

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED CARE HOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE,
THE OAKS, CLACTON ROAD, WEELEY HEATH, CO16 9EF

LNT

Care Developments

LNT Care Developments

Helios 47

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for a 66no. bedroom two-storey care home on behalf of LNT Care Developments (the applicant), 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 (the agent) has considerable experience in the development of care homes, having constructed numerous care homes for their sister company Danforth Care and other operators across the UK.
- 1.3 We have now developed over 220 care homes specifically for the care of older people across England. We are now the leading care home developer and provider in the country.
- 1.4 The site presents an excellent opportunity for the development for a new care home, being well located between settlements with good accessibility to public transport and local amenities.
- 1.5 We intend to deliver the proposal within 16 months of gaining planning permission and are seeking the support of Tendring District Council (the council) for the proposal.
- 1.6 The development is proposed on a sustainable brownfield site. It will provide for important identified care and housing needs, providing for both general residential and dementia care. It will be made available for, and staffed by the local population and offers important benefits to community wellbeing, the amenity of the local area and performance of the local economy.
- 1.7 This site represents an opportunity to develop in a sustainable location and as such the proposed development accords with local and national planning policy principles.

2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 Weeley Heath is a settlement located approximately two miles north of the edge of the built-up area of Clacton-on-Sea, a large coastal town in the county of Essex. Located on the Tendring Peninsula, Clacton-on-Sea is the largest settlement within Tendring District. Colchester is situated approximately 12 miles to the west of the application site and Harwich located approximately 12 miles north east. The site is situated just outside the settlement boundary of Weeley Heath towards the south-eastern edge (See Figure 1).
- 2.2 The site is currently a residential dwelling with ancillary buildings set in a very large plot. The access into the application site is from the B1441 Clacton Road. Weeley Heath has seen clusters of new residential development over the past years, increasing the size and population of Weeley Heath.
- 2.3 Covering an area of approximately 2.04 acres in size, the site is located within the Weeley and Tendring ward.



Figure 1 – Aerial view of the site.

- 2.4 The proposed development will nestle within an area with a large residential dwellings, fronting onto Clacton Road. Although set in a wider rural character area the appearance of Clacton Road as you travel from Weeley to the north, into Weeley Heath and through to Little Clacton is mainly continuous linear residential form linking into Clacton on Sea. The site has close connections to the A133 providing easy links to Clacton, Harwich and Colchester.
- 2.5 The site is in an accessible location, benefiting from an existing access into the site (alterations proposed to the access to make it suitable for a care home) that will be suitable for safe vehicle, pedestrian and cycle movements. There are two bus

stops within 75m of the site that provide links between several local settlements and connecting to Clacton and Colchester.

- 2.6 The residential properties in the surrounding area are a variety of architectural styles and characteristics, these are detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.7 There are historic applications on the site dating from between 1991 and 2023, relating various residential developments on site.

- 2.8 The following applications are the most significant on site.

17/02072/OUT – Residential development of 0.6ha of land to create five detached self-build custom-build houses. Refused

19/00701/OUT - Proposed demolition of 2no. dwellings & replacement with 3no. detached houses. Approved

19/00723/OUT – Proposed demolition of dwelling and development of four self-build or custom built houses. Refusal

22/00620/FUL - Proposed erection of seven dwellings, garage buildings and associated development following demolition of two existing dwellings. Approved

23/00144/FUL - Proposed erection of ten dwellings and garage buildings, and associated development (following demolition of two existing dwellings). Refused

23/00828/DISCON - Discharge of conditions 12 (Hard and Soft Landscaping), 14 (Boundary treatments), and 16 (Sustainable Drainage Strategy) of application 22/00620/FUL. Approval - Discharge of Condition

23/01016/VOC - Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act, to allow a variation of conditions 12 (Landscaping), 14 (Fencing Details), 15 (Renewable Energy) and 16 (SuDS) of 22/00620/FUL. Application Turned Away

23/01018/DISCON - Discharge of condition 15 (Renewable Energy) of application 22/00620/FUL. Approval - Discharge of Condition

- 2.9 As mentioned above the site has a current planning approval for seven dwellings (Ref 22/0062/FUL), the approved scheme (shown below in Fig 2) increases the built form of the site extending further towards the southern boundary, approving significant development within the site.



