Residential Development at the Former Belle Vue Ambulance Station, Gorton

Planning Statement

Project Ref: 30061 | Date: May 2014

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Document Control Sheet

Project Name: **Former Ambulance Station, Gorton**

Project Ref: **30061**

Report Title: **Planning Statement**

Date: **May 2014**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Planning Statement

1.1.1 This Planning Statement[1] has been prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP ('PBA') on behalf of the Homes and Communities Agency ('HCA') to support an outline planning application for residential development at the site of the former Ambulance Station in Gorton, Manchester.

1.1.2 In this Statement we describe the application site and proposed development, and explain how the scheme accords with relevant national and local planning policies. We demonstrate that the site is a suitable and appropriate location for residential uses, and is therefore exactly the type of development that is advocated by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and which should be approved in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

1.1.3 At the outset we consider it important to note that the scheme will deliver a wide range of important benefits, which can be summarised as follows:

- Manchester City Council has a **shortage of housing land**, with substantially less than five years' supply of deliverable housing sites;
- the site is in a **sustainable location** directly adjacent to existing residential uses in Gorton;
- the scheme represents **urban regeneration** at a derelict previously developed site, which will be brought back into beneficial use;
- the development will generate a number of **employment opportunities**, both full and part time, during the construction phase;
- the scheme will attract additional funding through the Government's **New Homes Bonus** scheme, which can be spent locally; and
- the scheme will provide a range of **high-quality family homes** providing additional choice in the market for housing in the City.

1.1.4 Following the submission of a formal screening opinion pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Regulations) 2011, Manchester City Council has confirmed in a letter dated 21 March 2014 that the proposal does not constitute EIA development. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix A.

1.2 Application Documents

1.2.1 The planning application is accompanied by a range of supporting reports and drawings, which should be read in conjunction with this Statement (see Table 1.1). The planning application package has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Council's validation checklist (December 2010) and the scope of the submission has been confirmed during pre-application discussions with Ian Jarvis at Manchester City Council (MCC). To avoid unnecessary repetition we cross-refer to the other documents which form part of the application submission wherever appropriate.

[1] Hereafter referred to as the 'Statement' for brevity.

Table 1.1 Planning Application Documents

Document	Prepared by
Drawing: Location Plan	IBI Taylor Young
Drawing: Existing Site Plan	IBI Taylor Young
Drawing: Indicative Masterplan	IBI Taylor Young
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment	MOLA
Design & Access Statement	IBI Taylor Young
Crime Impact Statement	GMP (to follow)
Design and Access Statement	IBI Taylor Young
Ecology Report	PBA
Phase 1 Desk Study Report	AECOM
Transport Assessment and Travel Plan	PBA
Utility and Physical Infrastructure Report	PBA

1.2.2 For the avoidance of doubt, the Affordable Housing Statement and Waste Management Statement required by the validation checklist are subsumed within this Planning Statement (see Section 3). We have also agreed with Ian Jarvis at MCC that the Crime Impact Statement can be provided after validation, to allow time for Greater Manchester Police to complete this element of work.

1.3 Structure of the Planning Statement

1.3.1 The remainder of the Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the location and characteristics of the application site and surrounding area;
- Section 3 provides details of the proposed development;
- Section 4 assesses the compatibility of the scheme with the Government's objectives, which include delivering sustainable development and significantly increasing the supply of housing;
- Section 5 considers the proposal against local planning policies and associated guidance; and
- Section 6 provides our overall summary and conclusion.

2 Application Site Context

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The site is located in Gorton within the East Manchester regeneration area. The site is bound by the All Saints School to the north, Gorton Park to the east, the 209 Manchester and St Helens Battery barracks to the south and Belle Vue Street to the west. The site can be identified on the image in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Aerial View of Site Location



2.1.2 The site is the location of the former Belle Vue Ambulance Station. The site currently comprises the ambulance station building and an adjacent surface car park. The ambulance station has recently closed and the existing site is due to be cleared.

