

# **UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – ACCESSIBLE HOMES AND PLAYSPACE**

**ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2005**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Supplementary Planning Document is one in a series of guidance notes prepared in support of the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in January 2005. The guidance has been prepared following consultation and a sustainability appraisal has been carried out to make sure that all relevant social and environmental issues have been taken into account.

## **BACKGROUND**

There are an estimated 10 million disabled people in Great Britain representing 1 in 5 of the adult population. There are also about 700,000 disabled children in Great Britain. In Uttlesford there is at least one person with some form of disability in nearly 20% of households (around 5,770 households).

It's not just the disabled who encounter problems in getting around. Many people may experience mobility problems at some point in their life e.g. as a result of injury, age, pregnancy, coping with prams or heavy shopping.

Although accessibility requirements are covered by Building Regulations the Government requirements to develop inclusive and sustainable communities means the needs of people with disabilities and mobility problems is a planning concern. Building Regulations are not intended to provide the full standard of accessibility that would be needed in a disabled persons home but rather to make housing more accessible for visitors who may be disabled.

To comply with Part M of the Building Regulations the following features should be provided:

- Access from the pavement or car parking space
- A level threshold at the entrance
- Entrance storey corridors and internal doorways suitable for wheelchair users
- A stair suitable for use by ambulant disabled people at any change of level in the entrance storey
- A WC in the entrance storey and
- Sockets outlets and light switches at a convenient height.

## **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE**

Uttlesford is a district where significant housing growth is committed. It is important that in providing this additional housing that the needs of all residents are met and that the new development is inclusive and sustainable. In order to provide housing and play space which meets these needs the Council has produced this Supplementary Planning

Document for developers, architects and builders setting out the Council's advice in relation to:

- Lifetime Homes
- Wheelchair Accessible Housing and
- Accessible Playspace

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

A Supplementary Planning Document must relate to a policy in a development plan. The relevant policies in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in January 2005 are Policy GEN2 – Design, and Policy LC2 – Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities.

### **Policy GEN2 – Design**

**Development will not be permitted unless its design meets all the following criteria and has regard to adopted Supplementary Design Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.**

- a) It is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings;**
- b) It safeguards important environmental features in its setting, enabling their retention and helping to reduce the visual impact of new buildings or structures where appropriate;**
- c) It provides an environment which meets the reasonable needs of all potential users.**
- d) It helps to reduce the potential for crime;**
- e) It helps to minimise water and energy consumption;**
- f) It has regard to guidance on layout and design adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the development plan.**
- g) It helps to reduce waste production and encourages recycling and reuse.**
- h) It minimises the environmental impact on neighbouring properties by appropriate mitigating measures.**
- i) It would not have a materially adverse effect on the reasonable occupation and enjoyment of a residential or other sensitive property, as a result of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, overbearing impact or overshadowing.**

The relevant part of this policy is criteria C) – development of housing and playspace which is accessible will make sure that it meets the needs of more potential users.

### **Policy LC2 – Access to Leisure and Cultural Facilities**

**Development proposals for sports facilities, arts and leisure buildings, hotel and tourist facilities, will be required to provide inclusive access to all sections of the community, regardless of disability, age or gender.**

In support of these policies the Council will apply the following criteria.

