

Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note: Extra Care Housing and Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation (updated January 2021)

This is one of a series of notes issued by the Chief Planning Officer to guide greater consistency when making planning decisions. These notes may be updated from time-to-time in response to changing circumstances.

It provides guidance to help reach a decision only and should not be used as a reason for refusal. The note cannot be used as a substitute for the policies of the adopted Local Plan.

Background

1.1 With an ageing population the delivery of appropriate forms of accommodation for our older residents continues to become increasingly acute. Providing appropriate accommodation will ensure residents are able to secure the right support for their needs, in doing so enabling people to retain a greater level of independence for longer and acting as a viable alternative to moving into a care home. By providing alternatives to traditional care homes it will, most importantly, provide accommodation that better meets the needs of many older residents, but in doing so it will also help to ease the strain on public finances.

1.2 There are various forms of accommodation that could be provided, two of which are Extra Care Housing and Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation (ESA).

Extra Care Housing – Provided in the form of 1 and 2 bed flats, which are self-contained, with their own kitchen, bathroom and living area; specifically designed to support residents so that they can live independently for as long as possible. Extra Care schemes also provide additional communal facilities, such as a communal lounge, dining room, sitting room/hobby room, etc. Schemes often provide other facilities like a small shop, hairdressers, cafes, etc that can be utilised by both the extra care residents, as well as the wider community (such facilities should complement, rather than compete, with existing facilities within the neighbourhood). Extra Care schemes will provide facilities for overnight stay for guests; plus they will provide private outdoor space for the residents to use. However, the most significant aspect of extra care schemes is that they will have onsite care staff 24 hours a day, to support the needs of the residents, as required.

Extra Care schemes generally need to provide approx. 70-80 flats, together with the other associated facilities, to make them viable. A site needs to be approximately 2 acres in size; plus ideally they will be located within walking distance of other services and facilities, as well

as public transport routes. Tenure mix can vary depending upon location, but most Council led schemes are likely to be entirely affordable accommodation.

Due to the self-contained nature of the accommodation, we would expect to see Extra Care Housing schemes defined within the C3 use class. By exception, consideration would be given to it falling within the C2 use class, but only when the level of care provided from the outset, for the majority of residents, will be akin to that provided in a traditional care home; with this care provision set within the conditions and/or s106 agreement.

Further information on the provision of Extra Care Housing is set out in the [Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#)

Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation (ESA) – Generally provided in the form of 1 or 2 bed flats, which are self-contained, similar to Extra Care housing. However, compared to Extra Care housing, the accommodation is usually slightly smaller, although they are still designed to meet the needs of an older person with increasing mobility issues; such as wide corridors, walk in showers, open plan kitchens, etc. The extent of the communal facilities will be more limited compared with Extra Care, e.g. a single day/activity room and staff room/office; but no restaurant or shop for example. Furthermore, ESA will not have permeant on-site care staff; instead the care needs of any residents will be met through domiciliary care packages.

ESA scheme should provide approx. 30-40 homes and it is anticipated that they would be provided on a site of at least 1 acre.

1.3 Policy 6 of the Cornwall Local Plan indicates that for schemes of 200 dwellings or more, specialised housing (including Extra Care) should be considered where demand exists. However, as set out below, support for Extra Care or ESA schemes should not be confined to just schemes of this size.

1.4 The position on developer contributions will be monitored, in light of the government's consultation on amendments to the planning system. However, at the time of writing, all units would be CIL exempt, as per the charging schedule. With regard to schemes within an allocated site, it would be liable for Transportation and Healthcare s106 contributions; but would be exempt from Education contributions (due to age of occupants) and Open Space contributions (if it is being provided on site).

Reviewing proposals for Extra Care housing / Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation

2.1 To ensure that the planning system is providing support to this much needed form of accommodation, some guidance has been prepared that sets out how this form of accommodation should be considered through the pre-application and planning application process.

2.2 Firstly, pre-application requests or planning applications will be considered against 5 general tests:

General Tests

1. Is the scheme located within or immediately adjacent to the urban area of one of the following settlements:
 - a. Extra Care Housing – Penzance, Hayle, St Ives, Helston, CPIR, Falmouth-Penryn, Truro, St Austell, Newquay, Bodmin, Wadebridge, Liskeard, Looe, Launceston, Callington, Bude, Saltash & Torpoint.
 - b. Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation (ESA) – One of the towns listed above, or another smaller town, or a large village that contains a range of services and facilities and access to regular public transport
2. The site meets the appropriate size guidance (i.e. approximately 2 acres for an Extra Care scheme, and at least 1 acre for Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation)
3. It is providing an appropriate number of homes to make the schemes viable, i.e. approx. 70-80 homes for Extra Care; and approx. 30-40 homes for Enhanced Sheltered Accommodation
4. To ensure deliverability of the Extra Care / ESA scheme, the applicant should:
 - a. get confirmation from Adult Social Care that demand exists for an Extra Care / ESA scheme, of the scale proposed, within that community;
 - b. demonstrate that the proposed Extra Care / ESA scheme is deliverable on the proposed plot of land; and
 - c. provide a letter of intent from the Registered

Provider that would seek to deliver or take control of the completed Extra Care / ESA affordable accommodation on the site

5. The proposed scheme meets the other normal tests for development – e.g. infrastructure, including highway capacity, could cope; there is no significant detrimental impacts on environmental and/or historic assets; it would represent an appropriate neighbour to existing or proposed uses within the vicinity of the site; etc.

