

# Addendum Sustainability Statement

Client: Thurlaston Meadows Care Home

Project: Retirement Village



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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Land & Planning Consultants Limited has been instructed by Thurlaston Meadows Care Home to provide professional advice on its property and current planning application reference R20/1030. The applicant is stated as Eastdene Investments Limited.
- 1.2 The proposed development is part of the expansion and rationalisation of Thurlaston Meadows Care Home in application reference R21/0152 and comprises 35 extra care units together with new facilities to include a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) (incorporating tennis courts), bowling green, health/fitness facilities with creche, shop/community building and a bus service.
- 1.3 This statement focuses on the sustainability issues in relation to the proposed development and weighs up its village location constraint versus the numerous sustainability benefits of the proposals. It should be read in conjunction with the Sustainability Statement originally submitted with the planning application dated November 2000 prepared by Rebecca Chapman Design LLP.

## **2.0 Sustainability Issues and Benefits**

- 2.1 As stated in the introduction, a sustainability statement was submitted with the planning application prepared by Rebecca Chapman Design LLP. This statement supplements this original statement, adding more detail where necessary and assesses sustainability as a whole.

### **Planning Policy**

- 2.2 Rugby Borough Local Plan (RBLP) adopted June 2019 contains a number of policies in relation to sustainable development. It could be argued that the whole of the Local Plan relates to sustainable development as there is a direct correlation between the objectives of town planning and the objectives of achieving sustainable development. However, it is considered that the following policies are the most relevant in this case:

- Policy GP1: Securing Sustainable Development
- Policy GP2: Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy DS1: Overall Development Needs
- Policy H6: Specialist Housing
- Policy HS1: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
- Policy HS3: Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services
- Policy HS4: Open Space, Sports Facilities and Recreation
- Policy HS5: Traffic Generation and Air Quality, Noise and Vibration
- Policy NE1: Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets
- Policy SDC1: Sustainable Design
- Policy SDC4: Sustainable Buildings
- Policy SDC6: Sustainable Drainage
- Policy SDC8: Supporting the Provision of Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technology
- Policy D1: Transport
- Policy D2: Parking Facilities

- 2.3 It is considered that the proposed development complies with and is supported by all of the above policies save for Policy GP2 which is discussed under the next heading.

### **Location**

- 2.4 The main concern identified by the replacement case officer is the site's location in relation to Policy GP2. The policy introduces a settlement hierarchy with the aim of directing development to the main settlements as generally this is perceived as being the most sustainable spatial strategy and in terms of major housing and major employment developments, this approach is correct.

- 2.5 However, each application ought to be considered on its own individual merits and the sustainability of extra care housing is very different to national house builder sites.
- 2.6 In terms of the site's hierarchy under Policy GP2, the site does partially fall within the boundary of Thurlaston (inset map appended to this statement) and therefore this element of the proposed development is fully in compliance with Policy GP2. The remainder of the site is open countryside as a default zoning despite physically being within the village of Thurlaston. However, the site is previously developed comprising a care home and associated development and a dwelling (Patricks Field). It is accepted that the latest revisions to the NPPF removed residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land.
- 2.7 It is also important to note that the proposed site is circa 500m away from the Southwest SUE in the adopted Local Plan which as the acronym SUE implies, must be a sustainable location.
- 2.8 There is a precedent set for extra care housing on similar sites contrary to Policy GP2 by the approval of application reference R20/0213 comprising 11 extra care bungalows and 40 extra care apartments on the site of Inwoods House. For the reasons explained in the statement, the development proposed at Thurlaston Meadows Care Home is far more sustainable than this consent which lacked any on site facilities and community transport.

### **Definition of Sustainable Development**

- 2.9 There are numerous other factors that must be taken into account when determining whether development is sustainable or not. It is important therefore to first examine what defines sustainable development.
- 2.10 The International Institute for Sustainable Development still quotes the definition of sustainable development from the 1987 Brundtland Report and this remains the simplest definition to date and is:

*“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

- 2.11 The UK Government has a number of definitions of sustainable development. The DWP quote a government wide definition from an April 2013 publication in chapter 10 of its statutory guidance (April 2023):

*“The government is committed to sustainable development. This means making the necessary decisions now to realise our vision of stimulating economic growth and tackling the deficit, maximising wellbeing and protecting our environment, without affecting the ability of future generations to do the same..”*

- 2.12 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF advises on how we can achieve sustainable development and outlines 3 overarching objectives:

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

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

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

- 2.13 It is clear therefore that sustainability and sustainable development encompasses more than just 'location' but indeed every single aspect of a development from economic benefits, to providing homes for future generations and protecting the environment through a wide range of measures.

