

PLANNING STATEMENT

Erection of Retirement Living Housing



Site of Jessiefield, Spath Road, Didsbury
September 2022



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APPENDIX F: A Better Life: Private Sheltered Housing and Independent Living for Older People by The Opinion Research Business.

APPENDIX G: Local Area Economic Impact Assessment by the Institute of Public Care (March 2014)



Executive Summary

The Planning Statement is prepared in support of a full planning application for the creation of 26 Retirement Living Apartments (Category II type accommodation) together with associated landscaping and car parking following the demolition of the existing building.

This revised scheme addresses all the concerns expressed by the Inspector in dismissing the appeal following the refusal of the original planning application (LPA ref: 128018/FO/2020). This has principally been achieved by reducing the number of units from 34 to 26 and reducing the building's massing and height from part 2.5/part 4 storeys down to part two/part 2.5 and part 3 storeys.

This Planning Statement sets out the planning policy considerations which support the provision of Retirement Living apartments for older people on the application site. The development will ensure that residents maintain their independence via a range of communal facilities and a House Manager, allowing them to remain in their own home as frailty increases through later life. These are a very specialised forms of accommodation that are currently limited within Didsbury, the development of which promotes downsizing and more efficient use of the existing housing stock.

The proposal provides the opportunity to achieve a high quality development that would positively contribute to meeting demonstrable local housing needs in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

In short, this scheme provides numerous wide ranging social and planning benefits, both for potential residents and the community as a whole. In summary, these are:

Sustainability Benefits

- *The provision of much-needed accommodation for older people that helps address the demographic imperative of an ageing population and a housing stock that is ill equipped to deal with its needs.*
- *An accessible location and form of development that will lead to less reliance on the private motorcar.*
- *A development that serves to underpin local facilities, including the retail functions of the shops close to the site.*
- *A land use, which is entirely passive and a "good neighbour".*
- *A Retirement Living building that provides substantial energy efficiency advantages over most open market schemes.*

Balanced View of Policy and Other Material Considerations

- *Specialised housing for older people provides significant planning and social benefits.*
- *Sustainable form of development.*
- *Optimises use of scarce previously developed land.*
- *Net environmental benefit in streetscene, character and landscape terms.*
- *Reduced demand on public sector resources and health services. Residents manage better and spend fewer nights in hospital, reducing the impact on NHS resources.*
- *Most residents have family and friends in the locality and are able to remain an important part of the local community.*
- *Increases availability of much needed family housing in areas of shortage boosting the supply in the local housing market.*
- *Helps underpin local facilities.*



Executive Summary

This proposal represents an ideal opportunity for the redevelopment of this site within the built-up area of Didsbury in accordance with the Government's housing and sustainable development policies. It would provide for much needed specialised accommodation for older people within a sustainable location, freeing up existing under-occupied stock.

This specialised form of accommodation also provides older people with a better housing choice, and provides residents with safety, security and companionship whilst removing the heavy burden of property maintenance. Therefore reducing the anxieties and worries experienced by many older people living in accommodation that does not best suit their needs.

This proposal is located in an accessible location with good links to Didsbury village centre and is within easy reach of the shops, public transport facilities and other essential services located therein, which all benefit residents in maintaining an independent lifestyle. This specialised form of housing generates extremely low levels of traffic; and the convenience of the location close to public transport opportunities would further reduce the need for car use, not least because purchasers of such housing accommodation generally no longer need or wish to have the 'burden' of car ownership (please see the Transport Statement submitted alongside this planning application).

The proposed development successfully achieves a balance between the potentially competing objectives of development and the environment, and thereby satisfies the goal of "sustainability".

This proposal will:

- Accord with national planning guidance in relation to sustainable development and meeting local housing needs;

- Accord with the relevant and material provisions of the development plan including its housing objectives;
- Achieve a high quality design that will enhance both the character and appearance of the local area; and
- Respond positively to the character of the area and the street scene and fully address the Inspector's design concerns in respect of the initial proposal.



Above: Example of McCarthy & Stone development at Bamford, Rochdale



McCarthy & Stone was established in 1963. Since 1977 and thus for the past 45 years the Company has specialised in the design, construction and management of Retirement Living housing (also known as sheltered accommodation) for sale to older people, and has developed a wealth of experience in this particular sector of the housing market. Extensive research both at pre and post-occupation has been carried out by the Company, which has led to product and service development.

This background has resulted in McCarthy & Stone being widely recognised as the market leader in the provision of Retirement Living housing for sale to older people. To date more than 58,000 specialised dwellings for older people have been built or are in the course of construction at over 1,300 McCarthy & Stone development sites throughout the United Kingdom. As a result, McCarthy & Stone has considerable experience of successfully developing a wide variety of sites including town centre locations, infill sites, sites within conservation areas and those adjacent to Listed Buildings.

McCarthy and Stone's ethos is that later life can be more fulfilling. Through its developments and services, it helps older people enjoy their lives in peace, comfort and security. In addition to new developments, the Company provides its own care, support and management services. This ensures a continuing relationship and commitment to all of its residents.

McCarthy & Stone continues to win the highest awards possible for customer satisfaction. Independent surveys by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) show that it is the only retirement house builder to achieve a double five star rating for customer service, and it has done so for fifteen consecutive years.



