



## **Local Plan (2021-2040)**

# **Policy LP30 Adaptable & Accessible Homes: Explanatory Note**

**April 2025**





## 1. Building Regulations

1.1 The building regulations set out legal requirements for specific aspects of building design and construction. A series of approved documents provide general guidance about how different aspects of building design and construction can comply with the building regulations.

1.2 Approved Document M provides guidance for satisfying Part M of the building regulations: Access to and use of buildings. This requires the inclusive provision of ease of access to, and circulation within, buildings, together with requirements for facilities for people with disabilities. There are three categories:

- M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings
- M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings
- M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings

1.3 Regulation M4(1) is mandatory for all new dwellings unless one of the optional requirements M4(2) or M4(3) applies. The requirements set out in M4(2) and M4(3) are optional requirements that only apply if imposed on new development as part of the process of granting planning permission based on a local plan's policy requirement (including viability). Approved Document M can be viewed via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>.

### Local Plan (2021 – 2040)

1.4 The Local Plan has been found 'Sound' through the local plan examination process and has recently been adopted (27/03/2025). This includes Policy LP30 Adaptable and Accessible Homes, which emphasises the need for new homes to be adaptable, to meet changing needs of occupants over their lifetime.

### Category M4(2) homes – Accessible and adaptable

1.5 Criterion 1(a)) states: *'40% of new homes must be built to meet requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations: Category 2 for accessible and adaptable dwellings...'*

1.6 The requirement for 40% of new homes built to meet the M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings is based on the [Housing Needs Assessment \(2020\)](#), submitted alongside the Local Plan, which identifies a net requirement of 40% of all homes (para 6.25). Homes built to this standard are more flexible and readily adaptable as people's needs change. They are suitable not just for the elderly but also for families with pushchair needs, or those with a temporary or permanent disability or health issue.

1.7 The [Viability Assessment \(2021\)](#) for the Local Plan, found that the additional construction costs associated with providing M4(2) standard housing (compared to



the minimum, Category M4(1)), to be <£600 per unit (paragraph 8.52). Therefore, it is viable for 40% of the total housing need to be constructed to M4(2) standards.

- 1.8 So, the Borough Council is requiring that 40% of new dwellings on a scheme must meet the M4(2) standard. 40% should be regarded as a maximum requirement for the purposes of decision making.

## **Application of criterion 1(a) – M4(2) Category homes**

- 1.9 Policy LP30(1(a)) does not set a minimum number of dwellings where the policy would need to be applied. Based on the evidence (highlighted above) this should be applied to all developments on the basis of the 40% requirement being a maximum. This is to ensure that the level of M4(2) housing delivered meets the identified need.

- 1.10 In practice this would apply to nearest whole unit (dwelling), up to 40% of the total number of units proposed. The table below shows the numbers of M4(2) dwellings required for schemes of between 1 and 12 dwellings.

<b>No. of dwellings proposed</b>	<b>No. of M4(2) Accessible &amp; Adaptable dwellings required</b>
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	1
5	2
6	2
7	2
8	3
9	3
10	4
11	4
12	4

- 1.11 Provided below are a few worked examples:

- In the case of a scheme for 5 dwellings, 40% equates to 2 dwellings required to be built to the M4(2) standard.
- In the case of a scheme for 9 dwellings, 40% equates to 3.6 dwellings. As 40% is the maximum, 3 dwellings would need to be built to the M4(2) standard.
- In the case of a scheme for 12 dwellings, 40% equates to 4.8 dwellings. As 40% is the maximum, 4 dwellings would need to be built to the M4(2) standard.

## **Category M4(3) homes – Wheelchair user dwellings**

- 1.12 Category M4(3) homes are fully wheelchair accessible. Provision of such dwellings would significantly increase construction costs (exceeding £10k per unit). This is recognised by Policy LP30(1). However, criterion b encourages developers to include M4(3) standard dwellings, where practicable and viable (see also Policy LP30(2), which provides exemptions on practicality or viability grounds).

- 1.13 Policy LP30(1)(c) includes a requirement to provide 5% of the affordable housing contribution as M4(3) standard homes. This entails the following trigger thresholds (see Policy LP28(7)) 15% within the built-up area of King's Lynn, and 20% in all other areas.





1.14 Worked Examples:

- Downham Market: A scheme of 100 homes, would require 20 affordable homes. 40% of the 100 homes should be M4(2) standard, which equates to 40 homes. In addition, 5% of the 20 affordable homes should be M4(3) standard, which equates to 1 home.
- King's Lynn: A scheme of 100 homes, would require 15 affordable homes. 40% of the 100 homes should be M4(2) standard, which equates to 40 homes. In addition, 5% of the 15 affordable homes should be M4(3) standard, however this equates to less than 1 home, so no M4(3) homes are required. The first M4(3) home contribution in King's Lynn would be triggered for a scheme of 134 homes.