

# Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday 27 February 2014

## Planning for older people in Edinburgh

Item number	5.7
Report number	
Wards	City Wide

### Links

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Coalition pledges	<a href="#">P8</a>
Council outcomes	<a href="#">CO13</a> , <a href="#">CO16</a> , <a href="#">CO19</a> , <a href="#">CO21</a> , <a href="#">CO22</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">SO2</a> , <a href="#">SO4</a>

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# Executive summary

## Planning for older people in Edinburgh

### Summary

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This report responds to the following motion by Councillor Mowat which was passed by the Planning Committee on 23 October 2013:

*Committee notes that demographic changes are one of the greatest pressures facing the Council and asks for a report detailing how the needs of the increasing numbers of older people can be taken into consideration as part of the planning process, what the impacts for development are and whether there is a need to include the Health and Social Care Department of the Council as a statutory consultee, to ensure we are meeting the needs of older people when determining planning applications.*

It reviews existing planning policy and concludes that this currently supports the development of housing and other forms of development for older people as part of mixed sustainable communities.

The development management process is also examined, there being no identified benefit in including Health and Social Care as a consultee when determining planning applications.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) Notes that the current planning process adequately addresses the needs of older people;
- 2) Notes that these issues will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing work on the local development plan;
- 3) Agrees that there is no requirement to include Health and Social Care as a consultee when determining planning applications; and
- 4) Agrees that this report discharges the motion by Councillor Mowat.

### Measures of success

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The needs of the growing number of older people are adequately addressed through the planning process.

## Financial impact

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The contents of this report will have no impact on Council budgets.

## Equalities impact

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The recommendations in this report have the potential to enhance the life of older people in the city through improvements to the built environment, age being one of the identified protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

## Sustainability Impact

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The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the development of housing and related development for older people is encouraged as part of mixed sustainable communities.

## Consultation and engagement

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Consultation has taken place with Health and Social Care regarding Councillor Mowat's motion.

## Background reading / external references

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[Planning Committee 23 October 2013 – Minutes](#)

[Census 2011-Population, age structure and household overview. Initial findings from first release of Census data at local authority level, March 2013.](#)

[Future Demographic Change in Edinburgh 2012.](#)

[Scottish Parliament Finance Committee: Inquiry into the impact of demographic change and ageing population on public finances](#)

[Edinburgh City Local Plan 2010.](#)

[Rural West Edinburgh City Local Plan 2006.](#)

[Developing Urban Housing Final Report, Jan 2005.](#)

[Edinburgh Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2013.](#)

[Edinburgh Design Guidance.](#)

[Edinburgh Standards for Streets.](#)

[Council's City Housing Strategy 2012-2017.](#)

[The Building \(Procedure\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2007 .](#)

[Council and committee report writing and committee template information pack](#)

[November 2012.](#)

[Live Well in Later Life, Edinburgh's Joint Commissioning Plan for Older People 2012-22](#)

[Strategic Development Plan Supplementary Guidance on Housing Land](#)

[Planning Committee Report, 23 October 2013.](#)

## Planning for older people in Edinburgh

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 On 23 October 2013, the Planning Committee passed the following motion by Councillor Mowat:

*Committee notes that demographic changes are one of the greatest pressures facing the Council and asks for a report detailing how the needs of the increasing numbers of older people can be taken into consideration as part of the planning process, what the impacts for development are and whether there is a need to include the Health and Social Care department of the Council as a statutory consultee, to ensure we are meeting the needs of older people when determining planning applications.*

- 1.2 The number of older people is expected to grow significantly over the next 25 years in Edinburgh according to figures released by Records of Scotland (previously GROS).
- 1.3 This report reviews relevant planning policies in existing and emerging development plans.
- 1.4 It also examines the current development management process for dealing with planning applications which affect older people and examines whether there is a need to include the Council's Health and Social Care (H&SC) as a consultee.

### 2. Main report

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#### **Growth of older people**

- 2.1 Edinburgh has a relatively youthful population. The 2011 Census shows that in the last ten years the total number of older people has remained fairly stable. There has been a slight reduction in the 65-74 year old age group, which can be explained in part by post-retirement out-migration in this age group. However, there has been an increase in the number of people aged over 75, and particularly those aged 85+.