2.1.3 Access is currently achieved via Belle Vue Street. This access point is currently the only access for both vehicular traffic as well as pedestrian traffic. Existing bus routes run along Belle Vue Street in close proximity to the site, these services provide connections to the immediate surrounding area as well as the wider environs

2.2 Appraisal of Surrounding Area

2.2.1 The site is located to the south of Gorton Lane and west of Crossley Street. This is a transitional area: to the immediate west, on the adjacent side of Belle View Street are established residential areas. These areas principally comprise social housing in the form of terraced properties.

Figure 2.2 Milne Close and Great Jones Street





2.2.2 Immediately to the north of the site is the All Saints School and to the south the 209 Manchester and St Helens Battery barracks. To the immediate east of the site is Gorton Park, a large expanse of public open space.

Figure 2.3 Former Ambulance Station and Army arracks





2.2.3 The immediate surroundings offer few vernacular design cues. The surrounding housing, whether post-war or more recent, is generally of a generic type that does not have a local distinctiveness. Gorton Monastery, a Grade II* listed building is, of course, or great local significance. Further images of the site and surrounding area can be viewed in Appendix B.

2.2.4 However with the Monastery c.230m from the site, views to the monastery will not be possible from many points within it once it is developed, and the scale and use of the listed building is not appropriate to domestic housing. Instead, the site offers an opportunity for well designed contemporary family housing which can help to raise residential design standards in the local area.

2.3 Planning History

2.3.1 There are no previous, relevant planning applications that relate to the development site.

3 The Proposed Development

3.1 Scheme Details

3.1.1 The outline application submission seeks approval for up to 14 dwellings on the site of the former Ambulance Station. All matters are reserved with the exception of access. Therefore there are no detailed plans being submitted with regards to the appearance of the scheme. The principle of residential development is being sought however, and so the general parameters for what could be contained within the site are set out below.

Quantum of Development

3.1.2 The site covers an area of 0.36 ha. Policy aspirations for this area (described further in chapter 6) highlight that densities for residential development should be between 40 and 50 dwellings per hectare. This would produce a range of between 15 and 18 dwellings. However, in order to achieve other policy aspirations and to maintain a similar level of density shown in surrounding residential areas, we are suggesting a slightly lower figure of up to 14 dwellings on the site. An indicative masterplan layout has been developed to give an indication of how a development of this size could be accommodated on the site. The accompanying Design and Access statement provides a greater level of detail into the proposed elements of the scheme.

Figure 3.1 Indicative masterplan



Development Type

3.1.3 The development proposed for the site will be residential in use. The surrounding residential properties are characterised by 2 storey dwellings in short rows of terraces. It is suggested that this character would be maintained on the site. Residential properties would be no taller than 2 storeys and there is scope to include a mix of semi-detached and terrace properties. Ultimately, the final design of a scheme is subject to a reserved matters application. At this stage it is anticipated that the houses will reach Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3.

Affordable Housing Statement

3.1.4 Pre-application discussions with the Council have confirmed that there is no requirement to provide affordable housing as part of this proposal. There are already various schemes in the local area which will provide affordable housing, and prices in this part of Manchester are low when compared with the rest of the City.

Access Arrangements

3.1.5 Access is the only matter that has not been reserved for the application. A single access point is proposed off of Belle Vue Street. Further detail is contained within the supporting Transport Statement.

Waste Management Statement

3.1.6 The indicative layout has been prepared in consultation with highways officers at Manchester City Council, and all roads have been tracked to ensure that refuse vehicles are able to service all parts of the site. Accordingly, we can confirm that adequate provision has been made for the removal of household waste over the lifetime of the development.

4 National Planning Policy

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In this section of our Statement we provide our appraisal of the application scheme against the objectives and requirements of the NPPF, which was published on 27 March 2012. The NPPF consolidates the guidance set out in preceding Planning Policy Statements (PPS), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes and a number of related circulars into a single document, and now forms the statutory national planning policy guidance against which applications for new development must be assessed. The NPPF is therefore an important material consideration.

4.1.2 We consider that the publication of the NPPF has significantly strengthened the case in favour of the application scheme.

