LPA Reference: PLA-2026-001078

Land at the Former Peacock Centre and Land at Pipewell Avenue, Gorton, Manchester

National Planning Policy Framework 2026 Compliance Note

1. Introduction

1.1 This Note has been prepared by Stantec on behalf of its Client, Clarion Housing Association Limited and Clarion Property Development Services Limited (hereafter referred to as our "Client", or the "Applicant"), to inform the ongoing consideration of the above planning application, which seeks full planning permission for the erection of 75 dwellings (Use Class C3), including a three-storey 25-unit apartment building and 27 dwellings on the Peacock Centre Site, and 23 dwellings on the Pipewell Avenue Site, with associated access, parking, landscaping, public open space, informal play provision, drainage infrastructure, and enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections at the above location.

1.2 The Note has been prepared to re-affirm our Client's position in respect of this proposal having regard to the 2026 iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published on the 17th August 2026. The planning application in question was submitted prior to the publication of the new NPPF, and so this Note seeks to update the position of the proposed development in the context of the latest iteration of national planning policy.

1.3 The Note should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement (prepared by Stantec and dated June 2026) which was submitted as part of the above planning application, and remains pertinent in the consideration of the proposal, with the exception of Section 5.2 of the Planning Statement, which is superseded by this Note.

1.4 Section 2 below considers the pertinent aspects of the 2026 NPPF in relation to the proposed development, which is followed by concluding comments within Section 3.

2 National Planning Policy Framework 2026

2.1 As stated above, the revised NPPF was published by central Government in August 2026 and, upon its publication, came into force immediately, and superseded the 2025 iteration.

2.2 Paragraph 3 of the NPPF re-affirms the national position that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This latest iteration of the NPPF however seeks to introduce National Decision-Making Policies (or NDMPs), and paragraph 3 goes on to state that the NDMPs set out within the Framework are to be read alongside the policies within the development plan.

2.3 In a similar vein to the 2025 iteration, the revised, 2026 NPPF confirms, at paragraph 15, that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by managing the use and development of land in the long-term public interest. At paragraph 17, it goes on to re-affirm that there are three overriding objectives in achieving sustainable development, these being an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Decision Making Policies

2.4 Chapter 3 of the 2026 NPPF pertains to decision-making policies. Unlike previous iterations of national policy, the updated NPPF provides a series of policies, with dedicated policy reference numbers, and policy text within.

2.5 Policy DM1 (Preparing Development Proposals) sets out that proposals for major development should be informed by early engagement with neighbours and the local community, as well as the local planning authority, statutory consultees and other relevant bodies where appropriate in order to identify and resolve (where possible) key planning matters prior to the submission of a planning application. In respect of this Application, the aforementioned Planning Statement, as well as the Statement of Community Involvement, which accompanies the submission, confirms the extensive pre-application discussion which was undertaken with the local planning authority, as well as the engagement which was held with the local community, and how this informed the submission. As such, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Policy DM1.

2.6 Policy DM3 (Determining Development Proposals) cements the need for local planning authorities to work with applicants in a positive and proactive manner, seeking solutions to any problems arising in order to enable a timely decision, as well as taking a proportionate approach to the consideration of planning matters raised by a proposed development, in a way which reflects the scale, complexity and potential impact of those matters.

2.7 Criterion d) of Policy DM3 states that local planning authorities should consult statutory or internal consultees only where it is necessary to do so. It goes on to state that decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal. Criterion f) of policy DM3 confirms that local planning authorities should not refuse applications for development which should clearly be approved, having regard to their accordance with the development plan, the policies in this Framework and any other material considerations.

2.8 Policy DM6 (Use of Planning Conditions and Obligations) details the circumstances in which planning conditions should, and should not, be used. At point 3, the policy states that conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is clear justification.

Achieving Sustainable Development

2.9 Chapter 4 of the updated NPPF provides policies relating to the achievement of sustainable development. The objective of the policies within this chapter is stated as being to meet development needs through sustainable patterns of development, including by maximising the potential for growth on suitable land within settlements (amongst other matters).

2.10 Policy S3 outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and advocates the application of such an approach. Unlike previous iterations of the NPPF however, whereby a blanket approach was applied to the "Presumption", the 2026 iteration seeks to add a series of further policies, for different contexts, namely for the principle of development within settlements (where Policy S4 applies), as well as the principle of development outside of settlements (where policy S5 applies).

