

The application is for full planning permission for a 65 apartment extra care facility for people aged over 55, including a public café and function room at May Place, Brampton Road, May Bank, which is within the urban area, and adjacent to the Brampton Conservation Area.

The scheme will be an extra care scheme of 65 units. It would consist of 37 two bedroom apartments and 28 one bedroom apartments. All of these units will be affordable housing, comprising of social rented units.

The site extends to approximately 0.98 of a hectare. The topography of the site is higher towards the north and east, before it slopes fairly steeply down to the lower part of the site to the south adjacent to Sandy Lane.

There are two group Tree Preservation Orders on the site. Brampton Road is part of the A527 whilst Sandy Lane is a C classified road connecting the A527 with the A53

The 13 week determination period expired on 26th September. The Committee have already undertaken a site visit with respect to this application on the 4th September

RECOMMENDATION

a) Subject to the conclusions of a supplementary report to be submitted, subject to the applicant entering into S106 obligations, by the 18th November, to secure the following;

- (i) A financial contribution to public open space, the figure of which will be advised in a supplementary report
- (ii) A financial contribution of £2,200 towards Travel plan monitoring costs

Permit subject to the conditions concerning the following matters :-

1. Commencement of development
2. Approved plans
3. Approval of Finished ground and floor levels
4. Approval of all External Materials
5. Approval of all hardstanding and access materials
6. Approval of Landscaping scheme
7. Tree protection measures
8. Approval of drainage and surface water regulation
9. Approval of waste collection arrangements
10. Prior approval of a construction method statement
11. Full suite of contaminated land conditions
12. Prior approval of any external lighting
13. Prior approval of any noise mitigation measures
14. Prior approval of kitchen grease trap
15. Prior approval of kitchen ventilation system
16. Restriction on construction hours
17. Prior approval of details showing the widening of the pedestrian footway to 2 metres
18. Prior approval of surface water drainage for the parking, servicing and turning areas
19. Prior approval of details to show how the emergency access use will be controlled
20. Implementation of the travel plan in accordance with the timetable within that plan, and provision of progress reports on the promotion of sustainable transport measures to the LPA for a period of five years
21. Provision of the cycle parking prior to first occupation

b) Should the matters referred to in (i) and (ii) above not be secured within the above period, that the Head of Planning be given delegated authority to refuse the application on the grounds that without such matters being secured the development would be contrary to policy on the maintenance of the quality of public open space and sustainable transport measures.

Reason for Recommendation

The proposed Extra Care facility would provide an essential and valuable facility to the local community and the wider area. Whilst the development is likely to harm certain trees of amenity value and may put at risk others, such adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application

Pre application discussions were entered into where amendments were sought to the initial scheme in terms of design, materials and layout and how the proposal would impact upon trees. This is now considered to be a sustainable form of development that complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policies and Proposals in the approved Development Plan relevant to this decision:-

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 – 2026

Strategic Aim 3 (SA3) – To reduce the need to travel, improve accessibility and increase the opportunities for development of sustainable and innovative modes of travel to support the regeneration of the plan area by securing improvements to public transport infrastructure; and the progressive provision of park and ride facilities to promote walking and cycling.

Strategic Aim 4 (SA4) – To balance the supply and demand for quality housing; removing surplus and unfit/obsolescent accommodation; providing a better choice of homes in sustainable locations and to ensure that a sufficient number of new homes are affordable.

Strategic Aim 12 (SA12) – To renew the fabric of urban and rural areas to promote the best of safe and sustainable urban and rural living.

Strategic Aim 14 (SA14) – To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character of the plan area by ensuring new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and their context.

Strategic Aim 16 (SA16) – To eliminate poor quality development and establish a culture of excellence in built design by developing design skills and understanding, by requiring good, safe design as a universal baseline and distinctive design excellence in all development proposals and by promoting procurement methods which facilitate the delivery of good design.