4.2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.2.1 The very first sentence of the NPPF, in the Ministerial Foreword, makes clear that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. The Ministerial Foreword then states that '*sustainable development is about positive growth*' and that the planning system is about making this happen.

4.2.2 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 then sets out three dimensions to sustainable development as follows:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.2.3 The application proposal embodies sustainable development. The site, formerly the location of Former Ambulance Station, is due to be cleared in the coming months. It is immediately adjacent to other residential uses and represents a logical infill development in a predominantly residential area. The application site is easily accessible by private and public transport, and will have no significant impacts on the natural or built environment. The proposed development will therefore contribute towards ensuring that there is sufficient land of the right type and in the right location for residential development, and will assist in delivering the housing required to meet present and future needs. Delivering residential development on the site will ensure the ongoing redevelopment and regeneration of this location,

4.2.4 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF adds that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including:

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;
- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;
- replacing poor design with better design;
- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
- widening the choice of high quality homes.

4.2.5 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF makes clear that at the heart of the NPPF is a *'presumption in favour of sustainable development'*, which is the *'golden thread'* running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

4.2.6 Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, paragraph 14 of the NPPF advises that planning permission should be granted for development proposals unless 'any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed in this Framework taken as a whole' or where specified policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

4.2.7 In terms of specific policies in the NPPF which indicate that development should be restricted, footnote 9 to paragraph 14 explains that this refers to Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or National Park, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion. None of these designations or constraints applies to the application site or the application proposals.

4.2.8 The application proposal should therefore be approved in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.3 Objectives

4.3.1 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out 12 core planning principles and advises that, amongst other things, planning should:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. This means meeting the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and responding positively to wider opportunities for growth;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings; and
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

4.3.2 The proposed development is consistent with the NPPF's core planning principles referred to above. The application scheme will be of a high quality and is located in a sustainable location close to the centre of Gorton. The proposal will be sensitively designed to a very high standard, responding to the particular characteristics of the site and surrounding area, and it makes more effective use of this brownfield site.

4.4 Supporting a Prosperous Economy

4.4.1 Paragraph 19 of the NPPF states that the planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

4.4.2 Paragraph 23 encourages local authorities to recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres. They should encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

4.4.3 The development proposal will help to support local services and community facilities in Gorton, and so it accords with this element of national planning policy.

4.5 Promoting Sustainable Transport

4.5.1 The NPPF makes clear that the decision making process should take account of whether:

- opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- mitigation measures can be undertaken within the transport network to cost effectively limits any significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

4.5.2 The Transport Assessment conclusively demonstrates that the site can be satisfactorily and safely accessed, is accessible by sustainable modes of transport, and that any additional residual development traffic associated with the proposed scheme would have no noticeable or material adverse impact on any part of the road network, including key junctions. The impact of the residual development flows could in no way be considered to be 'severe' and accordingly there is no justification for refusing the proposed scheme on transport grounds.

4.6 Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

4.6.1 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF advises that, in order to significantly boost the supply of housing, LPAs should ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing. The same paragraph requires councils to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing, but it goes further than the precursor PPS3 which it replaced, stating that LPAs should provide sufficient land for an additional 5 per cent 'buffer', or a 20 per cent 'buffer' where there has been a persistent record of under-delivery. The NPPF therefore requires councils to plan for a significant increase in the supply of deliverable housing land.

4.6.2 Crucially, paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that *'Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'*. As mentioned earlier, paragraph 14 of the NPPF advises that, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted for development proposals unless *'any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed in this Framework taken as a whole*' or where specified policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

4.6.3 We also wish to highlight paragraph 50 of the NPPF, which advocates a mix of high-quality housing that is capable of meeting the needs of different groups in the community. The same

paragraph also advises LPAs to ensure an adequate supply of housing in terms of size, type, tenure and range.

4.6.4 The Council does not have a published housing supply figure as required by the NPPF. A telephone conversation with James Shuttleworth of the Planning Policy Team identified that the Council does not currently have a 5 year housing land supply, although he was unable to identify an actual figure. In these circumstances, the NPPF directs that the proposed housing development should be approved without delay given that there are no adverse impacts which significantly outweigh the benefits.

