

Development Strategy

Topic Paper

Appendix 12: Meeting the specialist housing needs of older people and those with disabilities



Greater Cambridge Local Plan

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Development Strategy Topic Paper 2026

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Introduction

1.1 The [Housing Needs of Specific Groups Update for Greater Cambridge](#) (HNSG, 2025) identifies a need for the following specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people between 2024 and 2045:

- 290 housing units with support in Cambridge (all market housing),
- 1,015 housing units with support in South Cambridgeshire (all market housing),
- 473 housing units with care in Cambridge (405 market housing and 68 affordable housing),
- 795 housing units with care in South Cambridgeshire (606 market housing and 189 affordable housing),
- 534 nursing and residential care bedspaces in Cambridge, and
- 974 nursing and residential care bedspaces in South Cambridgeshire.

1.2 The HNSG makes clear that the current and future demand for specialist accommodation is influenced by a host of factors, including the balance between demand and supply in any given area and social, political, regulatory and financial issues. Additionally, it highlights that the extent to which new homes are built to accessible and adaptable standards may, over time, have an impact on the demand for specialist accommodation for older people, as they often want to remain at home rather than move to care.

1.3 The HNSG highlights that whilst the calculations undertaken to identify the above needs for older people and disabled people are compliant with national planning practice guidance, they potentially overstate the level of need. The HNSG therefore also references Cambridgeshire County Council's demand profiles for older people and disabled people, which identify lower levels of need for specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people. It

should be noted that the County Council's profiles take account of population forecasts associated with the adopted housing requirements, rather than population forecasts associated with the standard method for calculating local housing need, and are also informed by local knowledge including for planned increases in hours of domiciliary care.

- 1.4 National planning guidance sets out that communal (use class C2) accommodation provided in the form of bedspaces for older people can be counted towards delivering the housing requirement based on the amount of accommodation those new bedspaces release to the wider housing market (National Planning Practice Guidance, published July 2019, Paragraph: 034 Reference ID: 6803520190722). The [Housing Delivery Test rulebook](#) sets out the ratios to be used to convert bedspaces to dwellings for older peoples accommodation – the dwelling equivalents set out below have been calculated using a ratio of 1.9 to convert bedspaces to dwellings, taken from the Housing Delivery Test rulebook (December 2024).

- 1.5 The need identified above totals 3,367 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) for 2024-2045. In comparison, the County Council's demand profiles for older peoples accommodation total 715 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) for 2021-2036, with additional need for accommodation for those with disabilities.

Consideration of sources of supply

- 2.1 The development strategy for new homes within Greater Cambridge, including any specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people, is to direct it them to where they have the least climate impact, where active and public transport is the natural choice, where green infrastructure can be delivered alongside new development, and where jobs, services and facilities can be located near to where people live, whilst ensuring all necessary utilities can be provided in a sustainable way. This means that new specialist housing should be provided within Cambridge, on the edge of Cambridge, at new settlements,

and within our towns and sustainable villages (primarily Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres).

- 2.2 Potential sources of supply to meet the identified accommodation needs of older people and disabled people, taking account of the development strategy, have been considered by the Councils, to enable them to set out within the Local Plan how they will meet these accommodation needs in Greater Cambridge.

A. Completions 2024-2025 and existing commitments

- 2.3 We have considered anticipated delivery of specialist housing for older people from our completions and existing commitments (i.e. sites with planning permission) through the preparation of the [Greater Cambridge Housing Trajectory and Housing Land Supply Report \(April 2026\)](#). This includes consideration of the deliverability and / or developability of all adopted allocations, sites with planning permission, and sites with a resolution to grant planning permission for all self-contained dwellings for older people and any bedspaces for older people.

Standalone developments providing specialist housing for older people

- 2.4 Within our completions for 2024-2025 and existing commitments, there are a small number of standalone developments for specialist housing for older people, and these developments are anticipated to deliver 185 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) within the plan period of 2024-2045. These developments are:
- **5 High Street, East Chesterton** – the site has a certificate of lawfulness for the change of use from a 90 bed care home (equivalent to 47 dwellings) to student accommodation, and due to the retrospective nature of the certificate has been recorded as completed in 2024/25.
 - **Edward House, Albion Row, Cambridge** – the site has full planning permission for an existing 15 bed care home to be demolished (equivalent to loss of 8 dwellings) and replaced by 16 almshouses

apartments for older people – this results in an overall net increase of 8 dwellings for older people. The existing care home was demolished in 2024/25 and the agent anticipates the almshouses will be completed in 2027/28.