Policy SP1:	Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy SP3:	Spatial Principles of Movement and Access
Policy ASP5:	Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1:	Design Quality
Policy CSP2:	Historic Environment
Policy CSP3:	Sustainability and Climate Change
Policy CSP4:	Natural Assets
Policy CSP5:	Open space/ sport and recreation
Policy CSP6:	Affordable Housing
Policy CSP10:	Planning Obligations

Saved policies within the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy H1:	Residential development: sustainable location and protection of the countryside
Policy H7:	Protection of Areas of Special Character
Policy H13:	Supported Housing
Policy T16:	Development – General Parking Requirements
Policy C1:	Development and open space
Policy C4:	Open space in new housing areas.
Policy N12:	Development and the protection of trees
Policy N13:	Felling and pruning of trees
Policy B9:	Prevention of harm to Conservation Areas
Policy B10:	The requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a a Conservation Area
Policy IM1:	Provision of Essential supporting Infrastructure

Other material considerations include:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Affordable Housing SPD (2009)

Space around dwellings SPG (2004)

Developer Contributions SPD (2007)

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design SPD (2010)

North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy

Views of Consultees

The **Landscape Development Section** requests £2943 per dwelling to pay for off-site improvements to facilities at Brampton Park. This equates to £191,295.

There have been four sets of comments by the Landscape Development Section upon these proposals, as additional or revised information has been received.

As matters now stand they object to the proposal on the grounds that there will be a poor relationship between certain retained trees of amenity value and a significant part of the proposed development and the result will be that the affected part will receive very little natural light and the relationship created will not be sustainable in the long term. A further concern is the known and identified encroachment of the development into the root protection areas of certain trees within the site, and the unknown but likely encroachment into the root protection areas of other trees, including protected ones, located both within and outside the site. There a number of less significant other concerns around the issues of the lack of certain details, the provision of readily comprehensible and consistent information on tree losses/retentions and other matters.

The **Environmental Health Division (EHD)** objected to the application as submitted. In the absence of a suitable noise assessment and having taken sample noise measurements on the perimeter of the site that suggest that predicted noise levels would exceed certain guidelines, and in the absence of the identification of appropriate noise mitigation measures to sustain compliance with these guidelines, they consider, that the development as currently proposed fails to comply with the objective of avoiding significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life as set out in the NPPF.

The **EHD's** comments on a noise survey and report now received are currently awaited

Should planning permission be granted the EHD requests conditions about contaminated land, restrictions on construction hours, the management of the environmental effects of construction, the ventilation system to the café's kitchen, and the provision of a grease trap

The Council's **Urban Design and Conservation Officer** initially indicated that she had no objections to the proposal. The site lies outside of the Brampton Conservation Area adjacent to its northern boundary. The application site has a distinctive green landscape with mature trees, especially on the road edge, some of which are protected matching the essential character of the Brampton Conservation Area characterised by large suburban plots in a mature landscape. The heritage asset statement is not particularly detailed as it does not assess the significance of the Conservation Area specifically or its setting or refer to the existing appraisal.

The northern boundary of the Conservation Area has a large area of open space (fronting onto Sandy Lane) lined with a hedge and is across from the application site. The application site has a distinctive topography, sloping down towards the road and whilst a large building is proposed, the building is well articulated and responds to the site. The materials reflect the local character, albeit in a contemporary way. Provided the proposal retains trees and landscaping along the road frontage contextually that will help it to sit better in its environment and it would be unlikely to cause harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. There are no long distance views, the road itself providing the most prominent view into and out of the Conservation Area and this aspect remains unchanged.

Subsequently the officer, having been provided with detailed information on likely tree losses has indicated that she does have some concerns about the removal of the trees on the Sandy Lane frontage and the creation of an engineered access at this point. She asks whether there is a genuine requirement for this access or whether all alternatives have been considered

The **Conservation Advisory Working Party** objects to the application due to it representing overdevelopment of the site that would adversely affect views out of the Conservation Area

The **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** suggests that an effective form of access control and physical security measures should be provided.

The **MADE Design Review Panel** had the following comments on a scheme that they considered in June:

- The Panel identified two main issues that are critical to the success of this project - the building's relationship to its immediate surroundings and the quality of accommodation for residents. This summary focuses on the former
- Panel understands that the requirement for viability demands a certain quantum of development which has led to a proposal for a large building, significantly bigger than others in the area. The scale and mass should be honestly expressed, however the designers should do all they can to reduce the dominance of the proposed building. In this regard the southern section that projects towards Sandy Lane is particularly problematic – its both the part that comes closest to the Conservation Area and its it is the tallest – the monopitch roof emphasises its dominance – a more fragmented arrangement stepping down towards the road would be better
- Recommend simplifying the materials palette to allow the building to be better articulated through its shape – the use of buff brick, not widely used in Staffordshire, should be avoided
- The rear of the proposed building comes quite close to the dwellings to the rear, and the proposal is to remove a grass bank with existing tree cover and replace with retaining wall, car parking and bin storage area. The Panel questioned whether this was necessary and also questioned the location of the bin store which would involve collection vehicles having to reverse for more than 20 metres

In summary the Panel indicated that more work needed to be done to ensure that the building has a less dominant institutional feel both externally and internally. A simpler palette of materials and more articulations through its shape would help externally.