Retirement Living housing is a proven option for older people who wish to move into accommodation that provides comfort, security and the ability to manage independently to a greater extent. It enables older people to remain living in the community and out of institutions whilst enjoying peace of mind and receiving the care and support that they need.

All McCarthy & Stone developments are specifically designed to provide specialised housing accommodation for older people, with communal facilities and specific features within the apartments tailored to meet the particular needs of older people. Since 2010 McCarthy and Stone has managed its own developments and a House Manager is based on-site, supported by the Company's management services team. This allows for the maintenance and management of the development and its grounds to be kept in line with best practice and all legal lease management requirements that apply.

While anyone may purchase an apartment, the apartments are sold on the basis of a 999 year lease requiring the accommodation, with the exception of the House Manager's office accommodation, to be occupied by persons over 60 years. In the case of a couple, that part of the lease shall be satisfied where one of the occupants is over the age of 60 years and the other is over the age of 55 years.

This is a reasonable and caring approach to the limitation on the occupancy of retirement living housing in that it recognises and allows for those exceptional cases where a spouse, who is in need of special accommodation, has a younger partner.



Above: Example of a guest suite and an example of organised activities, which are a feature of a McCarthy and Stone development



Such occurrences are, in any event, found to be extremely rare as between 60-70% of occupants are aged 78 years or over with about 30% aged 80 years or above. The vast majority of McCarthy & Stone residents (some 85-90%) are widowed or single, with 75% of apartments comprising of single, female households.

The accommodation includes a range of communal facilities that are also tailored to meet the needs of the residents, including:

- **a residents' lounge;** this comprises the heart of the community and is centrally located close to activity either on or off site (e.g. the car park). It is decorated to the highest standards and is designed to have the atmosphere of a high quality hotel lobby.
- **internal refuse room;** this allows the residents to dispose of waste without leaving the building, and avoids the need for unsightly external bin stores.
- **battery car charging store;** this can store and charge larger mobility vehicles. Lifts/corridors are designed to facilitate the width of these scooters.
- **lift;** between floors facilitating ease of movement.
- **secure entrance lobby ;** with CCTV link to individual apartments;
- **House Manger's Office;**
- **emergency help line;** available within each residents' apartment and communal areas to summon assistance in the event of an emergency;

- **Guest suite:** comprising an en-suite twin bedroom for family and friends to sleep over; and
- **Gardens;** these are an important element in the design of Retirement Living accommodation and will comprise well landscaped gardens, with sitting out areas for the residents' enjoyment.



Above: Typical McCarthy and Stone apartments bedroom and lounge.

3 Planning and Social Benefits of Retirement Living Housing for Older People

Recently a growing number of reports have been published that promote the strategic need to provide more and better housing for those in later life as well as the benefits that specialist accommodation for older persons delivers. These reports have been published by a variety of organisations including the private sector, academic institutions, charities and numerous Government bodies at national and local level. The following seven reports are of particular relevance and an executive summary for each is appended to this document:

- *Ready for Ageing?* compiled by the House of Lords - Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (Appendix A) - The report warns that the Government and our society are woefully under-prepared for ageing. The Committee says that longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boom could turn into a series of miserable crises. The report covers a broad range of policy areas, providing a comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of an ageing population on public services.

The report states that *'the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people'*.

Additionally, the report highlights that *'there are just 106,000 units of specialist housing for home ownership and 400,000 units for rent in the UK*

as a whole. Build rates are lower now than in the 1980s. In 2010, just 6,000 units for rent and 1,000 for ownership were built, whereas in 1989, 17,500 units for rent were built as well as 13,000 for ownership'.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

- *Top of the Ladder* compiled by Demos (Appendix B) - This report uses original quantitative research to investigate older people's housing preferences, and the likely impact of giving them greater choice. It estimates that if all those interested in buying retirement property were able to do so, 3.5 million older people would be able to move, freeing up 3.29 million properties. Apart from these gains, retirement housing has a very beneficial effect on older people's health, wellbeing and social networks, and could save health and care services considerable resources.

<http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/topoftheladder>

- *Identifying the Health Gain from Retirement Housing* by the Institute of Public Care (Appendix C) - The paper highlights that increased companionship and security, better access to care and warmer, more accessible accommodation through the development of good quality retirement housing could reduce the need for health care expenditure.

<http://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/index.php?absid=71>



3 Planning and Social Benefits of Retirement Living Housing for Older People

- *Creating Housing Choices for an Ageing Population* by Shelter (Appendix D) - This report takes a detailed look at the current state of housing for the older people's market and considers whether there is a wide choice of housing for an ageing population and if there is any scope to stimulate a greater supply.

http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/a_better_fit_creating_housing_choices_for_an_ageing_population

- *Housing Markets and Independence in Old Age: Expanding the Opportunities* by Professor Michael Ball of Reading University (Appendix E) - This report highlights a number of simple policy changes needed to stimulate the delivery of owner occupied retirement housing.

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/news-and-events/releases/PR364822.aspx>

- *A Better Life: Private Sheltered Housing and Independent Living for Older People* by The Opinion Research Business (ORB) (Appendix F) - This sets out the findings of one of the largest studies of sheltered housing in the UK.

<http://www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk/documents/research%20and%20policy/orb2.pdf>

- *Local Area Economic Impact Assessment* by the Institute of Public Care (March 2014). This report (Appendix G) takes a detailed look at the economic benefits of sheltered housing developments on the local economy.