- 2.2 However, the number of older people in Edinburgh is expected to increase dramatically in future years (although this is not likely to be as great as in Scotland as a whole). It is mainly a result of the post-war baby boom i.e. due to people born during the 1950s and 60s reaching old age. Details of these trends are set out in Appendix 1. They are expected to have implications for a range of public services in years to come, including planning.

### **Council Initiatives**

- 2.3 The Council is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at improving the lives of older people in the city (see Appendix 2). The planning process supports these initiatives in a number of ways (see Appendix 3).

### **Policy Issues**

- 2.4 A number of development plan policies are considered relevant, most of which relate to housing and access.
- 2.5 The 'older age group' is made up of people who are economically, socially and physically quite diverse and for this reason it is difficult to respond to their needs in planning policy terms. Many older people are living longer and are in better health than previously, some remaining economically active until quite late in life. However, the ageing population will also mean an increase in the number of frail older people living with long-term conditions, disabilities and complex needs who have specific requirements in terms of mobility and accessibility.
- 2.6 In terms of the physical environment over which the planning system can have an influence, it may be argued that the needs and aspirations of older people are no different to those of the general population. In common with other age groups, many want to live in communities which contain good quality housing, a range of facilities, are located in pleasant surroundings and which are readily accessible by public transport.
- 2.7 Broadly speaking, policies in the existing and emerging development plan meet the needs of older people at present to the extent that they support the provision of housing and other facilities within existing communities which is largely where it is required.
- 2.8 The Council also works closely with NHS Lothian in preparing its development plans to ensure that strategic planning for health services takes account of areas for urban growth and new development.

### **Housing**

- 2.9 Housing is arguably the most important consideration for older people who generally spend more time inside their homes. Safety and security are important

considerations, particularly for the more frail elderly people, their homes offering both.

- 2.10 Many people occupy housing which in later years becomes unsuitable for a number of reasons. It may, for example, be too large to maintain and heat, include a garden which can no longer be maintained and perhaps most importantly of all be located some distance from shops, health and other community facilities.
- 2.11 An increasing number of older people are choosing to remain in their own homes, as under-occupied properties, rather than move elsewhere. This is partly through choice as many older people prefer to remain in a community with which they are familiar, close to friends and family. Another reason why older people are reluctant to move is that many have worked hard all their lives to repay mortgages on properties in the case of those who are owner-occupiers.
- 2.12 A further problem in Edinburgh is the fact that much of the existing and more recent housing takes the form of medium and high density flatted development. According to the 2011 Census, the city has in fact the second highest proportion of flats in Scotland (60.3%) only Glasgow having a higher proportion. However, as people age, they are often less mobile and able to climb stairs in order to access their property. At present, Building Standards only require a lift to be installed in residential properties above 4 storeys.
- 2.13 For some the lack of accommodation available is a deterrent to downsizing, many avoiding traditional retirement housing for a variety of reasons. Although some providers are submitting schemes which are more bespoke, the varied needs of the older people can make it difficult for the market to respond. The Council's City Housing Strategy 2012-2017 notes the lack of specialist housing for older age groups in the city, citing funding shortages as a major constraint.
- 2.14 A particular issue for specialist providers of housing for older people is the high cost of land. This can make developing low density forms of housing suitable for older people and incorporating communal facilities within some types of retirement housing, uneconomic. In addition, demand for retirement housing tends to be greatest in or near to facilities in town centres where land also tends to be more expensive. This problem is exacerbated in Edinburgh where land values are traditionally high, limiting site availability for specialist developers.
- 2.15 This raises the question of whether the planning system could or should intervene in what is primarily a market led system. With regard to site allocations, this is unlikely to be an effective approach, the main reason being that landowners are unlikely to agree to their sites being identified in this way and there is no guarantee that they would come forward anyway. An exception might be the allocation of publicly owned land.

- 2.16 The increase in older people may lead to an increased demand for care homes. The Local Development Plan (LDP) does not have a specific locational policy on care homes as the number of applications received in recent years has been very low. Any proposals will be considered on their merits, taking into account the impact on residential amenity, traffic, servicing, etc.