4.7 Requiring Good Design

4.7.1 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

4.7.2 The application proposal accords with the criteria listed above. The development has been carefully conceived to deliver a high quality scheme with an appropriate scale, density and layout which responds to the specific characteristics of the site and surrounding area. The development proposal will create a strong sense of place, respect local character, and will be visually attractive with appropriate landscaping. The materials palette will be confirmed through a subsequent reserved matters application, but it is envisaged this will reflect the local vernacular.

4.8 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

4.8.1 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and

- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

4.8.2 The development proposal does not conflict with this aspect of the NPPF. The scheme has been sensitively designed to take into account the setting of the area, it provides an opportunity for a net gain in biodiversity through new landscaping, and it retains and enhances key views and vistas through the site. We discuss this in more detail later in this Statement.

4.9 Determining Applications

4.9.1 The final part of the NPPF that we wish to highlight is paragraph 187, which pronounces that:

> *'…local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.'*

4.9.2 Against the background set by paragraph 187, the NPPF reiterates at paragraph 197 that when they are assessing and determining development proposals, LPAs should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.10 Summary of Benefits that the Scheme will Deliver

4.10.1 Given the advice contained in paragraph 14 of the NPPF that development proposals should be approved without delay unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, we consider it worthwhile briefly highlighting what we consider to be the key benefits associated with the proposed scheme. Some of these benefits include:

- the provision of up to 14 much-needed, high-quality, energy efficient family homes (including affordable houses) in a range of styles and sizes in a sustainable location with easy access to local shops and services;

- a significant boost for the local economy through the attraction of additional spending power to the Gorton area, with spin-off benefits for local businesses; and

- the creation of a significant number of jobs at the construction phase;

4.10.2 We are not aware of any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these considerable benefits.

4.11 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

4.11.1 The NPPG is to be read in conjunction with the NPPF and aids in reiterating the statements made in the Framework.

4.11.2 Paragraph 6 of the Guidance sets out advice on how decisions should be made when assessing applications for planning permission. It stresses the importance of having a planning system that is genuinely plan-led, and that should a proposal accord with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay. This is as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where relevant policies and plans are out

of date an application should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.11.3 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF takes this further by explaining local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. There should be a seamless link-up between the decision-taking and the plan-making, translating the plan aspirations into high quality development on the ground.

4.12 Conclusion in Relation to the NPPF and the NPPG

4.12.1 The NPPF places a firm emphasis on significantly boosting the supply of new housing, and makes clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. These factors weigh heavily in favour of approving the scheme, which will provide a genuine contribution towards meeting Manchester's dwelling targets and embodies sustainable development by bringing a brownfield site back into use.

4.12.2 The application scheme therefore fully accords with the various relevant parts of the NPPF in that it will deliver new housing, is acceptable in highways terms, achieves a high level of design quality, and will have no significant adverse impact on the natural or historic environment. In light of this the application is consistent with the NPPF when taken as a whole and should be approved in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5 Local Planning Policy

5.1 The Development Plan

5.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that:

> *'…if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'*

5.1.2 The adopted development plan against which the application must be determined comprises the Manchester Core Strategy (July 2012) and the saved elements of the Unitary Development Plan (July 1995).

5.2 Manchester Core Strategy

5.2.1 The adopted Core Strategy sets out the guiding policy principles for development across Manchester. The key policies associated with the development site are set out below.

SO3 Housing

5.2.2 Strategic Objective 3 aims to provide for a significant increase in high quality housing provision at sustainable locations throughout the City, to both address demographic needs and to support economic growth. The emphasis will be focussed on providing a good range of high quality housing to create sustainable lifetime neighbourhoods with high quality environments, good local facilities and with easy access to employment opportunities.

5.2.3 The development proposal aims to contribute towards this strategic objective through the provision of market housing on a brownfield site, in order to contribute towards the mix of available housing in Gorton.

