

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED CARE HOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE, EATON HOUSE,
BUXTON ROAD, LEEK, ST13 6EQ



LNT Care Developments

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the redevelopment of Eaton House, Buxton Road for a 66 bedroom two-storey care home. The application is made on behalf of LNT Care Developments, a company with considerable experience in the operation of care homes for older people and with an excellent reputation in respect of the quality of care it provides.
- 1.2 LNT Care Developments operates a series of care homes specifically for the care of older people in a number of locations including Yorkshire, the Midlands and the south of England. LNT Construction has considerable experience in the development of care homes, having constructed numerous care homes for their sister company Ideal Care Homes and other operators across the UK.
- 1.3 The site presents an excellent opportunity for the development for a new care home, being well located within Leek with good accessibility to public transport and local amenities.
- 1.4 This site represents an opportunity to develop in a sustainable location and as such the proposed development is fully in accordance with both local and national planning policy and guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.5 This statement briefly outlines the care home operational needs and legislation, the national and local need for care home provision and further outlines the proposal and assesses the planning merits of the scheme against the national and local policy context. The scheme will be assessed against material planning considerations which affect this site and the merits of the proposal for redevelopment.

2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is currently home to Eaton House, a two storey office building that has incorporated various other uses. The rear of the building is all hard surfaced car parking area.
- 2.2 The site is accessed along the western boundary of the site from Buxton Road leading to the car park at the rear. There is an area of public open space/park located to the east of the application site with a childrens nursery to the west. To the north of the site there is an industrial/factory unit.



Figure 1 – Aerial view of the site.

- 2.3 Located on A523 Buxton Road the site is approximately 0.5 miles from Leek town centre. There are close connections with the A53 leading to Buxton and A523 leads to Macclesfield and Congleton, there are also close connections with stoke on Trent.
- 2.4 The site characteristics and that of its surroundings are detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.5 **SMD/2004/0844** – Conversion of part of first floor to a mental health child and adolescent clinic - **Approved 24/06/2004**
- SMD/2001/1162** – Change of use from B1 offices to D2 gymnasium/leisure with ancillary café – **Approved 15/03/2002**

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 It is proposed to develop the site to provide a new purpose-built, two storey, sixty six bed residential care facility for older people with associated access, car parking and landscaping.
- 3.2 The facility will be fully compliant with the National Care Standards Act 2000; providing single-room accommodation, with en-suite facilities and a more than suitable ratio of communal/recreational space per resident together with level/amenable access throughout; all as described in the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application.
- 3.3 The introduction of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 reflected the general progressive nature of the improving standards that have been implemented in the provision of Social Care. It also led to the establishment of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) the current Regulatory Authority in respect of Social Care provision.
- 3.4 The proposed care home would be of brick, render and weatherboard cladding construction with a smooth grey tile roof, as described in further detail in the associated Design and Access Statement. In total the development will provide 3370m² over two floors and would provide an attractive and appropriate community building on this site.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- 3.5 The proposed development will bring with it important economic benefits to the local economy in terms of employment opportunities and investment in construction.
- 3.6 A study undertaken on behalf of the UK Contractors Group found that a £1 investment in construction results in £2.84 in terms of benefits to the wider economy, as outlined in Fig.1 below.