Fig 2 – Approved housing scheme on site

DESIGNATIONS

- 2.10 The site is located just outside the settlement boundary of Weeley Heath to the south, shown in Fig 3 and just outside the settlement boundary of Little Clacton, shown in Fig 3.1.

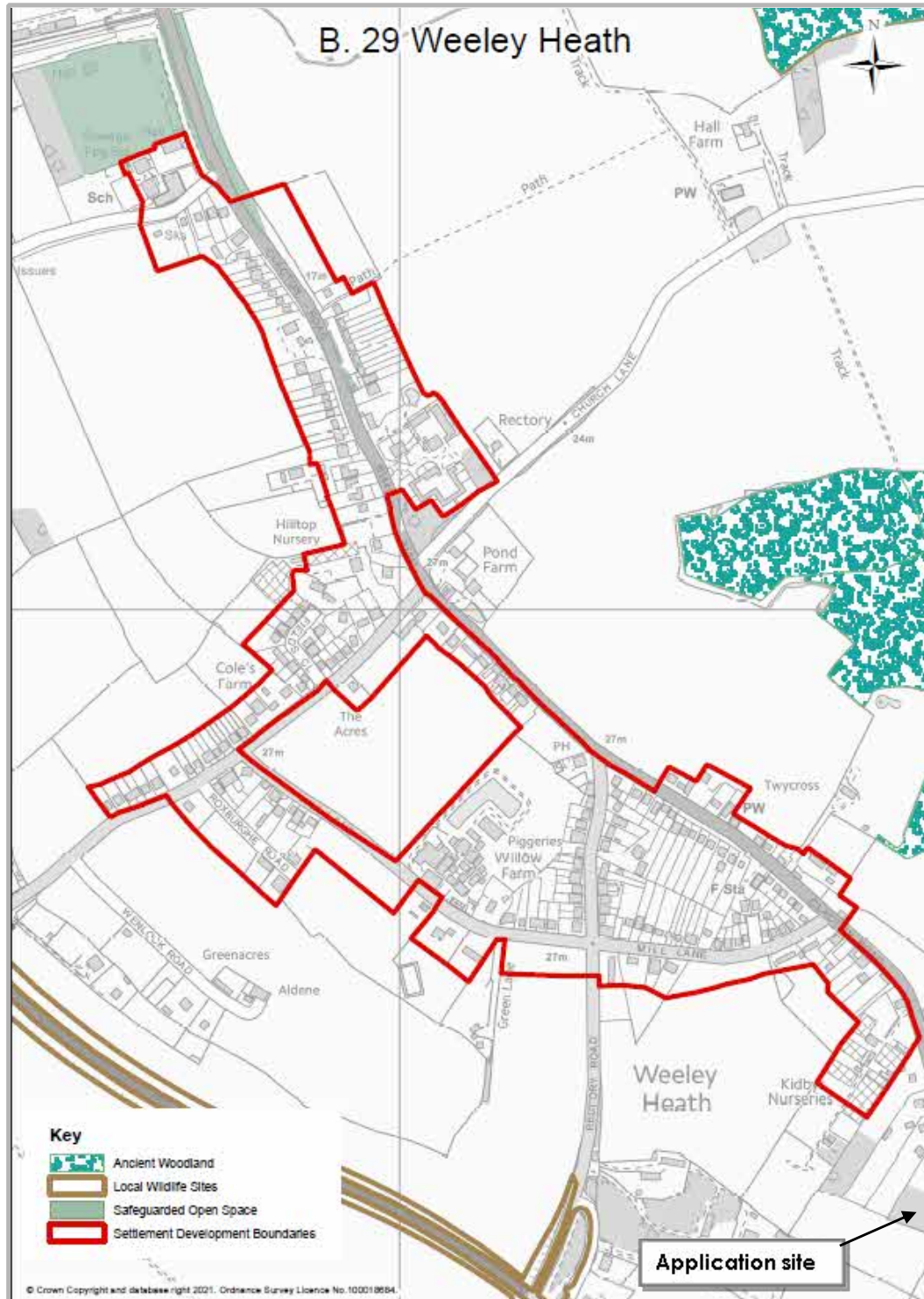