Policy SP1 Spatial Principles

5.2.4 Policy SP1 provides the key spatial principles that will guide the future development of Manchester. Developments in all parts of the City should follow these core development principles:

- Making a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:
  - Creating well designed places that enhance or create character;
  - Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents;
  - Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income; and
  - Protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.
- Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.
- Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

5.2.5 Whilst this is an outline application with all matters reserved except for access arrangements it is still important to consider the design principles of the scheme. Unlocking the site for a well designed residential scheme will enable these spatial principles to be achieved.

5.2.6 The site, in its current state, represents an excellent opportunity to bring forward a well thought out scheme.

Policy H1 Overall Housing Provision

5.2.7 Policy H1 outlines the overarching principles for providing housing across Manchester over the life of the Core Strategy. The target average rate of development is 3,333 dwellings per annum, equating to 60,000 dwellings by the end of the plan. Of the areas identified to accommodate the majority of development, East Manchester has been identified as one that will contain a significant proportion.

5.2.8 The distribution of new housing and the mix of provision within each area is driven by a number of factors including, among others:

- The number of available sites; and
- The need to diversify the housing stock in areas where a particular tenure dominates, this includes the need to increase levels of family housing.

5.2.9 H1 highlights that the type, size and tenure of housing mix should be addressed on a site-by-site basis, with an aspiration to deliver 90 percent of new residential development on previously developed sites. Other factors which need to be taken into consideration include:

- Contributing to the creation of mixed communities;
- Reflects the spatial distribution set out in H1;
- Contributes to the design principles of the LDF;
- Address any existing deficiencies in physical, social or green infrastructure;
- Prioritise sites which are in close proximity to centres or high frequency public transport routes;
- Takes a site's environmental constraints into consideration; and
- Be designed to give privacy to both its residents and neighbours.

5.2.10 The proposed development on the Former Ambulance Station represents an excellent opportunity to bring forward a residential scheme that will contribute towards the overarching aspirations for the East Manchester area as well as Manchester as a whole. The area is currently dominated by social housing and provides limited opportunity for dwellings to come onto the market.

5.2.11 The proposal scheme will deliver 100 percent market housing, offering both 2-bed and 3-bed houses. This provides an opportunity for a wide range of residents to take the opportunity to own their own home. Various groups could benefit from the development, ranging from young families to the elderly. The development will contribute to improve the range of property type and tenure available in Gorton and the wider East Manchester area.

Policy H2 Strategic Housing Location

5.2.12 Policy H2 identifies where the bulk of housing development is expected to come forward. Areas to the north and to the east of Manchester City Centre are identified as those strategic areas where development for new housing should be focussed.

5.2.13 The policy emphasises that developers should take advantage of development opportunities by:

- Diversifying the housing offer with particular emphasis on providing medium density family housing;
- Include environmental improvements across the area; and
- Creating sustainable neighbourhoods.

5.2.14 The Former Ambulance Station site is located in Gorton, an area specifically identified in the explanatory text to Policy H2. In the most part, developments in this area should deliver medium density housing at 40 to 50 dwellings per hectare. Accommodation should be aimed at families with children.

5.2.15 The indicative masterplan that has been drawn up suggests the site could accommodate up to 50 dwellings per hectare. The suggested mix of dwellings that could be accommodated on the site has been identified as 2-bed terraced properties and 3-bed semi-detached. This indicative layout takes account of the 'Guide to Development in Manchester SPD' (April 2007) and accords with the criteria set out in this policy.

Policy H4 East Manchester

5.2.16 Policy H4 identifies that over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, East Manchester will accommodate approximately 30 percent of the overall dwellings that are required across Manchester. Referring back to Policy H1, the target number of dwellings is set at 18,280 over the life of the plan. Once again, emphasis is placed on the delivery of family housing.

5.2.17 At present 51 percent of the housing in Gorton consists of 2-bed houses and apartments, with 12 percent of properties being privately rented and social rented properties at 61 percent. The Council identifies that there is a large number of sites available which can accommodate new residential development and diversify the mix of housing in the area.