The **Highway Authority** has no objections subject to a travel plan monitoring fee of £2,200 (secured via a planning obligation) and planning conditions relating to:

- Provision and retention of the parking, servicing and turning areas
- Prior approval of a plan showing the widening of the existing footway on May Place
- Surface water drainage for the parking, turning and servicing areas
- Measures to control the use of the proposed emergency access off Sandy Lane
- The Travel Plan implementation and reporting
- The cycle parking
- Construction method statement

Severn Trent Water has no objections subject to a condition requiring prior approval of surface water and foul sewage arrangements

The **Housing Strategy Section** note that in 2014, there were 2,250 applicants registered on the housing register. The age profile of these applicants shows that 24.9% of all applicants were over the age of 55. This information not only demonstrates the need for affordable housing within the Borough, but strongly establishes the need for older people accommodation. The Local Investment Plan for Newcastle under Lyme 2011-2014, states that “Newcastle has an older population that is increasing. There is a need to provide older people with a choice of affordable accessible and high quality housing as well as services which help people to maintain their independence. Staffordshire’s needs data used to inform Staffordshire’s Flexi-care Housing Strategy (2010 – 2015) highlights the need to increase extra care housing provision in Newcastle by 977 units by the year 2020.”

This extra scheme will contribute to the affordable housing requirements identified and meet the needs of the older people within the Borough.

The **Waste Management Team** has no objections, stating that they are pleased that there will be an outside bin store, however would appreciate discussions with the developer, prior to construction, on the issue of the capacity of bins. They request a condition requiring prior approval of recyclable

materials and refuse storage details, and the management of such waste, together with collection arrangements.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, United Utilities and the **East Newcastle Locality Action Partnership** although consulted have not commented by the due date on the application and accordingly must be assumed to have no observations to make upon the application

Representations

Six separate letters of objection have been received, one of which is from **Paul Farrelly MP** and one from the May Bank **Ward Councillors Simon Tagg, John Tagg and Ian Matthews**.

Paul Farrelly MP's letter is summarised below:

- the plans constitute overdevelopment, not least with the height in some parts of up to four storeys, plus a steep-sloping roof, compared with the existing one-and-a-half storeys, and also with the overall massing of the 'Extracare' complex
- The sketch in the 'view of the overall development' does not fairly reflect the impact of the development on neighbours' visual amenity, as it does not take into account the topography of the site
- Concerned regarding removal of trees and the impact this will have on the appearance of the area. From the sketches it is not possible to assess what effect this, or any proposed re-planting or landscaping, will have on visual amenity locally, and over what timescale.
- It is unclear what materials are being proposed.
- Although the site is not in a Conservation Area, it adjoins one and therefore it will be relevant to consider the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area
- Brampton Road and its roundabout are already busy and any second access to the site will have to satisfy road safety concerns.
- May Place is an unadopted road
- There are other preferable sites within the Borough such as the Recreation Centre in Knutton
- A further 'Extracare' development such as this would fit in with current sheltered housing in Knutton as a 'retirement village' and bring much-needed footfall for existing shops following the closure of the Recreation Centre, with a view to regenerating the village.

The letter from **Councillors John Tagg, Simon Tagg and Ian Matthews** is summarised below:

- Concern regarding the scale of the proposed development given its prominent position adjacent the Brampton Conservation Area.
- Concern regarding the impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties
- Lack of adequate parking provision for residents, staff and visitors. Existing car parking problems could be exacerbated
- Highway implications
- Large trees subject to preservation orders will require protection.
- May Place is currently un-adopted. Request that the full length of May Place is formally adopted if the development goes ahead.
- Construction activities and traffic would need to be regulated

The four remaining representations are summarised below:

