

PLANNING STATEMENT

68 & 70 Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8QP

Redevelopment for retirement living accommodation for older people comprising 41 retirement apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping.

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TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a detailed planning application for the proposed retirement living development at 68 & 70 Keymer Road, Hassocks (the site). The application proposes the erection of 41 retirement living apartments, together with access, parking and landscaping.
- ii. The UK faces a rapidly growing and ageing population. The Government aims to 'significantly boost the supply of housing'. The PPG is unequivocal in its message that "the need to provide housing for older people is *critical*".
- iii. The provision of retirement housing releases under-occupied family homes back into the housing market. This should be afforded significant weight in the determination of the application. In November 2021, the then Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher sought to encourage older people to downsize, highlighting that there were over 3 million people unable to downsize due to lack of suitable housing. The Government is currently looking at ways to remove barriers to the development of the later living sector.
- iv. There is a clear need for older persons housing in the Mid-Sussex district. As per the 2021 Census Data there has been an increase of 24.5% in people aged 65 years and over between 2011 and 2021. Most notably, people aged between 70 to 74 has more than doubled during the time period, showing an exponential increase in older persons.
- v. Based on this ageing population, the Mid-Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2021) identifies the projected need for suitable older persons housing. This has been calculated and identifies for housing with support (sheltered housing), there is a shortfall of 816 units up to 2038, 801 of these units are required in the open market sector. This would suggest there is currently a significant shortfall in suitable housing.
- vi. The PPG is clear: *"where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing, local authorities should take a positive approach to schemes that propose to address this need."* When considering the planning balance, substantial weight should be given to the proposal considering the high levels of specialist housing need identified.
- vii. The proposal is on a brownfield site. In accordance with the NPPF (para 120c) substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- viii. The site is in a highly sustainable location. It offers opportunities for the future residents to walk to local shops and services in Hassocks village centre. Substantial weight should be given to delivering development in a highly sustainable location.
- ix. The principle of development is considered acceptable. This is a brownfield site, in a very sustainable location, and the proposal complies with Policy DP4, DP6, DP30 of the District Plan, Policy 14 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and Policy SA39 of the Site Allocations Development Document.
- x. The scheme has been carefully designed to reflect the character and scale of the surrounding area whilst making efficient use of this sustainable brownfield site. Substantial weight should be afforded to the efficient use of land as required by paragraph 124 of the NPPF.

- xi. There are numerous economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the application. These should respectively be afforded substantial and moderate weight respect to environmental benefits in the determination of this application.
- xii. Overall, the proposal will provide redevelopment of a brownfield site in a sustainable location. It will provide much needed housing for older people, providing social and economic benefits and freeing up family housing elsewhere in the market. It will deliver sustainable development in accordance with policies within the Development Plan and the NPPF.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning Issues Limited, on behalf of Churchill Retirement Living, in support of a detailed planning application at 68 & 70 Keymer Road, Hassocks.
- 1.2 The planning application seeks permission to redevelop the site for 41 Retirement Living Apartments, including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping. The mix comprises 27no. one bedroom apartments and 14no. two bedroom apartments.
- 1.3 This statement accompanies a detailed planning application. It should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents which accompany the application:
 - Planning Statement by Planning Issues;
 - Affordable Housing and Viability Appraisal by Planning Issues Ltd;
 - Design and Access Statement by Churchill Retirement Living;
 - Archaeological Desk Based Assessment by Ecus Consultants;
 - Ecological Appraisal; Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Bat Survey Report by Tetra Tech;
 - Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment by Awcock Ward Partnership;
 - Landscaping Strategy by James Blake Associates;
 - Statement of Community Engagement by DevComm;
 - Transport Statement by Paul Basham Associates Ltd;
 - Tree Protection Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and Manual for Managing Trees on Development Sites by Barrell Tree Care;
 - Air Quality Assessment by Air Quality Consultants Ltd; and
 - Energy Statement by FOCUS Consultants.
- 1.4 The application includes the following plans:
 - 2009HK_PL001 Rev P1 – Site Location Plan
 - 2009HK_PL002 Rev P1 – Site Plan
 - 2009HK_PL003 Rev P1 – Ground Floor Plan
 - 2009HK_PL004 Rev P1 – First Floor Plan
 - 2009HK_PL005 Rev P1 – Second Floor Plan
 - 2009HK_PL006 Rev P1 – Roof Plan
 - 2009HK_PL007 Rev P1 – Elevations AA
 - 2009HK_PL008 Rev P1 – Elevations BB & CC
 - 2009HK_PL009 Rev P1 – Elevations DD
 - 2009HK_PL010 Rev P1 – Site Levels and Distances Plan

- 1.5 This statement briefly explains the concept of retirement living; the national and local planning policy; an analysis of the scheme against the policy context and wider material considerations.

OLDER PEOPLE HOUSING

- 2.1 On 26th June 2019 the Planning Practice Guidance was updated to include '*Housing for older and disabled people*' to assist Councils in preparing planning policies on housing for older and disabled people. The Guidance sets out that providing housing for older people is '*critical*'¹.
- 2.2 It is well documented that the UK faces an ageing population. The recently released Census 2021 data shows that on Census Day 2021 there were more people than ever aged 65 years and over in England, with more than one in six people (18.4%) being over the age of 65.
- 2.3 The recent House of Lords Built Environment Committee Report sets out that this ageing population must be reflected in the types of new homes built, particularly as there will be an increase in older people living alone (January 2022).
- 2.4 The House of Lords Built Environment Committee Report sets out that this ageing population must be reflected in the types of new homes built, particularly as there will be an increase in older people living alone (January 2022). The Government's aspirations are set out in the Adult Social Reform White Paper published in December 2021. They seek provision of a greater range of specialist housing for older people with the aim of increasing choice and allowing people to live independently while having better access to care and support.
- 2.5 Recognising the issues being faced, the Government has recently set up a task force to help improve the housing options for older people. The task force will work across housing, health and care sectors with the aim of driving an increase in the volume and range of housing options for older people.
- 2.6 Previous Housing Minister Rachel Maclean has recently stated "*Making sure older people can access the right homes that meet their needs in later life is a government priority. And by unlocking more housing for older people, we can also have a hugely beneficial impact on their health and wellbeing*"².
- 2.7 Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities, and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-making.
- 2.8 The Applicant has specialised in the provision of purpose-built apartments for older people since 1998 and has provided development proposals throughout England and Wales.
- 2.9 The accommodation proposed is specifically designed to meet the needs of independent retired people and provides self-contained apartments for sale. A key aspect of the design is that the units are in a single block. This is essential for control over access, with safety and security being a key concern for individuals as they age. It also provides much greater benefits for social interaction. This is enhanced with the communal space, in particular the owners lounge, coffee bar and garden.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

² [Government unveils taskforce chair to boost older people's housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-taskforce-chair-to-boost-older-people-s-housing)

2.10 The type of housing proposed is defined as retirement living or sheltered housing within the PPG. It sets out:

“Retirement living or sheltered housing: This usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.”

2.11 Without a range of housing options for older people, they are left with no choice but to stay in their own home, which can become unsuitable as people age, with lots of steps, or maintenance requirements. This puts additional pressure on social care services to deliver additional care at home, before people move in to high dependency care homes.

2.12 Providing opportunities for people to downsize in to suitable and adaptable accommodation, with support on hand should they need it, meets the Government’s agenda of encouraging much greater independence in old age, and reduces the pressure on social care services.

2.13 The communal facilities proposed are:

- A lodge manager employed by a Management Company to provide assistance and security for the owners of the apartments;
- A video entry system which is linked to the owners’ television in their apartments;
- An owners’ lounge is provided for use by all residents and their guests within the building;
- Communal lifts are provided for use by residents and visitors;
- A communal toilet for use by residents and visitors;
- A communal landscaped garden area;
- A guest suite for use of relatives of property owners who wish to stay overnight;
- A communal car parking area for use by residents who have a car (unallocated);
- An area for mobility scooters and bicycles to be sorted and charged; and
- A communal refuse store.

2.14 The apartments are sold by the Applicant with a lease containing an age restriction which ensures that only people of 60 years and over with a spouse or partner of at least 55, can live in the development. It is suggested that this is secured by the following condition.

“Each of the apartments hereby permitted shall be occupied only by:

- *Persons aged 60 or over; or*
- *A spouse/or partner (who is themselves over 55 years older) living as part of a single household with such a person or persons; or*
- *Persons who were living in one of the apartments as part of a single household with a person or persons aged 60 or over has since died; or*
- *Any other individual expressly agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”*

2.15 Notwithstanding the age restriction, the average age of purchaser of the apartments are 78 years old, with the average age of all occupiers being late 70s. Typically 70% of apartments are single occupancy, often occupied by a widow. The decision to purchase this type of development is predominantly needs based, with residents forced to move as their existing property is no longer suitable or they can no longer access the shops or services they need.

2.16 A recent report ‘**Too Little, Too Late?**’ sets out that downsizing is key to tackling the national housing crisis. It acknowledges that under occupation is greatest among the elderly

population but current housing stock in the UK limits their options. If more family homes are freed up by downsizing, the benefits would be felt across the housing market, with families being able to 'upsize' and smaller homes becoming available for first time buyers. This is further supported by a report '**Chain Reaction**' (August 2020) which finds:

- Circa 3 million older people in the UK aged 65+ want to downsize.
- If those that wanted to were able to do so, this would free up nearly 2 million spare bedrooms, predominantly in three bedroom homes with gardens, ideally suited for young families with children.
- The chain impact would be a major boost for first time buyers with roughly 2 in every 3 retirement properties built releasing homes suitable for first time buyers.