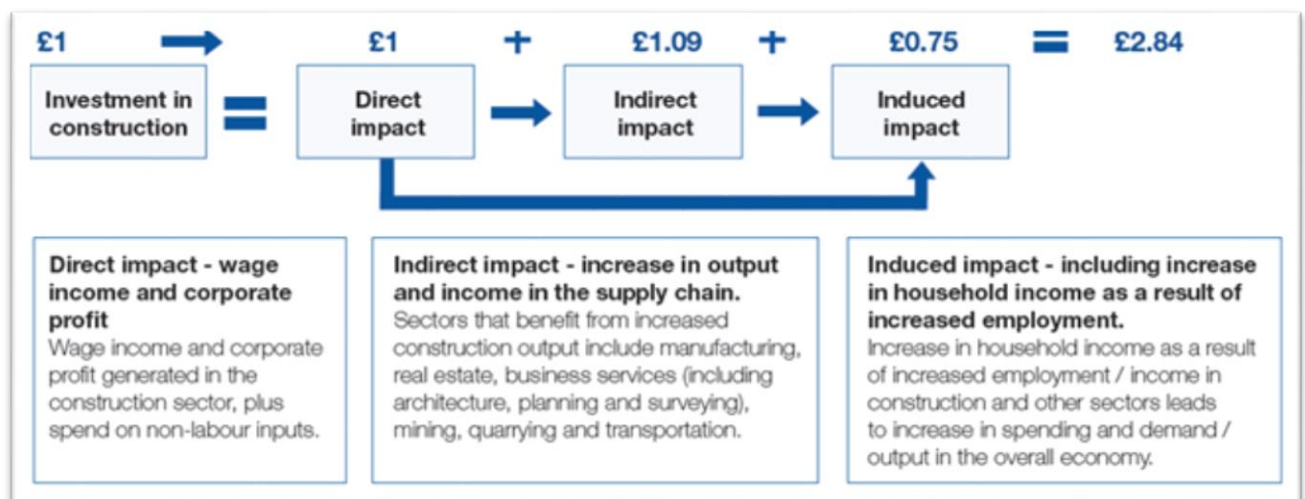


Fig 1: Image from UK Contractors Group study

- 3.7 The construction cost alone of the proposed development is substantial; bearing in mind the above table, this development should result in an extremely large contribution to the local economy.
- 3.8 Planning Inspectors have highlighted in appeal decisions the significant weight to be attributed to the need to support economic growth through the planning system and the contribution that new development can make to economic growth.
- 3.9 In terms of employment generation, between 40-50 full-time equivalent jobs are created that would be offered to suitable candidates from the local area. These jobs would range from the Home Manager; a series of Care Workers; through to Catering and Domestic Assistants.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY AND SCHEME APPRAISAL

- 4.1 The following paragraphs are intended to deal briefly with the national and local policy contexts and thereafter provide an appraisal to indicate the proposed developments acceptability. It is also intended to address all relevant policy areas that have been taken into account as material considerations in the formulation of this application.

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 4.2 Para.6 of the NPPF states *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development. The policies in paragraphs 18 – 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development in England means in practise for the planning system.”*

In respect of this planning application, it is considered appropriate to assess the proposal against a number of themes contained within the NPPF.

Decision Taking / Determining Applications

- 4.3 Para 11 of the revised NPPF states that Local Authorities should apply a **“presumption in favour of sustainable development”** and that for decision-taking this means:

- *“approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:*

...any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”

As the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with the NPPF, any adverse impacts of approving the proposal would not significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits and as such, permission should be granted in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

Sustainable Development

- 4.4 In making decisions on development proposals national planning policy requires Planning Authorities to consider the sustainability of individual schemes. The appraisal of the sustainability of a development is particularly important in light of the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” referred to above.
- 4.5 The most often used definition of sustainable development is that of development which: “meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Bruntland Commission, 1987).
- 4.6 It is generally accepted that truly sustainable development must strike a balance between environmental, social and economic sustainability. The three pillars of sustainable development are referred to in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.7 Previously, undue weight may have been given to considerations of environmental sustainability, especially with regard to accessibility by public transport. Para 103 of the NPPF acknowledges that *‘development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.’*
- 4.8 The NPPF confirmed that the planning system has a key role to play in securing sustainable economic growth that is able to proceed as easily as possible and the economic, social and environmental gains can be positively secured through the planning system. The current application is fully consistent with this national planning policy.

Design

- 4.9 The NPPF specifically supports the direction of development towards sustainable locations and the introduction of a mix of uses to create vitality and diversity. Preservation of the character and quality of townscape is stressed and high quality design required ensuring that places are attractive, useable, durable and adaptable. The application proposal is also fully consistent with these objectives.

Economic Growth

- 4.10 The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. The NPPF is placing significant weight on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. The application proposal is consistent with this objective.

Ministerial Statement – Planning for Growth (March 23rd 2011)

- 4.11 The statement sets out the steps the Government expects local planning authorities to take to ensure that sustainable development needed to support economic growth was able to proceed as easily as possible. The statement set out the Government’s clear expectation that local planning authorities should deal promptly and favourably with

applications that comply with up-to-date plans and that where plans are out of date, a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development that accords with national planning policies should be applied.

