

Written response to: Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

Resolution: That further information on the demographics of those in social housing be circulated to the Panel

Written response from: Housing Development Officer

Response:

Affordable Housing Need is covered in section 4. of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The updated SHMA (July 2019) is now included on the Evidence Base section of the Council's Planning Policy Web pages: <https://www.carlisle.gov.uk/planning-policy/Evidence-Base/Housing>.

Key demographic information in respect of social housing from the SHMA (as well as other related relevant information) is detailed below:-

1. The total net need for affordable housing is 158 units p.a. across Carlisle's urban and rural housing markets, as set out in the table below:-

Housing Market Area	Net Affordable Need
Carlisle Rural West	24
Carlisle Rural East	58
Carlisle City	77
	158

Although the greatest need numerically is in the urban area, the relative need in rural areas is higher as a percentage of population, reflecting the facts that entry level property prices are higher in rural areas, and there is a lower proportion of social/ affordable housing outside the City. The affordable housing need by tenure is assessed as 60% social/ affordable rental and 40% intermediate low-cost home ownership.

In 2018/19 there were 120 affordable completions (55% rent & 45% low cost home ownership). Most new affordable housing is funded either through grant-funded Housing Association-led schemes or planning obligations (required through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990) on new build schemes by private developers.

2. Social housing represents around 15-16% of the total housing stock.
3. The SHMA assesses the need for affordable housing as approximately 2/3rds 1-2 bed homes and 1/3rd 3/ 3+ bedroom properties. This totally contrasts with the assessed demand for market housing (approximately 1/3rd 1-2 bed homes and 2/3rds 3/ 3+ bedroom dwellings). This is because affordable housing is subsidised and the SHMA methodology is based upon minimum household requirement. Another factor in social

housing is the removal of the spare room subsidy (colloquially referred to as the “Bedroom Tax”). Therefore, under the “Cumbria Choice” allocations policy, the following household groups would only be assessed as needing a 1 or 2- bedroom policy:-

Couple – 1-bed flat

Couple with a boy and a girl under 10 years old – 2-bed house

Couple with two children of the same gender under 16 – 2-bed house.

In reality, there is relatively little demand for 1-bedroom accommodation for low cost home ownership.

4. Following the introduction of the Right to Buy policy in 1980 the profile of Carlisle’s social housing stock changed, as most of the properties sold were family houses, meaning around a third of the stock is 1-bedroom properties. This led to a “hollowing out” of the tenant profile, with more young single people and older people, with fewer families. The newer Housing Association led developments are seeking to redress the balance with more family houses, as well as some 2-bedroom bungalows for older residents.
5. The ageing population is a key area for housing and care services. The SHMA estimates a need for 32 new Extra Care units p.a. up to 2030 of which 50% would be for social/affordable rent.
6. Properties are generally smaller in the affordable housing sector. Space standards for each property type, agreed with local Housing Associations, were included in the Affordable and Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to ensure new affordable homes are delivered to comfortable space standards.

Date: 13 September 2019