Fig 3 – local plan settlement boundary map of Weeley Heath

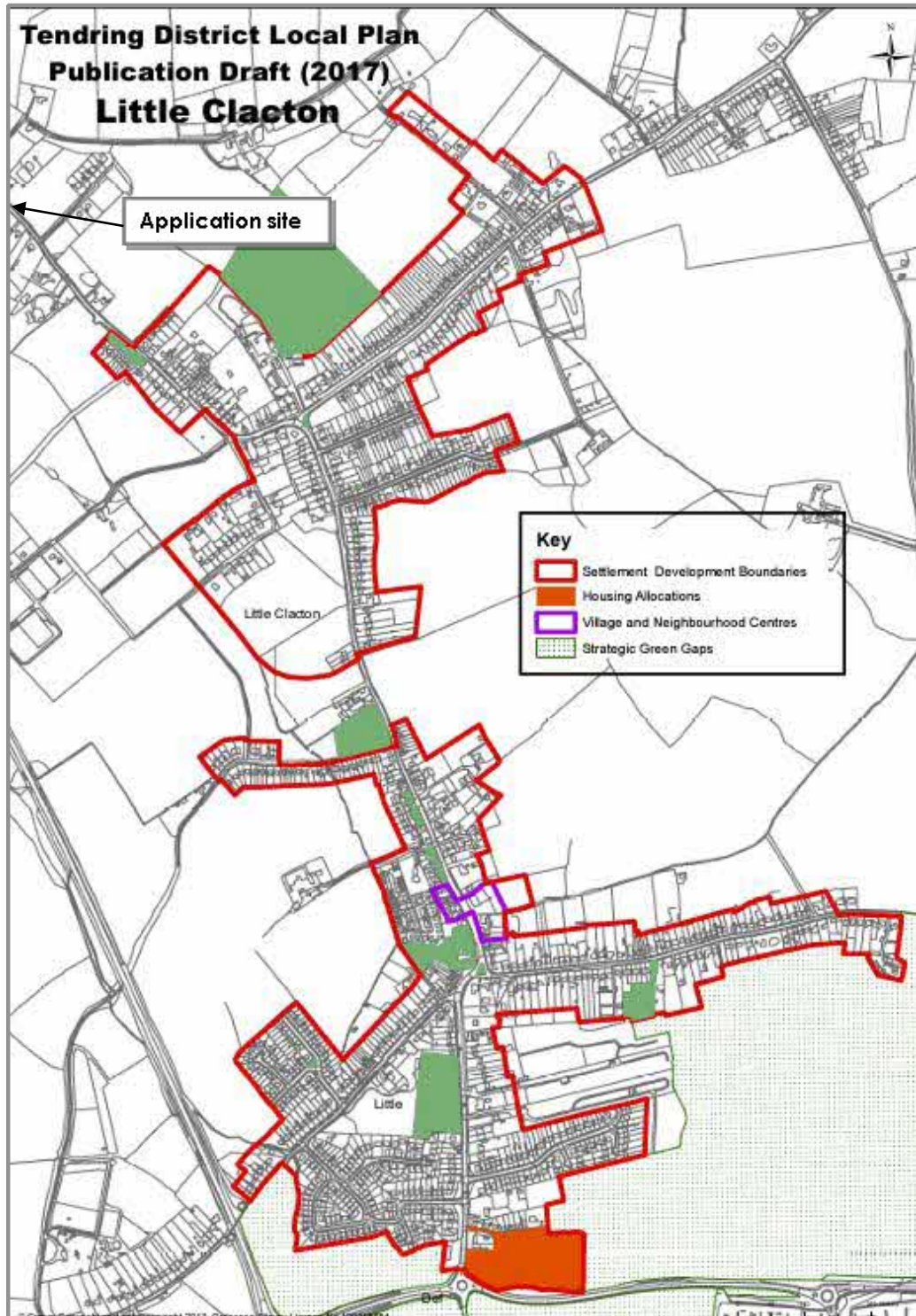


Fig 3.1 – local plan settlement boundary map of Little Clacton

- 2.11 The site is within Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding), with areas of very low surface water flooding.