The statement remains a material planning consideration, having not been cancelled with the introduction of the NPPF and remains an important guide to the Government's 'direction of travel' in planning policy terms and its support for development and economic growth.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.12 *"19. The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system."*

As indicated in section 3, Planning Inspectors have qualified the benefits that development can make to economic growth. The specific benefits of the proposed scheme are outlined in the preceding sections and significant weight should be placed on the economic benefits of this proposed development in the decision making process. This application would generate additional employment and economic growth in the area, whilst providing a social care service.

Housing

- 4.13 The NPPF aims to deliver quality and choice of homes, while seeking to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. To achieve this, a mix of housing types, tenures and prices is needed and a mix of different household types such as families with children, single person households and **older people**. It emphasises the importance of good design in making places better for people to live in. The current proposed development aims to address the present and future needs of an ageing population and contribute to the provision of a range, quality and choice of accommodation within the local community. The current proposal will make a positive contribution to the area in accordance with these requirements.

Transportation

- 4.14 The NPPF states that planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably and proposals should be accessible by a choice of means of transport/modes of travel. The current proposal aims to maximise the use of sustainable modes of transport which are accessible due to the sites location and to minimise the need to travel, by encouraging users of the care home both in terms of residents and staff to come from the local area.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 4.15 The site is located within the administrative area of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.16 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework (LDF) is the District wide development plan which replaces the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan to provide a framework for delivering development. The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on the 26th March 2014 and is the third LDF document to date. It provides the strategic context for delivering the strategic development needs of the District to 2026 and guides the preparation of subsequent Development Plan Documents.

Staffordshire Moorlands Adopted Core Strategy 2014

- 4.17 This Planning Statement has had regard to the local planning policies which are relevant to the submitted application and to which relevant weight should be given. The following policies have been assessed against the proposed development.

SS1 Development Principles

- 4.18 The Council's development principles are identified within this policy stating the council expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the district. Delivering a mix of types and tenures of quality affordable homes, provision for education, healthcare and community facilities. Create easy access to jobs, shops and transport services and increase economic prosperity and opportunities for employment. New development is to make the best use of previously developed land and will follow a sequential approach to the sustainable location of development. The proposed care home follows the principles of this policy providing a mix of housing type within the vicinity, a community facility that provides employment provision within the district.

SS1a - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.19 This policy states the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Applications that accord with the policies within the Core Strategy will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposed care home is in line with the requirements of the NPPF regarding sustainability and as such adheres to this policy.

SD1 - Sustainable Use of Resources

- 4.20 This policy requires all development to make sustainable use of resources and adapt to climate change, this will be achieved by encouraging development on previously developed land in sustainable locations and ensuring major developments are

accompanied by a Sustainability/Energy Statement. The statement will address the energy efficiency, water conservation, sourcing of construction materials and site orientation of the scheme. The proposed scheme follows the principles of this policy and includes a Sustainability/Energy Statement.

SD2 - Renewable/Low-Carbon Energy

- 4.21 This policy supports the use of renewable or low-carbon energy schemes to meet the future energy demand for the District through a variety of technologies such as wind power, solar energy, biomass etc. The policy relates mainly to small and large scale standalone renewable energy schemes although it is relevant to new development. The proposed care home will use ground source heat pumps, as such providing a renewable energy source and adhering to the principles of this policy.

E2 - Existing Employment Areas

- 4.22 This policy is proposing to safeguard employment areas and premises that are capable of meeting a range of employment uses to support the local economy. Redevelopment for other uses will not normally be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the site would not be suitable or viable for continued employment uses. Where redevelopment is proposed preference will be given to a mixed-use redevelopment scheme which retains an element of employment provision on site. There is currently only one tenant employed within the building, the building has been marketed for its current use with no success. The care home proposed will provide between 40 – 50 new jobs, although not the same use class the proposed development provides a commercial and residential use.

DC1 - Design Considerations

- 4.23 This policy requires new development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. The proposed scheme will add value to the local area providing a community building that will create additional employment, using detailing and materials to reflect the character of its surroundings and provide a building of appropriate scale, density, siting and landscaping. As such it is considered that the proposed scheme adheres to this policy.