- This is not the scheme that the objector was in agreement with
- The building is too high and scale is too large for the size of the site
- Trees are being removed
- The access will cause traffic nuisance and chaos.
- Loss of privacy to adjacent houses
- The density of the proposal is too high
- The proposed building does not respect local distinctiveness
- Lack of parking space provision
- Light pollution at night
- Noise pollution
- Visibility splays at entrance are not adequate for increased traffic
- Deterioration of area of natural landscape
- Heavy goods vehicles that will be delivering to the property

- No footpaths provided for the public

The County Council's **District Commissioning Lead Officer (Newcastle-under-Lyme)** writes

- The County Council fully supports the development of an extra care scheme for the site
- The proposal forms a key part of the County's strategy for accommodation, care and support of older people in the County
- By 2030 it is predicted that there will be an identified need of over 1,300 units of extra care housing compared to the current provision of only 188 units
- Extra care provides the opportunity for older people to live in their own accommodation with the security of knowing that care and support are available if required
- There are many benefits from extra care housing for older people including
 - relieving pressure on publicly funded care homes and care services
 - allowing people to retain independence for as long as possible
 - the creation of jobs
 - avoiding premature occupation of residential care home facilities
 - releasing under occupied properties for occupation by families
- The County believe the building is well designed, and it fully supports the application

Applicant/agent's submission

The Application is supported by documents including the following:-

- Design and Heritage Statement
- Affordable housing statement
- Arboricultural report
- Ecological survey
- Community involvement statement
- Transport statement
- Ventilation requirements
- Planning and Heritage Asset Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) Statement
- Noise survey report
- Statement on the viability of the scheme

All of the above are available for inspection both at the Council Offices, and on the Council's website www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/1400476FUL

KEY ISSUES

The proposal would provide a sixty five apartment Extra Care facility based on a predominantly three storey building with a 4 storey element, single storey entrance reception and a single storey public café and function room.

The existing access off Brampton Road is to be utilised, and an emergency access is to be created off Sandy Lane, some 30 metres off the roundabout.

Externally the proposal seeks to provide 31 car parking spaces to the rear of the development. Six of these would be disabled parking bays.

The site is covered by two Tree Preservation Orders. It lies adjacent to, but not within the Brampton Conservation Area. The site similarly lies adjacent to, but not within, the H7 Area of Special Character. Plans showing the areas covered by these designations will be made available to the Committee.

It is considered the following are the main issues to be considered:

- Is the principle of the development acceptable?

- What is the likely impact of the development upon protected trees?
- Is the design of the development acceptable and would it adversely impact on the character and appearance of the adjoining Brampton Conservation Area?
- What are the highway safety implications and are they acceptable?
- Does the proposal would cause any residential amenity issues, and can a satisfactory residential environment be provided on this site?
- Is the securing of a financial contribution towards the maintenance of public open space justified and what would be the impact of that upon the viability of the development?
- Do either any adverse impacts of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal or do specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted

The principle of the development and provision of affordable housing

The site lies within the urban area of Newcastle under Lyme as indicated by the Local Development Framework.

The NPPF sets out that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The proposal seeks to provide 65 apartments; which would comprise of 37 No. 2 bedroom apartments and 28 No. 1 bedroom apartments. As such it is a proposal for housing – albeit of a specialised form.

At paragraph 14, the Framework also states that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date this means unless material consideration indicate otherwise planning permission should be granted unless

- either any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF at a whole,
- or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The examples given of the latter such policies in the NPPF include designated heritage assets.

The Borough Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites which triggers the provisions of paragraph 49 of the Framework and, on that account, paragraph 14.

The site is considered to be a sustainable one, within walking distance to the shops and services of May Bank, and a longer, but still relatively short walk or drive or bus journey to Newcastle Town Centre. There is a bus stop on the Brampton Road close to the main entrance to the site.

There is a presumption in favour of this development, therefore, unless *either* any adverse impacts of the development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal *or* specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

What is the likely impact of the development upon protected trees?

Policy N12 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will resist development that would involve the removal of any visually significant tree, shrub or hedge, whether mature or not, unless the need for the development is sufficient to warrant the tree loss, and the loss cannot be avoided by appropriate siting or design.

There are two Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) covering trees on the site, which represent the strongest level of protection for trees. The character that trees on and surrounding this site contribute to the area is valuable, and retention of trees on this site is of great importance as they contribute to the visual amenity of the site and also to the setting of the adjacent Brampton Conservation Area.