2.11 Policy S4 (Principle of Development within Settlements) is pertinent in the consideration of this Application, and states that:

> *Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.*

2.12 It remains the Applicant's position that there are numerous significant benefits associated with the proposed development, as set out within the accompanying Planning Statement, and that these far outweigh any perceived harms. Noting that the Site lies entirely within the established settlement boundary of Gorton, they consider that the requirements of Policy S4 are met, and that the proposed development is acceptable in this respect.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change

2.13 Chapter 5 of the NPPF deals with meeting the challenge of climate change and is stated as seeking to support the Government aim of transitioning to net zero by 2050.

2.14 Policy CC2 (Mitigation of Climate Change) sets out that in order to contribute to climate change mitigation as well as the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant, prioritise sustainable patterns of movements and take opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, as well as providing the infrastructure to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles. Proposals should also support good access to facilities in order to limit the need to travel, whether through the development's location, through development densities which improve catchment populations for local services, or by incorporating community facilities and premises to support local employment opportunities.

2.15 Policy CC2 goes on to state that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights) where this would be achieved through proposals for development.

2.16 The development proposed as part of this Application is located within a highly sustainable and accessible location. It also incorporates environmentally friendly energy generation, including

through the installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered fully compliant with the provisions of Policy CC2.

2.17 Policy CC3 pertains to the adaptation of climate change, and stipulates that development should be located where the risk of flooding is minimised, as well as incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage risks associated with surface water flooding. The Application Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, and so is within an area at the lowest risk of flooding, whilst the proposed development incorporates sustainable drainage features throughout, again ensuring that it is fully compliant with the provisions of Policy CC3.

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

2.18 Chapter 6 of the revised NPPF relates to the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes, and states within its objectives that the objectives of the policies within Chapter 6 are to support the delivery of a substantial increase in the supply of homes, by ensuring that a sufficient amount, and variety of land can come forward where needed. Included within this is planning for an appropriate mix of accommodation for the local community and ensuring that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

2.19 In terms of the NDMPs relating to the delivery of a sufficient supply of new homes, policy HO7 (Meeting the Need for Homes) sets out that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, as identified through needs assessments prepared for the area of the local planning authority and other relevant evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, homes needed for different groups assessed under policy HO1.

2.20 For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of homes for people who require affordable housing is one such group identified by Policy HO1.

2.21 Policy HO8 (Providing Affordable Homes) builds upon this, stating that development proposals should meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent. A preference is set out for on-side delivery of affordable housing.

2.22 Criterion 3 of HO8 builds upon this further, stating that:

> *Where development proposals meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent properties, a flexible approach should be taken to the application of any development plan requirements relating to the number of bedrooms provided in market homes, taking into account prevailing market conditions.*

2.23 The development proposed as part of this Application exceeds the development plan requirement for the provision of affordable housing, and so is fully compliant with the provisions of Policy HO8.

As such, the benefits of the provision of affordable housing should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of this application, consistent with the wider provisions of Chapter 6.

Making Effective Use of Land

2.24 Chapter 12 of the revised NPPF pertains to making effective use of land. Policy L2 (Making Effective Use of Land) states the following:

> *Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following:*
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> *a) Remediating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*
> *b) Making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings…*

2.25 The proposed development seeks to redevelop the now redundant Peacock Centre site, involving the remediation and reuse of contaminated brownfield land, as well as an area of poor quality, unloved and under-utilised grassland to provide much-need affordable housing and high-quality public realm. As such, the proposed development is considered to accord fully with the provisions of Policy L2.

2.26 This level of compliance also applies to Policy L3 (Achieving Appropriate Densities), which too states that development proposals should seek to make efficient use of land having regard to local character and market conditions, as well as the availability of local infrastructure. Indeed, the Policy goes on to state (at criterion 4), that development which does not make efficient use of land in accordance with the NPPF should be refused.

2.27 L3 states that, within settlements, development proposals for residential development should contribute to an increased density within the area which they are situated, unless the prevailing density of the area is already very high. The proposed development is situated in a dense urban area, and the proposed layout has sought to mirror that high-density so that it is in keeping with the prevailing character of the area, whilst also maximising the land available. To increase the density over and above that level would have a harmful impact on local character and residential amenity. That being said, the proposed development does include for a three-storey apartment building, which does increase the density of the area whilst also ensuring a mix in the type of homes on offer. Taken in the round, this is considered to comply with the provisions of Policy L3, and the development should be afforded substantial weight in this respect.

