
PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND OFF STATION ROAD, GREAT SHELFORD.

Redevelopment for retirement living accommodation for older people (sixty years of age and/or partner over fifty five years of age) comprising 39 retirement apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping.

planning*issues*
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 a proposed retirement living development on land off Station Road, Great Shelford. The application proposes redevelopment of the site to form 39 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 proposal is on a brownfield site. In accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 120c) substantial weight should be given to *the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes*.
- IV. The site is in a highly sustainable location. It offers opportunities for the future residents to walk to local shops and services and a short walk from the railway station. Substantial weight should be given to delivering development in a highly sustainable location.
- V. The principle of development is considered acceptable. This is a vacant brownfield site and the proposal complies with Policy S/6 as the site is identified as a rural centre, acknowledged as in need of development.
- VI. The scheme has been designed to reflect the character and scale of the surrounding area whilst making efficient use of this sustainable brownfield site. Significant weight should be afforded to the efficient use of land as required by paragraph 124 of the NPPF.
- VII. 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.
- VIII. There are numerous economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the application. These should respectively be afforded substantial and moderate weight in the determination of the application.
- IX. The scheme is considered to meet the requirements of the development plan when read as a whole. Paragraph 11c of the NPPF provides that proposal which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

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Rev:	DRAFT	FINAL
Date:	25/10/21	10/11/21
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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 for the proposed retirement living development on land at off Station Road, Great Shelford.

1.2 The proposal is to redevelop the site for 39 retirement living apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping. The mix comprises 27no. one bedroom apartments and 12no. two bedroom apartments.

1.3 This statement accompanies a detailed planning application. It should be read with the following supporting documents which accompany the application:

- Planning Statement by Planning Issues;
- Design and Access Statement by Planning Issues;
- Affordable Housing and Viability Statement by Planning Issues;
- Transport Statement by Paul Basham Associates
- Drainage Impact Assessment by Awcock Ward Partnership;
- Landscape Strategy by James Blake Associates;
- Heritage Statement by Orion;
- Public Consultation by Devcomms;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Tetrattech;
- Geotechnical Report by Crossfield Consulting
- Noise Assessment by 24Acoustics

1.4 The application includes the following plans:

Site Location Plan	40040GS/PL01
Ground Floor Plan	40040GS/PL02B
First Floor Plan	40040GS/PL03
Second Floor Plan	40040GS/PL04
Roof Plan	40040GS/PL05
Elevation Sheet 1	40040GS/PL06
Elevation Sheet 2	40040GS/PL07
Elevation Sheet 3	40040GS/PL08

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.

1.6 This site comprises of several 1.5 and 2 storey office buildings, partially fronting Station Road. The building fronting onto Station Road extends the most-part of the western boundary, the other units on site are located along the eastern and southern boundaries, both of which contribute little in streetscape terms. Access is via Station Road and the car park is located central to the site.

1.7 The works to be undertaken by Churchill Retirement Living are as follows:

- Demolition of the buildings currently on site

- Development of 39 no. apartments, resulting in an overall enhancement to the site and locality
- Provisioning of a reconfigured 16 space car park and new access onto Station Road, accommodating the residents.

1.8 The applicants submission will demonstrate an acceptable comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the site, including due regard to the setting of the Conservation Area.

OLDER PEOPLE HOUSING

- 2.1 On 26th June 2019 the Government published Guidance¹ on '*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*'².
- 2.2 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.

The Applicant

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.”

- 2.6 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' televisions 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;

¹ Planning Practice Guidance - www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people

² Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626. Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

- 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 stored and charged; and
- A communal refuse store.

2.7 The apartments are sold by the Applicant with a lease containing an age restriction which ensures that only people of 60 years or over, or those of 60 years or 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 planning 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 old) 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 who has since died; or*
- *Any other individual expressly agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

2.8 Notwithstanding the age restriction, the average age of purchasers of the apartments are 78 years old, with the average age of all occupiers being late 80s. 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 that they need.

2.9 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.

2.10 A recent 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 huge imbalance between need and supply is to be addressed.

2.11 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.

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING HISTORY

The Site

- 3.1 The 0.29 hectares site off Station Road comprising of several units and a central car park. The existing buildings are 1.5 and 2 storey in height. Vehicle access is via Station Road.
- 3.2 The character of the immediate surrounding area is mixed, comprising mainly of residential properties but with commercial units on site and in proximity to the railway station. To the north of the site is a contemporary development of townhouses and apartments, to the south, was until recently, a storage unit containing a fuel-depot, which has since been demolished for a new development of a 63 bed care home. The east of the site is the railway line and the west is a residential development of 1950s semi-detached houses.
- 3.3 The site is located within the built up area boundary of Great Shelford, the Local Planning Authority is South Cambridgeshire District Council. Great Shelford is identified as a rural centre and has a significant group of local shops and services.
- 3.4 The site is outside but adjacent to the Great Shelford Conservation Area which is opposite the entrance to the south and to the east of the site. The existing frontage buildings are back edge of the footpath and turn their back on the Conservation Area presenting an unbroken white render wall. The buildings are considered to have a neutral impact on the setting of the Conservation Area but are poor in terms of their overall quality and in urban design terms by turning their back on the public realm.

Planning History

- 3.5 There is no relevant planning history relating specifically to the application site, however the consents on the adjoining parcels of land, and most pertinently the adjoining care home are relevant.
- 3.6 Planning permission was granted in 2015 for the demolition of the previous Railway Tavern and its redevelopment of 12 dwellings (S/28020/15/FL). This is the development of three storey townhouses and apartments immediately to the north of the site.
- 3.7 Planning permission has been granted on the adjoining site to the south in September last year for a 63 bed care home for elderly people (S/3809/19/FL). The site was formally in an employment use as office buildings and a fuel depot. In considering the development proposal against Policy E/14 the Council determined that the proposal complied with criteria 2 of the policy and that the overall benefits to the community from the provision of specialised accommodation for elderly care needs outweighed any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises in the area.
- 3.8 The officer's report to committee also noted that the 'development would remove an existing commercial use that is not particularly compatible with the adjacent residential uses.'