<http://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/pdf>

[Final McCarthy and Stone EIA report - March 2014.pdf](#)

These reports detail that Retirement Living housing provides a valuable form of specialised accommodation that meets a specific housing need. In so doing, it gives rise to significant planning and social benefits that realise other planning objectives given national and regional priority. Insofar as local and wider planning benefits are concerned, Retirement Living housing contributes the following:

Community

- Freeing up housing: Specialist housing helps to free up much-needed and under-occupied family homes in the local area, thereby making better use of existing housing stock. An average scheme of 45 apartments frees up housing **worth nearly £7.5 million**.
- Community spending: McCarthy & Stone's developments contribute to the vitality and viability of the local area as its residents typically do their shopping within a one mile radius. 80% use local shops almost daily or often and over 40% use the local library or post office frequently. Residents are estimated to have a 'community spend' of more than **£6 million** over a development lifetime period.

Economic benefits

- Investment during construction: An average development represents an investment of around **£3.6 million** into the local economy.
- Local jobs: Around 60 local companies are employed during construction, thus supporting local jobs. Additional job opportunities are created when the scheme opens.



3 Planning and Social Benefits of Retirement Living Housing for Older People

- **New Homes Bonus:** Through this Government initiative to encourage new development, each local authority will receive around **£378,000** per every 45 new homes (McCarthy and Stone's typical development size) that are built in the local area. This is money it can spend as it deems fit.

Improved health

- **Streamlined health and social care provision:** Residents in specialist housing have fewer visits to local health professionals and find it easier to return home after stays in hospital.
- **Older people account for 55% of GP appointments, 68% of outpatient appointments and 77% of inpatient bed stays.** As well as achieving better outcomes, specialist housing reduces demand for these acute health and care services by supporting people to live independently and avoiding crisis intervention. Research shows that each year a resident postpones moving into public care by living in market accommodation, the local authority saves on average £30,000.
- **Health and social care provision can be streamlined within specialist housing.** Visiting health professionals including doctors, nurses, chiropodists and so forth can visit several residents during one visit, which is a more efficient use of public resources.

Increased well-being

- **Increased wellbeing:** 64% of McCarthy & Stone's residents said their health and well-being had improved since moving into the scheme.
- **A higher quality of life:** 92% said they were very happy or contented.
- **Increased independence:** 83% believed they maintained their independence for longer.

Retirement Living housing provides purpose-built, specifically designed, small units of accommodation for local older people, which:

- addresses an acknowledged and specific housing need;
- addresses an existing housing "mismatch", by releasing presently under-occupied housing and thus plays an important role in the recycling of stock in general;
- has a knock-on effect in terms of the recycling of the whole housing chain – Retirement Living housing being at the "back-end" of the chain;
- optimises the use of previously developed land within the built-up area of Didsbury; and
- provides energy efficient construction and living, through shared wall construction, cross-flow ventilation and shared heating facilities.

In addition to the above benefits, the Executive Summaries of four more reports that highlight the benefits of the specialised retirement living accommodation that is proposed at this Springfield Gardens site are included within the application documents. These reports are based upon independent studies carried out by WPI Strategy for the Homes for Later Living Group. The three reports are relatively recent and were prepared between September 2019 and April 2022. The reports are entitled:

"Healthier and Happier" - An analysis of the fiscal and wellbeing benefits of building more homes for later living (September 2019);

"Chain Reaction" - The positive impact of specialist retirement housing on the generational divide and first time buyers (August 2020); and

"Silver Saviours for the High Street" - How new Retirement properties create more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential



3 Planning and Social Benefits of Retirement Living Housing for Older People

housing (February 2021).

“Sustainable Living” - How the ‘downsizing dividend’ can deliver a greener housing future (April 2022).

Authored by a former government economist within the DCLG, these reports find:

“Healthier and Happier” principally focussing on health and social care benefits and the savings delivered:

Each person living in housing specifically designed for later life enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing to fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of c.£3,500 per year.

Those in specialist housing are half as likely to have falls with resulting fractures, injuries and costly inpatient bed stays.

Building 30,000 more retirement housing dwellings every year for the next 10 years, which is the estimated demand, would generate fiscal savings across the NHS and social services of £2.1 billion annually.

Based on a selection of established national well-being criteria such as happiness and life satisfaction, an average person aged 80 feels as good as someone 10 years younger after moving from mainstream housing to housing specially designed for later living.

Whilst by nature, a fiscal report, its positive findings arise from improved safety, security, health and well being for older people associated with a move to retirement housing.

“Chain Reaction” principally exploring benefits to the housing chain and helping first time buyers join the housing ladder:

c.3 million people in the UK over the age of 65 (or 25%) want to downsize.

90 per cent of projected household growth in the coming decades is set to be

amongst those aged 65 and over, taking the total number of homes owned by those aged 65 and over from 3.9 million today to at least five million by 2030.

If all the homeowners over the age of 65 in England who wanted to move were able to do so, they would directly release one million properties back onto the market and free up two million spare bedrooms.

For every retirement property sold generates at least two moves further down the housing chain. This frees up homes at differing stages of the housing ladder for different demographics. A typical Homes for Later Living development which consists of 40 apartments therefore results in 80 additional moves further down the chain.

Roughly two in every three retirement properties built releases a home suitable for a first-time buyer. A typical Homes for Later Living development which consists of 40 apartments therefore results in at least 27 first time buyer properties being released onto the market.