2.3 Guidance on how proposals for Extra Care housing / ESA will be considered, depending upon their location and planning/policy status, is set out below. This guidance should be considered alongside Policy 6 of the Cornwall Local Plan, which indicates that 'scheme of 200 dwellings or more should consider the inclusion of additional specialised housing, including extra care'. Therefore, for schemes of 200 dwellings or more, located within one of the targeted settlements, it is expected that every effort is made to include Extra Care / ESA, if there is a demonstrated unmet demand within that settlement.

Pre-apps / Applications for sites within a town

3.1 Proposals for Extra Care or ESA schemes on unallocated sites within the existing urban area will be given in-principle support, subject to the 5 'General Tests' being met

Pre-apps / Applications on the edge of a settlement

4.1 Scheme for an Extra Care / ESA scheme alone:

In-principle support will be given, subject to the scheme being well related to the existing built form and the 5 'General Tests' being met.

4.2 Scheme for an Extra Care / ESA scheme, on an unallocated site, as part of a wider development:

Firstly, it would be expected that the overall development is limited in scale (e.g. the number of family dwellings is substantially less than the number of Extra care / ESA dwellings). Secondly, the applicant should have the support of the divisional member and Town/Parish Council for the scheme. If the local support is in place, consideration would be given to supporting the scheme, subject to:

- the scheme being well related to the existing built form and is of a scale appropriate for the settlement and its immediate location;
- the whole scheme meets General Test 5, with the Extra Care / ESA element meeting the other 4 General Tests; and
- the land for the Extra Care / ESA scheme is given over to the Council at nil cost, in lieu (or in part) for the on-site affordable housing that would otherwise have been required from the site (as explained further below)

Pre-apps / Applications on allocated sites

5.1 Support would be given to the principle of Extra Care / ESA housing on allocated Residential sites and Mixed Use sites that incorporate residential uses. Plus schemes of 200 dwellings or more are anticipated to include such accommodation, where there is a demonstrated unmet demand.

5.2 The inclusion of an Extra Care / ESA scheme within a residential / mixed-use allocation will be subject to:

- a) The 5 General Tests being met; and
- b) If the Extra Care / ESA scheme is going to count towards the scheme's affordable housing contribution, the freehold transfer of the land should be offered to the Council / approved Registered Provider at nil cost.

5.3 In return the applicant may reduce (in part or full) the number of general needs affordable housing within the remainder of the scheme. The reduction in affordable dwellings should be equivalent to the number of general needs housing that could have otherwise been located on the land given over to the older persons accommodation (based upon general needs dwellings, at 35dph, up to a maximum of 2 acres). The provision of serviced land to this effect would be obligated by a Section 106 agreement, with appropriate triggers.

Pre-apps / Applications relating to a site with existing planning permission

6.1 Application or pre-application requests received to amend an existing permitted scheme, to incorporate an extra care facility, would be considered based upon one of the following:

- a) **Replacing land permitted for market dwellings for an Extra Care / ESA scheme:** In-principle support would be given subject to the 5 General Tests being met
- b) **Replacing land permitted for commercial development for an Extra Care / ESA scheme:** A change of use will be looked at favourably, if:
 - i. the applicant can demonstrate that without their employment land, there are still sufficient completions, deliverable

permissions and allocations to enable the delivery of the Local Plan's employment space targets for the CNA;

- ii. the land has been marketed as a commercial development opportunity for at least 9 months and there is no prospect of the site being developed for its intended purpose; and
 - iii. the 5 General Tests are met
- c) **Replacing land for affordable dwellings for an Extra Care / ESA scheme:** This will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that converting the tenure and form of housing in this way will unlock a stalled scheme (this may include for reasons of financial viability). If it can be demonstrated that this change in approach is both deliverable and would release a stalled site for development, a proportional reduction in general needs affordable housing would be given further consideration based upon meeting the four points below:
- i. The reduction in general needs affordable dwellings is only up to the point at which the scheme becomes viable (i.e. the reduction in affordable dwellings should not just be equivalent to the number of affordable Extra Care / ESA units that would be provided) ;
 - ii. The freehold transfer of the land should be offered to the Council or an approved Registered Provider at Nil cost.
 - iii. The change to Extra Care / ESA would be permitted for a maximum of 2 years; and
 - iv. The proposed Extra Care / ESA scheme meets the 5 General Tests

1. Example: A permitted scheme for a total of 300 dwellings, including 90 affordable general needs dwellings, has been demonstrated to be financially unviable to deliver. It is proposed that a 70 unit Extra Care scheme (all affordable) is introduced into the scheme. A new viability assessment shows that the reduction of 40 affordable general needs dwellings from the existing scheme, together with the transfer of the Extra Care land to the Council or an Approved RP at Nil Value, would unlock the scheme. Therefore, the amended scheme should still provide 50 affordable general needs affordable dwellings, plus the Extra Care land.

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