

What Housing is Needed to Meet the Needs of Marton Moss People?

This is a summary of the Marton Moss Housing Needs Assessment report that was produced for the Neighbourhood Forum by planning consultants AECOM

Most people who live on the Moss have a home that suits their present needs well, but that is not true for everyone. There is a higher proportion of large (four or more bedrooms) detached homes in the Neighbourhood Area than in Blackpool as a whole and nationally, with very few flats locally. Most of the homes on the Moss are privately owned, some are privately rented, only a few are rented from the Council or a housing association. There is no specialist housing for older people although just outside the Area there are two rented, sheltered housing schemes.

The research that has been done shows that in total a small number of extra homes are needed on the Moss, and some households here would benefit from being housed in more suitable accommodation. As a minimum, an extra 28 homes need to be built over the next 10 years to help accommodate new households that will form or need to move locally over that time. If some of the new housing is two or three bedrooms in size, rather than larger, that would widen the choice of homes available and reduce the need for local people to move away.

Some local people setting up home for the first time, struggle to be able to afford to live on the Moss. If some additional affordable (cheaper than market) accommodation is not provided, they (particularly those requiring to rent) will have no choice but to look elsewhere, in places where housing costs are lower. The research shows that at least 20 affordable homes are needed on the Moss from now until 2030.

People's housing requirements change as time goes on. Like residents in most places around the country many local people on the Moss are living longer but as they do so some are less able to cope in homes they have often lived in for a long time. Understandably, many older people prefer to stay put and some can manage to do so with minor adaptations fitted (such as handrails) and carers calling daily to help. However other people with more serious mobility problems need housing that is specially designed to make independent living manageable and so avoid them having to move to a care home. It is difficult to be exact, but the research shows that between about 30 and 50 specialist housing units would be needed on the Moss by 2030 to fully meet this need.

In an ideal world all of these housing needs would be sorted out, but the reality is different. Funding, especially for specially designed and affordable housing is limited. Similarly, developers dedicated to building such developments along with landlords (such as housing associations) set up to manage rented schemes have limited capacity. To an extent market housing schemes can subsidise a proportion of affordable accommodation, as they are obliged to do by national and local policies, and can also be required to provide some more accessible housing but there is a limit to what is financially viable.

The Neighbourhood Plan cannot sort out all the housing issues across the Moss (Blackpool Council also has a role to play), but what it can do is help to resolve some of them. Developing a large amount of housing locally would harm the character of the Area. However, planning for a little more than the minimum amount of land for new market housing would provide more scope for such development to subsidise additional affordable housing. Similarly, allowing an extra development in the form of specially designed housing for older people should be possible without harming the local character; provided the scheme is well designed and on an appropriate site.

Before the Plan is prepared there is an opportunity for local people and other interested parties to put forward other suggestions or to comment on the outcomes of this research within the six weeks set aside from when the report was published. The full report can be viewed on the Forum's website www.martonmossforum.org and comments made using the form available there. The Forum can also be contacted via enquiries@martonmossforum.org or on 07739 517630.

Do you agree with the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment?

Do you disagree or wish to comment on it?