5.2.18 The application site represents an opportunity to deliver a mix of family housing, comprising both 2-bed and 3-bed properties. The housing provided on the site will be 100 percent market value so that there is a greater number of market homes in an area that is currently dominated by social housing. This will ensure there is a greater mix and opportunity of home ownership in the Gorton area.

Policy H8 Affordable Housing

5.2.19 Affordable housing provision is set at 20 percent for all sites over the threshold 0.3 hectares (or 15 or more units). This threshold is subject to revision over the life of the strategy. Based on this requirement the development site would be required to provide an element of affordable housing. However, criterion 4 of the policy allows for the non-provision of affordable housing where material considerations indicate that intermediate or social rented housing would be inappropriate.

5.2.20 The list of material considerations that apply include the following criteria:

- There is a very high level of affordable housing provision in the immediate area;
- There is either a high proportion of social rented (35 percent), or low house prices in the immediate area compared to average incomes; and
- Affordable housing would be prejudicial to the diversification of the existing housing mix.

5.2.21 The development proposal is to provide a scheme that delivers 100 percent market housing. This has been influenced by the three criteria highlighted above. This approach has been confirmed by Manchester City Council during pre-application meetings.

5.2.22 As identified in Policy H4, East Manchester contains a high proportion of affordable housing at present (61 percent). This would suggest that there is no further need currently for the provision of affordable homes in the area. The Council's aspiration is to improve the housing mix within East Manchester and a scheme providing 100 percent market housing will contribute towards delivering this aspiration in this location.

Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

5.2.23 Development in Manchester will be expected to follow the following seven design principles as set out in national guidance. These are character, continuity and enclosure, quality of public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised.

5.2.24 The site falls within the Central Arc Character Area. An area that is characterised by 1960s social housing estates and zoned industrial areas. Policy EN1 identifies opportunities to improve the character of the areas through innovative design.

5.2.25 At this stage appearance is a reserved matter and is not covered by this outline application. Nonetheless, we expect high quality and well designed family housing on this site.

Policy EN14 Flood Risk

5.2.26 Policy EN14 highlights the need to mitigate sites against the possibility for flooding as well as the potential for development exacerbating the issue of flooding. The policy sets out various requirements for sites, including:

- Development should be directed away from the sites at the greatest risk of flooding and towards sites with little or no risk of flooding (as identified in the Manchester-Salford-Trafford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA));
- All new development should minimise surface run-off, including through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and the appropriate use of Green Infrastructure; and
- Developers should have regard to the requirements set out in the SFRA in terms of run-off rates and so on.

5.2.27 In order to fully assess the potential impact of flooding on the site a flood risk assessment (FRA) was commissioned and is submitted to support the application. Key findings are summarised in Section 6. Any reserved matters application will need to take the recommendations of this report into consideration when formulating a detailed design.

Policy PA1 Developer Contributions

5.2.28 There are a wide range of items for which a developer could be asked to contribute towards, as set out in Policy PA1. We expect ongoing discussions will take place during the course of the application where specific items will be identified. At present no contributions have been requested.

5.3 Saved Unitary Development Plan

5.3.1 A number of policies have been 'saved' from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) that preceded the Core Strategy. All relevant saved policies are discussed below.

Policy DC7.1 New Housing Development

5.3.2 This policy seeks to ensure that new housing is accessible at ground floor level to disabled residents. It goes on to state that where family homes are developed, they should be designed in such a way that there are safe areas for children to play, and where appropriate the Council will expect play facilities.

5.3.3 The design and layout of the scheme is a reserved matter. Any scheme designed at the reserved matters application stage will consider all relevant design guidance, including the 'Guide to Development in Manchester' SPD, to ensure that it is brought forward in accordance with the required specifications.

Policy DC26.1 Development and Noise

5.3.4 The Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the city. The Council will consider both the effect of developments that would be considered noise generating as well as those new developments that may be subject to existing noise sources.

5.3.5 The former Ambulance Station site is located in an area that is occupied by industrial uses as well as residential. To this end there is a possibility that the site could be influenced from external noise sources. To understand these potential impacts further a Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The full report forms part of the planning application submission and headline findings are summarised in Section 6 of this statement.