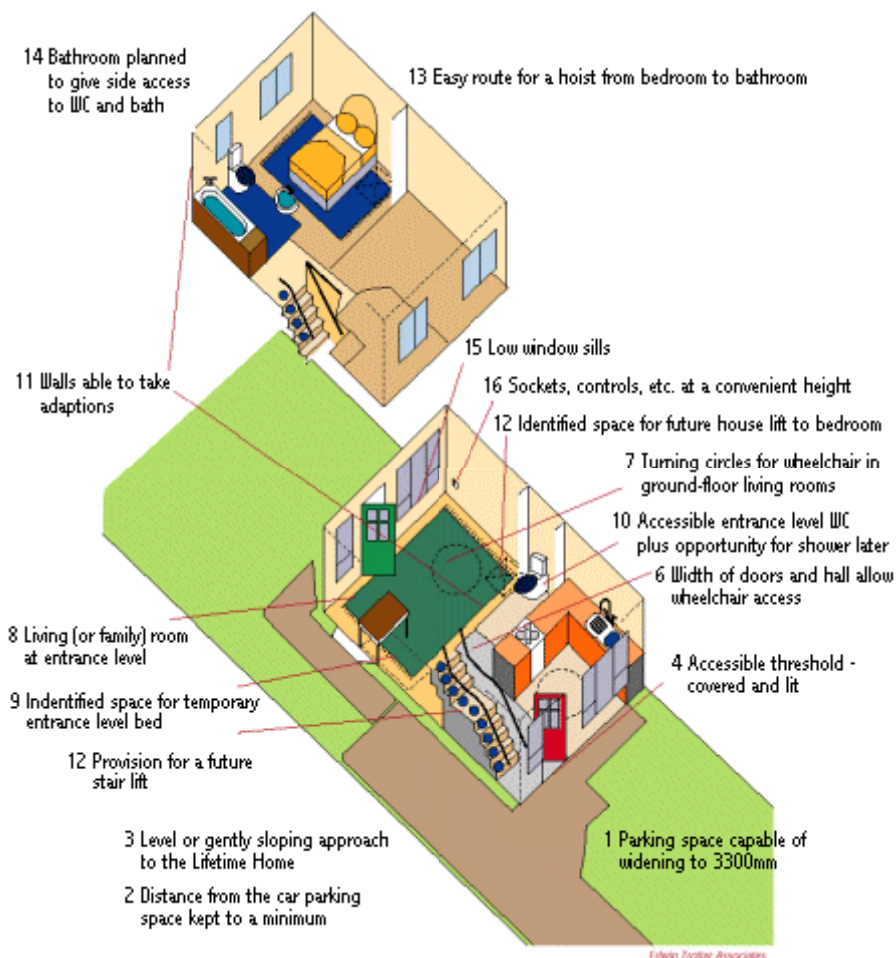
## HOUSING

### LIFETIME HOMES

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation developed the concept of Lifetime Homes. Lifetime homes have 16 design features which will make sure that each house or flat will meet the needs of most households and mean that the homes are easy to adapt if peoples' circumstances change. The Council wants all new housing to include these features.

The Council will require developers to provide new homes, which are designed to lifetime homes standards. These standards will apply to all new housing, including blocks of flats, for both social housing and private sector housing. The lifetime homes standards are set out in the table at Appendix 1 and illustrated in the drawing below.

Applicants should provide a statement that sets out the approach taken in both the external and internal environment to deliver accessible homes and the opportunities and constraints of each proposal. Where elements of the scheme are unable to meet full lifetime homes standards the solutions introduced to overcome the constraints should be explained in the statement.



From "Building Lifetime Homes Foundations" Published in 1997 by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.  
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## **WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING**

In addition to the standards above the Council wants to increase the supply of wheelchair accessible properties in the District.

In new housing developments of between 10 and 20 units the council will require that at least one dwelling is built to wheelchair accessible standards. In developments of 20 units and over at least 5% should be built to wheelchair accessible standards.

The standards for wheelchair accessible homes are set out in the table at Appendix 2.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Flats**

A significant amount of new housing being provided within the District is in the form of flats. This is expected to continue with the pressure to deliver high density development. The provision of lifts in such developments would improve accessibility and increase housing choice for a number of groups including those with disabilities. Lifts must be provided in all new developments of flats above 2 storeys.

Where there is communal provision of waste containers, recycling facilities, drying areas etc these must also be accessible.

### **Residential Annexes**

Residential annexes are often provided for dependent relatives, these should be single storey and wheelchair accessible throughout.

## **ACCESSIBLE PLAY SPACE**

Disabled children are entitled to the same play opportunities as other children. Carers with disabilities may also require access to play space with their children. High quality, well-used play spaces/areas bring people together and lead to more inclusive communities. Good design of public play space is needed to make this possible. Developing accessible play space is not just about getting the equipment right - how the design of the space allows people to use it in different ways is also important and all children should be able to be included in the playspace in some way. There should be consultation with children and parents in preparing the scheme.

The Council will negotiate with developers to achieve provision of secure and accessible play areas that are suitable for integrated play. To achieve this play space provision will be reviewed on an application by

application basis. These areas must be accessible for both carers with disabilities and children with disabilities.