### **Other Infrastructure**

- 2.17 Aside from housing, some thought should also be given to the provision of infrastructure generally to support the needs of older people.
- 2.18 Access is a key issue for older people, many of whom have mobility difficulties. In general, the older population is more reliant on public transport, partly because ill health often prevents them from driving. Proposed housing sites in the LDP have been selected on the basis that they have relatively good accessibility by public transport, and many of the site briefs include provision for new service uses, e.g. shops, units which could be used by GPs, etc.
- 2.19 New proposals are therefore being well located in relation to public transport and local facilities including shopping, health services, public open space and community services. In preparing site briefs, the Council has had regard to these facilities and services. This involves a co-ordinated approach, involving external bodies such as NHS Lothian.
- 2.20 Within the public realm, many older people use wheelchairs, walking sticks and walkers and therefore find it harder to move. Some have visual and hearing problems. Therefore, dropped kerbs and good quality paving can make a major difference to their mobility. Badly designed street furniture can be a further problem for some older people - there can be too much of it or it may be poorly positioned. Advice in both the [Edinburgh Design Guidance \(EDG\)](#) and [Edinburgh Standards for Streets](#) (which will shortly be replaced by the Street Design Guidance) encourages good design for those with mobility problems, including older people.
- 2.21 The EDG currently restricts single aspect flats to 50% of a proposed development. However, this type of accommodation may be suited to the needs of older people and a review of policy is under consideration. This would enable more dwellings to be provided in each block and as a result make it more economic for developers to install lifts.

### **Development Management Process**

- 2.22 The development management process includes a number of requirements aimed at improving the built environment for older people.
- 2.23 As a proportion of the total number of planning applications submitted, the Council deals with relatively few which contain 'older people' or a similar term in



the development description or state in supporting documentation that they will be occupied by this age group. For example, only five such applications were submitted for determination in 2013 for a range of accommodation types including nursing homes, care homes and more independent forms of housing. The same number of applications was determined by the Council during this period.

- 2.24 The Council does not differentiate in its handling of planning applications which provide for older people. Neither is there a separate use class for 'housing for older people'.
- 2.25 There is no requirement for the planning authority to notify H&SC regarding planning applications involving older people. However, the possibility of including H&SC as a non-statutory consultee has recently been discussed. It was agreed that such a process was not necessary. This is partly because, as stated, Planning receives few applications which raise specific issues for older people. However, some informal discussions have been held between the two regarding design and access for older people, H&SC having been consulted on the possible changes to the EDG referred to in paragraph 2.19 above.

### **Conclusion**

- 2.26 To conclude, the Council's planning policies support the needs of older people by encouraging the development of mixed sustainable communities. However, this is an issue which will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing work on the local development plan. There is no requirement to regularly consult with H&SC on planning applications.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- 1) Notes that the current planning process adequately addresses the needs of older people;
  - 2) Notes that these issues will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing work on the local development plan;
  - 3) Agrees that there is no requirement to include Health and Social Care as a consultee when determining planning applications; and
  - 4) Agrees that this report discharges the motion by Councillor Mowat.