Pre-Application Community Engagement

- 3.9 The Applicant is committed to engaging with local stakeholders on their proposed planning applications. As a result, the Applicant has a strong track record in consulting with members of the local community, specialist groups, local councillors and other relevant third party stakeholders in an open, transparent and comprehensive way.
- 3.10 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 39 that '*Early engagement has significant potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community*'.
- 3.11 Through the commitment of the Applicant, they have engaged with local representatives, involved residents and stakeholders, encouraged feedback, published the consultations online, and reviewed and adapted the proposals to look to address concerns or provided further evidence, as well as undertaking pre-application with the LPA.

Public Consultation

- 3.12 Churchill Retirement Living look to carry out public exhibitions where the local community can attend and put any questions or queries to the Developer, Architect and Planning Consultant and be able to discuss the plans. Unfortunately, due to the current pandemic, this has not been possible to carry out.
- 3.13 An online public consultation was held between 1st-8th October 2021, where plans were available to view and the applicant asked for feedback from the local community.
- 3.14 The Local Representatives could provide comment on the application proposals by emailing a designated inbox. Hard and electronic copies of the exhibition material and feedback forms are also available to be sent to those who requested them, one request was made through the event.
- 3.15 By way of advertising the consultation, letters were sent to circa 500 nearby residents and local business's with the addition of key stakeholders. An advert was also put in the local newspaper, The Cambridge News, on 24th September 2021 informing of the online consultation event. Details of the advertisement and the consultation material can be found in the Statement of Community Engagement that accompanies this application.
- 3.16 A total of 19 consultation comments were received to the online exhibition, details of which can found within the accompanying Statement of Community Engagement.

Councillor Engagement

- 3.17 As part of the applicant's pre-application engagement, DevComms, a political engagement company, were instructed to discuss the development with local ward Councillors and key members. Representatives of Planning Issues also presented to the planning committee of Great Shelford Parish Council on the 20th September 2021.

- 3.18 A summary of the discussions and comments raised are noted below:
- Concerns regarding parking provisions
 - Affordability of the product
 - Access to the site
 - No concerns were raised concerning redevelopment of the site for residential use
 - Welcomed the retirement age and the benefit they would bring by the way of use of the High Street.

The Proposed Development

- 3.19 The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site to form 39no. retirement living apartments.
- 3.20 The site is accessed via Station Road, which connects to High Street to the south-west of the site. The proposed development provides 16 car parking spaces for the apartments in a parking court to the northern part of the site.
- 3.21 A mobility scooter store is provided on site adjoining parking spaces and in close proximity to the entrance. The owners lounge is accessed via the main entrance, which is located next to the car parking court or through the amenity at the north of the site.
- 3.22 The proposed development will include a high-quality landscape amenity space in the form of communal garden area which will be maintained in perpetuity by the management company, *Millstream Management*. In addition, some balconies for occupiers are proposed along with a communal seating terrace off of the owners lounge.
- 3.23 The proposed development is two and a half to three storeys in height. Materials are proposed in line with the Great Shelford Village Design Statement, such as slate roof, buff brick, stone headers and cills.
- 3.24 Further details of the proposed development and materials can be found in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this planning application.

PLANNING POLICY 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 indicates otherwise.

Development Plan

- 4.2 The Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council is the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)

- 4.3 The planning policies that are relevant to the redevelopment of this site to older people housing on this proposal site are listed below.

- S/2 – Objectives of the Plan
- S/3 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S/6 – The Development Strategy to 2031
- S/7 – Development Frameworks
- S/8 – Rural Centres
- S/12 – Phasing, Delivery and Monitoring
- CC/1 – Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
- HQ/1 – Design Principles
- NH/4 – Biodiversity
- NH/14 – Heritage Assets
- H/9 – Housing Mix
- H/10 – Affordable Housing
- H/12 – Residential Space Standards
- E/14 – Loss of an Employment Land to Non Employment Uses
- SC/2 – Health Impact Assessment
- SC/4 – Meeting Community Needs
- TI/2 – Planning for Sustainable Travel
- TI/3 – Parking Provision

- 4.4 The South Cambridgeshire District Council began review of the Local Plan in conjunction with Greater Cambridge Council. Development Plans should be updated every five years; the adopted Local Plan was published in 2018, thus a revised Local Plan is required by 2023. The council will provide an updated plan period to 2043, where necessary changes to visions and objectives will be discussed.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.5 The revised National Planning Policy Framework was updated on 20th July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised NPPF replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, and revised in July 2018 and February 2019.
- 4.6 Paragraph 8 of the revised NPPF highlights three dimensions to sustainable development being economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 4.7 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*
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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."*
- 4.10 The revised 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.
- 4.11 Paragraph 69 of the revised NPPF acknowledges that small and medium sized sites make an important contribution to meeting housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a 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.
- 4.12 The revised NPPF identifies at Paragraph 120(c) that 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. Paragraph 120(d) advises that planning decisions should 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.

- 4.13 Paragraph 123 of the NPPF also advises local planning authorities to take a positive approach for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.
- 4.14 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.*
- 4.15 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Planning should be creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings. Paragraph 128 advocates the preparation of design codes or guides consistent with the National Design Guide and Model Design Code which should reflect local character and design. South Cambridgeshire from a pre-existing design guide.
- 4.16 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out a design set of criteria for planning policies and decision making. New development should add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping; sympathetic to local character; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of a site; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.
- 4.17 Under the Historic Environment section of the NPPF Paragraph 197 advises that Local Planning Authorities in determining applications should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.18 Paragraph 202 advises where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.19 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.