The list in appendix 3 gives sources of further guidance on requirements for accessible play space but generally the following should be provided:

- Not all children will be able or want to use all the equipment all the time but the equipment provided should be as accessible as possible so that as many children as possible have the choice to use it.
- The path to the play area should be wide enough for wheelchairs and pushchairs and allow two people to walk side by side (normally 1m minimum) with a firm surface.
- The entrance should be obvious and accessible for wheelchair users, people with pushchairs etc. Dog grids should not be used.
- Bright/contrasting colours should be used to identify sudden or unexpected changes in level.
- Seats should be provided and benches and tables should include some space for wheelchair users.
- Areas of planting can be used to provide shade and shelter and more informal opportunities for play.
- If toilets are being provided these should also be accessible. Simple shelters could be provided to offer carers some protection from the weather.

For more information please contact the duty planning officer on 01799 510617 or e.mail [planning@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:planning@uttlesford.gov.uk). If you require copies of this guidance in Braille, large print or another language please contact the Customer Care Manager on 01799 510467.

### Appendix 1 – Lifetime Homes Standards

Lifetime Homes Standards	Specifications and Dimensions which Meet the Standards	
1. Where there is car parking adjacent to the home, it should be capable of enlargement to attain 3300mm width	The general provision for a car parking space is 2400mm. If an additional 900mm width is not provided at the outset there must be provision e.g. a grass verge for enlarging the overall width to 3300mm at a later date.	
2. The distance from the car parking space to the home should be kept to a minimum and should be level or gently sloping	It is preferable to have a level approach. However, where the topography prevents this a maximum gradient of 1:12 is permissible on an individual slope of less than 5m or 1:15 if it is between 5 and 10m and 1:20 where it is more than 10m. Paths should be a minimum of 900mm width.	
3. The approach to all entrances should be level or gently sloping	See Standard 2 above for the definition of gently sloping	
4. All entrances should: a) be illuminated b) have level access over the threshold and c) have a covered main entrance	The threshold upstand should not exceed 15mm	
5a) Communal stairs should provide easy access and b) where homes are reached by a lift it should be fully wheelchair accessible	<p>Minimum dimensions for communal stairs Uniform rise not more than 170mm Uniform going not less than 250mm Handrails extend 300mm beyond top and bottom step Handrail height 900mm from each nosing</p> <p>Minimum dimensions for lifts Clear landing entrances 1500x1500mm Min. internal dimensions 1100x1400mm Lift controls between 900 and 1200mm from the floor and 400mm from the lift's internal front wall.</p>	
6. The width of the doorways and hallways should conform to the specifications in the next column	<p>Doorway Clear Opening Width</p> <p>750 or wider</p> <p>750</p> <p>775</p> <p>900</p>	<p>Corridor/Passageway width</p> <p>900 (when approach is head-on)</p> <p>1200 (when approach is not head-on)</p> <p>1050 (when approach is not head-on)</p> <p>900 (when approach is not head – on)</p>

	The clear opening width of the front door should be 800mm. There should be 300mm to the side of the leading edge of doors on the entrance level.
7. There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and adequate circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere	A turning circle of 1500mm diameter or a 1700x1400mm ellipse is required
8. The living room should be at entrance level	
9. In houses of two or more storeys there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient bed-space	
10. There should be: a) a wheelchair accessible entrance level WC, with  b) drainage provision enabling a shower to be fitted in the future	<p>The drainage provision for a future shower should be provided in all dwellings.</p> <p>Dwellings of three or more bedrooms                  For dwellings with three or more bedrooms or on one level the WC must be fully accessible. A wheelchair user should be able to close the door from within the closet and achieve side transfer from a wheelchair to at least one side of the WC. There must be at least 1100mm clear space from the front of the WC bowl. The shower provision must be within the closet or adjacent to the closet (the WC could be an integral part of the bathroom in a flat or bungalow.</p> <p>Dwellings of two or fewer bedrooms                  In small two-bedroom dwellings where the design has failed to achieve this fully accessible WC the Part M standard WC will meet this standard.</p>
11. Walls in bathrooms and toilets should be capable of taking adaptations such as handrails	Wall reinforcements should be located between 300 and 1500mm from the floor.
12. The design should incorporate: a) Provision for a	There must be a minimum of 900mm clear distance between the stair wall (on which the lift would normally be located) and on the edge of