- 2.17 Speaking to the House of Lords Built Environment Committee on 2nd November 2021, Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher said he wants to encourage older people in large homes to downsize and make way for first time buyers. He stated that four in ten homes were too big for their owners and that Michael Gove, the Communities Secretary was looking at ways to "identify and remove the barriers to development of the later living sector". He reiterated the 3 million people that can't downsize due to the lack of suitable housing. He noted that in the early 1990s something like 31% of properties were under-occupied, now that percentage is 38%.
- 2.18 A report by Knight Frank acknowledges that whilst there is an increase in the number of older people's housing units being developed, this rate is still dwarfed by the rapidly ageing population. By 2037, population projections suggest that one in four of us will be over 65. Thus even while delivery of older people's housing may increase, in real terms the numbers of older people housing units per 1,000 individuals is expected to drop. Thus a **step change in new delivery** is required if the imbalance between need and supply is to be addressed.
- 2.19 In addition, the majority of existing retirement housing is within the social rented sector, thus only available for those in need of affordable housing. A large proportion of older people are owner occupiers, and particularly own without a mortgage. They are therefore unable to apply for social rented housing, and in many cases wish to retain equity and so would be looking for a property to buy.
- 2.20 The '**Happier and Healthier**' Report (2019) clearly sets out that this type of retirement living accommodation will save the NHS on average £3,500 per person per annum compared to mainstream housing.
- 2.21 In recent evidence within a report '**Silver Saviours of the High Street**' has shown the significant economic benefits that retirement living developments can have on local high streets. The residents are 'basket shoppers', often walking into town on a daily basis to get the shopping they need. They will also utilise the high street during the week, when it's typically at its quietest. Through downsizing residents often have more disposable income and more time to use local facilities.

THE SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

The Site

- 3.1 The 0.45ha site comprises of two detached residential homes and associated gardens.
- 3.2 The site is located along Keymer Road, a primary artery to the east of the Hassocks village centre. The surrounding area is predominately residential, and located opposite Adastra Hall which is used as a local community centre and village hall, as well as Adastra Park.
- 3.3 The site is located just east of the Hassocks main centre, with a host of services and amenities, as well as the Hassocks railway station. As such, the site is located in a very sustainable location.

Planning History

- 3.4 The planning history across the two sites is limited to tree pruning applications relating to number 79 Keymer Road.

Community Engagement

- 3.5 Churchill Retirement Living always look to carry out public consultations with the local community as part of their design process and to present their proposals to the local public.
- 3.6 An online public consultation was held between 24th November to the 3rd December 2023 on a dedicated website, where plans were available to view, together with an interactive feedback form. A copy of the information boards is appended to the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.7 Letters were issued on 22nd November 2023 to circa. 213 residential and commercial addresses bordering and within close proximity to the site.
- 3.8 In addition, a press release was issued on 24th November 2023, and was published by the Sussex World on the same day.
- 3.9 The project website received 976 views from 340 people from during the event. Of those people who visited the website, only 17.6% of visitors left feedback.
- 3.10 Ten feedback forms were received during the public consultation. Feedback acknowledged that the proposed development would provide significant benefits to the local economy and reduce pressures on NHS services.
- 3.11 The need for older persons housing was also recognised during the consultation by a number of respondents, as well as one response identifying the development of older persons housing would be a great opportunity in returning to Hassocks to live.
- 3.12 Overall, the feedback was generally positive, with any queries raised throughout being responded to within the SCl.

FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 4.2 The development plan for Mid Sussex District Council consists of the Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted in 2018), the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted in June 2022), as well as the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (adopted in July 2020). Mid-Sussex District Council are also in the process of adopting an updated Mid-Sussex District Plan Review 2021-2039.
- 4.3 The planning policies from the Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 relevant to the redevelopment of this site to older persons housing on this proposal site are listed below:
- DP3 – Village and Neighbourhood Centre Development
 - DP4 – Housing
 - DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy
 - DP26 – Character and Design
 - DP27 – Dwelling Space Standards
 - DP28 – Accessibility
 - DP30 – Housing Mix
 - DP31 – Affordable Housing
 - DP37 – Trees, Woodland, and Hedgerows
 - DP38 – Biodiversity
 - DP39 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 - DP41 – Flood Risk and Drainage
 - DP42 – Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment
- 4.4 The planning policies from the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan relevant to the redevelopment of this site to older persons housing on this proposal site are listed below:
- Policy 4 – Managing Surface Water
 - Policy 5 – Enabling Zero Carbon
 - Policy 8 – Air Quality Management
 - Policy 9 – Character and Design
 - Policy 14 – Residential Development Within and Adjoining the Built-Up Area Boundary of Hassocks
 - Aim 4 – Housing Mix
 - Policy 17 – Affordable Housing
- 4.5 The planning policies from the Site Allocation Development Plan Document relevant to the redevelopment of this site to older persons housing on this proposal site are listed below:
- SA39 – Specialist Accommodation for Older People and Care Homes
- 4.6 There are also a number of Supplementary Planning Documents which have been reviewed to inform this application:
- Affordable Housing SPD (2018)

- Mid-Sussex Design Guide SPD (2020)
- Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD (2018)

4.7 As set out above, Mid-Sussex District Council is preparing to adopt a new Mid-Sussex District Plan. In November 2023, the Council published a Regulation 19 consultation draft. The District Review Plan's expected adopted is 2024.

4.8 Given the Review Plan is at Regulation 19 phase and is yet to be formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, minimal weight can be awarded to the relevant policies and as such have not been considered for this application.

4.9 Therefore, for the purposes of this application, the Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, Site Allocation Development Plan Document and the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan have been reviewed.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.10 National Planning Policy Framework was updated on 5th September 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The latest version of the NPPF replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, and revised in July 2018, February 2019 and July 2021.

4.11 Paragraph 8 of the revised NPPF highlights three dimensions to sustainable development being economic, social, and environmental objectives.

4.12 The revised NPPF at paragraph 11 states that for plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision making 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 proposed; or*
 - ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework*

4.13 Paragraph 47 identifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

4.14 The Government's policy, as set out in the revised NPPF, is to boost significantly, the supply of housing. Paragraph 60 reads:

*"To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, **that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed** and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay."*

- 4.15 The NPPF looks at delivering a sufficient supply of homes, Paragraph 62 identifies within this context, the size, and type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies including older people.
- 4.16 Paragraph 69 of the revised NPPF acknowledges that small and medium sized sites and make an important contribution to meeting housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of good mix of sites local planning authorities should 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.
- 4.17 Paragraph 86(f) of the NPPF sets out planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.
- 4.18 The NPPF identifies at Paragraph 120 that planning policies and decisions should:
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land
 - d) 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.
- 4.19 The Government recognises at Paragraph 124 that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
 - b) local market conditions and viability;*
 - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
 - d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
 - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.*
- 4.20 The NPPF places a strong emphasis of achieving well-designed places at Paragraph 130 advising that new developments should ensure that they:
- a) 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;*
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) 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);*

- d) *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;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodation and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for 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.'*

4.21 The overriding message in the NPPF is one of sustainable development.

Planning Practice Guidance

4.22 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is a material consideration when taking decisions on planning applications. The PPG provides guidance on how policies in the NPPF should be implemented.

4.23 In June 2019 the PPG was updated to include a section on Housing for Older and Disabled People, recognising its importance. Paragraph 001³ states:

“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. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; **by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million**. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking” (emphasis added).

4.24 Paragraph 003⁴ recognises that “the health and lifestyles of older people will differ greatly, as will their housing needs, which can range from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support.” Thus a range of provision needs to be planned for.

4.25 Paragraph 006⁵ sets out “plan-making authorities should set clear policies to address the housing needs of groups with particular needs such as older and disabled people. These policies can set out how the plan-making authority will consider proposals for the different types of housing that these groups are likely to require.” Therefore, recognising that housing for older people has its own requirements and cannot be successfully considered against criteria for general family housing.

4.26 Paragraph: 016⁶ sets out that “Decision makers should consider the location and viability of a development when assessing planning applications for specialist housing for older people”. It goes on to clearly state: **“Where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing,**

³Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

⁴ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-003-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

⁵ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-006-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-016-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

local authorities should take a positive approach to schemes that propose to address this need” (emphasis added).

Draft Consultation National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.27 The Government have published a consultation document on proposed reforms to the national planning policy with accompanying proposed revision on the NPPF on the 22nd December 2022. At the current time the consultation period for the revised NPPF document has closed. The revised NPPF may be published prior to the determination of this application in which case the development plan policies will need to have regard to their consistency with revised national planning policy. At the current time some weight can be given to the emerging NPPF, but regard will need to be had to public comments received on the consultation document and those elements of national policy proposing to be amended or retained unchanged as the case may be.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Proposed Development

- 5.1 The proposal subject to this application is for the redevelopment of the site to form 41 retirement living apartments. The site is located within the settlement boundary of Hassocks.
- 5.2 The development will create a new vehicular access off Keymer Road, leading into a parking court that contains 15 parking spaces. A scooter mobility store is located on the western aspect of the parking court, catering for 6 scooters and has direct access onto the parking court and pedestrian pathway from Keymer Road.
- 5.3 The proposed development will include a high-quality landscaped amenity space in the form of communal garden area which will be maintained in perpetuity by the applicant's sister company, 'Churchill Estates Management'. In addition, there will be internal communal areas including the Owner's Lounge and guest suite.
- 5.4 The proposed development is 2-2.5 storeys in height, constructed of red and painted brick and a linking element detailed in grey render, with two contrasting roof tiles, as well as UPVC windows and doors.