“Silver Saviours for the High Street” focussing on job creation and impact on the high street:

Retirement housing creates more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential development.

People living in each retirement development generate £550,000 of spending per year, £347,000 of which is spent on the local high street. Some £225,000 of this is new spending in the local authority, directly contributing to keeping local shops open.

For just one retirement development of roughly 45 units, a local authority could expect to see benefits of 85 construction jobs for the duration of the build, as well as six permanent jobs and £13m in GVA over the lifetime of the development, as opposed to not developing a site.



3 Planning and Social Benefits of Retirement Living Housing for Older People

“Sustainable living” focussing on the impact on the environment of specialist retirement housing compared to other developments.

Each new build McCarthy Stone apartment could save over 1 tonne of CO2 each year through reduced energy loss in a ‘downsizing dividend’.

Older people moving into a McCarthy Stone apartment create a ‘home improvement dividend’ as younger homeowners move into the freed up family homes and make energy efficiency improvements.

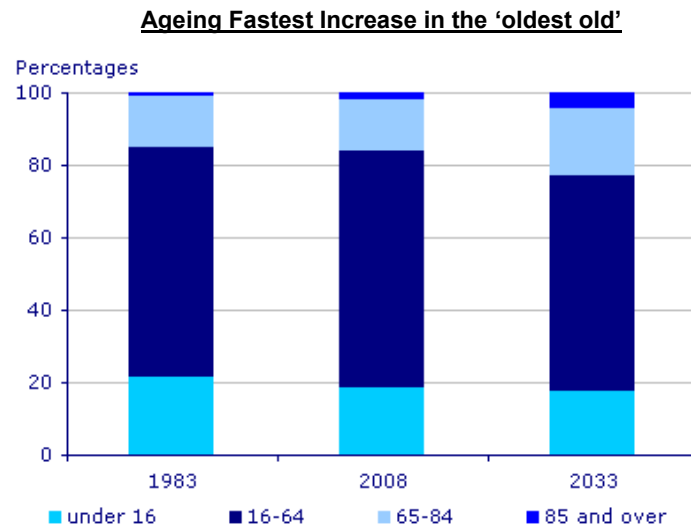
Residents of specialist retirement housing are also less likely to drive and it is estimated that building 45 specialist retirement housing properties could take up to 15 cars off the roads.

Adding the various savings together, building a new McCarthy Stone apartment instead of a standard new build house could save nearly 2 tonnes a year in CO2 emissions.

Taking these savings together, in line with recognised estimates of demand, were the UK to build 30,000 retirement living properties - ie 10% of the new homes per year target - annually, instead of 30,000 new standard houses, our analysis suggests that we could prevent nearly 60,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year being released into the atmosphere.



The proposed redevelopment of the Retirement Living housing for older people provides a significant opportunity to contribute towards meeting the current and projected requirements for special needs accommodation for older people in Didsbury, the City of Manchester and the UK generally. The following table and supporting text from mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, shows the estimated increase in older people.



Above: Population by age, UK, 1983, 2008 and 2033

"The population of the UK is ageing. Over the last 25 years the percentage of the population aged 65 and over increased from 15 per cent in 1983 to 16 per cent in 2008, an increase of 1.5 million people in this age group [in real terms]. Over the same period, the percentage of the population aged 16 and under decreased from 21 per cent to 19 per cent. This trend is projected to continue. By 2033, 23 per

cent of the population will be aged 65 and over compared to 18 per cent aged 16 or younger.

The fastest population increase has been in the number of those aged 85 and over, the 'oldest old'. In 1983, there were just over 600,000 people in the UK aged 85 and over. Since then the numbers have more than doubled reaching 1.3 million in 2008. By 2033 the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to more than double again to reach 3.2 million, and to account for 5 per cent of the total population" (Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics).

Comprehensive details of the need for the proposed development are set out in the *Proposed Development of 34 Retirement Living Units: Accommodation for Sale at Spath Rd/Lancaster Rd Didsbury: Evidence of Housing Demand and Supply* report by Three Dragons which accompanied the original planning application and is also enclosed with this application. Its conclusions remain valid albeit the scheme will now only contribute 26 rather than 34 units to meet the need identified in the report.

Data from the 2011 Census for Didsbury (made up of Didsbury East and Didsbury West) shows that there were 3122 people aged 65 and over. Census data also shows that out of all households where the Household Reference Person is aged 65 and over in Didsbury, 79.6% were owner occupied in tenure.

Consequently, the provision of private retirement housing for older people will widen the housing choices for older persons within the area, and allow them to remain as property owners. The proposed Retirement Living housing will provide modern, purpose built accommodation, in keeping with the current needs and aspirations of elderly persons. The proposed development will provide specialist accommodation for the elderly, therefore helping to diversify housing options available for older persons within Didsbury.



The site is a very suitable location for Retirement Living housing, located approximately 500 metres away from the start of Didsbury village centre and its associated shops and services.

The site is easily accessible via public transport. Palatine Road and Barlow Moor Road are both bus routes with existing bus stops for both directions within a 400m walk of the site. The combined bus services using the existing bus stops provide frequent services between the site, other parts of Didsbury and Manchester. The site is also 0.6 miles from the Didsbury Village Metrolink light rail stop and 1.2 miles from the East Didsbury railway station. These provide direct services to Manchester City centre and the connections to the national railway network.