NE1 - Biodiversity and Geological Resources

- 4.24 This policy seeks to balance positive management measures and control of development to enhance biodiversity. Not all the criteria within this policy is relevant to this application. The policy seeks to ensure development where appropriate produces a new gain in biodiversity and ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. The proposed development will provide a net gain in biodiversity with increased landscaping and habitat provision. There is no loss in habitat for any protected species therefore the proposed development is in line with the relevant sections of this policy.

T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

- 4.25 This policy promotes and supports development which reduces reliance on the private car and reduces the need to travel. This will be achieved by ensuring all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development, ensuring major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes and referring to appropriate parking standards as laid out in national guidance. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres and link with identified walking or cycling routes.
- 4.26 The proposed care home is located within walking distance of the town centre and on a public transport route with a bus stop adjacent, reducing the reliance on the private car and providing an additional place of employment within the town centre reducing the need to travel. Although the development is classified as a major development care homes are known to be low traffic generators, as such there will be no detrimental impact on the existing highway network. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council do not have any adopted parking standards, the scheme includes 20 no. parking spaces that is considered adequate in this town centre location with good public transport provision. As an operator of care homes LNT Care Developments, from experience of other homes, consider this provision to be adequate for the needs of a home of this size.

SCHEME APPRAISAL

- 4.27 A general assessment of the scheme against relevant national and local policies set out above would indicate the scheme is in general compliance.

Principle of Development

- 4.28 The site is situated within Leek town centre, located on the A523 Buxton Road one of the main arterial routes into Leek. It is situated in a sustainable location with good access to local amenities.
- 4.29 The development, which is commercial by definition, is very much residential in nature. It is entirely compatible with the immediately surrounding developments.
- 4.30 The site is seen as an excellent opportunity to provide a new purpose built care facility fully compliant with the requirements of the Care Standards Act. It would not only serve any local need but would be highly accessible to the community, providing both service and employment.

Design

- 4.31 As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, it is considered that the proposal would positively contribute to the built environment in this location by developing the site and having regard to the principles of good urban design. It will enhance the character of the site and also optimise the opportunities the site offers for residents in terms of aspect, views and amenity provision.

- 4.32 The two-storey building would front onto Buxton Road and will have an appropriate presence within the street scene. For security purposes the main entrance to the building faces into the parking area to provide surveillance over the car park to ensure all visitors to the home are seen. The transition between public and private space will be obvious and accessible, defined by signage and suitable boundary treatment. Decorative railings are proposed along the southern boundary to create an open aspect for the site and reflect the current treatment along the site frontage.
- 4.33 The proposed building sits comfortably within the site providing adequate parking and secure garden area. This design of building is proposed due to the operational needs of the care home and to meet the requirements of the Care Standards Act. This shape of building enables the home to function efficiently internally providing segregation between care categories, secure environment for residents, separation between back of house functions and residents with a variety of communal spaces for residents to enjoy.
- 4.34 The proposed care home would reflect some of the design features apparent within the surrounding area. The use of red brick and render is prevalent within the area with the addition of weatherboard cladding to add articulation to the elevations. To add variation to the scheme the use of render helps to break up the elevations with the use of brick heads and stone cills providing a detail design feature that reflects the surrounding developments. Vertical brick and grey weatherboard cladding projections are added to provide articulation to the building.
- 4.35 The planning benefits of the scheme are considered to carry significant weight. In particular, the scheme will provide a new landmark building that will positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. It will function as a community building within the predominantly residential area in a landscaped setting appropriate to its use and community function.
- 4.36 The scheme design is of a scale and intensity which would sit comfortably within the site and its surroundings without any resultant harm to the character or amenity of the area, whilst still presenting itself as an important community building. The proposal is a single building with adequate amenity space contained within its boundaries. There is adequate distance to adjoining boundaries to prevent any undue or unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing, therefore would not adversely affect the privacy or amenity of future neighbouring development. The proposed building provides the opportunity for a high quality design that adds to local character, in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

Landscaping

- 4.37 There are no significant trees within the site, along the site frontage with Buxton Road there are three no. small trees within the landscape strip that will be maintained. Additional trees are proposed within the development within the landscaped areas.
- 4.38 There will be significant amounts of landscaped amenity space around the care home and the building would directly overlook these spaces and have access to it from the ground floor lounges and main and secondary entrance. In quantitative terms, 1428m² of external amenity space would be provided which equates to a ratio of some 21m² per

resident. It is considered that the application proposals accord with both local and national policy.

