addresses the access to and use of dwellings. It identifies three categories of dwelling, these are:
 - a. M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings.
 - b. M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings.
 - c. M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings.
23. M4(1) is mandatory for all new dwellings. M4(2) and M4(3) only apply in instances where a Local Plan introduces such a requirement, as is the case with this policy. The M4(2) and M4(3) standards can be summarised as follows:
24. M4(2): Accessible and adaptable housing provides safe and convenient approach routes into and out of the home and outside areas, suitable circulation space and suitable bathroom(s) and kitchen within the home.
25. M4(3): Wheelchair user dwellings achieve the accessibility and adaptability requirements of M4(2) housing, but also include additional features to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs, or allow for adaptations to meet such needs.
26. **Guidance on how to achieve these requirements is provided within Part M of the Building Regulations¹.**
27. M4(2) and M4(3) requirements have been introduced in Shropshire for a number of reasons, including:
 - a. There is a higher proportion of older people living in Shropshire than the national average.
 - b. It is anticipated that over the plan period to 2038, the proportion of older people living in Shropshire will increase at a faster rate than the national average.
 - c. The anticipated contribution that growth in older households makes to total household growth in Shropshire.
 - d. The higher prevalence of long-term health problems and/or disabilities amongst older people;
 - e. Within the People's Strategy for Shropshire, a key principle for meeting the care needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs is supporting them to remain independent within their own homes, within their existing communities and with access to their established support networks wherever possible. Provision of M4(2) and M4(3) housing will directly facilitate this in the future, whilst also providing genuine choice for those older people and people with disabilities and special needs that do wish to move to alternative general housing; and

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m



- f. Government's aspiration for adult social care is to sustain people at home for as long as possible. Provision of M4(2) and M4(3) housing directly facilitates this strategy.
28. The need for M4(2) and M4(3) housing was specifically considered within the SHMA. It estimated that for the total projected growth in households in Shropshire during the Local Plan period, 13% will require wheelchair accessible dwellings, M4(3) standard and 33% will require accessible and adaptable dwellings to M4(2) standard.
29. However closer inspection of household growth by the age of Household Reference Person, reveals a significantly higher level of household growth in households with a Household Reference Person aged 65 years and over. With a higher prevalence of long-term health problems and/or disabilities amongst older people, the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan does not underestimate the level of need for accessible housing that meets M4(3) and M4(2) standards is very much apparent.
30. As such, the SHMA considers the number of older households (with a Household Reference Person aged 65 years and over) with a long-term health problem or disability that impacts on their housing needs. It estimates that such households will increase by an amount equivalent to 77% of the total growth in older households over the Local Plan period, requiring either M4(2) or M4(3) standard dwellings.
31. The SHMA also estimates that the number of older wheelchair user households is projected to increase by an amount equivalent to 10% of the total growth in older households, requiring M4(3) standard dwellings. This suggests the remaining 67% of older households with a long-term health problem or disability that impacts on their housing needs will require M4(2) standard dwellings, although it is acknowledged that a proportion of this need will be met within specialist housing.
32. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to require that on sites of 5 or more dwellings 5% of dwellings meet M4(3) standard and a further 70% of dwellings meet M4(2) standard, unless site-specific factors indicate that step-free access cannot be achieved.
33. There will be an expectation that M4(3) dwellings within a development will be sited nearest to service provision and maximise the ease of which the household can access public transport and open space. An updated Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document will provide detailed guidance on the siting and integration of M4(3) dwellings into a development.
34. It is also considered appropriate to require all dwellings specifically designed for the elderly or those with disabilities, including specialist housing, to meet M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations. If site-specific factors indicate that step-free access cannot be achieved, it is questionable as to whether the site or element of the site should be identified for dwellings specifically to meet the needs of the elderly or those with disabilities and special needs.
35. This policy requirement is consistent with the National Planning Practice Guidance advice on Housing: Optional Technical Standards, which specifies in Paragraph 5



(ID: 56-005-20150327) *“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that local planning authorities should plan to create safe, accessible environments and promote inclusion and community cohesion. This includes buildings and their surrounding spaces. Local planning authorities should take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need”.*