Principal of Development

- 5.5 The Development Plan of the Council consists of the Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, adopted in 2018, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, adopted in 2022 and the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, adopted in 2020.
- 5.6 Hassocks is identified as a Village Centre, alongside Crawley Down, Cuckfield, Hustpierpoint and Lindfield. These centres meet the needs of their own communities and neighbouring small villages and countryside areas. Policy DP4 identifies across these area, 3,005 homes are required over the plan period, including 838 from 2017 onwards within Village Centres.
- 5.7 The site falls within the settlement boundary and built-up area boundary of Hassocks. Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies that infilling and redevelopment of sites within defined built-up area boundaries will be supported on the basis the proposal is of an appropriate nature and scale to the character and function of the settlement.
- 5.8 Policy 14 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan also supports residential development on unidentified sites within the built-up areas of Hassocks, where the proposal responds positively to the character and function of the area.
- 5.9 Through a detailed design analysis, the proposal is considered to comply with the criteria of Policy DP26 (Character and Design), and ensures that the proposal positively sits within its surroundings.
- 5.10 As previously noted, the site is currently occupied by two large detached residential properties, set within spacious grounds. Therefore residential, Use Class C3, is already an established use.
- 5.11 In addition to the above, the redevelopment of this site will be for older persons housing. The adopted District Plan (Policy DP30) and Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (Aim 4 – Housing Mix) support this type of development, subsequently ensuring there is a deliverable supply of suitable housing for older people.

- 5.12 Therefore, the principle of redevelopment to form older persons housing (Use Class C3) on this site has been considered appropriate and as such accords with Policy DP6, DP25 and DP30 of the District Plan, as well as Policy 14 and Aim 4 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood.

Housing Delivery

- 5.13 There is a significant national drive to increase housing delivery. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF is clear, the Government intends to significantly boost the supply of new homes. There is an intention to deliver 300,000 new homes a year. The Government has made planning reform a priority, to speed up and plan for the homes we need.
- 5.14 The planning system has a clear role in ensuring it delivers homes where they are most needed. As set out in paragraph 119 of the NPPF this means making as much use as possible of previously developed land. The Government is championing the take up of brownfield land by encouraging the remediation of degraded or contaminated spaces, promoting the development of under-utilised land and opening up opportunities to build upward.
- 5.15 Within the adopted District Plan 2014-2031, Mid Sussex have a housing provision target of 16,390 dwellings to be delivered between 2014-2031. The Category 2 Settlements (Copythorne, Crawley Down, Cuckfield, Hassocks and Keymer, Hurstpierpoint and Lindfield) are expected to deliver 3,005-dwellings over the plan period. Of these, 882 dwellings are expected to be targeted to Hassocks.
- 5.16 Brownfield sites such as the application site are essential in bringing forward sustainable housing in Hassocks and this proposal will aid towards the housing provision.
- 5.17 Paragraph 69 of the NPPF acknowledges the benefits in terms of delivery offered by small and medium sized sites and encourages authorities to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within settlements for homes and at paragraph 120(c) that substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- 5.18 As identified in the Council's Housing Land Supply Statement (June 2021), Mid Sussex was able to demonstrate a 5.34-year supply of land.
- 5.19 However, as identified within a recent appeal decision (3319542) dated 5th October 2023, the Council claimed a deliverable supply of 5.04-years, which was identified within the Statement of Common Ground in July 2023. This was agreed by the Planning Inspector.
- 5.20 In terms of the Housing Delivery Test (2021), Mid-Sussex achieved 124% of their requirement, having completed 2,793-dwellings against their 2,261-dwelling requirement.
- 5.21 Notwithstanding the 5.04-year housing land supply calculation, the proposed development of older persons housing, which will be delivered within the next five years, will **significantly assist the Council in meeting its housing targets and should be given substantial weight when considering the planning balance.**

Older People Housing Need

- 5.22 On 26th June 2019 the Planning Practice Guidance was updated to include 'Housing for older and disabled people' to assist Councils in preparing planning policies on housing for older and disabled people. The Guidance sets out that providing housing for older people is 'critical'.

- 5.23 It is well documented that the UK faces an ageing population. Life expectancy is greater than it used to be and as set out above by 2032 the number of people in the UK aged over 80 is set to increase from 3.2 million to five million (ONS mid 2018 population estimates). The House of Lords Built Environment Committee Report (January 2022) requires new homes to be built that reflect our ageing population, particularly as there will be an increase in older people living alone.
- 5.24 The Homes for Later Living Report (September 2019) notes the need to deliver 30,000 retirement and extra care houses a year in the UK to keep pace with demand. Currently in the UK, we build around 8,000 retirement properties a year. This is despite the PPG setting out that the need to provide housing for older people is 'critical'. This is distinctly below the level of need and demand.
- 5.25 Recognising the issues being faced, the Government has recently set up a task force to help improve the housing options for older people. The task force will work across housing, health and care sectors with the aim of driving an increase in the volume and range of housing options for older people.
- 5.26 Housing Minister Rachel Maclean has recently stated "Making sure older people can access the right homes that meet their needs in later life is a government priority. And by unlocking more housing for older people, we can also have a hugely beneficial impact on their health and wellbeing".
- 5.27 The Government's reform of Health and Adult Social Care is underpinned by the principle of increasing independence in old age. Without choice and diversity in the housing market to allow this, many older people are faced with limited options but to remain in often large and unsuitable accommodation, with lots of steps, or maintenance requirements. This puts additional pressure on social care services to deliver additional care at home, before people move into high dependency care homes.
- 5.28 Providing opportunities for people to downsize to suitable and adaptable accommodation, with support on hand should they need it, meets the Government's agenda of encouraging much greater independence in old age, and reduces the pressure on social care services.
- 5.29 In addition, the majority of existing retirement housing is within the social rented sector, thus only available for those in need of affordable housing. A large proportion of older people are owner occupiers, and particularly own without a mortgage. They are therefore unable to apply for social rented housing, and in many cases wish to retain equity and so would be looking for a property to buy.
- 5.30 Policy DP30 (Housing Mix) identifies housing development should meet the current and future needs of different groups in the community, including older people. This could include the provision of bungalows and other forms of suitable accommodation.
- 5.31 Policy SA39 (Specialist Accommodation for Older People and Care Homes) from the Site Allocations DPD also recognises the need for additional accommodation for older persons. Whilst the policy focuses Use Class C2 developments, it sets out specific criteria for the support of specialist accommodation proposals. This includes:
- It is allocated in the adopted development plan;
 - It forms part of a strategic allocation;
 - **It is located within the Built-Up Area boundary.** *[my emphasis added]*

- 5.32 The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan also recognises the need for suitable housing for older persons through Aim 4: Housing Mix.
- 5.33 People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. **In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million.** Offering older people, a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.
- 5.34 The 2018 Sub-National Household Projections also show that there has been a significant increase in persons aged 65 years and over in Mid-Sussex. In 2018, there were 30,496 persons aged 65 and over which is estimated to increase to 45,023 by 2043. This shows an increase of 67.7% of people over the age of 65 between 2018 and 2043.
- 5.35 As recorded in 2021 Census, there are more people than ever aged 65 years and over in England. Subsequently, more than one in six people were aged 65 years and over on Census Day in 2021. In Mid-Sussex this is no different, there has been an increase of 24.5% in people aged 65 years and over between 2011 and 2021. Most notably, people aged between 70 to 74 has more than doubled during the time period, showing an exponential increase in older persons.

Population change (%) by age group in Mid Sussex, 2011 to 2021

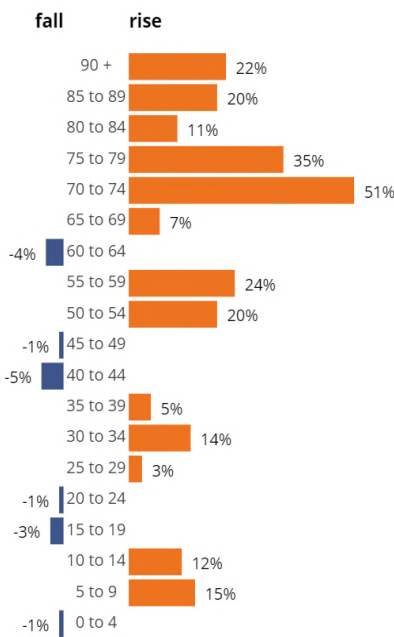


Figure 1: Population Change (%) by age group in Mid-Sussex, 2011 to 2021

- 5.36 As identified in the government data on Productive Healthy Ageing, Mid-Sussex falls within the ‘75th Percentile to Best’ for life expectancy in both female and male, 84.8 years, and 81.7 years respectively.
- 5.37 In the 2018, West Sussex County Council published a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024. A clear message of the report is to enable healthy ageing. As part of this strategy, the report identifies 4 clear goals, this includes:

- Fewer older people feel lonely or socially isolated;
- Older adults stay healthier, happier and independent for longer;
- There is a reduction in the number of older people having falls; and
- People receive good quality end of life care and have a good death.

