

City Executive Board response to the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee on disabled impacts in planning

Provided by the Board Member for Planning & Regulatory Services

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1. That the Council consults with disabled users and organisations in the context of the emerging Local Plan.	Yes	The Council already has a number of organisations and community groups who are consultees for planning policy changes such as the Local Plan. Officers recently met with Unlimited Oxfordshire to discuss a range of issues including the Local Plan and are happy to increase consultation with disabled users and organisations.
2. That the Council contacts the Department for Communities and Local Government asking them to: a) Review the application and impacts of part M of the Building Regulations and whether these regulations and optional standards go far enough in light of the latest demographic data; b) Promulgate good practice in terms of disabled access and inclusivity to local authorities.	Yes	
3. That the Council makes representations to landlords, estate agents and developers about the importance of creating an inclusive housing market.	Yes	This requires a broad approach across the Council, as these organisations are often dealt with by different departments and under different strategies. Officers will consider how best to have a single statement of best practice, charter or similar that can be used with these different groups.
4. That as part of the Local Plan review the Council reviews whether planning policy HP2 requires that a sufficiently high proportion of new dwellings are either fully wheelchair accessible or easily adapted for full wheelchair use, in order to meet future housing needs in the city, or whether the 5% threshold should be raised.	Yes	This is best considered as an additional submission to the Preferred Options consultation, and will be considered alongside all other responses.
5. That where possible, the Council monitors compliance with planning policy HP2 (or any equivalent policy that replaces it following the Local Plan review).	Yes	Where the Building Control Service are the inspecting authority they will ensure that new buildings comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, including where

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		planning conditions have been imposed to comply with relevant planning policies relating to accessibility and adaptability.
6. That the Council encourages higher standards of disabled access and inclusivity through HMO licencing. This could include capturing data from inspections and making recommendations to landlords on good practice.	Yes	<p>The nature of a licence and the process of licensing is that the conditions for that licence only ensure compliance with housing legislation. It is not therefore possible to require something that cannot be used as a condition of the licence. This means that the statement of best practice – as described in answer to Q3 above – would be advisory only.</p> <p>However the regular contact between officers and HMO landlords and the educational work through Landlords Forums offers an opportunity to help promote best practice. The proposed new enhanced inspection scheme for the broader private rented sector (PRS) offers a similar opportunity in the rest of the PRS.</p>
7. That the Council continues to look at good practice from other local authorities to inform further improvements to planning and regulatory services, including with regards to disabled access and inclusivity.	Yes	The aim of the Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Service is to be Best in Class and so benchmarking, innovation and seeking out best practice is carried out on a regular basis. This might also be done as part of a process of regularly reviewing the statement of best practice.