36. It should be noted that M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations sets a distinction between wheelchair accessible (a home readily useable by a wheelchair user at the point of completion) and wheelchair adaptable (a home that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a household including wheelchair users) dwellings.
37. Where dwellings are required to meet M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) standard within Building Regulations to comply with this policy, they will normally consist of wheelchair adaptable homes. Wheelchair accessible homes will only be required where Shropshire Council is responsible for nominating a person to live in the dwelling.
38. This approach is consistent with National Planning Practice Guidance advice on Housing: Optional Technical Standards, which specifies in Paragraph 9 (ID: 56-009-20150327) *“Wheelchair accessible homes will only be required where the Council is responsible for nominating a person to live in the dwelling”*,
39. **It should also be noted that where references to the Building Regulations in this policy change, the requirement shall be taken to refer to the most up-to-date standard.**

Dementia Friendly Housing

40. Dementia friendly housing is designed to support the independence of and provide a comfortable environment for those living with dementia.
41. The SHMA indicates that as a result of the increase in older people in Shropshire over the plan period, there will also be a significant rise in the number of people with dementia. Specifically, the SHMA concludes that between 2017 and 2035 the number of people aged 65 years and over with dementia is expected to increase by 80%.
42. As a result, it is considered appropriate to require all housing, including specialist housing, designed to M4(3) standard to be dementia ‘friendly’ and to strongly encourage all housing designed to M4(2) standard to be dementia ‘friendly’.
43. Guidance on achieving dementia ‘friendly’ housing is available through such organisations as the Alzheimer’s Society which has produced a Dementia-friendly housing guide available at: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/Dementia%20Friendly%20Housing_Guide.pdf
44. This guide addresses such issues as consideration of layout, décor, lighting, flooring, furnishings, seating, signage, toilets, navigation, parking, noise and quiet spaces.



45. These measures generally have only a very minimal (if any) additional cost compared to the design requirements to achieve M4(2) and particularly M4(3) housing, but can make a significant difference to the quality of life and independence of those living in the home with dementia.

Types of Specialist Housing for Older People and those with Disabilities and Special Needs

46. The National Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People recognises there is a significant amount of variability in the types of specialist housing available to meet the housing needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs. It identifies four main categories of specialist housing, whilst equally acknowledging that this list is not definitive.
47. The forms of specialist housing identified are as follows:

“Age-restricted general market housing: *This type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services.*

Retirement living or sheltered housing: *This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.*

Extra care housing or housing-with-care: *This usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are known as retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.*

Residential care homes and nursing homes: *These have individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.*

48. The key distinctions between the different categories of specialist housing are the level of on-site care and the level of communal facilities available.
49. Developers are encouraged to seek pre-application advice to establish whether their proposal may be classified as Use Class C2 or C3. When determining the Use Class of housing for older people, due consideration will be given to the level of care and scale of communal facilities provided.



50. However, it is important to note that irrespective of the Use Class of the development, all specialist housing constitutes residential accommodation and housing which is subject to all relevant housing policies within the Local Plan. This is clear within the approach taken in the Local Plan itself to such specialist housing, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, including the National Planning Practice Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People.

Provision of new Specialist Housing for Older People and those with Disabilities and Special Needs

51. The SHMA projects that over the Local Plan period, there will be a need for around an additional 3,500 specialist older persons accommodation units and around 2,500 additional units of residential care provision in order to maintain current prevalence rates (this being the amount of specialist houses for older people compared to the number of older people).
52. As already documented, the People's Strategy for Shropshire includes the strategy for meeting the care and support needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs. This strategy is underpinned by the key principle of wherever possible seeking to support older people and those with disabilities and special needs living in Shropshire to remain independent within their own homes, within their existing communities and with access to their established support networks.
53. As also already documented, there are numerous reasons for this approach, including responding to our understanding of the needs and aspirations of older people and those with disabilities and special needs living in Shropshire and importantly the geography and characteristics of Shropshire.
54. This strategy inevitably means that the 'prevalence rates' for specialist housing in Shropshire will be lower than in other areas with either a different strategy for meeting the needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs and/or with a different geography and characteristics – for instance more urban and densely populated geographies.
55. However, it is recognised that this strategy can be complemented by the provision of appropriate quantities and forms of specialist housing that support independent living (particularly in our larger settlements), which can provide genuine choice for those older people and people with disabilities and special needs that require support. There also remains an important role for nursing homes which provide high level care (including dementia care), for those individuals who cannot be supported to remain independent within their own home.
56. The strategy is however likely to reduce the need for residential homes that do not provide high-level care. This role will be increasingly met by the provision of support within the home.
57. As such, it is considered both necessary and appropriate to introduce a series of measures to ensure the delivery of appropriate types and quantities of specialist



housing in Shropshire – particularly within our larger settlements, which will complement (but importantly must not undermine) the strategy for meeting the care and support needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs.

