Freedom of Information (FOI) Request / Research Questions

**Introduction**

I am requesting data through a freedom of information (FOI) request and collecting data required for the project through the questionnaire below.

**Background**

In 2015, the Government amended Approved Document Part M (Access to and Use of Buildings) to include a mandatory category (M4(1)) and two optional categories (M4(2)) & M4(3)). This study focuses on the local councils' proportion of new-build dwellings since 2015 and establishes to which Approved Document Part M standard the dwellings are built.

**Key Terms**

Building Regulations set minimum access requirements for all new buildings. These standards are explained by legislative guidance in Approved Document M. There are 3 Categories for Part M described below.

Category 1 - M4(1)- Basic standards for all new homes relating to accessibility for all new dwellings.

Category 2 - M4(2)- Accessible and Adaptable Homes - sets a greater requirement for dwellings to be more easily adaptable over time. Replaces the Lifetime Homes Standards.

Category 3 - M4(3)- Wheelchair User Dwellings - sets the highest standard to make a dwelling easier to adapt to be fully wheelchair accessible. Replaces the Wheelchair Housing Standards.

Questions:

1. Which local Council do you represent? Leicester City Council
2. What is the total number of all social housing dwellings that your Council has under its ownership/management?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leicester City Council dwellings | 19,416 |
| HomeCome (HomeCome owned) dwellings | 137 |
| HomeCome (LCC owned) dwellings | 44 |
| HomeCome (Privately owned) dwellings | 95 |

**HomeCome**

HomeCome is a not for profit company created by Leicester City Council to assist the Council in finding decent homes for people in Leicester.

The Company manages its properties through a contract with Leicester City Council.

HomeCome lets its properties from Leicester City Council’s Housing Register.

1. What is the total number of new-build social dwellings built by your authority since 2015? (Tick below)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Tick** |  | **Number** | **Tick** |  | **Number** | **Tick** |
| None |  | 201-250 |  | 451-500 |  |
| 1-50 |  | 251-300 |  | 501-550 |  |
| 51-100 |  | 301-350 |  | 551-600 |  |
| 101-150 |  | 351-400 |  | 601-700 |  |
| 151-200 |  | 401-450 |  | 700+ |  |

The Council has in the last 4 years delivered a total of 1,132 affordable homes for the City with many of these acquired from the open market and now Leicester City Council housing stock but not ‘new builds’ along with the Council working with Registered providers to deliver 216 new build affordable homes in the City .

1. To which Approved Document Part M standard were the dwellings built?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Standards** | **Tick** |
| None Built |  |
| M4(1) |  |
| M4(2) |  |
| M4(3) |  |

1. Is there a specific reason why the new-build homes were built to the above standard?

Our current Planning Core Strategy, adopted in 2014, includes, within Policy 6: Housing Strategy, “Ensuring that all new housing units are, where feasible, designed to ‘Lifetime Homes’ standards so that they are adaptable enough to match lifetime’s changing needs.” Following the Government’s introduction of national technical standards, Leicester has sought all new dwellings to be designed to M4(2) standard as this is the nearest national technical standard to the Lifetime Homes standard.

…….………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. If all of the new-build homes did not meet M4(3) standards, why not?

All 121 new homes meet the M4(2) standard.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1. How many new-build social dwellings does your council intend to build in the next 10 years?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Tick** |  | **Number** | **Tick** |  | **Number** | **Tick** |
| None |  | 201-250 |  | 451-500 |  |
| 1-50 |  | 251-300 |  | 501-550 |  |
| 51-100 |  | 301-350 |  | 551-600 |  |
| 101-150 |  | 351-400 |  | 601-700 |  |
| 151-200 |  | 401-450 |  | 700+ |  |

1. What percentage of your Council's total housing stock comprises post-2015 new build dwellings?

As above 121 post 2015 new builds to date divided by 19,411 current housing stock = 0.62%

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. Has your Council amended or planned to amend a Planning Policies to exceed the mandatory M4(1) standards for all their new-build social housing dwellings?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Answer** | **Tick** |
| Yes |  |
| No |  |

1. How many applicants on your housing homes register / waiting list declare that they use a wheelchair?

As at 01/06/2023 there were 141 households on the housing register assessed as needing wheelchair accessible accommodation.

1. How many existing council tenants declare that they use a wheelchair?

As at 01/06/2023 there were 41 council tenants on the housing register assessed as needing wheelchair accessible accommodation.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. How many property adaptations take place each year for existing tenants that require a wheelchair?

This information is not specifically held for the purpose of this request. These are recorded as ‘social services adaptations’ and the way in which they are recorded does not identify whether they are specifically for a wheelchair user. For example a request for a level access shower, does not detail if the service user is ambulant or a wheelchair user. Therefore, this letter acts as a refusal notice under section 17.1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 because, in accordance with section 1.1 of the Act, this information is not held by Leicester City Council

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for completing this questionnaire