### **Economic Benefits**

- 2.14 The proposed development meets the economic objectives to achieve sustainable development as advised by the NPPF. In fact, the economic benefits will be substantial.
- 2.15 The main economic benefit is sustaining the longevity of Thurlaston Meadows Care Home by the transformation of its site into a modern retirement village that is adaptable and can meet the needs of all sectors of the elderly population which is defined by OECD as people aged 65 and over. The existing care home is an integral part of the retirement village proposal with synergy between it and proposed development. Thus, the attractiveness of the care home to clients will be significantly enhanced and vice versa to the extra care unit clients that will benefit from services provided by the care home.
- 2.16 When assessing sustainable development, one should also consider the disbenefit from not allowing development. In this case, the existing care home would become less competitive and the cost of staff and servicing would be more expensive than would otherwise be the case. In the long term, the worst case could be a non-viable business and consequently a very large redundant set of buildings. It is a constantly evolving business hence it has had to change its business model over the years and improvements are always needed to exceed CQC regulation standards and meet client expectations; hence application R21/0152 to extend and reorganize the home.
- 2.17 There will be numerous significant direct economic benefits. An immediate benefit will be the significant economic boost to the local construction industry from the construction

of 35 extra care units, the MUGA, the wellness/creche facility, the shop/community building as well as the associated infrastructure of the retirement village complex including the access/road, car parking, SUDS, internet, electricity, water supply, sewerage and landscaping.

- 2.18 Once established, the proposed development will maintain and significantly increase employment at the retirement complex. Whilst exact numbers are not known at this stage, it is clear new staff will be required to run the shop/community building, the wellness/creche facility and run the electric community taxi/bus service. Additional staff will also be required to maintain the grounds, 24-hour security and maintain the buildings. It is likely that additional catering staff will be required as well as delivery staff to deliver post/goods and meals to the extra care units. Existing staff levels comprise 33 full-time and 19 part-time staff. It is anticipated that at least 12 more members of staff will be required as well as external contractors such as health care professionals.
- 2.19 The spin-off or indirect benefits will also significantly boost the local economy.

### **Social Benefits**

- 2.20 Significant weight should be attributed to the proposed development meeting Rugby's important social objective of the provision of extra care housing. The need for such housing and the critical shortage in the borough is explained in a separate 'extra care housing need statement'. There is presently no planned or permitted provision that is likely to come forward in the short-medium term apart from 5 units at Lime Tree Village whereas at least a combined total 765 private extra care units are needed between 2022-2032 (Coventry and Warwickshire HEDNA Nov 2022).
- 2.21 Linked to provision is the spin off benefits of releasing circa 35 homes that the potential residents currently occupy because there is nothing suitable available in the market. Retired couples are often trapped in family homes that could be put to better use for families.
- 2.22 There are significant other demonstrable social benefits that will meet the proposed retirement village and local community's health and social well-being needs. The site layout demonstrates substantial areas of safe and beautiful open space that will be designed to encourage wildlife. The wellness/creche facility and shop/community building will both clearly meet the NPPF objectives on sustainable development and be of great benefit to existing and future residents as will the MUGA and bowling green. On-site entertainment and the electric bus/taxi service are further social benefits.

### **Environmental Benefits**

- 2.23 The proposed development has been designed to provide an exhaustive list of significant environmental benefits.
- 2.24 The re-use of previously developed land is one benefit that has already been mentioned that meets the objectives of the NPPF. Whilst this might not include the garden land, the

redevelopment of Patricks Field gives the site a higher sustainable development status than a greenfield site. The proposed development will also use the existing facilities provided at the care home such as the staff car park, catering kitchen, maintenance depot, office administration space and waste collection and recycling thus making a highly efficient use of land and property.

- 2.25 In terms of bio-diversity, there will be a 10% net gain as required by policy. A key objective of the applicant is to make the most of the existing landscaped setting and is proposing to retain all the trees unless the tree officer advises removal on tree health grounds as well as retention of the pond with a large natural area of space. The site already provides a wildlife habitat to numerous species and proposed mitigation will help birds, bats, amphibians and reptiles to thrive.
- 2.26 The site is located within flood zone 1 (the lowest risk possible) and SUDS will be designed to manage stormwater at its source, to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment to save energy and water resources. The internal road layout is intended to be constructed of natural materials to be more sustainable and aid drainage as well as enable it to integrate better into the landscape.
- 2.27 Waste will be minimized through on-site collection and sorting by the care home to maximize recycling of waste.
- 2.28 Pollution will be minimized by the proposed electric taxi/bus services and the requirement for all 35 extra care units occupiers to only own electric vehicles. The units will be serviced by electric transport such as golf carts by maintenance and delivery staff.
- 2.29 Allotments will provide sustainable food production as well as a source of recreation.

#### Low/Zero Carbon

- 2.30 A particular feature of the proposed development is its low carbon footprint and zero carbon in terms of the 35 extra care units.
- 2.31 The Rebecca Chapman Design Sustainability Statement explains how the zero carbon units will be achieved. The dwellings will be predominantly factory made off-site using sustainable timber and SIPS which are insulating panels of exceptional thermal qualities. This will also minimise local disturbance from construction works and traffic. Consequently, the units will require less energy to heat them which will be achieved by air source heat pumps. Solar thermal and PV panels will also create 'green' renewable energy. Lighting will be LED low energy and rainwater harvesting and low flow toilets and kitchen fittings will further minimise water and energy consumption.
- 2.32 The units will be of a high-quality architectural design and the site layout proposed maximises solar gain through orientation where possible, again to minimise heating and lighting using natural resources. All rooms will have windows and roof lights will be



electronically controlled. Additional control systems will further minimise energy use and a canopy over feature glazing will prevent over heating during Summer months.