58. These measures include providing support for the provision of appropriate forms of specialist housing (as documented within Paragraph 14 of this Policy) that is consistent with the requirements of the Local Plan (particularly Policies S1-S20) in appropriate locations within identified development boundaries. Such locations are more likely to benefit from appropriate access to services and facilities and can be integrated into existing communities, enhancing the social and sustainability benefits of multi-generational and inclusive communities.
59. These measures also include providing support for the provision of appropriate forms of 100% local needs affordable specialist housing, where this provision is consistent with the requirements of the Local Plan (particularly Policy DP4). Provision of affordable (particularly social rent) specialist housing is of particular importance in Shropshire.
60. This is because a significantly higher proportion of households living in social rent properties in Shropshire contain people with long-term health problems or disabilities than other tenures of housing. Specifically, the SHMA concludes that 27.8% of households living in social rent properties contain a person with a long-term health problem or disability, compared to 17.1% of households living in owner-occupied properties, 13.6% living in private rented properties, and 17.9% of households living in any property tenure.
61. Furthermore, older people and those with disabilities and special needs with care and support needs that occupy social rented properties may be more inclined to move to specialist housing than owner-occupiers.
62. Another measure is the provision of support for appropriate forms of Use Class C2 specialist housing being provided as a secondary employment use on mixed use employment sites. Provided that this provision is consistent with the requirements of the Local Plan (particularly Policy SP13) and that such provision complements other existing and proposed employment uses on the site and facilitates the delivery of the wider employment site, including through the provision of accesses, servicing and other infrastructure.
63. Such provision provides the dual benefit of providing appropriate forms of specialist housing and also facilitating the delivery of the wider employment site. Furthermore, these employment sites are generally well-located, allowing appropriate access to services and facilities. The elements of mixed use employment sites that are likely appropriate for specialist housing are also likely to be those closest to other forms of housing, thereby providing opportunities to integrate the specialist housing into existing communities.



64. Another measure is the requirement for proportionate quantities of appropriate forms of specialist housing to be provided on larger development sites, in a way that integrates this provision into the wider development site. Such an approach facilitates the achievement of the social and sustainability benefits of multi-generational and inclusive communities.
65. The thresholds identified for the 'categories' of housing within which proportionate provision of appropriate forms of specialist housing is required are responsive to both our understanding of the nature of development schemes that occur in Shropshire and the concept of achieving multi-generational and inclusive communities.
66. Specifically, developments of 50 or more dwellings are generally considered to represent a 'large-scale' development in a Shropshire context. Development at this scale benefits from economies of scale and have the potential to integrate specialist housing as part of a wider housing mix that encourages multi-generational and inclusive communities.
67. Developments of over 150 dwellings constitute 'significant-scale' development in a Shropshire context. Developments of this scale benefit from significant economies of scale and have the potential to integrate specialist housing as part of a wider housing mix that encourages multi-generational and inclusive communities. Many developments above 150 dwellings will have the potential to provide those forms of specialist housing that require larger numbers of units due to their operating model and the requirement for economies of scale, such as extra-care housing and nursing homes offering high end care (including dementia care).
68. Developments of 250 or more dwellings represent 'strategic-scale' development in a Shropshire context. Developments of this scale benefit from significant economies of scale and the potential to integrate much larger forms of specialist housing provision as part of a wider housing mix, that encourages multi-generational and inclusive communities. On such sites there are particular opportunities for the provision of those forms of specialist housing that require larger numbers of units due to their operating model and the requirement for economies of scale, such as extra-care housing and nursing homes offering high end care (including dementia care). It is expected that these opportunities would be fully explored.
69. The specific thresholds identified for the proportionate 'quantities' of specialist housing are responsive to our understanding of the 'critical mass' required for the various forms of specialist housing, development viability, the level of 'need' that exists in Shropshire, and the concept of achieving multi-generational and inclusive communities.
70. New specialist housing should ideally be located where residents can benefit from access to existing services and facilities. This has the dual benefit of supporting the integration of the specialist housing development and its residents into the



wider community and also supports the long-term sustainability of these existing services and facilities.