5.38 In addition to the above, in October 2021 Mid-Sussex District Council published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The SHMA identifies that over the next 17-years up to 2038, there is expected to be an overall population growth of 33,000 people; with 14,000 of this being people over the age of 65 years. This equates to the population of people aged 65 and over, accounting for 42.5% of the total projected population change. This is shown in figure 2 below.

	2021	2038	Change	% Change
Under 65	122,514	141,473	18,959	15.5%
65-74	16,408	21,872	5,463	33.3%
75-84	10,932	15,760	4,828	44.2%
85+	4,913	8,662	3,749	76.3%
Total	154,768	187,766	32,999	21.3%
Total 65+	32,253	46,293	14,040	43.5%
Total 75+	15,845	24,422	8,577	54.1%

Source: Demographic Projections

Figure 2: Projected Change in Population of Older Persons, 2021 to 2038

5.39 Based on the increasing ageing population, the SHMA (2021) goes on to identify the future projected need for suitable older persons housing. This has been calculated and identifies for housing with support (sheltered housing), there is a shortfall of 816 units up to 2038, 801 of

		Housing Demand per 1,000 (75+)	Current Supply	Current Demand	Current Shortfall/ Surplus	Additional Demand to 2038	Shortfall/ Surplus to 2038
Housing with Support	Market	69	874	1,087	213	588	801
	Affordable	35	844	557	-287	302	15
Total (Housing with Support)		104	1,718	1,644	-74	890	816

Figure 3: Specialist Housing Need 2021-38

these units are required in the open market sector. See Figure 3 below.

5.40 This shows a significant unmet housing demand in the borough.

5.41 From an online review, the current retirement living schemes in the Hassocks area have been listed below:

- Brookside, Brook Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8LQ (built in 1985) - comprising of 30 flats (Social Rent).

- Fitzjohn Court, 66 Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8QP (built in 1989) – comprising of 17 flats (Leasehold).
- Clevelands, 18 Lodge Lane, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8NA (built in 1983) – comprising of 14 flats (Social Rent).
- Shands, Windmill Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8LL (built in 1965 and renovated in 1985) comprising of 13 flats (Social Rent).

5.42 This shows there is a current supply of 74 retirement apartments, all of which were built prior to 1989.

5.43 Therefore, despite an estimated increase in the ageing population by 45% by 2031 and a delivery requirement of 816 specialist units, there has been no retirement living schemes development in the Hassocks area since 1989. This presents a significant unmet need.

5.44 The PPG is clear: *“where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing, local authorities should take a positive approve to schemes that propose to address this need.”*

5.45 The SHMA (2021) also recognises the tenure of older persons households in Mid-Sussex. As shown in the figure below, in 2011 75.3% of households comprising of solely older people were owner-occupied (no mortgage). This shows that most occupiers have significant equity which can be put towards the purchase of a new home.

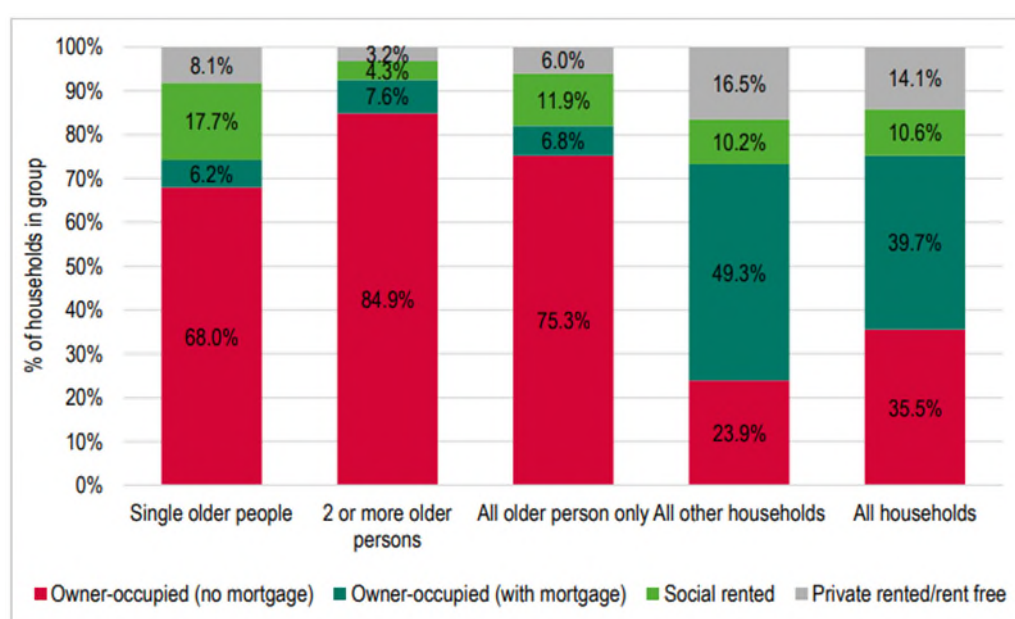


Figure 4: Tenure of Older Persons Households in Mid-Sussex (2011)

5.46 This demonstrates that the development of older persons housing in the Mid-Sussex area would free up other types of housing within the housing market area. This is demonstrated in the Lichfield’s Infographic Report produced specifically for the redevelopment of the proposal site in Hassocks (see Appendix B). The Infographic shows that 82 potential existing homes would be released into the housing market as a result of the redevelopment of this site.

Impact on Health and Social Care

5.47 The proposal seeks to provide housing to assist older people to live as independent lives as possible. The Government’s reform of Health and Social Care is underpinned by the principle

of people living in their own home as long as possible. Thus, providing specially designed housing is important in helping to address this.

5.48 The PPG is clear: “where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing, local authorities should take a positive approach to schemes that propose to address this need.”

5.49 Paragraph 001 of the PPG on Housing for Older and Disabled People is unequivocal in its message that “*the need to provide housing for older people is critical*”. In this context, the benefits of the scheme in delivering older people’s housing against the identified needs must be given substantial weight in the determination of this application.

5.50 In accordance with the above, the ‘Campaign to End Loneliness’ estimates the potential national costs of loneliness to health and care services, for a cohort of people aged over 65, to be in excess of £1,700 per person over a 10-year period.

5.51 There is evidence showing that providing purpose-built retirement accommodation reduces the impact on the NHS. The **Happier and Healthier Report** (2019) clearly sets out that this type of retirement living accommodation will save the NHS on average £3,500 per person per annum compared to mainstream housing.

5.52 For the proposed 41-unit scheme, it is estimated this will lead to a fiscal savings of £187,000.

5.53 Social isolation has been identified as an age-related illness. As shown in figure 5, the site falls on the boundary between an area of very high risk (darker blue) and high risk.

5.54 Depression remains the most common mental health need for older people. There is clear evidence that retirement living accommodation significantly reduces loneliness and social isolation. Residents live in accommodation with like-minded individuals. There are social gatherings in the communal lounge, ranging from coffee mornings to fish and chip suppers, to Bridge clubs. There are film nights and formal garden parties. In addition, there are daily informal interactions and residents chat to neighbours in the communal areas or the lodge manager on their way in and out of the building.

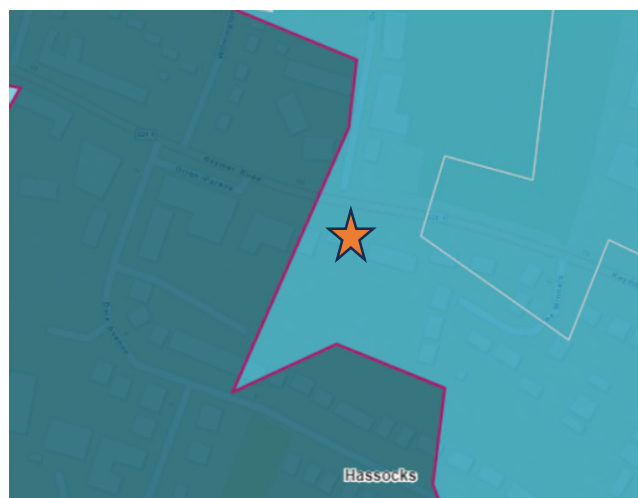


Figure 5: Risk of Loneliness in Hassocks (Source: Age UK)

5.55 Loneliness and depression within the ageing population has been recognised by the World Health Organisation. The WHO have acknowledged that focusing on improving the wider determinants of health that affect an older person can lead to improvements in mental health and life expectancy. Within this, supportive housing and the provision of security and freedom has been recognised as important factors to help prevent these issues.

5.56 As part of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024, it is also identified that more than 72,500 people aged 65+ are estimated to be living alone in 2017.

5.57 People often chose to move into retirement living accommodation after a significant life event, such as a fall or death of a partner.