4.20 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).

4.21 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.

4.22 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.

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

³ Planning 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>

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The principle of redeveloping this site for specialised accommodation for older persons complies with the spatial objectives of the Local Plan and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF, Policy S/3). The site is previously developed land in a sustainable location within Great Shelford which is identified as a rural service centre. The redevelopment of the site complies with the overall spatial strategy set out in Policy S/6. The site is an unallocated site within a built up area and subject to a design that is compatible to the scale and character of the local area the proposal will comply with Policy S/7.
- 5.2 The principle of redeveloping the site for specialised accommodation for older persons would also comply with the objectives set out in Policies S/2 and H/9 in regard to providing a housing choice for older people looking to downsize to more manageable property. This has material benefits in providing older persons with appropriate housing in later years but also frees up under occupied family accommodation to better serve that sector of the local housing market.

Housing Delivery

- 5.3 There is a significant national drive to increase housing delivery. Para 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.
- 5.4 The planning system has a clear role in ensuring it delivers homes where they are most needed. As set out in para 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.
- 5.5 Within the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the Council have a housing provision target of 19,500 new homes up to 2031. Policy S/8 identifies Great Shelford as a rural centre and advises that development and redevelopment without any limit on scheme size will be permitted provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.
- 5.6 The South Cambridgeshire District Council's Five Year Housing Land Supply Report (September 2020) advises that the Council are able to demonstrate a land supply of 5.4 years.
- 5.7 The latest Housing Delivery Test for 2020 (published January 2021) shows that over the last 3 years, South Cambridgeshire delivered 114% of their housing target having completed 3,081 dwellings compared to their target of 2,708 dwellings.

5.8 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.

5.9 The proposed development of specialist older persons accommodation, 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

5.10 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).

5.11 The Homes for Later Living Report notes the need to deliver **30,000 retirement and extra care houses a year** in the UK to keep pace with demand (September 2019).

5.12 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 demand and need.

5.13 Based on the 2018 sub national population projections (released June 2020) **the percentage of people aged 65 and over is 16.6% in South Cambridgeshire compared to the England average of 18.2%. There is a projected increase to 22.9% in 2030 and 25.6% in 2040.**

5.14 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.

5.15 The age profile of the population can be drawn from Census data. South Cambridgeshire, as set out in Figure 1 identifies an age profile with a mean age of 40.1 and a median age of 41. However, the figures identify that **34,458 are over the age of 60, equating to 23.2% of the current population of the district.**

5.16 The Local Plan at Paragraph 7.3 starts to identify the growing need for accommodation to suit the needs of older persons. It advises that the District has 'an ageing population with growth forecasts between 2001 to 2021 of 95% for the

Date	2011
Geography	South Cambridgeshire
	value
All usual residents	148,755
Age 0 to 4	9,300
Age 5 to 7	5,483
Age 8 to 9	3,578
Age 10 to 14	9,106
Age 15	1,946
Age 16 to 17	3,789
Age 18 to 19	2,999
Age 20 to 24	7,148
Age 25 to 29	8,083
Age 30 to 44	31,957
Age 45 to 59	30,908
Age 60 to 64	9,756
Age 65 to 74	13,139
Age 75 to 84	8,166
Age 85 to 89	2,244
Age 90 and over	1,153
Mean Age	40.1
Median Age	41.0

Figure 1 - 2011 Census Data - Age Structure of South Cambridgeshire

60-74 age group and 108% for those over 75.' Paragraph 7.38 recognises that older people will need or prefer smaller or specialised accommodation which is easier to manage than the family home.

5.17 The Cambridgeshire Older People Strategy states that 'In Cambridgeshire, we expect to see the number of people over 65 grow by around a third over the next ten years, with a clear expectation that this will put pressure on services. The number of older people will grow faster than the population as a whole.'

5.18 The Strategy sets out a vision that includes; '*Older people remain independent, living in homes that are appropriate to their needs and actively engaged in their communities for as long as possible.*'

5.19 The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 contains on Page 19 'Building for an Ageing Population' where the Councils are looking to promote a range of housing options for older persons to enable safe and independent living for as long as possible. The strategy includes the provision of 'downsizer' accommodation to provide more housing choice for older people to move into smaller and more suitable accommodation but remain in their local community. The strategy acknowledges the role that specialist housing for older persons can have in tackling isolation and loneliness in later years. The strategy specifically states in respect to sheltered and extra care housing;

'There are a number of sheltered housing and extra care schemes for older people in the Greater Cambridge area, which enable older people to remain in the community, whilst at the same time having the opportunity to mix more with people of their own age where they choose to do so. Both councils are interested in exploring options for more housing specifically for older people.'

5.20 From the local research paper by Sheffield Hallam University the Council's housing strategy is looking to deliver 7% of all new housing provision as specialist accommodation for older people.

Loss of an Employment Use

5.21 Policy E/14 seeks to resist the loss of employment sites to other uses within development frameworks unless one of the following criteria are met; (my emphasis)

'1. It is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. Applications will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the site is not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use. Evidence would be required that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than 12 months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises; or

'2. The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises; or

'3. The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic and any alternative employment use would continue to generate similar environmental problems.'

