

Specialist Accommodation in Harlow

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report highlights Essex County Councils (ECC) level of demand for specialist accommodation in Harlow and seeks to provide the basis for further discussion on suitable opportunity sites in the District..

2. Summary of issue

- 2.1. Essex Housing is wholly owned development arm of Essex County Council. A core function of Essex Housing's work is to deliver specialist accommodation that responds to identified need across Essex. This specialist accommodation primarily falls within two groups; Older Persons Accommodation (ILOP) and Accommodation for Adults with Disabilities (AWD) within which there are varying levels of complexity / need.

2.2. Independent Living for Older People (ILOP)

- 2.2.1. ILOP schemes (more commonly referred to as 'Extra Care') are for adults over 55 with no or very low care needs. ECC is the provider of social care in Harlow. ECC's approach to Independent Living encourages the provision of specialist accommodation across Essex as a means by which older people can continue to live healthy and active lives within existing communities whilst enabling older people to remain as independent as possible with the most appropriate housing and support for their needs. ECC have worked with developers / providers to identify the most efficient scheme model which has resulted in 60-unit schemes developed on sites of approximately 1.5 acres.

2.3. Adults with Disabilities (AWD)

- 2.3.1. Complex Needs Accommodation is intended for adults with learning disabilities / autism who require specialist care and support. Essex Housing (on behalf of ECC) have developed 'template' schemes typically comprising of six to eight units requiring upwards of 0.4 acres of land. These schemes will generally be self-contained with an ambition for a site serving demand in West Essex.
- 2.3.2. Supported Living accommodation refers to Adults over the age of 18 who have varying care and support needs however who benefit from additional support to lead independent lives. There is no set typology or design for these schemes and generally the expectation is this accommodation could be designed as part of a general needs housing development on larger sites as seen at Essex Housing schemes already completed at Goldlay Gardens and Moulsham Lodge both of which are in Chelmsford. Essex Housing has however also developed stand alone schemes on smaller sites such as the Norton Road development (a converted residential dwelling) completed in Ingatestone.

- 2.4. Essex Housing is aware that delivery of Specialist Housing is a priority for Harlow District Council. Essex Housing are successfully delivering or have achieved planning for similar schemes across the County and believe that through cooperation could deliver similar in Harlow District, supporting the achievement of both organisations aims.

3. Demand

- 3.1. ECC collates demand and needs information for each service user group and summarises this through regular bulletins as well as engagement with Local Authorities. Below is a summary of the demand for West Essex and Harlow District.
- 3.2. **Independent Living for Older People (ILOP):** Harlow has an ageing population which has clear implications for the future delivery of housing. For Harlow the Housing LIN @SHOP tool predicts a need for 104 units of Extra Care (whole market demand) in addition to the current Extra Care provision in the district. This provision is in addition to the requirement for other specialist accommodation such as sheltered housing. It is ECC's intention to facilitate the development of at least one 60-unit Extra Care scheme in the next five years in Harlow to meet Adult Social Care demand in the district.
- 3.3. **Complex Needs:** There are insufficient in-county complex needs facilities to meet both current and projected demand. It is anticipated that on average Essex has a requirement for 12 and 15 new placements each year, derived from both newly identified service users and those currently in other residential settings. The specific needs of the individuals in complex-needs accommodation mean they are likely to remain in an accommodation setting for long-periods and so new demand must largely be met by an uplift in capacity. ECC has recently approved business cases to bring forward schemes in South and North Essex. In West Essex there is High demand for Complex Needs service provision and nine placements currently requesting but awaiting accommodation however no site currently identified.
- 3.4. **Supported Living:** West Essex has moderate demand for Supported Living accommodation with a waiting list of approximately 10 requests for placement however this number fluctuates and is dependant on a number of factors. In February 2022 Harlow District was requested by five adults. No site is currently identified for this accommodation type in Harlow.

4. Next steps (Harlow District)

- 4.1. Essex Housing have been working to bring forward an ILOP scheme on the site of the former Westfield Primary School in Harlow. The scheme design is largely complete however agreement regarding issues around massing and relationship to the neighbouring 'Green Wedge' is needed prior to progression of the scheme.
- 4.2. We are aware HDC have identified delivery of specialist housing is a priority for the authority and have identified potential sites for development. We believe there is an opportunity for Essex Housing to deliver further Complex Needs and Supported Living schemes in Harlow to meet this demand.
 - 4.2.1. ECC has an approved business case for further Complex Needs developments which will enable a scheme to be brought forward in West Essex however no site is currently identified - this is a priority for progression by Essex Housing.
 - 4.2.2. Given the varying size of sites that might be suitable for supported living accommodation we would welcome the opportunity for a more detailed discussion on potential opportunities and potential progression of schemes.