**Mark Turley**

Director of Services for Communities

## Links

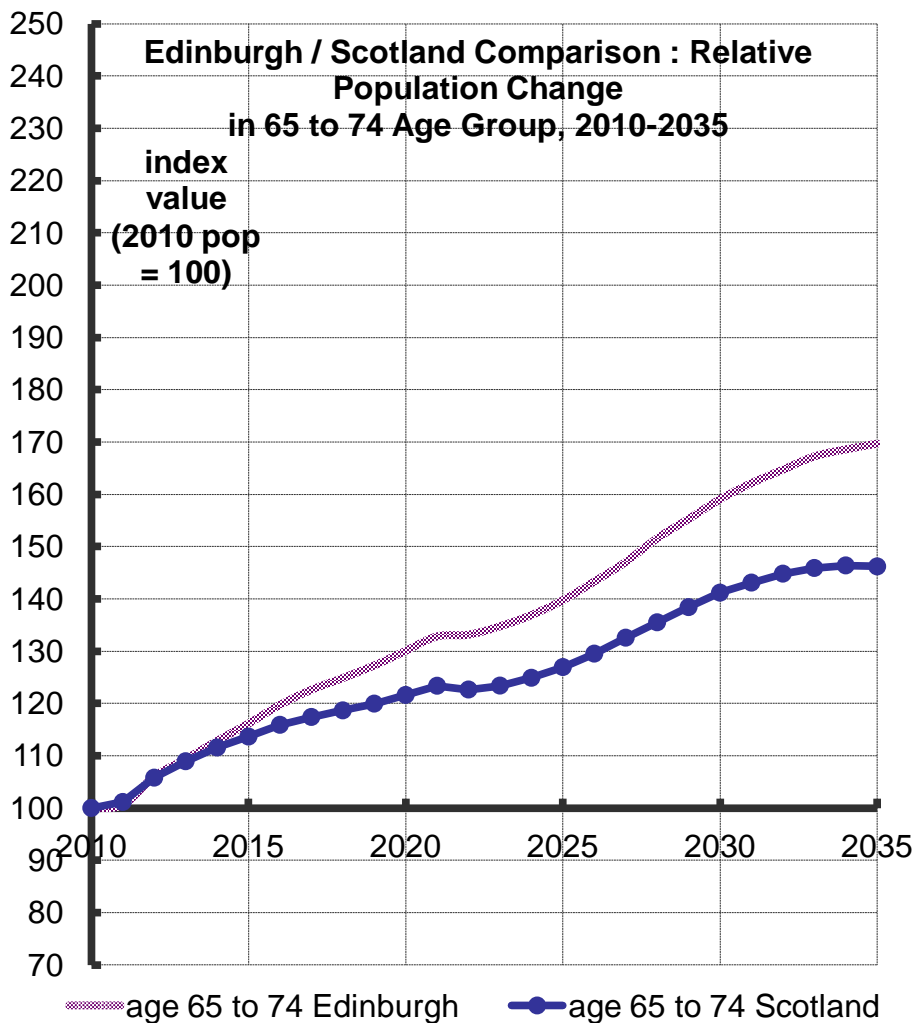
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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P8 Make sure the city's people are well-housed, including encouraging developers to build residential communities, starting with brownfield sites.
<b>Council outcomes</b>	<p>CO13 People are supported to live at home.</p> <p>CO16 Well-housed – People live in a good quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in a well managed. Neighbourhood</p> <p>CO19 Attractive Places and Well Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.</p> <p>CO21 Safe –Residents, visitors and businesses feel that Edinburgh is a safe city.</p> <p>CO22 Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible.</p>
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	<p>SO2 Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health.</p> <p>SO4 Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric</p>
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>Appendix.1: Population Trends</p> <p>Appendix 2: Council Initiatives</p> <p>Appendix 3: Planning Process</p>

## Appendix 1: Population Trends

- 1.1 The most up to date information on population trends are the 2010- based population projections produced by National Records of Scotland (previously GROS). It must however be remembered that these are only estimates and should be viewed with a certain amount of caution.
- 1.2 The projections show that the number of older people (aged 65+) in Edinburgh is expected to increase by 48,600 over the next 25 years, a proportional increase of 70%. Approximately half of this increase or 24,000 is expected to take place towards the end of this period i.e. between 2025 and 2035.
- 1.3 **Numerically, the greatest increase in older people is expected to be in the recently retired group (aged 65-74).** Over the next 25 years, this age group is likely to increase from 34,000 in 2010 to nearly 57,700 in 2035 i.e. by 23,600 or 70%. This increase is higher than the Scottish average of 46% (see Fig 1).