- 5.22 The policy requires just one of the tests to be met for a proposal for the loss of employment site to comply with the policy.
- 5.23 It is noted from the officer's report that the recent consent for the care home on the adjacent site was approved with the Council considering that the benefits to the community of providing specialist accommodation for older persons outweighed the loss of the employment site. The nature and type of specialist accommodation for older people will vary from nursing homes, care homes, extra care facilities through to forms of independent living for later years as proposed. All serve a purpose in meeting a community's need to provide a range and mix of suitable accommodation for older persons. Given the Council's determination that the delivery of specialist accommodation for older people would outweigh the loss of an employment site in this location, it is therefore considered that the proposal complies with criteria 2 of Policy E/14.
- 5.24 In addition to the benefits of the proposed scheme outweighing the loss of an existing employment site, this planning application submission is accompanied by a marketing report provided by Cheffins. The marketing report identifies that;
- There is a falling demand for out of office employment space in the Cambridge market area;
 - The site and accommodation subject of this pre-application submission does not appeal to the market as evidenced by the number of vacant units on site and the associated marketing information;
 - Great Shelford and the surrounding environs is well serviced for office accommodation of a better quality than the pre-application site.
 - Market demand is for modern open plan office accommodation not aged stock that cannot meet modern office requirements.
- 5.25 In conclusion it is considered that the proposal as well as complying with criteria 2 would also comply with criteria 1 of Policy E/14 as it is no longer appropriate for the site to continue in an employment use given lack of market demand.

Design Considerations

- 5.26 This section looks to review the application proposal against the policies relating to the quality of the context, scale, massing and appearance of the proposed development. This section also discusses the rationale behind the design along with the discussions in pre application.
- 5.27 The National Design Guide forms planning practice guidance and illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The Guide sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places which contribute towards the themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The Design Guide lends some objectivity to the inherently subjective issue of 'good design'. At paragraph 64 the National Design Guide states:
- "Well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open space that optimises density. It also relates well to and enhances the existing character and context."*
- 5.28 The PPG establishes that 'good design' can be described with the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide, By clarifying that the National Design Guide does not

attempt to establish a 'one-size fits-all' approach to design for the whole country, it encourages the preparation of Local Design Guides.

- 5.29 Policy HQ/1 : Design Principles, sets out a range of criteria. key aspects of which are considered below:

Relationship to surroundings, Layout and Siting

- 5.30 The development potential of the site was assessed with a number of configurations which are reviewed and discussed within the Design and Access Statement at section 4.

- 5.31 In respect of the apartment building, as a response to the site constraints and opportunities, a kinked "I" shaped scheme facing Station Road was considered the most favourable arrangement and now forms the submission proposal. This arrangement provides a strong street frontage whilst providing a balance of landscaping and private amenity space. The layout as proposed provides suitable access to the site and an appropriate level of parking and the widening of the footpath to the front of the site for better ease of movement for pedestrians.

Neighbour Amenity

- 5.32 To the South is the development site, which is to be a three storey 63 bed care-home, which will be one main block. As both developments are centrally located within their site boundaries, producing adequate separation distances. The proposed scheme at its closest point is 13.7m from the care home but this is with a flank wall with no windows. There is a secondary living room window in apartments 3, 25, 29 with a separation distance of 16m which as a secondary window is considered to be acceptable but could be obscured glazed through planning condition.

- 5.33 Regarding the properties to the North, 4-6 Station Road, the proposed development has a separation distance of 15m at its closest point to those properties but has been carefully designed to ensure no unacceptable overlooking to these properties with no windows in the closest flank wall of the proposed development in proximity to 4-6 Station Road.

- 5.34 To the west of the site are the 1950's semi detached dwellings these are on the opposite side of the road with the public realm in between. The proposal follows the building line established by the adjoining townhouses and the relationship to properties on the opposite side of the road is consistent with the existing situation.

- 5.35 In terms of the east aspect of the site, a railway line lies adjacent to the eastern boundary, therefore it is not considered that there would be any undue impact on amenity to the east.

Scale, Height and Massing

- 5.36 The scale and design of the building has been strongly influenced by the existing character of the area and the Heritage Statement that accompanies the application and the recently permitted schemes directly adjoining the site.

- 5.37 In order to provide an appearance that better reflects the rhythm of the adjacent townhouse development, the façades of the apartment block have been broken down

into town house sized elements. This will allow the three storey apartment block to outwardly reflect the scale and height of the townhouses to the immediate north.

- 5.38 The proposed building is the same height as the adjoining townhouse development to the Station Road frontage at two and half storeys and increases to an element of three storeys to the rear of the site facing the railway line. This increase in height going back into the site follows the approved design approach for the adjacent care home which increases in height further back into the site.

Links, Connectivity and Access

- 5.39 The proposal will help repair this part of Station Road, defining the area and creating an attractive street frontage. The current buildings are hard up to the footpath and turn their backs on the road and the Conservation Area. The proposed scheme provides an attractive active frontage to Station Road. The building line has also been pushed back into the site to reinforce the building line started by the townhouse scheme. This provides the opportunity to improve pedestrian movements outside of the site by widening the footpath to 2.1m.

- 5.40 The design proposes a well-defined entrance to Station Road, with pedestrian and vehicular access

Density

- 5.41 The scheme has been supported by Design and Access Statement which provides an understanding of the context, and through engagement the proposals have been developed to resolve a contextually informed proposal.
- 5.42 The scheme has demonstrably addressed the constraints and opportunities of the site and had regard to the local context including heritage assets and their setting.
- 5.43 The National Design Guide states at paragraph 62 that well-designed places have compact forms of development. At page 20, 'compact' is defined as relatively high density and an urban layout.
- 5.44 The scheme proposes a compact form of development that reflects the pattern and grain of this part of Great Shelford. The proposed development can be comfortably and appropriately accommodated on site without causing harm to amenity for existing and proposed residents and by meeting the required amenity standards.