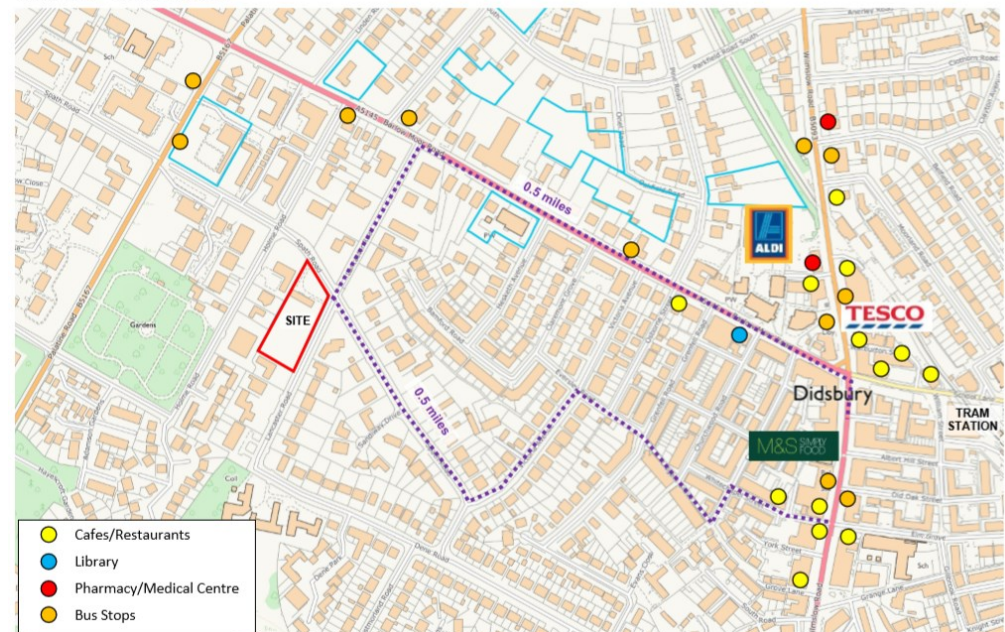
In selecting sites for older persons' accommodation, McCarthy & Stone take full account of the locational criteria recommended in the Joint Advisory Note of the National House Builders' Federation and the National Housing and Town Planning Council entitled - "Sheltered Housing for Sale" (2nd Edition - 1988).

The five locational criteria identified are:-

- (i) Topography
- (ii) Environment (including safety and security)
- (iii) Mobility
- (iv) Services
- (v) Community Facilities

The NHBF/NHTPC Advisory Note acknowledges that the ideal site for sheltered housing is difficult to find. However, the site that is the subject of this application is eminently suited to a use such as Retirement Living housing and is well situated to serve the needs of local elderly persons who will occupy such a development.

DIDSBURY – AMENITIES MAP



Above: Amenities Map with the site marked in red.



Proposal

The proposed development comprises of 26, 13 one bedroom and 13 two bedroom Retirement Living apartments for sale to older people. The proposal will feature a House Manager's office alongside communal facilities such as a residents' lounge, CCTV entry system, pavement car store / charging points, guest suite and Careline alarm facility, as detailed in Chapter 3. McCarthy & Stone's management company maintain the grounds and fabric of all its developments following construction, thus safeguarding the interests of the owners and the local community.



Above: Proposed Site Plan



Above and below: Perspective CGI views



Site Description

The site is approximately 0.47 ha and is situated to the south side of Spath Road, and to the west of Lancaster Road. The immediate locality is typified by detached and semi-detached dwellings together with some apartment blocks on relatively wide, tree lined roads. The site is bound to the east by Lancaster Road, and north by Spath Road. To the west and south are neighbouring residential properties.

The site is currently occupied by a large detached house which is located towards the northern portion of the site and is orientated so that its front elevation faces towards Spath Road. It has two principal storeys of accommodation, with additional accommodation within the roof space.

The existing house is set behind a low, red brick wall, mature hedgerow and mature trees. The property is of traditional construction with red brick elevations and red vertical hanging tiles at first floor level between the ground floor windows and eaves, resting beneath a pitched red tile covered roof with two chimneys.



Above: Site and its surrounds Photo Log



Planning History

There are 2 relevant previous applications prior to McCarthy Stone's interest in the site. Both of which related to development within the grounds of the site with the existing dwelling being retained.

An application (LPA ref.077185/FO/2005/S2) for 13 apartments in a part 3/part 4 storey building was dismissed at appeal in July 2007. The Inspector found the 4 storey element to be excessive in scale and that its proximity and size would lead to a loss of privacy and be overbearing to the properties to the rear at 23 and 25 Holme Road.

A subsequent application (LPA ref. 089194/FO/2009/S2) for two 3 storey detached dwelling houses with basement parking was approved in May 2009.

In addition to the above, planning permission was granted in June 2019 under LPA ref. 123555/FH/2019 for a substantial single storey extension to the existing dwelling.



Above: Plans approved under LPA ref: 089194/FO/2009/S2



The applicant's initial application for the erection of a scheme that would provide a total of 34 retirement living units (LPA ref: 128018/FO/2020) was refused at the City Council's Planning and Highways Committee meeting on 17th December, 2020.