- **Gracefield Nursing Home, St Neots Road, Caldecote** – the site has full planning permission for extensions that include 2 additional bedrooms (equivalent to 1 dwelling), and due to the retrospective nature of the planning permission has been recorded as completed in 2025/26.
- **Former Hotel Felix, Whitehouse Lane, Cambridge** – the site has full planning permission for a new 72 bed care home (equivalent to 38 dwellings). The agent anticipates that the development will be completed in 2028/29.
- **2 Station Road, Great Shelford** – the site has full planning permission for 39 retirement living apartments. The apartments were completed in 2024/25.
- **Land between Haverhill Road and Hinton Way, Stapleford** – the site has detailed planning permission for 147 dwellings for older people. The development was completed in September 2025, with 129 dwellings completed in 2024/25 and 18 dwellings completed in 2025/26.
- **1 Edmund Close, Milton** – the site has full planning permission for its refurbishment, which results in the loss of 2 bedspaces (equivalent to loss of 1 dwelling). Officers anticipate that the renovation will be completed in 2027/28.

Specialist housing within strategic sites

2.5 Within our commitments, existing strategic sites are anticipated to deliver some units as specialist accommodation, which may include specialist accommodation for older people either as self-contained dwellings (with support or care) or in the form of bedspaces within care or nursing homes.

2.6 **Springstead Village (Cambridge East - north of Cherry Hinton)** has outline planning permissions for 1,200 homes including a retirement living facility, and the Planning Statement submitted with the outline planning applications refers

to a retirement living facility of potentially 90 bedspaces. It is anticipated that a 66 bedspace care home (equivalent to 35 dwellings) will be provided, with the development anticipated to be completed in 2030/31 to 2031/32. To ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation, a specific requirement for specialist accommodation for older people, in the form of a retirement living facility, has been added into the allocation policy for Cambridge East - north of Cherry Hinton / Springstead Village.

2.7 **Eddington (North West Cambridge)** had outline planning permissions that included the provision for up to 6,500 sqm of senior living (Class C2). The Senior Care Needs Statement (September 2011) submitted with the outline planning applications set out that the facility of up to 6,500 sqm is sized sufficiently to allow for a senior care home or self-contained residential extra care units, however further details are then provided that explain that a senior care centre would provide 75 bedrooms, large lounges, restaurant, kitchens and other back of house services. These outline planning permissions have lapsed; however, new outline planning applications for a phased mixed use development, including senior living accommodation, were submitted in September 2025. The Planning Statement submitted with the outline planning applications, sets out that the development will include 6,500 square metres of senior living space (equivalent to a 75 bedroom care home). Officers have anticipated that 75 bedspaces (equivalent to 39 dwellings) will be completed in 2037/38. To ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation, a specific requirement for specialist accommodation for older people, in the form of a senior living facility, has been added into the allocation policy for North West Cambridge (Eddington).

2.8 **Waterbeach New Town West** has outline planning permission for up to 6,500 dwellings, which includes up to 600 residential institutional units. This may be units for older people, but could be other forms of specialist housing that fall within use class C2. The agent has advised that details of the delivery of these units is not yet known. To ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation, a specific requirement for 600

units to be provided as specialist accommodation within Waterbeach New Town West has been added into the allocation policy for Waterbeach New Town.

2.9 Waterbeach New Town West is anticipated to deliver 4,171 dwellings within the plan period of 2024-2045, which is 64% of the dwellings anticipated on this development. If the residential institutional units are provided as self contained dwellings and are delivered proportionally throughout the build out of this development, 384 units could be provided within the plan period.

2.10 **Waterbeach New Town East** has outline planning permission for up to 4,500 dwellings, which includes up to 450 residential institutional units. This may be units for older people, but could be other forms of specialist housing that fall within use class C2. The agent has advised that a strategy for the delivery of institutional use units is being developed. To ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation, a specific requirement for 450 units to be provided as specialist accommodation within Waterbeach New Town East has been added into the allocation policy for Waterbeach New Town.