- 4.39 An extensive landscaping scheme will be provided to enhance the setting of the building, provide adequate screening and visual interest to the site.

Transport Considerations

- 4.40 The site is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport as set out in the accompanying Transport Statement and Travel Plan.
- 4.41 Given the nature of the development and location of the site, the level of car parking demand and anticipated traffic generation are unlikely to be significant. Based on the experience of the applicants in their operation of other similar types and sizes of facility, it is considered that no parking or adverse highway or pedestrian safety issues would arise.
- 4.42 The proposed access arrangements and availability of alternative modes of travel to the site and submitted Travel Plan, should significantly demonstrate that the potential level of vehicular activity and impact on the local highway network is acceptable.
- 4.43 The proposed layout and design is intended to create a safe and secure environment for its residents. The building configuration ensures a degree of natural surveillance and defensible space to the main road and over the car park and access road from the main entrance. The main points of access to the site and building are both able to be monitored from the main office foyer of the home to enable continuous surveillance. A suitable lighting scheme comprising low level bollard lighting to the footpath routes and car parking area will be deployed.
- 4.44 The application proposal will not unduly impact on the surrounding highway network and hence the proposal accords with both local and national planning and highway policies.

Sustainability Considerations

- 4.45 The building would have 'active' elevations and frontages being occupied at all times of the day. There would be a clear distinction between public and private space through the use of an appropriate boundary treatment.
- 4.46 In terms of building design, steps have been taken to reduce energy demand having regard to the operational requirements of the home. Externally the building has been designed with glazed areas to maximise access to natural light and to minimise energy requirements for lighting and heating in communal areas, in particular in the main day lounge/dining areas and the quiet lounges. All glazing would be specified to minimise heat loss and excessive solar gain. Other glazing in the corridors and stairwells will provide natural light into circulation areas, reducing the level of artificial lighting required.

- 4.47 Low energy luminaires and occupancy sensors would be used throughout the home in the communal areas, corridors, bathrooms, toilets and en-suites to minimise energy used. There would also be a control centre which will enable areas within the building to be isolated at night to further minimise energy use.
- 4.48 High levels of insulation will be provided to reduce the consumption of energy required for heating. The Building Regulations submission provides the Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) calculations relating to the energy efficiency of the building including the heating, lighting and orientation of the building. This requires a 10% increase in efficiency of the target provided for the building.
- 4.49 A ground source heat pump system is proposed to provide heating to the building which would generate in excess of 15% of the facilities energy requirements from renewable sources, with a commensurate reduction in carbon emissions.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed development for a care home on this site is in accordance with government policy in the NPPF. The site clearly lies within a sustainable location in close proximity to facilities, local population and existing public transport services and is consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.
- 5.2 The development of the site will contribute to maintaining a socially inclusive community, whilst also providing significant numbers of jobs/employment. It is considered that the proposal would improve the built and natural environment in this location by providing a community building that makes best use of the site having regard for the principles of good urban design. The current development plan for the area has been considered along with relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance. The proposal accords with local planning policies contained within Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, as discussed previously in detail.
- 5.3 The proposed care home would provide a character and form of development that should positively enhance the character of the site and the wider surrounding area, whilst also offering an important local community service. The design approach utilised is considered acceptable within the context of this particular site.
- 5.4 The development would also have a positive impact within the area by improving employment opportunities, both during construction and in the longer-term operation of the care home. In regeneration terms, it would result in a positive use that would fulfill a social care need and provide a sympathetic development in terms of design and that will be important from social, economic and physical regeneration perspectives.
- 5.5 In summary, the planning benefits that would be generated from the proposed development would be significant and far outweigh any adverse effects that might be attributable to it. On balance, the proposal should be considered to represent a wholly acceptable and positive proposal for which planning permission should be granted.