As indicated above the Landscape Development Section object to the proposal on the grounds that there will be a poor relationship between certain retained trees of amenity value and a significant part of the proposed development and the result will be that the affected part will receive very little natural

light and the relationship created will not be sustainable in the long term. A further concern is the known and identified encroachment of the development into the root protection areas of certain trees within the site, and the unknown but likely encroachment into the root protection areas of other trees, including protected ones, located both within and outside the site.

Members should note that objections are not being raised to the loss of some of the trees on the site. Some are not considered to make a significant contribution – for example those between the existing building and No .3 May Place. Others are however more significant – either because they are more prominent or of a higher category. For example the protected group of trees between No 9 May Place and the proposed development is considered important. Your officers are proposing to continue discussions to see if the impact of the development on such trees can be avoided – but that will almost certainly require a reduction in the amount of car parking.

The loss of 2 visually prominent mature TPO'd trees on Sandy Lane will have a particularly negative impact upon the character of the neighbourhood and locality. The loss of these two trees is to facilitate the creation of an emergency access to the building, which is required, it is understood, in order to be able to get an emergency vehicle (a fire engine) within certain distances of all parts of the building. Various options have been considered, and continue to be. A report on this aspect is expected to be provided to the Committee.

Whilst there remains an issue of the lack of information, it is undoubtedly the case that the proposal would have a significant impact in two ways – it would be likely to harm trees of amenity value both on and off the site and further it would create an unsatisfactory long term relationship between the development and some trees of similarly high amenity value. Some of these trees are within the Area of Special Character (the H7 designation). Policy H7 refers to the objective of seeking to preserve the unique character of that area and indicates that permission will not be given where development would be detrimental to the overall character of the area and the loss of, or adverse effect upon, visually significant trees is cited as to be avoided.

Is the design of the development acceptable and would it adversely impact on the character and appearance of the adjoining Brampton Conservation Area?

The site is located immediately to the north of and adjacent to the Brampton Conservation Area. The duty (on the LPA) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a Conservation Area applies only to the development of land that is within the Conservation Area. Nevertheless saved Local Plan policy B10 refers, in the list of criteria to be considered in the ensuring that the preservation or enhancement of a Conservation Area is achieved, to the importance of considering whether important views within, into or out of a Conservation Area are protected. The NPPF refers to the need to consider the 'setting' of heritage assets.

The character of the Brampton Conservation Area is enhanced by the character of the surrounding area – including the trees and open landscape of this site. The character of the site reflects the essential character of the adjacent Conservation Area. The northern part of the Conservation Area has a large area of open space lined with a hedge and is across from the application site.

The Council's Conservation Officer has no objections to the proposal, but only provided the large bank of trees along Sandy Lane is retained. As indicated above this is not the case because of the requirement to provide an emergency access. Negotiations may result in a change in the exact location (to take advantage of a tree that needs to be removed in any case for arboricultural reasons) but the effect will be the same – to make this tree buffer less effective.

The question is therefore whether the removal of any trees to provide the access fundamentally alters the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Your Officer notes first of all that there are developing trees on the southern, opposite side of Sandy Lane, and these two would help filter and provide context for the development.

The site has a distinctive topography, sloping down towards the road and whilst a large building is proposed, the building is well articulated and responds to the site. The scale of the building would be mostly three storeys, arranged in a "u" shape around a proposed terrace area. The materials reflect the local character of the area, albeit in a contemporary way, and the palate of materials has been

kept to a minimum particularly on the external elevations to the roadside to simplify the appearance of the proposed building.

Your Officer's view is that the proposal is unlikely to cause harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. There are no long distance views into the site from within the Conservation Area, the road itself providing the most prominent view into and out of the Conservation Area and this aspect remains largely unchanged through the retention of the majority of the trees.

What are the highway safety implications and are they acceptable?

The access arrangements into this site would remain largely unaltered. Appropriate visibility is provided and the Highway Authority have no concerns about the access arrangements.

Policy T16 of the Local Plan indicates that development will not be permitted to provide more parking than the maximum levels specified in the Local Plan Table 3.2 although development that provides significantly less parking than the maximum specified levels will not be permitted if this would create or aggravate a local on street parking or traffic problem.