The decision was subject to three reasons for refusal. The first reason stated:

'1. *The scale and massing of the development proposed would cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of providing an overbearing structure that would also give rise to overlooking and loss of privacy to properties on Holme Road, contrary to policy DM1 of the Core Strategy*'.

The second reason stated:

'2. *The demolition of the family dwelling house and creation of 34 retirement apartments and the creation of a car park within the front garden, will result in unduly harmful levels of activity and general disturbance from the increase in comings and goings from the development due to increased levels of domestic activity taking place on site. This will lead to an increase in noise disturbance which would cause unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of existing occupants within the surrounding area, which is contrary to Policies SP1, H1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan, the Guide to Development in Manchester (2007) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2019)*'.

The third reason stated:

'3. *The design of the development constitutes an overly dominant incongruous structure in the street scene to the detriment of the visual amenity and character of the area, by virtue of the height and the extent of the building, contrary to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework*'.

A subsequent appeal was dismissed in an Inspector's letter dated 16th March, 2022.

The Inspector concluded that reasons for refusal 1 and 2 were not justified stating that the scheme "would not have a significantly detrimental impact on

the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in the surrounding area, particularly through general disturbance and noise, or result in a sense of enclosure and/or loss of privacy to the occupiers of No's 23 and 25. Consequently, it would accord with the amenity aims of CS Policies SP1, H1, DM1; Saved Policy DC26 of Council's Unitary Development Plan 1995; The Guide to Development in Manchester 2007 and the Framework" (paragraph 13).

The Inspector, however, concluded that the development would have a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area. He stated at paragraph 6 that, "I find the scale and massing of the proposed development would represent a notable addition to the built environment that would represent a dominant structure through its overall scale and massing, particularly through the sections that are 4-storeys in height. This adverse visual effect would be readily visible from both Spath Road and Lancaster Road, where this awkward relationship would be heightened, due to the lack of articulation of the ridge of the proposed front elevation facing Spath Road and the overall amount / form of development proposed in this location".

This amended proposal has a significantly reduced height and massing, principally as a result of the reduction in height of the element fronting Spath Road from 4 down to a mix of 2, 2.5 and 3 storeys, and fully addresses the Inspector's concerns. The accompanying Design, Access & Sustainability Statement sets out more fully how the Inspector's comments have informed the current design approach.



National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019 and 20 July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, and must be taken into account as a material consideration in planning decisions in accordance with Section 38 of The Act 2004.

Achieving sustainable development

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of NPPF outlines that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, requiring the planning system to perform economic, social and environmental roles. It states that these overarching objectives "are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways". The objectives are:

***"an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

***a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

***an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is 'a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**' (paragraph 11). For decision taking this means:

- c) '...approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposal.*
 - ii. Or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole".*

Decision making

The NPPF states in Chapter 4 that 'local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way...Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible' (paragraph 38).

It also emphasises the value of pre-application engagement stating that 'good quality pre-application discussions enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community' (paragraph 39).

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 5 of the NPPF supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and recognises the importance of a sufficient amount and variety of land required and specifically that 'the needs of groups with specific housing



requirements are addressed' (paragraph 60).

The importance of a variety of housing types being recognised in planning policies is highlighted in paragraph 62 which states *'within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, **older people**, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers' (emphasis added).*

In terms of affordable housing NPPF paragraph 63 specifies where there is an identified affordable housing need 'planning policies and decisions should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- *· off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and*
- *· the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.'*

Paragraph 65 states that *'where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership', an exemption to this requirement is for sites that provide specialist accommodation for older people.*

The NPPF recognises that small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting an area's housing requirement (paragraph 69).

Furthermore it goes on to state 'local planning authorities should (inter alia):

- *· support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes'.*

In the NPPF the Government dedicates a whole chapter to making effective use of land

(Chapter 11) as a means of meeting the need for homes and other uses. (paragraph 119).

Furthermore paragraph 120 states that *'planning policies and decisions should: (inter alia)*

- *Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.'*

The Government also encourages alternative uses of land and states, in paragraph 123, that Local Planning Authorities should *'take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land.'*

In order to achieve appropriate densities, paragraph 124 states *'planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account: (inter alia)*

- *the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- *local market conditions and viability;*
- *the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places'.*

Furthermore NPPF states at paragraph 125 *'where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.'*

Paragraph 125 goes on to advocate that plans use minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport and these should seek an uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be



inappropriate.

Chapter 12—Achieving well-designed places

NPPF states at paragraph 126 *‘the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.’*

Paragraph 130 sets out that *‘Planning policies and decisions should 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;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity of existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the*

quality of life or community cohesion and resilience’.

The NPPF goes on to state at paragraph 133 that design quality should evolve through early engagement with the local planning authority and the local community and that *‘applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot’.*

Additionally, paragraph 134 states significant weight should be given to *‘development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design’ and/or ‘outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability’.*

Planning Practice Guidance

In March 2014, the Government published supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This guidance is intended to sit alongside the NPPF and provides additional clarity in respect of NPPF Policy.

Importantly as part of the ‘Housing for older and disabled people’ section (paragraph 001 revision date 26th June, 2019), PPG states that:

*“The need to provide housing for older people is **critical**. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing” [emphasis added]*”.