- 2.12 The site is not located within a Conservation Area and is not other local or national designations (statutory or otherwise). There are no designated heritage assets or listed buildings within the vicinity and no other designations or constraints that would have a bearing on the proposal, on site or in the local area.

LOCAL CARE NEEDS

- 2.13 LNT have developed an extensive understanding and knowledge of care accommodation supply, need and demands across England.
- 2.14 Analysis of census and existing care home data, as of July 2023 there is an undersupply of 489 care beds within a five mile radius of the site and 183 care beds within 3 miles of the site.
- 2.15 Within the market catchment area (5 miles) there is an approximate population of 112,625; of which 33.7% of people are over the age of 65 and 17.8% are over 75. A significant portion of the local population are therefore within or approaching the age where a residential care home is a suitable solution for their needs.
- 2.16 An analysis of the 2018 based ONS projected population figures for older people aged 65+ has been carried out to find the total growth rate of the target elderly demographic between 2023 and 2043. The total elderly population is projected to grow by circa 53% in the 5 mile catchment area and the local authority area. Further compounding the need for additional care facilities.
- 2.17 A Planning Needs Assessment has been submitted in support of this application and the above analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of supply, demand and need within a five-mile market catchment, 3 mile catchment and local authority area and identifies a significant need for bedspaces (including for people with dementia) to 2036.

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 Care Homes fall under Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions) however the Care Home will function as an important local community facility; particularly as it is intended to be occupied and staffed by local people or people with a local connection, generally within a three to five-mile radius.
- 3.3 The proposals are outlined below, with details considered further in supporting documentation:
- Two-storey purpose-built building of 3,178 sqm (Gross Internal Area).
 - Single-room accommodation with en-suite facilities.
 - High quality internal and external amenity spaces, with level and amenable access throughout.
 - 25 parking spaces (including two accessible, six electric and eight cycle spaces).
 - On-site renewable energy generation (Solar PV and Ground Source Heating).
 - Ancillary buildings for refuse, solar energy storage and utilities connections.
- 3.4 The care homes built by LNT are designed with the resident's comfort at heart and provide excellent day-to-day amenities, services and comforts in-house. The proposed building includes main lounges/dining rooms, café/bars, quiet lounges/family rooms, a garden room, cinema room, a shop and hair studio. These facilities are particularly important for future residents who rely upon easy access to facilities, activity and familiar settings for a good quality of life.
- 3.5 The home is designed to cater for general residential and dementia care and will be dual registered on completion. The landscaping, layout, floor plans and interior design will provide a high level of care and comfortable living environment for residents with dementia.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 In terms of design the proposed care home would be of red brick, render, hanging tiles and timber boarding detailing 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.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

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

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 4.2 Para.7 of the NPPF states *“The purpose of the planning system is to contrik sustainable development. The policies in paragraphs 20-217, 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 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 demonstra, 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 11 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 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 strikes a balance between environmental, social and economic sustainability, in line with national planning policy.

Design

- 4.8 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

- 4.9 The Government is committed to ensuring that the plan 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. The supporting Economic Statement covers this in more detail.

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

- 4.10 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

- 4.11 *Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that: “Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.”*

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

- 4.12 The NPPF aims to deliver quality and choice of homes, while secure, 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 emphasizes 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.

Rural housing

- 4.13 Paragraph 78 states planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

Transportation

- 4.14 The NPPF states that planning applications that secure sustainable 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 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 current development plan for Tendring comprises Sections 1 and 2 of the Tendring District Council 2013 – 33 and Beyond Local Plan (adopted January 2021 and January 2022) supported by a suite of evidence base core documents and neighbourhood plans that have been adopted. Both these plans form the basis for the decision-making process in relation to all planning applications. This section of the Planning Statement identifies the policies the proposed scheme has been assessed against.
- 4.17 Further to the Local Plan, relevant supplementary planning documents are also considered in our development proposal.