5.4 East Manchester Regeneration Framework

5.4.1 The East Manchester Regeneration Framework (2008-2018) outlines the key objectives and aspirations that are being pursued to bring about the effective regeneration of East Manchester. The Neighbourhoods and Places Framework sets out the Council's ambitions, which include the following:

- Increase the population of East Manchester through the attraction of and retention of working households and in particular those working households with children;
- Offer residents a range of attractive housing choice that are of comparable quality to what is available elsewhere in the region;
- Establish a series of neighbourhoods each with a high-quality environment served by vibrant retail centres which act as community hubs; and
- Provide safe, secure and well managed neighbourhoods where people choose to live.

5.4.2 The Council has identified a number of issues which it feels need to be addressed in order to bring about the effective regeneration of the area, which include:

- A lack of attractive family housing;
- A lack of high-quality, owner-occupied family housing;
- a need for larger family houses;
- A lack of pathways to home ownership; as well as
- Few street trees, and uninviting public spaces.

5.4.3 The mix of housing that is proposed at the application site will provide an opportunity to create a well-designed scheme. With a proposed mix of housing that will provide 100 percent market housing, the scheme will diversify the tenure mix of dwellings in the location, will provide greater opportunities for residents to own their own homes and will provide an effective mix of family accommodation.

5.5 Conclusion in Relation to Local Planning Policy

5.5.1 The City Council has ambitious development and regeneration targets for East Manchester. The proposed development will help to deliver these ambitions by providing much-needed, open market family housing at a brownfield site in a primarily residential area.

5.5.2 For the reasons outlined above, we believe that the proposed scheme is entirely consistent with relevant local planning policy.

6 Other Technical Considerations

6.1 Technical Reports

6.1.1 Various technical studies been carried out on the site to understand what, if any, potential issues could arise when bringing forward development on the site. The full reports are submitted alongside this planning statement, for a brief synopsis of the findings, the executive summaries and conclusions are included below.

6.2 Archaeology

6.2.1 MOLA conducted an archaeological desk-based heritage assessment of land at the former Belle Vue Ambulance Station site, Gorton, Manchester. There are no designated heritage assets or Historic Environment Record events within the site. A grade II* listed former monastery lies c230m to the north. The Ambulance Station building is due to be demolished. It is considered that it is of local historical interest and may merit some further recording prior to demolition.

6.3 Ecology

6.3.1 The survey identified that potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed development were related to bats and bird species only. The report identified that the building presented the only opportunity for birds and bats to nest. As a precaution, it has been recommended that a pre-demolition survey of the building is made for signs of bird-nesting activity within and on top of the building. If any nesting activity is identified then work affecting these areas would have to be stopped and delayed until nesting activity ceases. This survey work is currently being undertaken prior to the demolition of the building. Given the findings of the survey and as long as the mitigation is implemented as described in the report, the proposed scheme will be in compliance with planning policy and legislation.

6.4 Ground Conditions

6.4.1 The Phase 1 risk assessment has identified a number of possible pollutant linkages. There is considered to be a moderate risk of potential human health hazards associated with the on-site ground conditions. Controlled waters have been ruled out as a potential receptor owing to the anticipated underlying geology beneath the site. Potential pollutant linkages have therefore been identified.

6.4.2 It is recommended that an intrusive (Phase 2) ground investigation is undertaken at the site to ascertain and quantify any ground contamination risks associated with the identified potential on-site sources of contamination.

6.5 Highways

6.5.1 The Transport Statement demonstrates that development is in a highly sustainable location; existing sustainable transport in the vicinity of the site includes nearby frequent bus services which run throughout the week as well in the early morning and late at night, as well as two train stations which provide services to Manchester Piccadilly station and are within 10 minutes' walk. There are also numerous local facilities within walking and cycling distance via designated cycle routes. Furthermore, the trip generation from the development is considered to be negligible and therefore will have negligible traffic impacts. Thus, the development is in accordance with national policy as well as aspirations set out in local policy.