71. Where services and facilities are not already available, or there is a need for specific services and facilities on the specialist housing site, this provision should be responsive to the types of services and facilities already available and be proportionate in scale to the type of specialist housing. It is important to ensure that specialist housing remains affordable – recognising that specialist housing occupiers will have to pay both service-charges and care-costs in addition to any rent/mortgage. The greater the level of services and facilities on the site, the greater the risk that the resultant specialist housing becomes unaffordable to many of the older people or people with disabilities and special needs in Shropshire whose needs it is intended to meet.
72. It is important that specialist housing is supported by the provision of an appropriate quantity and quality of open space. Consistent with Policy DP15, consideration will be given to reducing the quantity of open space provided, where a specialist housing development is able to provide a particularly high quality of open space on site which meets the needs of all residents. High quality open space is particularly important for specialist housing as residents may be less able or willing to travel to other open space in the area and recognising the wider value and health benefits of the ability to both access and view open space.
73. Furthermore, any new specialist housing scheme should also give consideration to the potential for the provision of appropriate key worker accommodation for any associated care staff. This is a particularly important consideration in Shropshire, as one of the barriers to the care worker labour force is the availability of affordable housing and yet many specialist housing facilities require a significant number of care workers to ensure their operation. Such provision has the potential to complement the provision of smaller open market housing consistent with the requirements of Policy DP1 and affordable housing consistent with the requirements of Policies DP3-DP7.
74. As documented above, the provision of affordable (particularly social rent) specialist housing is of particular importance in Shropshire. However, there is also a need for market specialist housing and crucially there is a need for affordable general housing.
75. As such, whilst the specialist housing provision required within Paragraphs 15-17 of this Policy can, where it is consistent with the definition of affordable housing, also constitute all or part of the affordable housing required from the development - consistent with the requirements of Policy DP4 of the Local Plan, there is a need to ensure this does not undermine the provision of either market specialist housing or affordable general housing.
76. Therefore, this policy includes the ability to require specialist housing provided in accordance with Paragraphs 15-17 of this Policy to be market provision, if this is



considered necessary in order to ensure the appropriate provision of market specialist housing or affordable general housing.

77. It is recognised that many forms of specialist housing present opportunities to achieve a denser form of development than general housing, whilst still achieving a high-quality design that is complementary to the development site, surrounding character and importantly consistent with wider policies within the Local Plan – including those relating to high-quality design (SP5) and health and wellbeing (SP6).
78. It is also recognised that some forms of specialist housing require a ‘critical-mass’ in order to ensure operational efficiency and viability, which may mean that opportunities arise to provide a significant quantity of specialist housing in excess of that required within Paragraphs 15-17 of this Policy.
79. As such, it is considered important and appropriate to provide further flexibility regarding the approximate site provision figure and overall settlement housing guideline in circumstances where a site allocation is proposing to significantly over-provide the amount of specialist housing provision, above that required within this Policy. Provided that the resultant development remains appropriate to the site having regard to its characteristics and the character of the surrounding area, and the resultant development complies with the wider policies of the Local Plan, particularly Policies SP3, SP5-SP6, DP1, DP2, DP3, DP11, DP12, DP14-DP17, DP25 and DP27-DP28.
80. Such an approach also incentivises the provision of specialist housing as an important and valued component of the housing mix on site allocations and supports the achievement of multi-generational communities.

Retention of Existing Specialist Housing for Older People and those with Disabilities and Special Needs

81. In addition to addressing the provision of new forms of specialist housing for older people and those with disabilities and special needs, this policy also introduced an important requirement for the retention of existing specialist housing, unless any loss is offset through the appropriate replacement with equivalent or better provision or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the particular form of specialist housing within the relevant settlement and Shropshire as a whole. This approach is considered important given that:
 - a. There is a higher proportion of older people living in Shropshire than the national average.
 - b. There is an expectation that the proportion of older people living in Shropshire will increase at a faster rate than the national average.
 - c. Specialist housing can complement the strategy for meeting the care and support needs of older people and those with disabilities and special needs in Shropshire.



- d. Many of the sites containing specialist housing are well integrated into their community and as such support the principle of multi-generational communities and provide good access to services and facilities. As such, it is important that these locations are retained for specialist housing, even if it is ultimately an alternative form of specialist housing.