This statement is unequivocal. We find no reference to other “critical” housing needs (or similar terminology) in the guidance or within the National Planning Policy Framework. Given the acknowledgement of a “critical” need, it is for the Planning system to deliver it unless there is very good reason why it should not. This is what government and national policy expects.

Whilst the use of the term ‘critical’ is recent, the imperative to provide an adequate



quantity and choice of accommodation for older people has been emphasised by the Government for several years now (for example documents prepared by DCLG such as Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (February 2008)). Key common themes have been related to the need to provide accommodation of an appropriate size, location and quality.

The majority of older people who are looking to move home in later life are downsizing from a larger family home. Hence the need to deliver a range of choice in terms of type and tenure that will enable them to make such a move. The proposed development will contribute to the provision of such a choice. The 'need' expressed in the National Planning Practice Guidance is across all tenures and types of older persons' housing ranging from bungalows to residential institutions. The proposal falls within the spectrum of accommodation cited in the NPPG and will meet a need for specialised accommodation for older people.

In conclusion, the golden thread running through the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed development is located on an inherently sustainable site close to Didsbury centre, providing a specialist form of accommodation for older people that addresses the urgent and increasing need within Didsbury. It is therefore wholly in keeping with the concept of sustainable development detailed within the NPPF.

Local Policy

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 - 2027 was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester in accordance with the

Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.'

Core Strategy

Paragraph 4.1 sets out the Core Strategy Vision stating that by 2027, amongst others, Manchester will be *"a City with neighbourhoods where people choose to live all their lives because they offer a wide range of quality housing and an attractive environment where locally distinctive character is conserved and enhanced"*.

Chapter 5 sets out the spatial objectives including objective SO3 which relates to housing. This states the objective 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 on providing a good range of high quality housing, (in terms of size, type, tenure, accessibility and price) including affordable housing across the City; to create sustainable lifetime neighbourhoods with high quality environments, good local facilities and with easy access to employment opportunities"***.

Policy SP 1 sets out the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027 including that development should:-

- *"Make 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.*
 - ◇ *protect and enhance the built and natural environment"*.

Chapter 9 deals with housing and paragraph 9.1 states, *"Manchester's population is predicted to increase to 581,300 by 2027 (Greater Manchester Forecasting Model 2010). Consequently, more houses are required, including properties which will attract*



economically active families who will contribute to the long term economic growth of the City. In addition there is a need to renew old stock, provide homes which are affordable, particularly to first time buyers, and meet the needs of a growing elderly population as well as making provision for disabled people, people with special needs, BME communities, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, young people and those on low incomes” (emphasis added).

Policy H 1 sets out the overall housing provision stating that, “approximately 60,000 new dwellings will be provided for in Manchester between March 2009 and March 2027. This equates to an average of 3,333 units per year, however the rate of delivery of units will vary across the lifetime of the Core Strategy”. The policy also states that, “90% of residential development will be on previously developed land” and that South Manchester is expected to accommodate around 3,240 new dwellings. It goes on to state that proposals for new residential development should take account of the need to, amongst others:

- “Contribute to creating mixed communities by providing house types to meet the needs of a diverse and growing Manchester population, including elderly people, disabled people, people with specific support requirements, BME communities, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
- Reflect the spatial distribution... which supports growth on previously developed sites in sustainable locations and which takes into account the availability of developable sites in these areas
- Be designed to give privacy to both its residents and neighbours” (emphasis added).

Policy H 6 deals with housing in South Manchester stating that it, “will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. High density development in South Manchester will generally only be appropriate within the district centres of Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, and Withington, as

part of mixed-use schemes. Outside the district centres priorities will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing and provision that meets the needs of elderly people, with schemes adding to the stock of affordable housing” (emphasis added). Hence this policy explicitly states that the principle of high density development for older people will be acceptable in areas of South Manchester outside of the district centres.

Policy H 8 deals with affordable housing and sets the requirements for affordable housing or an equivalent financial contribution applying to all residential developments on sites of 0.3 hectares and above or where 15 or more units are proposed. It recognises that the thresholds will be subject to amendment over the lifetime of the Core Strategy to reflect changing economic circumstances and the appropriateness of using financial viability assessments.

Policy EN 1 deals with design principles and Strategic Character Areas stating that, “all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design... and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives”.

Policy PA 1 deals with developer contributions stating that, “where needs arise as a result of development, the Council will seek to secure planning obligations in line with Circular 5/2005, Community Infrastructure Levy regulations or successor regulations/guidance”. The policy goes on to state that, “The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. Where appropriate, any such provision will be required to be provided on site. Where this is not possible, a commuted sum payment is likely to



be sought. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligation, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account”.

Policy DM 1 sets out development management considerations setting out a list of specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document. Amongst others the list includes:

- *“Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.*
- *Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.*
- *Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.*
- *Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.*
- *Community safety and crime prevention.*
- *Design for health.*
- *Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.*
- *Refuse storage and collection.*
- *Vehicular access and car parking.*
- *Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.*
- *Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.*
- *Flood risk and drainage”.*

Unitary Development Plan

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (the UDP) was adopted by the Council on 21 July 1995 as the statutory document which sets out guidelines for all development in Manchester and provided a framework from which to base decisions about planning applications.

Significant elements of the UDP were replaced following the adoption of the Core Strategy as the document that sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester’s future development.