Essex Design Guide (2005)
 Parking Standards Design and Good Practice Guide (2009)

Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond North Essex Authorities' Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan (adopted January 2021)

4.18 North Essex is identified, within the introduction of this section of the local plan, as a vibrant and attractive place to live and work. The area has experienced significant population, housing and employment growth in recent years and this is forecast to continue. In response to the growth the neighbouring authorities including Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils have agreed to work together to address the strategic planning matters across their areas, collectively known as the North Essex Authorities. These authorities have prepared a common Section 1 Local Plan to promote a sustainable growth strategy for the longer term. Central to this is effective delivery of planned strategic growth, particularly housing and employment development with the necessary supporting infrastructure.

Vision for North Essex

4.19 The vision for North Essex is to be an area of significant growth over 2033 and beyond, embracing the need to build well-design new homes, create jobs and improve and develop infrastructure for the benefit of existing and new communities. Rural and urban communities will be encouraged to thrive and prosper and will be supported by adequate community infrastructure. Sustainable development principles will be at the core of the strategic areas response to its growth needs, balancing social, economic and environmental issues. Health care facilities enabling healthy and active lifestyles will be planned and provided along with other facilities to support the development of substantial new growth; while the undeveloped countryside and the natural and historic environment and settlement character. At the heart of the strategic vision for North Essex is a new garden community to be sensitively integrated into the area based on Garden City principles.

Policy SP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.20 This policy states when considering development proposals the Local Planning Authorities will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. They will also work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Policy SP2 – Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

4.21 This policy requires contributions to be secured from development mitigation measures in accordance with the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy 2018-2038 (RAMS).

Policy SP3 – Spatial Strategy for North Essex

4.19 This policy identifies existing settlements as the principal focus for additional growth across the North Essex Authorities area within the Local Plan period. Development will be accommodated within or adjoining settlements

according to their scale, sustainability and existing role within the district and where relevant across the wider strategic area.

- 4.22 Future growth will be planned to ensure existing settlements maintain their distinctive character and role, to avoid coalescence between them and to conserve their setting. Re-use of previously developed land within settlements is an important objective, although this will be assessed within the broader context of sustainable development principles, particularly to ensure that development locations are accessible by a choice of means of travel. Beyond the main settlements the authorities will support diversification of the rural economy and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.

Policy SP4 – Meeting Housing Needs

- 4.23 This policy states that the local planning authorities will identify sufficient deliverable sites, developable sites and/or broad locations for their respective plan period, to meet the housing requirements for each Local Authority Area and will incorporate additional provision to ensure flexibility and choice and competition for land.

Policy SP5 – Employment

- 4.24 The policy states that a strong, sustainable and diverse economy will be promoted across North Essex with the local planning authorities pursuing a flexible approach to economic sectors showing growth potential across the plan period. Section 2 of each plan will allocate employment land to ensure provision is made for office, research and development, industrial, storage and distribution uses.

Policy SP6 – Infrastructure and Connectivity

- 4.25 The policy requires all development to be supported by the provision of the infrastructure, services and facilities that are identified to serve the needs arising from the development. The policy provides overriding initiatives for the improvement to transportation and travel, social infrastructure, education, health and well being, digital connectivity and water and waste water.

Policy SP7 – Place Shaping Principles

- 4.26 This policy requires all new development to meet high standards of urban and architectural design.

All new development should reflect the following place shaping principles, where applicable, (the sections relevant to this proposal are identified below)

Respond positively to local character and context to preserve and enhance the quality of existing places and their environs;
Provide buildings that exhibit individual architectural quality within well-considered public and private realms;
Protect and enhance assets of historical or natural value;
Incorporate biodiversity creation and enhancement measures;
Create well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport services above use of the private car;
and Protect the amenity of existing and future residents and users with regard to noise, vibration, smell, loss of light, overbearing and overlooking.

Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 2 (adopted January 2022)

- 4.27 Section 2 of the Local Plan identifies ‘strategic priorities’ for achieving sustainable development and planning for economic growth, meeting the social needs of a growing population and protecting the places that make the District an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Vision

- 4.28 The Vision and Objectives for Tendring are aiming to provide a thriving and prosperous economy that promotes sustainable economic growth making use of its natural and historic environments, maritime connections and visitor attractions.