Appearance and Materials

- 5.45 From review of the surrounding context, the area is made up of traditional buildings. The majority of buildings have brick or render external finishes with slate or concrete tiled roofs. Chimneys are apparent on traditional buildings and the use of brick detailing can be seen in the area.
- 5.46 The design approach of the proposal has sought to be responsive to the surrounding context and character of the area identified above.
- 5.47 In response to the site location close to the centre of Great Shelford, and in keeping with the majority of the residential development on Station Road the proposed

accommodation will be built to provide a traditional appearance in terms of its elevational treatment and detailing.

- 5.48 There is a varied palette of traditional building materials in evidence in the locality, although gault brick and render are predominate within the area. The proposed development will therefore use materials that will help it to assimilate with, rather than contrast with its neighbours.
- 5.49 The scheme proposes a 3 storey building using traditional materials and good design to reflect the character of the area. The proposed materials are a combination of slate roofing, buff brick with stone headers and cills and Georgian proportion to windows.
- 5.50 In accordance with Paragraphs 119, 124, 125, 130 and 134 of the NPPF and the National Design Guide the Scheme is design led. Is of high quality and is in compliance with Policy HQ/1: Design Principles.

Heritage Assets

- 5.51 The Planning Application is supported by a Heritage Assessment by Ecus Ltd.
- 5.52 The Great Shelford Conservation Area adjoins the application site to the west and south-west. The character of the designation comprises an older core around the church and later ribbon development along the edges of the former village green. The Heritage Statement confirms that there would be no harm to the setting of the Great Shelford Conservation Area as a result of the proposed development,
- 5.53 Furthermore, the Stapleford Conservation Area is located approximately 380 metres to the east of the application site. There is no inter-visibility between the site and the heritage asset, given the distance between them and the intervening development that exists. Therefore, there would be no harm on the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 5.54 There are no listed buildings located within the application site or in its immediate vicinity.
- 5.55 The Heritage Statement confirms that the The design approach adopted ensures that the new build is responsive to the local vernacular in terms of its scale and placement within the application site. The approach along Station Road utilises a restrained scale which ensures that the new build is responsive to the important attributes of the Conservation Area to the south-west.
- 5.56 The recent consent for the adjoining care home and removal of the employment uses on that site were considered not to detrimentally affect the Conservation Area.
- 5.57 It is considered that there is no harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site, the proposals are considered to comply with the town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, NPPF.

Amenity Space

- 5.58 The applicant has considerable experience in delivering retirement developments nationwide. This has given a clear understanding of the use of and need for amenity space.
- 5.59 The quality of amenity space is important to prospective residents. Churchill Retirement Living have won awards for excellence for their landscaped gardens.



Figure 2 - Tregolls Court, Truro Award winning landscaping.

- 5.60 Typical purchasers are 80 year old widows. The move into retirement living accommodation is typically a needs based move, with the main drivers being the death of a partner, companionship, downsizing as the family property is too large to manage or not suited to mobility needs, and to be closer to shops and services.
- 5.61 The experience of the applicant is that high quality amenity space is far more important than quantity. Residents wish to have a pleasant outlook, with high quality planting, and value this far more than large areas of green space. Residents use the space in a passive way. Active use of external amenity space tends to be relatively limited and mainly involves sitting out for those few residents who occasionally choose to do so, and perhaps tending a few small flower pots immediately outside of ground floor apartments where access is provided to individual apartments. Large grassed areas of external amenity space are just not required.
- 5.62 A landscape strategy is submitted in support of this application which shows the landscaping and planting that will be provided on the site. Native species will be used to enhance biodiversity. Borders are included with species chosen to add visual interest but also to encourage pollinators.
- 5.63 In addition there is the internal communal lounge and coffee bar. This is a highly valued space, where residents often meet for coffee or to play card games and is useable all year round. Film nights, book clubs, wine and cheese evenings as well as summer parties are also organised. Residents value this amenity space far more than large grassed areas and is usable all year round.
- 5.64 The upper floors include balconies and Juliet balconies, providing further amenity space. However, experience has shown that older people derive considerable pleasure and enjoyment from interacting with others as a community in the communal lounges and terraces. This is not everyone's preference, but is something residents chose to buy into when they purchase a property.
- 5.65 The experience of Churchill is that the vast majority of apartments are occupied by a single person, with many choosing to move in having found their current family home too much to maintain, or after the loss of a partner, or needing to give up using a private motor vehicle and to be closer to shops, services and public transport. The apartments themselves therefore provide a lot of private space. However, residents highly value the communal lounge and terraces as places to spend time with friends.

- 5.66 Despite this, the main external amenity space is located to the south of the site, screened away from Station Road by the development. As well as a smaller amenity space located outside the Owner's Lounge. Ground floor apartments have their own private patios which are often used for a few pots. Balconies to some of the upper floor apartments provide additional private amenity space.
- 5.67 Overall, given the balance of achieving efficient use of land as set out in paragraph 124 of the NPPF combined with a clear understand of the needs of the residents and the emphasis on high quality landscaping, it is strongly considered that the proposed amenity space will meet the needs of the residents.