Amongst the remaining City wide development control policies, **Policy DC7.1** deals with new housing development and states that *“the Council will negotiate with developers to ensure that new housing is accessible at ground floor level to disabled people, including those who use wheelchairs, wherever this is practicable”.*

Policy DC26 deals with development and noise and states at DC26.1 that *“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”* and. *“will consider both:*

- a. *the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and*
- b. *the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control”.*

The Inspector’s decision letter from the original planning application confirms that the scheme accords with this policy.



Design Response

The form of development and detailed design has evolved from careful consideration of its contextual analysis. The design of the Retirement Living building and careful use of materials will sit comfortably within the pattern of surrounding developments to the enhancement of the locality. The development has been sited in a manner that will ensure that the amenities enjoyed by the existing and future occupiers of nearby residential properties will not be adversely affected.

Landscaped gardens, as well as the retention and improvement of the existing boundary with the introduction of additional shrubs and trees, will provide an attractive outlook for the occupiers. Existing trees on site will be retained with the exception of those that need to be removed because of disease or poor condition.

The development will be in keeping with the distinctive local character in terms of the use of materials, scale and mass whilst introducing housing to meet the needs of people in retirement. The NPPF sets out the Government's objective of achieving well—designed places at Chapter 12.

In evolving design solutions the NPPF encourages pre-application engagement with the local community, statutory consultees and the local planning authority (paragraph 132). The applicants in this case have complied with the advice and consulted with the local community and interested bodies.

In summary, the proposed redevelopment of this site will provide a sympathetically designed development that will enhance the character and appearance of the local area including the setting of the nearby conservation area. Additionally, the proposal will offer significant benefits including high quality landscaping and the delivery of specialist housing for older people.

Further details on the design and sustainability can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement submitted with this application.

A landscape architect and an arboricultural consultant have been commissioned and a sympathetic landscaping scheme has been devised that incorporates and supplements the existing vegetation wherever appropriate (please see the Proposed Landscaping Scheme submitted with this application).

Car Parking / Access

McCarthy & Stone has unsurpassed experience in providing for the car parking needs of its specialised housing developments. Specialised housing for older people, because of its very nature and concept, is invariably located within reasonable walking distance of shops and other essential services and close to public transport facilities. It can therefore be predicted that the level of car parking proposed, given the age of the intended residents, will adequately supply sufficient parking for the residents, the House Manager and visitors.

It should be noted that the parking provision is supplemented by the provision of a battery car store, suitable for the intended residents, and provides access to alternative forms of transport. Further information has been provided in the accompanying Transport Statement.



Amenity Space

As the market leader in the provision of this form of specialised accommodation, McCarthy and Stone has plenty of experience in assessing the functional requirements of its purchasers / residents. The design of the building is innovative in the ways which it maximises the potential for giving the residents optimum amenity spaces; both personal and communal through features including balconies and terraces. This will provide a high quality of life for the residents of the scheme.

Residents of this form of specialised housing tend to spend considerable time in their apartments and it is therefore appropriate that, wherever possible, lively or interesting views or pleasant and peaceful scenery should be visible from all rooms. Often the more favoured aspects are those on the busiest road frontage or those facing the main entrance and car parking area where activity is present.

The proposed development will include gardens for the enjoyment of the residents. The Company employs a professionally qualified landscape architect and prides itself on the quality of its landscape treatment, which has become a “hallmark” of all McCarthy & Stone retirement schemes. A landscaping scheme is provided as part of the proposed application. Given the nature of the accommodation and the experience of McCarthy and Stone in this form of development, the proposed amenity space is considered appropriate.



Above: Typical landscaping Layout



The site is ideally located for the proposed Retirement Living housing, being close to the amenities of Didsbury village centre, and would provide for much needed specialised older persons housing in the local area, whilst also supporting local businesses.

Careful consideration has been given to the nature of the site, its relationship to its immediate surroundings, and the amenities of neighbouring occupiers together with the concerns expressed by the Inspector in considering the original proposals. There is no doubt that a high quality development will make an effective use of this site and respond to its townscape. At the same time Retirement Living housing is acknowledged to be a passive use, and an entirely sympathetic neighbour with extremely low levels of traffic generation in comparison to other potential housing uses of the site.

Points to note:

The proposed development complies fully with the NPPF's objective of a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It fulfils all three dimensions of sustainable development listed by the NPPF. Providing a range of **economic** benefits, including direct employment in its own right, supporting the local economy and revitalising the housing market through the release of under occupied family housing. Providing **social** benefits through the provision of specialist accommodation for older people and reducing pressure on health care facilities. Finally, providing **environmental** benefits through making effective and efficient use of a valuable land resource, assisting with the delivery of housing within a short term timeframe which would reduce pressures on other unallocated greenfield land for residential development.

- As set out by the accompanying Design, Access and Sustainability Statement the proposed development has evolved through thorough pre-application engagement with the local planning authority and where relevant statutory consultees together with the comments of the Inspector in his decision letter in dismissing the appeal following refusal of the initial planning application.
- The proposed development accords with both national and local planning policies in respect to the delivery of older persons' accommodation, which the recent National Planning Practice Guidance has identified its delivery as 'critical'. Section Four of this report identified the extant need for older persons' accommodation within Didsbury and the current shortfall of private sector forms of retirement housing.

In summary, the proposal is fully in accordance with national and local planning policy, providing a scheme that epitomises sustainable development and contributes towards the provision of an identified local housing need as well as the overall supply of housing.