Below is a summary of the objectives identified that are relevant to the proposed scheme.

Objective 1

- 4.29 The Local Plan’s strategic objectives for Housing Delivery are to provide new dwellings within Tendring District up to 2033 of sufficient variety in terms of location of sites, size, types, tenure and affordability to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population in full and to deliver high quality sustainable new communities.

Objective 2

- 4.30 The Local Plan’s strategic objective for employment delivery is to create the conditions for economic growth and employment opportunities across a range of economic sectors including established business sectors and those sectors projected to grow in the future such as renewable energy and care and assisted living. Also to provide for the development of employment land on a variety of sites to support a diversity of employment opportunities and to achieve a better balance between the location of jobs and housing, which will reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable growth up to the period of 2033.

Objective 6

- 4.31 The Local Plan’s strategic objective for sustainability is to locate development within Tendring District where it will provide the opportunity for people to satisfy their needs for employment, shopping, education, and other services locally or in locations which minimise the need to travel and where there are modes of transport available in addition to the car.

Objective 8

- 4.32 The Local Plan’s strategic objective for Biodiversity is to provide interconnected multi-functional natural green and blue spaces which secures a net gain in biodiversity and geodiversity; promotes healthy lifestyles; and enhances the quality of the natural and built environment.

Policy SPL1 – Managing Growth

- 4.33 This policy identifies the Settlement Hierarchy, the policy contributes to achieving Objectives 1 and 6 of the local plan. Weeley Heath is identified as a smaller rural settlement with Weeley and Little Clacton, the neighbouring villages, identified as rural service centres.

- Policy SPL2 – Settlement Development Boundaries**
- 4.34 This policy refers to the ‘Settlement Development Boundaries’ identified on the Policies Map and Local Map. There is a general presumption in favour of new development within the boundaries to encourage sustainable patterns of growth and carefully control urban sprawl. Outside of the settlement boundaries the Council will consider any planning application in relation to the pattern and scales of growth promoted through the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy SPL1.
- Policy SPL3 – Sustainable Design**
- 4.35 This policy contains the design criteria against which planning applications are considered. Divided into three parts the policy provides local planning criteria for ensuring development is well designed and relates to its surroundings, that practical requirements have been addressed and that any potential impacts on surrounding uses and environment are identified and measures put in place to ensure any adverse impacts are minimised.
- Policy HP1 – Improving Health and Wellbeing**
- 4.36 This policy identifies how the Council will work to improve the wellbeing of residents in Tendring. Initiatives such as working in partnership with and supporting the NHS and Public Health, working with stakeholders on projects that provide improved services, encouraging healthier communities through targeting of unhealthy lifestyles, requiring Health Impact Assessments (HIA) on certain developments, seeking mitigation towards new or enhance health facilities and ensuring increased contact with nature and access to the Districts open spaces and offering opportunities for physical activities.
- Policy HP3 – Green Infrastructure**
- 4.37 This policy encourages new development to include, protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure in the local area. Green Infrastructure within the local plan area is identified on the Policy Map, this policy provides criteria to protect, manage and enhance the existing areas.
- Policy LP2 – Housing Choice**
- 4.38 This policy states that the Council will work with the development housing providers to deliver a mix of dwellings types, sizes and tenure within the housing growth proposed for the District which reflects the overarching vision for growth in Tendring District and the evidence of housing need contained in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The policy goes on to say the Council will support the development of bungalows, retirement complexes, extra care housing, independent living, starter homes, self build and other forms of residential accommodation aimed at meeting the future needs of older and disabled residents as well as family housing.
- Policy LP 10 – Care, Independent Assisted Living**
- 4.39 This policy supports the construction of high quality care homes and extra care housing in sustainable locations. The Council will also work with the NHS, Essex County Council, care providers, educational establishments and businesses to promote technical advancements in the provision of care, improvements in training and qualifications for care professionals and support growth in the ‘supply chain’ industries related to care and assisted living.