2.11 Waterbeach New Town East is anticipated to deliver 1,550 dwellings within the plan period of 2024-2045, which is 34% of the dwellings anticipated on this development. If the residential institutional units are provided as self contained dwellings and are delivered proportionally throughout the build out of this development, up to 153 units could be provided within the plan period.

2.12 **Bourn Airfield New Village** has outline planning permission for up to 3,500 dwellings and up to 250 residential institutional use units. This may be units for older people, but could be other forms of specialist housing that fall within use class C2. To ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation, a specific requirement for 250 units to be provided as specialist accommodation within Bourn Airfield New Village has been added into the allocation policy.

- 2.13 Bourn Airfield New Village is anticipated to deliver 3,500 dwellings within the plan period of 2024-2045, which is all of the dwellings anticipated on this development. If the residential institutional units are provided as self contained dwellings, 250 units could be provided within the plan period.
- 2.14 **Northstowe - Phases 2, 3a and 3b** - could provide units for older people, and it is important that this new settlement does deliver specialist accommodation units. The adopted Northstowe Area Action Plan sets a requirement for Northstowe to be developed with a good mix of house types, sizes and tenures attractive to, and meeting the needs of, all ages and sectors of the community. The outline planning permissions for Phases 3a and 3b each include a condition that requires a housing delivery statement to be submitted and approved for each phase that sets out a schedule, description and justification for the housing mix, including any other housing to provide a wide choice, type and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community.
- 2.15 For Northstowe Phases 2, 3a and 3b, the Planning Statements submitted with the outline planning applications set out that an element of C2 use (either student accommodation or supported housing) will be provided, but that exact numbers will not be known until the reserved matters application stage, or that the residential mix is unknown. For Phase 2, the master developer has advised that for the delivery of residential institution use accommodation for students or older people is still to be confirmed and that no units have been permitted. For Phases 3a and 3b, the master developer has advised that there are no residential institution use units planned or permitted. It is recommended that Northstowe Phases 2, 3a and 3b are required to deliver 10% of their new homes as specialist accommodation, and to ensure that this development contributes towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation a specific requirement for the delivery of 10% of the homes on phases 2, 3a and 3b to be provided as specialist accommodation has been added into the allocation policy for Northstowe.
- 2.16 Phase 2 has outline planning permission for up to 3,500 dwellings and is

anticipated to deliver 3,421 dwellings within the plan period of 2024-2045, which is all the remaining dwellings on this phase of Northstowe as 79 dwellings had been completed by 31 March 2024. If 10% of the 3,500 homes on phase 2 are provided as self contained specialist accommodation units, 350 units could be delivered within the plan period.

2.17 Phases 3a and 3b have outline planning permissions for up to 5,000 dwellings, and are anticipated to deliver 2,708 dwellings within the plan period of 2024-2045, which is 54% of the dwellings anticipated on these phases. If 10% of the 5,000 homes on phases 3a and 3b are provided as self contained specialist accommodation units and are proportionally delivered throughout the build out, these phases could deliver 270 units within the plan period.

2.18 On the basis of anticipated delivery set out for each of these strategic sites, these sites could deliver 1,481 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) as specialist accommodation within the plan period of 2024-2045.

2.19 For our remaining existing strategic sites, no specialist housing for older people or disabled people has been secured and there are reasons why it would not be possible to require specialist housing on these strategic sites, such as:

- the development is largely or wholly completed, and there is no land available for this use,
- the outline planning permission restricts the residential use to use class C3 or only include references to market and affordable dwellings, and not other types of residential uses, or
- the development is prioritised for meeting specific needs, such as those from the Wellcome Trust.