6.6 Utilities Capacity

6.6.1 A technical note has been produced based on a review of the various existing utility asset plans which were obtained from the incumbent asset providers; therefore, it would be a requirement to confirm the appropriate location and capacity of the affected assets in the next stage of this scheme. Based on the land use site plan calculated the estimated energy demand and loadings for electricity, gas, foul water discharge and potable water has been calculated. The findings can be seen in the accompanying technical note.

6.7 Summary

6.7.1 The technical reports that have been produced to accompany the submission have identified that whilst there may be potential issues associated with bringing forward development on the site, there are a range of mitigation measures that can be put in place.

7 Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Overview

7.2 Summary in Relation to the NPPF

7.2.1 The NPPF places a firm emphasis on significantly boosting the supply of new housing, and makes clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. These factors weigh heavily in favour of approving the scheme, which will provide a genuine contribution towards meeting Manchester's dwelling targets and embodies sustainable development by bringing a brownfield site back into use.

7.2.2 The application scheme therefore fully accords with the various relevant parts of the NPPF in that it will deliver new housing, is acceptable in highways terms, achieves a high level of design quality, and will have no significant adverse impact on the natural or historic environment. In light of this the application is consistent with the NPPF when taken as a whole and should be approved in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.2.3 This position is firmly supported by the Local Planning Policies which have been adopted by Manchester City Council.

7.3 Summary in Relation to Local Planning Policy

7.3.1 The Local Planning Policy that affects development within Manchester aims to deliver ambitious development and regeneration targets. The proposed development accords with the strategic objectives and relevant planning policies of the adopted Core Strategy and East Manchester Regeneration Framework.

7.3.2 The scheme has been tested against the relevant policies associated with the site including those in the Adopted Core Strategy, Saved Local Plan Polices and the objectives set out in the East Manchester Regeneration Framework. The principle of residential development that is proposed to be brought forward on this site is fully supported by the policy framework as set out by the Council. As a result consider the application should be fully supported by the Council.

7.4 Other Technical Considerations

7.4.1 A number of technical reports have been produced in support of the application. The reports identify there being potential for issues on the site however these will not inhibit the development of the site. There are a range of mitigation measures that will be implemented in order to bring development forward on the site. We therefore consider there to be no technical issue with enabling development to take place on the Former Ambulance Station.

7.5 Conclusion

7.5.1 In light of all the above factors, the planning balance is clearly weighted heavily in favour of the application scheme. We conclude that the proposed residential development is a sustainable form of development which is in accordance with the NPPF and the adopted development plan when taken as a whole, and should therefore be approved without delay in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

Appendix A EIA Screening Letter

MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Planning
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21 March 2014

F.A.O. Mr. M. Gilbert

Dear Sir,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011

FORMAL SCREENING REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT 'SCREENING OPNIONS' UNDER PART 2 REGULATION 5

FORMER AMBULANCE STATION SITE, BELLE VUE STREET, GORTON, MANCHESTER

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

I write to you in response to your letter, dated 4 March 2014 regarding the above request, and site plan drawing number SXC835 received by email on 5 March 2015.

In coming to a formal opinion on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to support the proposed development, Manchester City Council as local planning authority has taken into account the information contained within your letter and site plan.

A proposed housing development is considered, in principle, to fall within a 'Schedule 2 10 b' project (urban development project). However, the legislation indicates a threshold of 0.5 hectares, below which an EIA is not required.

In this case the site is 0.37 hectares in size and taking into account the submitted information and the EIA guidance thresholds it is Manchester City Council's formal opinion that an EIA is not required to support the proposed development.

I would advise you that this letter does not infer or imply in any way that planning permission would be granted for the development and numbers of dwellings proposed and relates only to a screening opinion**.**

Yours faithfully,

Derek Jones
Group Manager
Development Management North

Appendix B Site and Surrounding Area Images



Photograph 1: The former Ambulance Station site. The building is due tp be demolished.



Photograph 2: The neighbouring All Saints School building to the north of the site.



Photograph 3: The neighbouring Barracks to the south of the site.



Photograph 4: Milne Close to the east of the site.



Photograph 5: Gorton Park to the east of the site.