5.58 Government data on Productive Healthy Ageing identifies in Mid-Sussex the number of emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 years and over is 2,330 per 100,000 which is within the worst- 25th percentile in England. Mid-Sussex maintain this

position in the worst-25th percentile in people aged 80 years plus, with 5,944 per 100,000 (data set shown below)

Falls & Fractures									
Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over	2021/22	–	795	2,330	2,100	3,272			1,012
Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 to 79	2021/22	–	250	1,083	993	1,674			491
Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 80 plus	2021/22	–	545	5,944	5,311	8,251			2,523

Figure 6: Productive Healthy Ageing Profile: Mid Sussex (Source: Public Health Data)

- 5.59 The consequence of falls can have a significant impact on health and social care services. It can lead to the need for regular care at home or even admission to a residential care home if the house is no longer suitable. Options such as the proposed retirement living scheme offers a specifically designed environment, with level access throughout to enable older people to live safe and independent lives.
- 5.60 Furthermore, the proposed development will not be creating new residents. Evidence from Churchill Retirement Living's existing schemes is that at least 50% of residents come from a 5-mile radius around the site. These residents will already be within the local health service and will not place any increased pressure on the local facilities.

Design Considerations

- 5.61 A detailed assessment of the local character has been undertaken to greater understand the site and its wider setting. The Design and Access Statement has also been produced to evaluate the character and setting of the surrounding area. This section should be read in tandem to the Design and Access Statement.
- 5.62 The proposed development consists of a 2-2.5 storey traditional 'T' shape building. Materials are proposed to include red and painted brick, as well as a central linked element comprising of grey render, brick detailing, and contrasting red and grey roof tiles.
- 5.63 Although a singular building, the design approach has been detailed in a way to appear as two detached residential dwellings, through the use of contrasting brick colours (red and white respectively). This subsequently enables the building to sit appropriately within its setting.
- 5.64 The building has been broken with varying roof heights, and gable frontages to break the overall scale of the building, particular fronting Keymer Road.
- 5.65 The main elevation of the building fronts Keymer Road, which predominantly comprises of residential dwellings. The proposed building is stepped back from the northern boundary to adhere to the existing building line, with the implementation of soft landscaping along the frontage. This is a common feature of residential buildings along Keymer Road.
- 5.66 This stepping back of the building is also to ensure the building does not interfere with the TPO trees located along the northern boundary. These trees are a prominent feature Keymer Road, as well as provide suitable boundary screening.
- 5.67 The main entrance of the building is located within the site, along the western elevation which is demarcated with a portico finished entrance. This has been designed in a way to ensure there is a clear main entrance coming off the parking court.
- 5.68 The proposed apartment building comprises a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments, which provides an appropriately dense development for this sustainable location. As such, the proposal

accords with Policy DP26 of the District Plan, and Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, as well as paragraph 124 of the NPPF.

- 5.69 Overall, the proposal is considered to create a building with high-quality design. All site-specific factors have been extensively reviewed and subsequently incorporated into the design to ensure the building sits appropriately within its context. Therefore, the scheme is in accordance with Policy DP26, Policy 9, paragraphs 124, 130 and 134 of the NPPF, as well as paragraph 124 of the National Design Guide (2021).

Scale, Height and Mass

- 5.70 The proposed development shows a 2-2.5 storey development, which is considered appropriate and in keeping with the surrounding townscape.
- 5.71 As identified above, the overall scale and mass of the building has been broken up by a varied design and materials palette. The building is visually subdivided into two residential dwellings along the site's frontage, with the building extending into the southern extents of the site.
- 5.72 The southern extents of the building are visually broken with dormered accommodation and varying brick colour and contrasting roof tiles. The building is also stepped down in line with topographical changes across the site.
- 5.73 Therefore, the building has been designed to ensure it does not appear overall dominant in the streetscene. This has been achieved by a varied materials palette, with varying roof heights and dormered accommodation. Furthermore, varied fenestration details also provide visually interesting elevations, so as to not appear anonymous and out of context with the residential area.

Siting and Layout

- 5.74 The development potential of the site has been assessed which can be found within the supporting Design and Access Statement.
- 5.75 The proposal is for a 'T' shaped building that fronts onto Keymer Road, with amenity space to the north, eastern and southern extents of the site, as well as further soft landscaping and a parking court to the western extents. The main entrance to the building is situated along the western elevation, adjacent to the parking court.
- 5.76 There are two main areas of amenity space, the first is adjacent to the Owner's Lounge, where residents will have direct access onto a patio area with outdoor seating facilities. There is also a secondary area which is accessed from an internal corridor to the eastern aspect of the site, where a pathway leads to another patio area with seating and soft landscaping. This area of the site will achieve good levels of daylight and sunlight and therefore make a usable space for residents to enjoy.
- 5.77 As discussed further within this report, the siting and layout of the building has been orientated around the TPO trees located along the east and northern boundaries of the site. This has influenced the siting of the building footprint within the site and done to ensure the building does not impact any trees on or off-site.
- 5.78 The orientation of the building is considered to provide future occupants private and useable amenity space, as well as addressing the main northern elevation along Keymer Road.

Density and Mix

- 5.79 The NPPF strongly promotes the efficient use of land; paragraph 120(c) identifies that substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlement for homes.
- 5.80 Whilst the District Plan does not have a density specific policy, the Mid-Sussex Design Guide (2020) Principle DG32 identifies development density should be appropriate to the location and respond to and/or enhance the character or the existing settlement. The principle goes on to identify any development that promotes a scale, height and massing that is greater than the existing context must demonstrate that it does not harm adjacent neighbouring amenity, adversely impact on views of the wider townscape, adversely impact quality of the streetscape and generate parking that dominates the public realm.
- 5.81 In relation to the points raised in Principle DG32, the proposal has considered all issues to ensure the density, scale, height and massing is appropriate for its context.
- 5.82 The development will provide 91dph. It is considered that the proposed development makes an appropriate balance between making an efficient use of land, whilst respecting the local character and context.
- 5.83 The proposal provides a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments, which allows for best use of the site situated in a sustainable location close to the village centre. This is therefore in accordance with paragraph 124 of the NPPF.
- 5.84 In addition to the above, all proposed units meet M4(2) standards. This subsequently exceeds the policy requirement, as set out in DP28 which requires 20% of units to M4(2). M4(2) is considered an appropriate measure for the future occupants of this retirement living scheme.

Appearance and Materials

- 5.85 The proposal has been designed to ensure the building integrates successfully into the pattern of urban form with similar materials and fenestration detailing. This has been achieved through an in-depth review of the surrounding buildings and architectural detailing, as well as a choice of materials. As such a sensitively selected palette of materials has been proposed.
- 5.86 With regards to the main (north) elevation, the proposal presents three contrasting details including red brick, painted brick and an internal linking element comprising of grey render, with a contrasting grey roof tile. Window heads and cills have been shown in a red contrasting brick to break up the facades. Tile hanging has also been incorporated into the main elevation to promote visual interest and a traditional residential design.
- 5.87 As previously identified, the front elevation also shows two porches to appear as residential front doors. As shown in the street scene elevation, the set-back linking element allows for the appearance of two separate asymmetrical dwellings which are appropriate for the streetscene.
- 5.88 The use of contrasting material is also emanated throughout the site, as shown on the central elements of both the eastern and western elevations.
- 5.89 Windows, doors, as well as fascia's and soffits, will be white UPVC casement, with rainwater goods consisting of black UPVC.

- 5.90 The proposed balconies, consisting of both Juliette and full walk-out balconies will be black painted metal. Balconies have been proposed on the east and west elevations.
- 5.91 Therefore, it is clear the design has taken reference from the traditional design features and materials found within the surrounding area. As such, it is considered the proposed development will fit seamlessly and appropriately along Keymer Road and surrounding area.
- Neighbouring Amenity
- 5.92 Policy DP26 identifies developments must demonstrate that they do not cause harm to the amenity of existing nearby residents.
- 5.93 Given the site is surrounded by predominantly residential uses, separation distances and the protection of neighbouring amenity has been carefully considered. This is to accord with Policy DP26.
- 5.94 Given the quantum of large established trees along the northern and eastern boundaries, the site is well screened from neighbouring dwellings to the east and therefore views are not duly afforded from these locations. This is a similar context to properties to the south of the site, which are well screened due to dense foliage and tree screening.
- 5.95 Despite the large trees located along the northern and eastern boundaries, it is considered that the proposal provides acceptable levels of daylight and sunlight to apartments.
- 5.96 As such, there is no concern over the impact of daylight/sunlight, overlooking or loss of privacy from the proposed development.
- 5.97 With the above in mind, it is considered that the development is in accordance with Policy DP26 and the NPPF.

Heritage Considerations

- 5.98 A detailed assessment of the site has been undertaken by Ecus Consultants to understand the site's heritage and archaeological interests.
- 5.99 The site lies outside of the Keymer Conservation Area and does not contribute to the setting or significance of this area. Additionally, the nearest listed building is located circa 350m from the site and therefore its redevelopment would not affect the ability to understand, experience and appreciate these designated heritage assets.
- 5.100 Therefore, heritage has not been considered a constraint for this site.
- 5.101 With regards to archaeology, an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been undertaken.
- 5.102 The site lies south of the Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) relating to the Section of the Hardham to Barcombe Mills Roman Road. The site does not fall within the ANA, but within close proximity. The potential for remains including road make-up, associated ditches and roadside features to present within the site are considered to be low. This has been considered on the basis that:
- There is limited evidence of the road, or associated activity, recorded within the surroundings;
 - Where archaeological remains have survived, such remains were located 50m north of the current ANA positioning. Therefore, there is a possibility the road is located further to the north, in contrast to what is recorded on the WSHR;

- Archaeological evaluations undertaken 250m north-west did not identify any archaeological features; and
- The area closest to the ANA (the northern extents of the site) are likely to have been subject to disturbance compared to the southern extents of the site which is located away from the ANA.