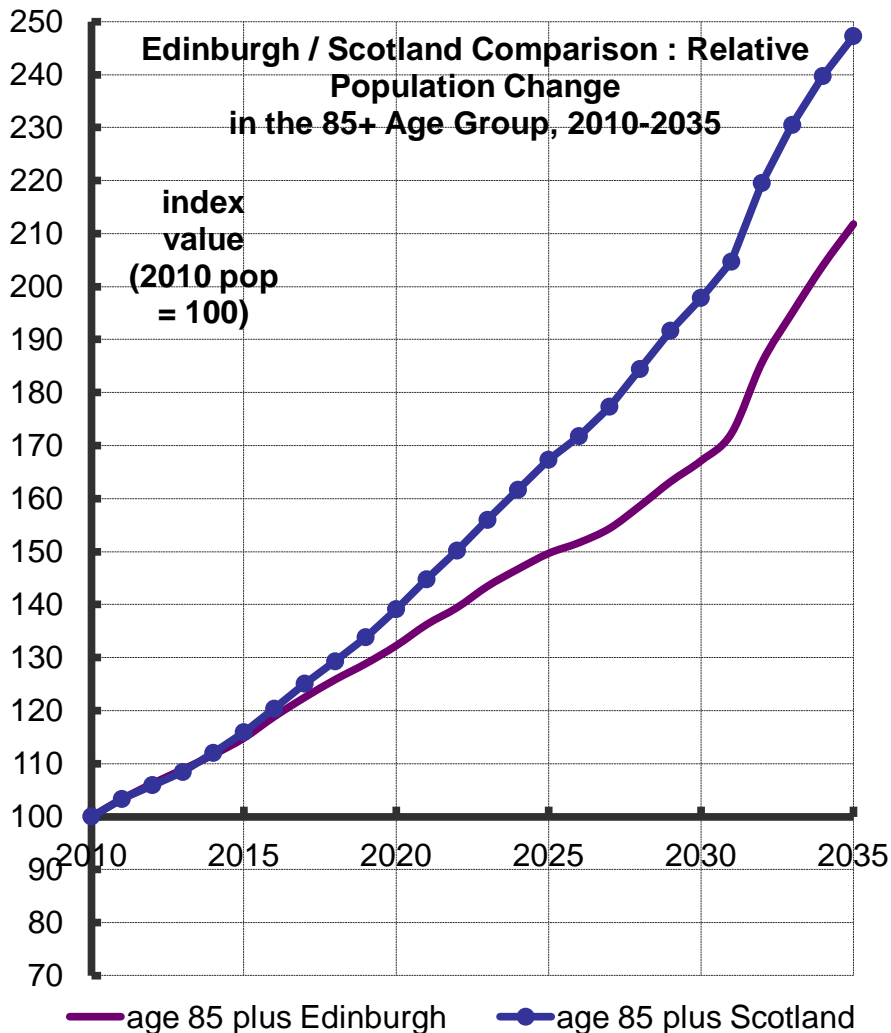
**Fig 1: Age 65 to 74**



- 1.4 However, the **greatest proportional change is projected in older people i.e those aged 85+.** Over a 25 year period the numbers in this age group will more than double, increasing from 10,400 in 2010 to 22,000 in 2035, an increase of

111% (see Fig 2). The growth for Scotland as a whole is even higher with an average increase of 147%.

**Fig 2: Age 85+**



- 1.5 Over the same period, there will be an increase in the number of **older residents living alone** as single person households. Such households may require specially adapted housing and/or assistance in the form of help from carers. The number of people living alone aged 85 or over is projected to more than double. The number is expected to increase from 5,500 aged 84 in 2010 to 11,700 by 2055 (an increase of around 250%).
- 1.6 The result of people living longer due to healthier lifestyles earlier in life is that there is likely to be a greater proportion of people in the older age groups, with long-term health conditions. The number of **frail older people** i.e. those with long-term conditions, disabilities and long-term needs e.g. dementia and or physical disabilities that require some degree of support either in their own homes or in other forms of housing is expected to increase.