Technical Considerations

- 5.68 The technical considerations have been considered from a desk based assessment, pre application discussions and site visit/s. The technical considerations identified can be broken down to the following headings:
- Highways and Parking
 - Refuse
 - Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Heritage;
 - Landscape;
 - Ecology;
 - Affordable Housing; and
 - Sustainability and Energy Use

Highways and Parking

- 5.69 A Transport Statement has been produced by Paul Basham Associates in support of the planning application.
- 5.70 Vehicle access is proposed to be taken from Station Road and will serve a parking court of 16 unallocated space for residents of the development.
- 5.71 This equated to a parking ratio of 0.41 spaces per unit which is considered to be wholly appropriate. As set out in the Transport Statement, the experience of Churchill is that 0.3 spaces per apartment meets the required demand. Parking surveys show a demand for 0.28 spaces per unit (these are attached to the Transport Statement).
- 5.72 The proposed development by its very nature is a low traffic generator and it is anticipated that there would be a net reduction in motorised vehicles coming from the site as a result of the development. The Council's policy T/3 on indicative parking standards does not provide any such standards for specialised accommodation for older persons. The policy does state that regard will be had to the nature of the proposed development, its location in terms of sustainability, and access to other modes of transport. The site is within an identified rural service centre on an existing bus route with Great Shelford train station within 200m of the site. It is considered that the site is well suited to the proposed use being in a highly sustainable and accessible location.
- 5.73 Further information on the empirical studies of existing Churchill Retirement Living developments can be found in the accompanying Transport Statement.

- 5.74 Residents move in typically at the age of 80 and either immediately or not long after tend to give up their cars, it is often one of the main reasons for choosing this form of specialised accommodation. Being in a location within walking distance of local shops and facilities encourages most residents to give up use of their cars. Average occupancy of these forms of apartments is 1.25 person per apartment which indicates that they predominantly tend to be single person occupancy. The lodge offers a home shopping service, in which the Lodge Manager will organise a bulk delivery of food shopping orders.
- 5.75 The NPPF promotes sustainable transport and 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.
- 5.76 From a sales perspective, Churchill would not want to provide a development with insufficient parking as it would upset residents and deter future purchasers. As such a thorough understanding has been obtained from existing schemes to ensure the appropriate number of spaces are provided.
- 5.77 The NPPF is clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Further information is provided within the Transport Statement submitted to accompany this application.

Refuse

- 5.78 The development proposal has a communal refuse store which can be accessed internally. Double doors are provided to prevent odour.
- 5.79 Within the refuse room small bags of household waste and recycling material from each individual flat can be decanted into larger shared wheeled bins, clearly designated for specific waste storage.
- 5.80 The refuse store is located within 10m of the highway and so it is anticipated that on street collection would be appropriate, however a collection point on the back edge of the footpath has been designed into the scheme. The doors will be unlocked on collection day by the lodge manager and bins moved as appropriate.
- 5.81 Churchill have developed a detailed understanding of the typical waste requirements based on experience of their existing lodges. The majority of apartments are single occupancy and the owners are daily basket shoppers with a low carbon footprint who generate small amounts of waste. The proposed refuse room is therefore suitable to meet the required needs.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.82 The application is supported by a Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note produced by Awcock Ward Partnership

- 5.83 To ensure the development is safe throughout its lifetime, the surface water strategy accounts for runoff in up to the 1 in 100 year return period. The strategy also safeguards against climate change (40%), providing betterment over existing conditions, where the rate and volume of runoff would continue to increase due to climate change.
- 5.84 The proposed development has been assessed in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to allow the planning application to be progressed and to show that the development can be undertaken in an acceptable manner from a flood risk perspective.
- 5.85 The proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not known to be susceptible to flooding from pluvial, groundwater, infrastructure or artificial sources. The application and drainage statement is supported by a drainage strategy plan and I would refer to that document.

Biodiversity

- 5.86 Policy NH/4 is the Council's policy in respect to biodiversity. The policy requires development proposals to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be permitted. The policy states that new development must aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and the opportunities should be taken to achieve positive gain through the form and design of development.
- 5.87 A Bat Roost assessment has been carried out by TetraTech which confirms there is negligible potential for bats within any of the buildings on site.
- 5.88 New native tree, hedgerow and shrub planting along with amenity grassland could increase opportunities for wildlife and help the site to achieve a biodiversity net gain. To create additional ecological enhancements at the site and in line with local planning guidance, the provision of bird and bat boxes is also recommended to improve opportunities for UK and local priority species.
- 5.89 The site in its current state is 100% hardstanding or buildings. The proposed development will increase the biodiversity with the site by the introduction of new areas of soft landscaping and tree planting.
- 5.90 The exact details of the landscaping proposals are set out in the landscaping strategy plan and it would be appropriate to control landscaping by means of condition to ensure the landscaping takes the opportunities to improve biodiversity.

Affordable Housing

- 5.91 Policy H10 seeks 40% provision of affordable housing from schemes of 11 or more units. The policy does advise that a lower level of provision may be negotiated where the proposed scheme is not viable to meet the policy target of 40%. The policy does also allow for provision to be made via an off-site financial contribution where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible to provide affordable units on-site or elsewhere off-site.
- 5.92 The nature of specialised forms of older persons accommodation makes it difficult to provide affordable housing within a private sector development of retirement living.

This is partly due to management regimes with housing associations not wishing to take a small number of units within a private sector development of specialist housing and on-going service charge schedules. It is common place for these forms of accommodation to make provision for any affordable housing provision by off-site financial contribution.

- 5.93 Affordable housing policies are also not designed with this form of accommodation in mind as large amounts of the proposed building are communal space. The NPPG on viability and housing for older persons recognises that the viability of specialised accommodation for older persons is different to mainstream housing.
- 5.94 The application is supported by an Affordable Housing Statement and financial viability appraisal. The report concludes that the proposed scheme could deliver circa £520,000 towards the provision of affordable housing. This is not an insignificant sum and will positively contribute to the delivery of affordable housing and complies with Policy H10.