<p>future stair lift</p> <p>b) A suitably identified space for a through the floor lift from the ground to the first floor, for example to a bedroom next to a bathroom</p>	<p>the opposite handrail balustrade. Unobstructed landings are needed at top and bottom of the stairs.</p>
<p>13. The design should provide for a reasonable route for a potential hoist from a main bedroom to the bathroom</p>	<p>Most timber trusses today are capable of taking a hoist and tracking. Technological advances in hoist design mean that a straight run is no longer a requirement</p>
<p>14. The bathroom should be designed to incorporate ease of access to the bath, WC and wash basin</p>	<p>Although there is not a requirement for a turning circle in bathrooms sufficient space should be provided so that a wheelchair user could use the bathroom</p>
<p>15. Living room window glazing should begin at 800mm or lower and windows should be easy to open/operate</p>	<p>People should be able to see out of the window whilst seated. Wheelchair users should be able to operate at least one window in each room</p>
<p>16. Switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls should be at a height usable by all (i.e. between 450 and 1200mm from the floor)</p>	<p>This applies to all rooms including the kitchen and bathroom</p>

## Appendix 2 – Standards for Wheelchair Accessible Housing

<p><b>APPROACH</b></p> <p>Level or gently sloping routes to all external entrances, and to external facilities such as storage, parking, garden and clothes drying area.</p> <p>Paths slip resistant and smooth, minimum width 1200mm</p> <p>Ramps to be avoided</p> <p>Path gateways to provide minimum 850mm clear opening width</p> <p>Good cover at point of transfer from vehicle to wheelchair</p>
<p><b>PARKING</b></p> <p>Located adjacent to the front entrance</p> <p>Under cover</p> <p>3.6 metres wide</p> <p>Located beside a 900mm path connecting the front door, parking bay and the adjacent road</p>
<p><b>ENTRANCE</b></p> <p>Entrance to be covered and well lit</p> <p>Entrance landing to be level and min 1500 x 1500mm</p> <p>All external doors to give 800mm clear opening and to have accessible thresholds.</p>
<p><b>INTERNAL CIRCULATION</b></p> <p>Corridors minimum 900mm wide, 1200mm wide where 90° turn necessary and 1500mm wide where 180° turn necessary</p> <p>Internal doorways to give minimum 775mm clear opening width and to have level thresholds</p> <p>Provision for storage and recharging of battery –operated wheelchair</p> <p>Minimum turning space inside entrance 1200x1500mm</p> <p>Rooms all on one level or accessible by wheelchair accessible lift (where required lift to comply with appropriate BS standard.</p> <p>Bedrooms, living rooms and dining rooms with adequate space for wheelchair users to turn through 180° with furniture in place i.e. turning circle 1500mm or ellipse 1800mmx1400mm</p> <p>Main bedroom to bathroom connected by full height knockout panel or</p>

other means.

Suitable provision for future hoist to run between main bedroom and bathroom

Kitchen layout provides effective and appropriate space for use by a wheelchair user. Clear manoeuvring area minimum 1800x1400mm.

Bathroom layout ensures independent approach/transfer to and use of all fittings including manoeuvring space clear of fittings.

Extra space in bathroom for both bath and shower with at least one to be fully installed. Shower area to be wheelchair accessible with floor drain.

Suitable controls of mains water stopcock, gas and electric main consumer units. Suitable isolating valves to sink, washing machine, etc

Glazing line in living/dining/bedrooms no higher than 810mm above room floor level.

### **Appendix 3 – Sources of Guidance on Accessible Play Space**

Developing Accessible Play Space  
A Good Practice Guide  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
2003  
[www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

Can Play Will Play  
Disabled Children and Access to Outdoor Playgrounds  
Alison John and Rob Wheway for  
National Playing Fields Association 2004  
[REDACTED]

Design Guides – Playspaces  
Secured by Design – Design Guides and Publications  
[REDACTED]