2.20 No specialist housing is therefore anticipated at:

- Orchard Park
- Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Darwin Green)
- Cambridge Southern Fringe – Trumpington Meadows, Glebe Farm, Clay

Farm and Bell School

- Cambridge East – north of Newmarket Road (Marleigh)
- Northstowe - Phase 1, land west of Station Road, or Digital Park
- Cambourne West
- Wellcome Genome Campus expansion

B. Provision within new allocations

Standalone developments providing specialist housing for older people and disabled people

2.21 Officers have considered whether there is any land within Greater Cambridge that is suitable, available and achievable for use as a new standalone sites for specialist accommodation using the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). Four sites submitted through the Call for Sites highlighted specialist housing for older people as their sole proposed use for the site. One of these sites (land at Haden Way, Willingham) has been found to be suitable, available and achievable through the HELAA, however this site has not been proposed for allocation as an outline planning application (24/04119/OUT) for a 65 bed care home is being considered by the Council and there are other sites considered more appropriate for allocation for residential uses. The other three sites are not considered suitable, available or achievable sites for specialist housing.

Specialist housing within strategic sites

2.22 This Local Plan is allocating additional strategic sites, and therefore it is important that these strategic sites deliver specialist units for older people and disabled people. Existing strategic sites have secured up to 10% of the new homes as specialist accommodation. To ensure that these developments contribute towards meeting our needs for specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people, it is therefore recommended that the new strategic sites are required to deliver 10% of their new homes as specialist accommodation. Specific requirements have been added into the allocation policies for:

- North West Cambridge (Eddington, densification) - 250 units for specialist housing (within the 2,500 dwellings)
- Cambridge East (airport) - 800 units for specialist housing (within the 8,000 dwellings)
- Cambourne North - 1,300 units for specialist housing (within the 13,000 dwellings)
- Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm - 450 units for specialist housing (within the 4,500 dwellings)

2.23 For **North West Cambridge (Eddington)**, the 10% requirement for specialist accommodation has been calculated based on the additional dwellings to be provided through densification, and is in addition to the 75 bedspaces (equivalent to 39 dwellings) already referred to above.

2.24 The delivery of some of these strategic sites is expected to continue beyond 2045, and therefore not all of the units for specialist accommodation are expected to be delivered within the plan period. However, on the basis of anticipated housing delivery within the plan period, and if the 10% requirement for specialist accommodation units is delivered proportionally throughout the build out, these strategic sites could deliver 1,155 units as specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) by 2045. This consists of:

- North West Cambridge (Eddington, densification): 250 units
- Cambridge East (airport): 395 units
- Cambourne North: 255 units
- Land adjacent to A11 and A1307 at Grange Farm: 255 units

C. Criteria-based policy

2.25 The Local Plan includes a criteria based policy that can be used for making decisions on any windfall specialist housing for older people and disabled people within Greater Cambridge. A criteria based policy is included as Policy H/SH: Specialist housing.

D. Other ways of meeting the accommodation needs of older people and disabled people

2.26 Policies in the Local Plan, such as Policy H/HM: Housing mix and Policy H/SS: Residential space standards and accessible homes, alongside Cambridgeshire County Council's proposed increased hours for domiciliary care and the use of technology enabled care, will help older people and disabled people to downsize or stay within their community through 'whole life housing' approaches. Additionally, new homes designed and built to meet accessible and adaptable homes standards and wheelchair user standards will contribute towards meeting the needs of those with mobility related disabilities. These approaches could offset some of the identified need for specialist housing for older people and disabled people.

Conclusion: meeting the identified needs

3.1 The identified need for specialist housing for older people and disabled people totals 3,367 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces) for 2024-2045. Anticipated delivery within the plan period from completions, existing commitments and requiring provision within new strategic sites allocations totals 2,821 dwellings (as self-contained dwellings or dwelling equivalents from bedspaces), which accounts for 84% of the identified need. Additionally, developments for specialist housing for older people and disabled people will also continue to come forwards on windfall sites, and these will contribute towards meeting the identified needs as and when they are developed.

3.2 If other solutions such as the County Council's care model for increased hours for domiciliary care, the use of technology enabled care, or more new homes being designed and built to accessible, adaptable and wheelchair user homes standards help older people and disabled people to downsize or stay within their community through 'whole life housing' approaches, some of the identified need for specialist housing for older people and disabled people may be offset. If it can be demonstrated that our identified needs are being met or offset in other ways, the amount of specialist housing being required within the strategic

sites may be reduced when considering planning applications.