Sustainability Measures

- 5.95 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.
- 5.96 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.
- 5.97 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.
- 5.98 Construction of the developments incorporates the use of local materials where possible and many energy saving devices, which is assisted by the containment of the apartments in a single block.
- 5.99 The Applicant continually reviews their environmental policies examining the newly evolving sustainable systems for incorporation into their developments where appropriate. Indeed, the use of photovoltaic tiles within the development proposal demonstrates Churchill Retirement Living's commitment to the principles of Sustainable Development and for on-site energy generation.

Waste and Recycling During Construction and In Operation

- 5.100 During Construction as scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works will be considered, with priority given to reuse of building materials on site. Details can be provided in a Construction Management Plan that can form a suitably worded planning condition.

- 5.101 A Site Waste Management plan will be present onsite to ensure that operatives, contractors and staff are routinely monitored for compliance.

Conserving Water Resources and Minimising Vulnerability to Flooding

- 5.102 To reduce excessive potable water use in the proposed apartments, the latest energy and water saving devices will be provided. In addition, all apartments will be fitted with flow restrictors, aerated taps and dual flush low capacity cisterns.
- 5.103 The Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note produced by AWP has been provided in support of the planning application. The assessment concludes that the development site can be redeveloped without increasing flood risk from surface water in and around the development or increasing the load on the existing public sewer network and allows for a suitable drainage strategy for surface water drainage.

The Type, Life Cycle, and Source of Materials to be used

- 5.104 The materials of the development have been considered in relation to the local character and delivering a development of high quality design.
- 5.105 Materials have been specified on the elevation drawings submitted in support of the planning application. Final details of materials will be agreed under a suitably worded planning condition prior to commencement.
- 5.106 The materials proposed will be sourced locally where possible; making sure that the products life cycle meets the relevant certified standard along with BES6001 Framework Standard for Responsible Sourcing of Construction Material.

6. BENEFITS & PLANNING BALANCE

6.1 In accordance with the NPPF and S/3, the scheme will make important contributions to the delivery of sustainable development:

6.2 Older peoples housing produces a large number of significant benefits which can help to reduce the demands exerted on Health and Social Services and other care facilities – not only in terms of the fact that many of the residents remain in better health, both physically and mentally, but also doctors, physiotherapists, community nurses, hairdressers and other essential practitioners can all attend to visit several occupiers at once. This leads to a far more efficient and effective use of public resources.

Economic

6.3 The report '*Healthier and Happier*' by WPI Strategy for Homes for Later Living explored the significant savings that Government and individuals could expect to make if more older people in the UK could access this type of housing. The research also looked at maximising independence and increasing social interaction – homes for later living can significantly improve the wellbeing of older people. The analysis showed that:

- ❖ *'Each person living in a home for later living enjoys a reduced risk of health challenges, contributing to fiscal savings to the NHS and social care services of approximately £3,500 per year.*
- ❖ *Building 30,000 more retirement housing dwellings every year for the next 10 years would generate fiscal savings across the NHS and social services of £2.1bn per year.*
- ❖ *On a selection of national well-being criteria such as happiness and life satisfaction, an average person aged 80 feels as good as someone 10 years younger after moving from mainstream housing to housing specially designed for later living.'*

6.4 **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 services of approximately £3,500 per year** (*Homes for Later Living September 2019*). More detail on these financial savings is set out within the report.

6.5 With 39 units proposed, at a ratio of 1.3 people per apartment, there will be around 51 occupants. At a saving of £3,500 each per year, this equates to **a saving of £177,450 per year in local NHS and social care costs**, in comparison to mainstream housing. This is a significant economic benefit.

6.6 A recent report entitled *Silver Saviours for the High Street* (February 2021) found that retirement properties create more local economic value and more local jobs than any other type of residential development. For an average 45 unit retirement scheme, the

residents generate **£550,000 of spending a year, £347,000 of which is spent on the high street**, directly contributing to keeping local shops open.

6.7 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.

6.8 An average retirement scheme will support the following new jobs:

- **85 construction jobs**
- **1 permanent job in repairs and renovations**
- **2.3 permanent jobs in management and care**
- **3.2 permanent jobs on the local high street (residents are basket shoppers and will do their shopping locally)**

6.9 Older peoples housing also helps to address a common and growing problem experienced by many local authorities by releasing housing onto the general market which is currently under-occupied; help to maximize urban previously developed land which helps to reduce pressure for development on more sensitive sites in greenfield locations; help to discourage the use of private vehicles by being located within highly sustainable locations in relation to town centres and public transport routes; and introduce a neighbourly use of the sites, which as a result can add to the vitality and vibrancy of district/town centres

6.10 **Substantial weight should be afforded to these economic benefits.**

Social

6.11 Retirement housing gives rise to many social benefits:

- Specifically designed housing for older people offers significant opportunities to enable 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 helps 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.
- Churchill developments offer a formal coffee morning as well as a number of informal coffee gatherings. Residents often organise bridge clubs, gardening clubs and weekly film nights in the communal lounge. There are also group trips into the town centre for coffee and shopping. Churchill also organise a number of events each year such as summer garden parties, cheese and wine nights, musical nights with tribute acts.

- 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.

6.12 The requirement of the NPPF at paragraph 91 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.

6.13 **Substantial weight should be afforded to these social benefits**

Environmental

6.14 The proposal provides a number of key environmental benefits by:

- Making more efficient use of land thereby reducing the need to use limited land resources for housing.
- Providing housing in close proximity to services and shops which can be easily accessed on foot thereby reducing the need for travel by means which consume energy and create emissions.
- Providing shared facilities for a large number of residents in a single building which makes more efficient use of material and energy resources.
- The proposal includes renewable technology through the use of solar panels to assist in the reduction of CO₂ emissions.
- All areas of the building will be lit using low energy lighting and where applicable utilise daylight and movement sensor controls.

6.15 It is therefore considered that there are significant benefits that arise from a retirement housing development that will benefit the local community.