- 2.33 Due to the highly efficient construction of the units described, construction waste will be minimised and at a small fraction of waste generated by traditional building sites.

#### Reducing Need to Travel by Private Car

- 2.34 One of the main reasons behind Local Plan Policy GP2 is to reduce the need to travel to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, the proposed development achieves the same objective through several means.
- 2.35 As already stated, the proposed development will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> through the use of sustainable transport. All occupiers of the proposed 35 extra care units will be required to own electric cars only and each unit will have an electric car charging point. Cycling will be encouraged by cycle parking and secure cycle storage.
- 2.36 A particular unique feature will be an electric taxi service which already runs from the existing care home. <https://levc.com/thurlaston-meadows-care-home/> is a weblink of a video with more information on the vehicle which has the appearance of a London taxi or hackney carriage. The vehicle accommodates up to 6 passengers or 4 if a wheelchair is on board.
- 2.37 The plan is for a constant all day circular route to include key drop off/collection points around Rugby including Draycote Reservoir, Dunchurch, Dunchurch Road Sainsburys and Rugby Town Centre. Once the retirement village is established, the plan will be to operate 2 additional electric taxis. Should the service be over-subscribed then an electric minibus will be acquired. The service will also be available to Thurlaston residents under the membership scheme described in this section. The taxis will be fitted with hi tech tracking systems and users will be able to track the vehicles via an app to save wasted time with a traditional timetable operated system.
- 2.38 The taxi/bus service will be a major benefit to the local community as the village lacks a bus service albeit public bus service 25/25A still operates with a stop at the Thurlaston Turn on B4429 Coventry Road five times a day each direction (ten stops in total) which is used by some staff.
- 2.39 On-site facilities are also designed to reduce the need for residents to travel. The proposed MUGA (multi-use games area) and wellness facility with gym, hydrotherapy pool and treatment rooms will be available for all residents and to the local community. A shop and community hub building will also save the need for residents and Thurlaston villagers to travel. The shop will provide a limited range of essential daily food and other groceries and the intention is for it to be open 24 hours on a hi-tech self- service basis.
- 2.40 It is proposed that the wellness facility could also house a small creche which may benefit staff and villagers who currently have to drive to child care provision outside of Thurlaston.

- 2.41 The community hub will be a flexible space and provided in recognition that the village hall has a finite life and will be more energy efficient with disabled access. Services expected to run from the community hub will include a hairdressers and a bistro/café that will have an outdoor space when the weather permits.
- 2.42 Additional services will also be on offer to residents and villagers. A meal (hot or cold) delivery service is proposed and deliveries could extend to prescriptions as these are obtained for care home residents already. There is also a weekly doctors surgery and it might be possible to extend this to extra care unit residents and villagers in the community hub. The same applies to the maintenance team that could do work for village residents.
- 2.43 The home also hosts entertainment events, many of which are held outside in the garden and could be extended to extra care unit residents and villagers.
- 2.44 Villager use of the facilities and services described would be subject to a membership scheme for security reasons and to recover some of the cost.
- 2.45 Last, but not least, is the use of a respite room which again will save residents and villagers the need for their visitors to book a hotel or other accommodation outside of Thurlaston.
- 2.46 It is clearly evident with the facilities and services proposed that will benefit staff, extra care unit residents and villagers that the proposed development will have significant benefits unachievable by other new developments in reducing the need to travel as well as making the village more sustainable for the same reason.
- 2.47 Most of the services and facilities would not be possible in a different location without an existing care home on site.

## Summary & Conclusions

3.1 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states:

*“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development...”*

3.2 It is demonstrated in this statement that sustainable development is at the heart of the proposed development to create a retirement village that will meet an urgent housing need for residents over the age of 65 without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.3 The proposed development achieves sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 8 of the NPPF as there will be demonstrable net gains in economic, social and environmental objectives.

3.4 These benefits can be summarized as:

- **Economic** – Sustaining the longevity of Thurlaston Meadows Care Home. Significant construction jobs, long term employment and boost to local economy.
- **Social** – Provision of 35 extra care units that are desperately needed with a critical shortage of supply in the Borough and associated release of family housing. New facilities enhancing the health and well-being of future residents, staff and villagers.
- **Environmental** – Retention of trees and pond in a landscaped setting, where wildlife can flourish with a net gain in biodiversity. A low carbon development with ‘green’ transport and 35 extra care energy efficient homes with a zero carbon footprint. Facilities and services that will reduce the need to travel both for residents of the retirement village and local community. Redevelopment of an existing dwelling and more efficient use of land on an existing care home site.

3.5 Whilst the proposed development may conflict with Local Plan Policy SD2, this constraint is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits outlined in this statement which could not be achieved at an alternative greenfield location as well as compliance with or support from all other relevant Local Plan policies. It is considered that the proposed retirement village may well be the most sustainable development ever achieved in Rugby and could be an exemplar for future developments.

Local Plan Inset Map of Thurlaston:

