



HOUSING



Meeting the housing needs of Ware's population

The focus here is to ensure that there's a range of general housing designed to meet the needs of people in Ware as they age and their requirements change.

It is important to note that the WNP does not seek to allocate sites for housing development – and that the proposed new development to the North and East of the town (Ware 2) is absolutely not covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Projections suggest that Ware's housing needs, in terms of raw numbers, will be met for the foreseeable future by Ware 2. So any additional development would come forward within the existing Ware Town Council boundary and would be treated as windfall.

Thus the focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that, in these cases, the right sort of housing is developed.

A significant proportion of Ware's population is of retirement age – in 2018, for instance, over 18% of its population was aged 65+.

It is therefore important that a good proportion of new housing in Ware is able to meet the needs of people as they age. It's true that bungalows are often considered popular among the older age group – but in order to provide flexibility in the housing stock, the issue should not be addressed solely by building bungalows.

Better to focus policy on general housing designed to accommodate the needs of people as they age.

The emphasis should be on smaller housing (suitable and more manageable for older "downsizers") situated close to shops and services, principally in Ware town centre.

The Government-accredited Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) knowledge hub has, since 2009, promoted a series of principles for good housing design.

Many are derived from universally-acknowledged principles – good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage – but they have particular relevance to older persons’ housing, which needs to both offer an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs.

Of the ten key design criteria, the ones most relevant to Ware, as revealed in our first consultation exercise back in the Spring of 2020, are:

- Space and flexibility
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and “care ready” design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and “hubs”
- Storage for belongings and bicycles

Delivering these criteria is of heightened importance when considering smaller dwellings such as flats. Ware has a high proportion of flats (over 31% of all dwellings in the town according to the 2011 Census) and many of the development opportunities in the town in recent years have delivered apartment living.

We will aim to ensure that future development is aimed at meeting the needs of older people as well as the younger working population.