6.16 **Moderate weight should be afforded to these environmental benefits.**

6.17 Overall there are significant benefits associated with the proposed development. It is considered that the scheme complies with the principles of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and S/3.

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

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

6.19 In weighing up the planning balance the Inspector set out at paragraph 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 national level in the NPPF and PPG and at a local level.”

6.20 The Inspector goes on to state at paragraph 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 comes 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”.

6.21 A copy of the decision is included at Appendix A.

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

6.22 This very recent 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 the 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 Paragraph 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 the generation of jobs, during both the 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."

6.23 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"

6.24 A copy of the decision is included in Appendix B.

Planning Balance

6.25 It is evident that there is 'critical' need for the delivery of older people housing in the Country and a significant pressing need within the administrative boundary of South Cambridgeshire. This planning application proposal will contribute towards delivering these much needed homes, including much needed older people housing. That contribution can be considered as a significant benefit which weighs strongly in favour of this planning application.

6.26 From the supporting documents, plans and reports of the planning application, it can be concluded unequivocally that the site is appropriate for older people housing and in a sustainable and accessible location.

6.27 Through a review of the planning application it can be confirmed that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan. The development is wholly acceptable in terms of the footprint of the building in relation to the scale of the site and surrounding locality. It is therefore concluded that the development is of a scale, mass, bulk and design that is acceptable and will not harm the character and appearance of the locality whilst providing a high quality development.

6.28 In review of the other technical considerations, it can be concluded from that the planning application proposal complies in all aspects with the relevant Development Plan policies and the NPPF.

6.29 The recent appeal decision at Former Fleet Police Station in Fleet⁷ identifies the weight to be given to benefits in relation to older people housing (see Appendix A) and a copy of this is incorporated in the below table:

Fleet Planning Benefits	Fleet Weight
Provision of 31 residential dwellings	Significant
Redevelopment of a Previously Developed Site	Significant
Redeveloping a Sustainable Site	Significant
Effective and Efficient use of Land	Significant
Meeting local housing need for older persons	Significant
Meeting local housing need for affordable housing	Significant
Visual enhancement of the townscape	Significant
Freeing up under occupied local housing stock	Significant
Economic Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Significant
Social Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Significant
Environmental Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Moderate

6.30 This site is no different to that appeal decision and the decision taker could come to the same conclusion when doing the Planning Balance in relation to this proposed development. For ease of reference, the table above has been updated to reflect this application:

Great Shelford Planning Benefits	Great Shelford Weight
Provision of 39 residential dwellings	Significant
Redevelopment of a Previously Developed Site	Significant
Redeveloping a Sustainable Site	Significant
Effective and Efficient use of Land	Significant
Meeting local housing need for older persons	Significant

⁷ Appeal Reference APP/N1730/W/20/3261194

Meeting local housing need for affordable housing	Significant
Visual enhancement of the townscape	Significant
Freeing up under occupied local housing stock	Significant
Economic Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Significant
Social Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Significant
Environmental Benefits of the Proposed Scheme	Moderate

6.31 Overall the scheme is considered to meet the requirements of the development plan when read as a whole. Paragraph 11c of the NPPF provides that proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. There are numerous and significant benefits associated with the application which should be afforded substantial weight in its determination.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This full planning application seeks permission for 39 retirement living units, communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping. This planning statement demonstrates how the development proposals will deliver a sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.2 The proposed scheme subject of this application has been designed to accord with comments received through the previous application on the site.
- 7.3 When considering the above considerations highlighted within this Planning Statement and apply them against the Development Plan and paragraph 11 of the NPPF. It can be concluded that:
- ❖ The principle of residential development is acceptable.
 - ❖ The proposed development would bring basket shoppers/footfall to the area which would increase local spending.
 - ❖ The proposed development would be sensitive to and conserve the surrounding townscape and landscape character;
 - ❖ The proposed development would not result in detriment to highway safety and the site can be safely accessed on foot via a separate pedestrian access;
 - ❖ The site is located in a sustainable location with good connections to services and facilities;
 - ❖ The proposal would contribute to the economy of the local area through the number of new residents who would use and facilitate existing local services;
- 7.4 It is evident that there **is critical need for the delivery of older people housing** in the district and a significant pressing need within the administrative boundary of the Council. This planning application proposal will contribute towards delivering these much needed homes, including older people housing. That contribution can be considered as a significant benefit which weighs strongly in favour of this planning application.
- 7.5 From the supporting documents, plans and reports of the planning application, it can be concluded unequivocally that the site is appropriate for older peoples housing and in a sustainable and accessible location.
- 7.6 Planning law requires that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is one such material consideration and confirms that the development plan is an essential component of the plan-led system.
- 7.7 The development is wholly acceptable in terms of the footprint of the building in relation to the scale of the site and surrounding locality. It is therefore concluded that the development is of a scale, mass, bulk and design that is acceptable and will not harm the character and appearance of the locality whilst providing a high quality development.

- 7.8 In review of the other technical considerations, it can be concluded from that the planning application proposal complies in all aspects with the relevant Development Plan policies and the NPPF.
- 7.9 Turning to National Planning Policy, Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged which identifies that '*decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.
- 7.10 Part (c) of paragraph 11 sets out that "*approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay*";
- 7.11 It has been concluded that there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF, as a whole and that the benefits that are provided are significant and therefore planning permission should be granted without delay.

APPENDIX A

APPEAL DECISION, FORMER FLEET POLICE
STATION, FLEET, GU51 5QQ
APP/N1730/W/20/3261194

APPENDIX B

APPEAL DECISION, FORMER BASINGSTOKE
POLICE STATION, BASINGSTOKE, RG21 4AD
APP/H1705/W/20/3248204