- 5.103 The site has been subject to previous disturbance/truncation which would have been caused by agricultural and horticultural activities, the construction and use former driveway providing access to/from Oaklands, the construction of the existing residential buildings, levelling and terracing in relation to the construction of existing buildings and services and utilities.
- 5.104 The assessment undertaken has concluded no designated archaeological remains would be directly affected by the proposed redevelopment, nor would the redevelopment impact any remains located within the wider area.
- 5.105 Based on archaeological potential, it has been concluded the site has low to moderate potential for archaeological remains of prehistoric date. However, it is likely any remains will have been disturbed by previous disturbances/truncation, and as such any remains would be of low heritage significance.
- 5.106 The site is also concluded to have low potential for Romano-British remains due to the Site's proximity to the ANA. This includes negligible potential for early medieval remains, low potential for medieval remains and moderate to high potential for post-medieval activity – with any such remains being at most, low heritage interest.
- 5.107 Therefore, this review has concluded archaeological resource is not a constraint to the proposed redevelopment and no further work is required to inform the planning application. The ABDA recommends a conditional programme of archaeological observation, monitoring and if required record (watching brief).

Amenity Space

- 5.108 The amenity space proposed in both its extent and design will meet the needs of its user. A Landscaping Strategy by James Blake Associates has been submitted with the application showing the high-quality landscaping proposed.
- 5.109 Principle DG46 of the adopted Design Guide (2020) seeks for all new developments to have access to appropriate external amenity. For communal gardens these should be incorporated to the rear of the apartment block to provide visual amenity, as well as outdoor space for residents with soft landscaping prioritised.
- 5.110 The applicant has considerable experience in delivering retirement developments nationwide and as such this has provided a clear understanding of the use and need of amenity space.
- 5.111 The quality of amenity space is important to residents. Typical purchasers are 78-year-old widows, and it is considered high quality amenity space is far more important than quantity. Residents wish to have a pleasant outlook, often with activity and with high quality planting. This is valued far more than large areas of green space.
- 5.112 Residents use the space in a fairly limited respect; this involves siting out on the patio and tending to flower pots which are located immediately outside ground floor apartments or on balconies.

- 5.113 Further to the external amenity space, there is the internal communal lounge and coffee bar. This is a highly valued social space, where residents meet for coffee or to play card games and is useable all year round. Film nights, book clubs, wine and cheese evenings, fish and chip suppers, as well as summer garden parties are organised for the residents. Residents value this internal amenity space far more than large, grassed areas and it is usable all year round.
- 5.114 Given the balance of achieving efficient use of land as set out in Paragraph 124 of the NPPF combined with the clear understanding of the needs of the residents and the emphasis on high quality landscaping it is strongly considered that the level and quality of amenity space is acceptable.

Access and Parking

- 5.115 This application is supported by a Transport Statement undertaken by Paul Basham Associates Ltd.
- 5.116 The site is currently accessed via two private driveways for the existing residential dwellings. Both existing accesses will be stopped up as part of the development, with a new access being formed along Keymer Road in the western end of the site's frontage. The new access measures 4.8m in width. This is suitable for two cars to pass simultaneously, without conflict.
- 5.117 The proposed access arrangement has been considered through the WSCC Stage 1 Road Safety Audit which showed that safe and suitable access is achievable in this location.
- 5.118 Pedestrian is also taken from the new access, via a 1.5m footway. This connects the site to Keymer Road and provides a direct route to local facilities and amenities.
- 5.119 With regards to parking provision on site, West Sussex County Council do not provide parking standards for age restricted C3 residential. The standards set for C2 residential care use as dictated in Parking at New Developments (published September 2020), suggest a site-specific assessment is required.
- 5.120 On the basis of the above, the independent surveys undertaken by Churchill Retirement Living has been utilised to assess the parking demand for this development. The research shows a demand for 0.28 spaces per apartment. Residents often move into a retirement development to be situated closer to local shops and services therefore, reliance upon cars is significantly reduced. As the development age, a pattern has emerged that residents usually given up their cars within 6 months as they no longer need it.
- 5.121 In total, 15 unallocated parking spaces have been provided, this provides a ratio of 0.36 spaces per apartment. This is above the evidenced need of 0.28 from Churchills' parking survey evidence.
- 5.122 Whilst it is demonstrated that there will be an increase in car movement on the local highway network, this has been concluded to have a negligible impact on the operation of the local road network.
- 5.123 The proposal also includes a secure mobility scooter charging and storage area located within the parking court.
- 5.124 It has been designed to allow a fire tender to get within 18m of a dry riser in accordance with Building Regulations by utilising the turning head provided in the southern extents of the parking court.

- 5.125 In accordance with the above, the site presents an opportunity to create a sustainable, non-car reliant development. The proposed development is located near to the Orion Parade where there are a host of amenities, including a café and food stores. Further into Hassocks centre, there are amenities such as a library, church and doctors' surgery – all within minutes' walk of the site. It is therefore concluded the site provides an excellent opportunity to create a sustainable development.
- 5.126 The local pedestrian routes also benefit from dropped kerbs, tactile paving, wide footpaths, and signalised crossings.
- 5.127 The closest bus stops are located 50m west of the site along Keymer Road. This stop provides access to a number of key destinations, including Lewes, Burgess Hill, Burgess via Plumpton and Haywards Heath.
- 5.128 The closest railway station is located approximately 640m west of the site (8-minute walk). The station is served by National Rail, providing direct services to London Victoria, Bedford, Brighton and Littlehampton.
- 5.129 The NPPF strongly promotes sustainable transport. Developers should not be expected to provide more parking than required unless there are clear and compelling justifications, taking into consideration the accessibility, type, mix and use of the development.
- 5.130 Overall, within the Transport Statement, it is demonstrated that safe and suitable access to the site is achievable, and the proposed development would not result in a severe impact on the operation or safety of the local road network.
- 5.131 It is clear within the NPPF paragraph 111 that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Refuse

- 5.132 Refuse collection will be undertaken via on-street collection on Keymer Road, as per the existing arrangement for other properties on the road.
- 5.133 A bin collection point is also located in the northern aspect of the site, adjacent to the access road. This is to ensure a refuse vehicle can get within 10m of the store to facilitate quick collection.
- 5.134 Churchill Retirement have developed a detailed understanding of the typical waste requirements based on experience of their existing lodges. The majority of flats are single occupancy. The owners are daily basket shoppers with a low carbon footprint who generate small amounts of waste. The proposed refuse store is therefore suitable to meet the required needs.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.135 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy undertaken by the Awcock Ward Partnership.
- 5.136 A majority of the site is located in Fluvial Flood Zone 1 and is not susceptible to flooding from surface water or ground water. Additionally, the site does not lie within a groundwater flood risk or flood warning area.

- 5.137 The southern extents of the site fall within Flood Zone 2 & 3, which is localised to the watercourse along the southern edge of the site. The surface water flooding is also localised to this area. As a result, no built development has been proposed in this location.
- 5.138 The lowest ground finished floor level of 46.50m AOD remains well above the maximum surface water flooding level of 45.5m AOD. Therefore, the proposed development will not be impacted by existing surface water flooding.
- 5.139 Based on investigations undertaken by Crossfield's Consulting (February 2023), it has been concluded that the existing ground conditions preclude the use of soakaways due to the underlying impermeable clay and shallow water table.
- 5.140 Furthermore, it has been confirmed that the land title includes riparian rights, permitting a discharge to the watercourse at the southern edge of the site. An attenuated discharge to surface water is proposed. This should be in the southwest corner of the site, outside of any of the surrounding Root Protection Areas.
- 5.141 Run-off generated by the proposed building, access road and external hard paving will be collected and drained towards a new cellular attenuation tank beneath the parking court in the southwest area of the site.
- 5.142 In regards to the foul strategy, the existing on-site private foul networks can be abandoned, whilst the existing adopted foul sewer, serving number 66 will be retained. The existing foul sewer is too shallow to receive gravity connection from the site and as such foul flows will drainage through a new network to the existing adopted foul network in Keymer Road. Southern Water have confirmed there is available capacity to receive foul flows from the site.
- 5.143 In light of the above, flooding has not been considered a constraint for this site, and a suitable drainage strategy can be implemented.

Affordable Housing

- 5.144 An Affordable Housing and Viability Statement has been submitted with a planning application analyses the policy requirement in light of the current economic climate and the viability of provision against the current development proposal.
- 5.145 Policy DP31 requires 30% affordable housing on qualifying sites subject to financial viability and evidence of local housing needs. The Council's adopted Affordable Housing SPD (2018) has also been reviewed.
- 5.146 In summary, forecasts over the next 3 years suggest that build cost inflation will continue to outpace inflation in house prices. It is therefore concluded that the assumptions within the FVA are appropriately balanced and are not overly pessimistic given the current and forecasted movements in costs and values.

Ecology

Habitat and Protect Species

- 5.147 This application is supported by an Ecological Report undertaken by TetraTech.
- 5.148 The site comprises two residential homes, gardens and includes habitat such as hedgerows, scattered trees, amenity grassland and small pockets of scrub. The habitats within the site are all of local importance.