The proposal is for 31 car parking spaces, of which 6 are disabled bays. A maximum of one parking space per three beds is required for C2 uses, therefore 34 spaces would be the maximum level of parking for the C2 element. The provision of the community café for public use, would, in reality, only be likely to be used by residents and their visitors. It is therefore considered that additional car parking provision is not required for this element of this scheme. That the proposal is for slightly less (than 34) is not considered significant, and therefore would not create or aggravate a local on street car parking problem. The applicant has suggested that in reality, the car parking at extra care facilities such as that proposed here tends to be underused. The proximity of the site to the town centre, and public transport facilities all suggest that vehicle trip rates associated with this particular development may be less than in a less appropriately located site.

As indicated above some reduction in the number of car parking spaces may be required to secure the retention of a particular group of important trees. Your Officer's view is that this would not cause severe harm to highway safety, as opposed to inconvenience – the NPPF indicating that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the cumulative impacts are severe.

Does the proposal would cause any residential amenity issues, and can a satisfactory residential environment be provided on this site?

It is important to ensure that proposed new development would not cause loss of amenity to existing neighbouring residents in terms of loss of light and privacy. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Space Around Dwellings provides guidance on achieving acceptable amenity standards.

The distance between facing principal windows of the new development with the existing dwellings on May Place would be approximately 32 metres. This exceeds the required distances for facing principal windows. The existing dwellings on May Place are situated at a higher ground level than the proposed development, however even when an additional 3 metre separation distance is added to the required 21 metres between facing principal windows where there is an additional storey, the 32 metres still greatly exceeds the required separation distances sought by the SPG.

The views of the Environmental Health Division on the noise survey report are awaited, but your Officer's view is that concerns about high levels of traffic noise experienced on the site should not be grounds for refusal of the scheme, bearing in mind that the issue appears principally to be about the external noise levels, it being recognised that within the building appropriate noise mitigation measures should be able to be taken.

Is the securing of a financial contribution towards the maintenance of public open space justified and what would be the impact of that upon the viability of the development?

This is a matter which your Officer has not yet reached a conclusion upon, and the intention is to provide members with a supplementary report expressly on this issue. It is not an issue which goes to the heart of the question as to whether or not planning permission should be granted – at least at this stage.

Do either any adverse impacts of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or do specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted?

Given the conclusion reached with respect to the limited impact of the development upon the adjacent Conservation Area it cannot be said that specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted in this location – the H7 area is not a designated heritage asset as listed in the NPPF or similar to any of the other examples of such policies given in the NPPF footnote to paragraph 14.

A number of benefits have been advanced in support of the scheme. The primary one is the provision of extra care facilities that are already much needed and will be even more so in the future when account is taken of demographic trends.

The 65 extra care units would help to meet an identified need for social housing. In 2014, there were 2,250 applicants registered on the housing register. The age profile of these applicants shows that 24.9% of all applicants were over the age of 55. This information not only demonstrates the need for affordable housing within the Borough, but strongly establishes the need for older people accommodation. The Local Investment Plan for Newcastle under Lyme 2011-2014, further states that Newcastle under Lyme has an older population that is increasing. There is a need to provide older people with a choice of affordable accessible and high quality housing as well as services which help people to maintain their independence. Staffordshire's needs data used to inform Staffordshire's Flexi-care Housing Strategy (2010 – 2015) highlights the need to increase extra care housing provision in Newcastle by 977 units by the year 2020.

Members will note the strong support given the County Council to the scheme, as detailed in the representations section of the Committee report

More generally the scheme adds to the provision of housing within the borough both in numeric terms and in terms of the variety of provision.

Set against these benefits is the known and likely immediate and potential impact of the development on trees of amenity value. The proposals have been the subject of considerable discussion and negotiation – and represent a much more acceptable scheme than was originally contemplated. Some tree losses are an almost inevitable consequence of the redevelopment of the site. Some of the tree losses are agreed between the parties, others the subject of disagreement and speculation. That the scheme would be managed by a Housing Trust suggests that concerns that might arise in the case of owner occupied properties (about the proximity of trees and limited natural day light) are less likely to be raised.

Taking the above into account the adverse impacts of the development in your officer's view do not significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the proposal and accordingly it is recommended that the application be permitted, provided the appropriate financial contributions are secured, which as indicated will be a matter for a further report.

Background Papers

Planning File
Development Plan
National Planning Policy

Date report prepared
26th September 2014