## Appendix 2: Council Initiatives

- 2.1 In Edinburgh, '**A City for All Ages**' has been the Council's overarching and long-term strategy for the social and economic inclusion of older people since 2000. The strategy deals with all aspects of older people's lives to enable social inclusion, reduce discrimination and provide better opportunities and services for older people.
- 2.2 In May 2011, the Council agreed a new approach to the strategy involving "mainstreaming" or increasing the integration of a number of priorities across the range of city strategies. Significantly, apart from a review of Council sheltered housing, none of the priorities refer to the provision of housing for older people more generally.
- 2.3 '**Live Well in Later Life, Edinburgh's Joint Commissioning Plan for Older People 2012-22**' refers to the fact that housing for older people is a priority.
- 2.4 The Council is participating in an inter-disciplinary consortium bid to research the impact of the built environment on older people is aimed at achieving the first priority in 'A City for All Ages'. The project, that is being undertaken by the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University, is looking at how places can be designed collaboratively to make mobility easy, enjoyable and meaningful for older people. The Planning and Building Standards Service is involved in the research and will contribute to its development and implementation.
- 2.5 The Council has submitted an application to the Mayor's Challenge, a competition run in Europe by Bloomberg Philanthropies, with the support of Eurocities. Edinburgh is competing with a number of other cities in Europe in a bid to become a '**Dementia Friendly City**', the first prize being 5 million euros. The closing date for applications was 31 January 2014.

### **Appendix 3: Planning Process**

- 3.1 **Policy Hou 2 (Housing Mix)** of the **Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) 2010** supports the provision of a mix of house types and sizes to meet the needs of different groups, including older people. The aim of this policy is to encourage the development of communities which are inclusive, socially diverse, self-supporting. The local plan housing policies were informed by a study referred to as **'Developing Urban Housing Final Report' (Jan 2005)** which identified ways in which high density development could meet the housing needs of a variety of different households. Good design is considered to be the key to providing such development and a number of local plan policies encourage this in relation to the built environment.
- 3.2 The **Edinburgh Design Guidance** interprets the development plan in relation to design as non statutory guidance. Several sections may be referred to in relation to older people. Section 2.6 on adaptability is concerned with ensuring that buildings are designed to meet the needs of different occupiers, including older people. Creating level access so that buildings can be used by all and ensuring there is sufficient space for changing needs are particularly relevant to the needs of this group. Section 2.7 encourages a mix of uses in order to create vibrant and interesting places to live for people of all ages which are readily accessible. Finally, section 2.10 supports Policy Hou2 in the ECLP (referred to above) with regard to housing mix and size.
- 3.3 Similarly, the **Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) Proposed Plan 2013** includes the same housing mix policy. It also encourages sustainable mixed uses which are accessible by public transport
- 3.4 The **Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan 2006** includes a policy on nursing homes (H 10) although these are also occupied by younger age groups as well as older people.
- 3.5 Certain applications for planning permission must be accompanied by a statement explaining the design principles and concepts that have been applied and how issues relating to access for those with mobility problems to the development have been dealt with.
- 3.6 **Access statements** are critical to making the new built environment better for those with impaired mobility, including older people. In these the Council requires applicants to have regard to policies relating to access in the development plan. It also says that any specific issues which might affect access to the development for these groups should be addressed. This should also explain how the applicant's policy approach adopted in relation to access fits into the design process.
- 3.7 Similarly design can help to improve the built environment for older people in many ways e.g. by making places safer and more secure. **Design Statements**, which set out the principles determining the design and layout of the development proposal are required for all major developments and local developments in sensitive

locations such as in the World Heritage Site, conservation areas or within the curtilage of listed buildings.

- 3.8 In 2007, revisions to **Scottish Government Building Regulations** introduced a range of measures to improve accessibility and ease of use in new homes. The majority of the good practice guidance identified by the 'Lifetime Home' standards is now incorporated and embedded within these regulations and the supporting documents, (Scottish Government Building Standards, 2009, Standard 3.11). Building regulations apply to all new domestic buildings, across both private and public sectors and all tenures. In the case of housing, the aim is to ensure that this is both more accessible and better suited to adaptation to address the varying needs of householders over time, including during old age.
- 3.9 The **Equality Act 2010** sets out a public sector equality duty which requires the Council to proactively consider equality in all aspects of its work. The Act identifies a set of protected characteristics, the relevant one being age. Equalities and Rights Impact Assessments are undertaken for all committee reports. These identify the likely implications of any planning policy or proposal for older people from an equalities perspective.