- 5.149 The site was considered to have potential for roosting bats, and as such a separate Bat Survey Report has been submitted in support of this application. The report concluded that roosting bats are absent from the houses and trees, and subsequently the development can proceed without further surveys or licensing.
- 5.150 The ecological report also identifies the presence of a number of protected species within 2km of the site. All species discussed are considered as negligible or local importance.
- 5.151 Several mitigation measures have been proposed, this includes the installation of bat and bird boxes, as well as swift bricks. Additionally, an appropriate lighting strategy has also been recommended to reduce the impact upon feeding and commuting bats.
- 5.152 In light of the above, the proposal seeks to provide a better quality of habitats with greater ecological importance compared to the habitats currently present on site. This is proposed through the Landscaping Plan produced by James Blake Associates which incorporates further tree planting and wildflower areas.
- 5.153 The Ecological Appraisal concluded; no features of significant ecological importance have been identified. Additionally, mitigation measures can be controlled by a reasonable worded CEMP condition, to protect fauna species which may occur on the site during development, as a precautionary approach.

Biodiversity Net Gains

- 5.154 Policy DP38 requires a no net loss of biodiversity on development sites, which is achieved by incorporating biodiversity features within developments.
- 5.155 A separate Biodiversity Net Gain report has been undertaken by Tetra Tech, in accordance with the landscaping plans produced by James Blake Associates.
- 5.156 The findings of the report conclude that there is a +2% increase in biodiversity on site, as well as +44% of hedgerow units. This has been achieved through an in-depth site review to include net loss mitigation such as suitable native planting, wildflower meadows and new tree planting.
- 5.157 As such, this proposal is in accordance with Policy DP38.

Trees

- 5.158 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Assessment and Tree Protection Plan by Barrell Tree Care.
- 5.159 Policy DP37 states development that will damage or lead to the loss of woodland or hedgerows that contribute either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area will not normally be permitted.
- 5.160 The proposal includes the removal of 27 trees and two hedges across the two site all of which are considered to be low quality due to their poor condition and/or size. These trees are located internally within the site and therefore do not contribute to the character or visual amenity of the area.
- 5.161 All significant boundary tree cover will remain. No medium or high-quality trees will be removed and as such the visual amenity and character along Keymer Road will be retained.
- 5.162 A number of trees across the site (located in the northern and eastern aspects) are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, LPA references: KY/03/TPO/88, KY/02/TPO/93 and

KY/01TPO/97. As part of the Arboricultural Assessment, several protective measures have been discussed to ensure no harm comes to any protected trees, this includes no-dig specifications.

- 5.163 The projection of these trees has been strong factor in the design development of this site. The retention, protection and enhancement of the trees within and adjoining the site has been duly considered throughout. As clearly stated in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, the proposal will not result in any harm to the trees or result in any future pressure to fell, in line with the recommendations proposed.
- 5.164 In addition, the proposal will also be implementing new tree planting across the site to mitigate the loss of the trees lost due to the proposal. This also includes the implementing of hedgerows, which as per the Biodiversity Net Gain metric which results in a +44% increase. As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy DP37.

Sustainable Development

- 5.165 Policy DP39 and Policy DP42 requires limitation of water usage to 110 litres/person/day, as well as a host of sustainable measures which developers are required to consider.
- 5.166 Policy 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan supports the provision for EV charging. 20% active charging and the remaining passive charging is also a requirement of West Sussex County Council.
- 5.167 The Applicant is fully aware that sustainable development is a major concern of Climate Change. The applicant implements various initiatives within its schemes that address this issue. A sustainability group within the company are constantly reviewing the latest guidance and technologies with a view to reducing the carbon footprint of the retirement housing developments.
- 5.168 This application is also supported by an Energy Statement undertaken by Focus Consultants. This report highlights the sustainable nature of the proposed development.
- 5.169 The Applicants scheme utilise previously developed sites in highly accessible locations close to community facilities and shops, with access to alternative modes of transport enabling a reduction in car numbers and ownership but make provision for battery operated buggies and cycles.
- 5.170 As set out above, landscaping is an important feature of the development and the accompanying design provides an indication of the proposed planting levels to make the most effective use of the space as well as make a positive contribution to the amenity value, making it a more pleasant environment. The landscaping design is of an extremely high standard and will improve the environmental quality of the site for prospective residents.
- 5.171 Construction of the developments incorporates many energy saving devices, which is assisted by the containment of the apartments in a single block.
- 5.172 The Applicant continually reviews their environmental policies examining the newly evolving sustainable systems for incorporation into their developments where appropriate. Indeed, the use of roof mounted Solar Photovoltaics within the development proposal demonstrates Churchill Retirement Living's commitment to the principles of Sustainable Development and for on-site energy generation.

Economic Considerations

- 5.173 In recent evidence within a report '**Silver Saviours of the High Street**' has shown the significant economic benefits that retirement living developments can have on local high streets. The residents are 'basket shoppers', often walking into town on a daily basis to get the shopping they need. They will also utilise the high street during the week, when it's typically at its quietest. Through downsizing residents often have more disposable income and more time to use local facilities.
- 5.174 There is significant evidence linking poor health with unsuitable living conditions. As set out above, each person living in a home for later living enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing fiscal savings to the NHS and social care service of approximately £3,500 per year (**Homes for Later Living September 2019**). Residents generally remain in better health, both physically and mentally, in comparison to being in unsuitable accommodation and for many being isolated. Doctors, nurses, and care workers can visit several occupiers at once.
- 5.175 With 41 units proposed, there is estimated to be fiscal savings to the NHS of £187,000 per annum directly from the proposed development, in comparison to mainstream housing. This is significant economic benefit.
- 5.176 Retirement housing releases under-occupied family housing and plays a very important role in recycling of housing stock in general. There is a 'knock-on' effect in terms of the whole housing chain enabling more effective use of existing housing. In the absence of choice, older people will stay put in properties that are often unsuitable for them until such a time as they need expensive residential care. It is estimated that the proposed development will open up approximately 82 existing homes within the housing market through a chain reaction. The proposal will therefore assist with meeting wider family housing needs.
- 5.177 Substantial weight should be afforded these economic benefits.

Social Considerations

- 5.178 Specifically designed housing for older people enables residents to be as independent as possible in a safe and warm environment. Older homes are typically in a poorer state of repair, are often colder, damper, have more risk of fire and fall hazards. They lack in adaptations such as handrails, wider internal doors, stair lifts and walk in showers. Without these simple features, everyday tasks can become harder and harder. Retirement housing help to reduce anxieties and worries experienced by many older people living in housing which does not best suit their needs by providing safety, security and reducing management and maintenance concerns.
- 5.179 There are huge benefits from new found friends and companions. Loneliness is linked with damaging health impacts such as heart disease, strokes, depression and Alzheimer's. Loneliness and isolation have become even more apparent in older generations through the lockdowns faced during the COVID 19 pandemic. However residents within existing Churchill Retirement Living schemes have expressed huge praise for their Lodge Managers in looking after them.
- 5.180 Churchill developments offer a formal coffee morning as well as a number of informal coffee gatherings. Residents often organise bridge clubs and weekly film nights in the communal lounge. There are also group trips into the town centre for coffee and shopping. Even just to say hello to neighbours in the corridor or a quick conversation with the Lodge Manager can significantly help. Churchill also organise a number of events each year such as summer parties, cheese and wine nights, and musical nights.

- 5.181 Residents can walk to local shops and services, or use their mobility scooter, giving them independence if they are no longer able or wish to drive. This is important as people age, reducing reliance on formal social care or help from family and friends.
- 5.182 The **Housing for Later Living Report (2019)** shows that on a selection of wellbeing 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 into housing specifically designed for later living.
- 5.183 The requirement of the NPPF at paragraph 92 to achieve healthy, safe and inclusive places are a fundamental part of the scheme proposed. These are key benefits that residents are looking for when they seek to move to a Churchill Retirement Living scheme.
- 5.184 Overall, it is considered that substantial weight should be afforded to these social benefits.

Environmental Considerations

- 5.185 The proposal will make efficient use of brownfield land thereby reducing the need to use limited land resources for housing.
- 5.186 The site is in a highly sustainable location. Shops and services can easily be accessed on foot thereby reducing the need for travel by means which consume energy and create emissions. The site is also located in close proximity to Hassocks train station, therefore allowing journeys further afield.
- 5.187 Providing shared facilities for a large number of residents in a single building makes more efficient use of material and energy resources. The proposal will be constructed with an energy efficient fabric and building services specification.
- 5.188 In efforts to reduce the overall carbon emissions associated with the development and to maximise the energy efficiency, solar gains will be made by implementing PV panels on the roof of the proposed building.
- 5.189 Substantial weight should be afforded to these environmental benefits.

Planning Balance

- 5.190 Notwithstanding the fact we consider the proposal to be in accordance with the Development Plan it is necessary to undertake a planning balance.
- 5.191 As set out above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act sets out that planning application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposal is not considered to be in conflict with any policies within the development plan.
- 5.192 Whilst Mid-Sussex can demonstrate a housing land supply (5.04-years), this proposal for 41-units will significantly boost this housing land supply and should be weighted accordingly.
- 5.193 The application should therefore be approved unless material consideration indicates otherwise. It is considered that the material considerations weigh heavily in favour of the grant of permission.
- 5.194 It is evident there is '*critical*' need for the delivery of older persons housing and a significant pressing need within the administrative boundary of North Dorset. Therefore, this planning application will contribute towards delivering these much-needed homes. That contribution

can be considered as a substantial benefit which weighs strongly in favour of this planning application.