Achieving Well Designed Places

2.28 Chapter 14 of the NPPF considers design, with the objective for the policies within this chapter stated as being to promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places.

2.29 To that end, policy DP3 (Key Principles for Well-Designed Places) states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. It goes on to state however that this should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3 (as discussed above).

2.30 The policy goes on to outline a series of principles for good design, for proposals to address, including; liveability, climate, nature, movement, built form, public space and identity. The policy goes onto state that any proposal which conflicts with these principles, or fails to respond positively to its context, should be refused unless any deviations from this are clearly justified.

2.31 The design rationale for the proposed development is considered comprehensively within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. For the avoidance of doubt however, the Applicant considers that the proposal which has been submitted to the Council represents a very high quality design which responds to the surrounding context (without necessarily seeking to replicate what has gone before), to provide an attractive setting to the benefit of both existing and future residents. It seeks to utilise high quality materials and landscaping to create a place where people want to live. To that end, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of Policy DP3.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

2.32 Chapter 15 contains policies relating to the provision of sustainable modes of transport. Policy TR3 (Locating Development in Sustainable Locations) looks to promote development in locations where it can promote sustainable patterns of movement. Development proposals should be cited, where possible, in locations which seek to limit the need to travel by private car and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents or users, unless the nature of a particular development makes this impractical.

2.33 TR3 goes onto state that any significant adverse impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

2.34 TR4 (Street Design, Access and Parking) builds upon this, and states that transport considerations should be integral to the design of development and should give priority first to walking, wheeling and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating easy access to high quality public transport, with layouts and densities which maximise the catchments for bus or other public transport services amongst other criteria. It goes on to state that development should provide a suitable number of parking spaces for a range of transport modes where appropriate, reflecting the location and nature of the development (including its connectivity), any locally-set standards in the development plan, and including adequate provision of spaces and infrastructure that allow for the charging of electric vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

2.35 The proposed development is accompanied by a suite of highways and design information which detail the highly accessible location of the Site, and the wider public transport network which is accessible from it. It also details on-site measures which have been included within the design (which have also been informed through pre-application dialogue) with the Council, including the provision of on-site parking to all dwellings. Taking all of this in the round, the proposed development is considered to accord with the policies within Chapter 15.

Promoting Healthy Communities

2.36 Chapter 16 of the NPPF considers policies which promote the creation of healthy and inclusive places, as well as seeking to retain or enhance existing community facilities.

2.37 With regard to development affecting existing recreational land and facilities, Policy HC7 states that:

> *Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, unless:*
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> *a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
> *b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or*
> *c) The development is for public service infrastructure, and the resulting loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality; or*
> *d) The development is for alternative open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

2.38 The proposed development features an area of existing amenity grassland that will be developed for new housing. This has been thoroughly considered as part of the application submission, which has included an Open Space Strategy Note. The findings of that Note remain valid in the assessment of the development proposal, in that the area in question is of a poor quality and in a poor condition, and that it will be replaced by a better-quality public realm on-site, as well as contributing to improvements to the nearby King George V Playing Fields. The combination of these two measures represents an appropriate solution compliant with the provisions of the revised NPPF, and specifically Policy HC7.

3 Conclusions

3.1 This Note has been prepared by Stantec on behalf of its Client, Clarion Housing Association Limited and Clarion Property Development Services Limited, to inform the ongoing consideration of planning application PLA-2026-001078, and the implications of the publication of the new NPPF in August 2026.

3.2 The 2026 iteration of the NPPF is markedly different to that of its predecessor, that being said, the underlying aims and objectives of it remain the same. That is to ensure good quality, sustainable and accessible development.

3.3 Despite the changes to the NPPF, the proposed development remains fully compliant with it, and there are a great many benefits of the development which should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of the Application. The Applicant considers that these benefits far outweigh any perceived harms of the proposal, which remains compliant with the adopted development plan, and should therefore be approved without delay.

3.4 The Applicant looks forward to continuing to work with the Council towards the goal of securing planning consent, but would of course be happy to consider any further queries which may arise.