5.195 The planning benefits with the weight to be given for this proposal are set out below:

Planning benefits of the current proposal	Weight to be given
Provision of much needed housing for older people where the need for such accommodation is 'critical'	Substantial weight
Development of previously developed, brownfield land.	Substantial weight
Development in a sustainable location, town centre location within immediate proximity to local services and facilities	Substantial weight
Efficient use of land	Substantial weight
Provision of 41 market dwellings	Substantial weight
Freeing up under occupied local housing stock	Substantial weight
Economic benefits of the proposed scheme through job creation and increased spending in the local area	Substantial weight
Social benefits of the proposed scheme, reducing social isolation and benefits to health and social care systems	Substantial weight
Environmental benefits of the proposed scheme including the delivery of ecological enhancements	Substantial weight

5.196 Recent appeal decisions have been noted below that effectively present the planning benefits of specialised accommodation for older persons, this includes a decision allowing for 31 retirement living apartments in Fleet, Hampshire; a decision allowing for 56 retirement living apartments in Basingstoke and a decision allowing for 45 retirement living apartments in Wigginton.

Appeal Decision Former Fleet Police Station, 13 Cookham Road, Fleet (APP/N1730/W/20/3261194) (May 2021)

5.197 The weight to be attached to the planning benefits of specialised accommodation for older persons was considered at a site in Fleet, Hampshire, by the Planning Inspectorate. The appeal was allowed for 31 retirement apartments by Churchill Retirement Living.

5.198 In weighing up the planning balance the Inspector set out at para 70:

"The following benefits would arise: (i) much needed housing for older people... significant weight should be given to this benefit; (ii) the development is of previously developed land (substantial weight); (iii) the development would be in a sustainable location (substantial weight); (iv) the development would make optimum use of the site (moderate weight); (v) the development would provide 31 market dwellings and is a clear benefit (substantial weight); (vi) the provision of the appellants payment to the delivery of affordable housing would be a significant benefit (substantial weight); (vii) there is a benefit releasing under occupied housing stock (substantial weight); (viii) the site would provide economic benefits by generating jobs, in the construction and operation phases of the development and by residents spending locally (substantial weight); (ix) there would be social benefits in specialised age friendly housing (substantial weight); (x) the environmental benefits of the scheme are a clear benefit

(moderate weight). Cumulatively, these 10 benefits weight heavily in favour of the appeal scheme especially given the critical need for housing for older people as identified at nation level in the NPPF and PPG and at a local level."

5.199 The Inspector goes on to state in para 71:

"Therefore, even if I had reached a contrary conclusion in terms of this appeal and found that there was a conflict with the development plan, any harm which might be identified as arising from the appeal proposal come nowhere near significantly and demonstrably outweighing the many and varied benefits of the appeal proposal. There is no reason to withhold planning permission in this case and I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

5.200 A copy of the decision is included at **Appendix C.**

Appeal Decision Basingstoke Police Station, London Road, Basingstoke RG21 4AD (APP/H1705/W/20/3248204) (June 2021)

5.201 This appeal decision in Basingstoke was allowed for 56 retirement apartments. In considering the planning balance, the Inspector sets out:

"The proposal would provide much needed housing for older people. In this respect, I note from evidence that there is a shortfall within the Borough for the provision of this type of accommodation and that there are no specific allocations for such development. Therefore, the Council is reliant on windfalls for their delivery. Such provision of specialist housing also allows for the release of under-occupied housing stock... In light of the advice contained within Para 59 of the Framework to significantly boost the supply of homes, and to meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements, it is appropriate to give significant weight to these benefits.

The proposal would involve the re-development of previously developed land, which is located within close proximity to the town centre and all the associated services and facilities that this has, thereby making the site sustainable in this respect. It is therefore appropriate to attach substantial weight to these benefits.

The proposal would provide economic benefits through generation of jobs, during both construction, but also once the development has been completed. Further benefits would also be delivered through increased spending by residents locally. Given the scale of the development proposed, it is appropriate to attach substantial weight to these benefits.

Further benefits would also be delivered through the optimum use of the site for new development, along with some environmental improvements through the reduction in hardstanding within the site. It is appropriate to afford these benefits moderate weight."

5.202 The Inspector goes on to conclude:

"In this instance, there is clear and convincing evidence with regards to the suitability of the proposal. The delivery of specialist housing weighs substantially in favour of the appeal scheme, especially given the critical need identified at national level in both the Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), along with the identified shortfall in terms of the delivery at local level. As a result, even if I had reached a different conclusion in relation to the heritage issues and found there to be harm to the identified designated heritage assets, any harm would have been clearly

outweighed by the significant public benefits of the scheme. Therefore, in this case, I find no reasons to withhold planning permission."

5.203 A copy of the decision is included in **Appendix D**.

Recent Appeal Decision - 11 The Village, Wigginton, York YO32 2PL (APP/C2741/W/23/3314331) (July 2023)

5.204 At a recent appeal in Wigginton (July 2023), for 45 retirement living units, the Inspector concluded:

- The provision of housing against no 5-year land supply attracted significant weight (paragraph 113).
- The provision of older persons housing to the existing unmet and critical need attracts significant weight (paragraph 113).
- The release of underoccupied housing stock attracts significant weight (paragraph 113).
- The site is in a sustainable location which attracts significant weight (paragraph 114).
- The redevelopment of the brownfield part of the site together with the environmental benefits of more suitable landscaping would also enhance the biodiversity and should attract significant weight (paragraph 114).
- Redevelopment of an underutilised site which attracts moderate weight (paragraph 114).
- The economic benefits attract significant weight (paragraph 115).
- The health and social benefits attract significant weight (paragraph 116).

5.205 The Inspector concludes at paragraphs 118 and 119:

"I have found no harm which individually or cumulatively would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As such the proposed development benefits from the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development and planning permission should be granted.

5.206 A copy of the appeal decision is included in **Appendix E**.

5.207 Overall the scheme is considered to meet the requirements of the development plan when read as a whole. Paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF provides that proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development is in full accordance with the Development Plan, **there is no policy objection to the delivery of the scheme and as such should be approved as per paragraph 11c of the NPPF without delay.**
- 6.2 The UK faces a rapidly growing and ageing population. The Government aims to **‘significantly boost the supply of housing’** The PPG is unequivocal in its message that ***“the need to provide housing for older people is critical”***.
- 6.3 The PPG is clear: *“where there is an identified unmet need for specialist housing, local authorities should take a positive approach to schemes that propose to address this need.”* **Substantial weight should be given to the proposal considering the high levels of specialist housing needs.**
- 6.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location being situated on the edge of the retail town centre with access to nearby town centre services and amenities. It offers opportunities for the future residents to walk to a range of services and facilities located a very short distance from the site. This is particularly important as people age, with many having to give up driving. **Substantial weight should be given to delivering development in a high-quality sustainable location.**
- 6.5 The scheme has been designed to reflect the character and scale of the surrounding area, whilst at the same time seeking to make the most efficient use of this sustainable site. **Substantial weight should be afforded to the efficient use of the land.**
- 6.6 The provision of retirement housing releases under occupied family homes back into the housing market. This in turn enables moves throughout the whole housing market, benefiting everyone including first time buyers. **Freeing up under occupied local housing stock should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of this application.**
- 6.7 The economic benefits associated with the application include:
- Savings to the NHS and social care services of £3,500 per person per year in retirement living accommodation (equating to £187,000 for this site)
 - Increased spending in local shops and services.
 - Creation of construction jobs as well as jobs within the local economy (Appendix B).
- 6.8 These benefits should be afforded **substantial weight in the determination of this application.**
- 6.9 The social benefits of the proposed development include:
- Encouraging independence in later life with suitably designed housing. Reducing reliance on residential and nursing care.
 - Providing safety and security and reducing management and maintenance concerns.
 - Companionship, reducing loneliness and social isolation and the associated health impacts.
 - Entertainment and social gatherings.
- 6.10 These social benefits are vital for mental health and quality of life as people age. **They should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of this application.**

- 6.11 The environmental benefits include:
- Efficient use of brownfield land, reducing the need for greenfield release.
 - Very close proximity to shops and facilities encouraging the residents to walk.
 - Shared facilities for residents in a single building makes efficient use of energy and resources.
 - Reduction of CO₂ emissions.
 - Use of low energy lighting with use of daylight and movement sensor controls.
 - Use of solar gains through roof-top PV panels.
- 6.12 These environmental benefits should be **afforded substantial weight in the determination of this application.**
- 6.13 There are numerous and significant benefits associated with the application which must be considered within the planning balance. The redevelopment of this will have significant social, economic and environmental benefits, as well as meeting an un-met housing need which is deemed critical by National Government.
- 6.14 As such it is considered the scheme accords with the Development Plan and it is clear that there are significant social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme.

APPENDIX A

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

APPENDIX B

Site Infographic by Lichfields

APPENDIX C

Appeal Decision, Fleet, May 2021

APPENDIX D

Appeal Decision, Basingstoke, June 2021

APPENDIX E

Appeal Decision, Wiggington, July 2023