The Council will support the provision of care homes and e) within settlement development boundaries and will also consider, on their merits proposals for new care homes on land outside settlement boundaries where they will support a sustainable pattern of growth in the District.

Policy PPL1 – Development and Flood Risk

- 4.40 This policy requires all development proposals to include appropriate respond to the risk of flooding on and/or off site. All major development proposals should consider the potential for new Blue and Green Infrastructure to help mitigate potential flood risk and include such Green Infrastructure where appropriate.

Policy PPL 3 – Rural Landscape

- 4.41 This policy seeks to protect the rural landscape and refuse planning p any proposed development that would cause overriding harm to its character or appearance. Development proposals should have regard to the special character areas and should protect and reinforce identified positive landscape qualities. New development within the rural landscape should minimise the impact of light pollution on the site and its surroundings, in order to protect rural amenity and biodiversity.

Policy PPL4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 4.42 The policy protects sites of nature conservation importance frc likely to have an adverse impact on their integrity. Requires proposals for new development to be supported by appropriate ecological assessment. Where development would harm biodiversity or geodiversity permission will not be granted unless exceptional circumstances exist, where benefits outweigh the harm caused and appropriate mitigation to ensure net gain are included.

Policy PPL5 – Water Conservation, Drainage and Sewerage

- 4.43 Requires all new development to provide adequate provision for drainage and sewerage and should include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as a means of reducing flood risk, improving water quality, enhancing Green Infrastructure network and providing amenity and biodiversity benefits.

Policy PPL 7 – Archaeology

- 4.44 Any new development which would affect, or might affect, designated or non-designated archaeological remains will be considered where accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment, a written scheme of investigation, recording or protection and deposition of archaeological records are required to be submitted.

Policy PPL10 – Renewable Energy Generation and Energy Efficiency Measures

- 4.45 Requires all development proposals to demonstrate how renewable energy solutions have been included in the scheme.

Policy CP1 – Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

- 4.46 Proposals for new development must be sustainable in terms of transport and accessibility and should include and encourage opportunities for access to sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport.

5.0 SCHEME APPRAISAL

- 5.1 A general assessment of the scheme against relevant national and local policies set out above would indicate the scheme is in general compliance with the three principles of the NPPF and the objectives of the Local Plan. The proposal could be considered to be contrary to local plan Policy SPL 2 as the site sits just outside the settlement boundary, the following appraisal sets the context for the proposal, providing justification for the chosen site and considering its impacts and benefits.
- 5.2 The Local Plan identifies that the District is projected to grow by 14.4% (from 2011 Census numbers) to approximately 158,000 by the end of the plan period. Recent decades have seen a trend towards an ageing population in the District and this is projected to continue in the future. The percentage of over 65's in Tendring District is higher than both the East of England and Essex percentages. The number of people over age 65 is projected to increase by more than a third within the plan period. In contrast, the proportion of the population aged under 5 years is projected to remain the same in that period. Between 2014 and 2034 the total population of the District is predicted to increase from 139,500 to 149,700, this represents an increase of 7% or 10,200 more people. The number of people over 65 is expected to increase from 40,600 to 47,500-an increase of 17% (6,900) representing almost a third of the total population in the district. Recent decades have seen a trend towards an ageing population in the District, these figures are representative of that.
- 5.3 The local plan states that the sector employing the most people in Tendring according to the Economic Development Strategy (2013 & 2019) was the Health and Care sector, accounting for 6,500 jobs.
- 5.4 At the time of writing the local plan identifies there were more than 130 Care Homes in Tendring District. The submitted Planning Needs Assessment by Carterwood states there are now 44 care homes (assessed on minimum market standards defined as any registered bedroom providing a minimum of en-suite WC and wash-hand basin).
- 5.5 The local plan says Tendring District has the highest concentration of care homes in the UK and the care sector is the second highest employer in the District. Figures from the Economic Strategy 2019 show the broad Health and Care sector is a significant employer within the District with over 6,500 jobs. 3,000 of these are within the Care and Assisted Living sub-sector, the vast majority of which are in care homes.
- 5.6 The research and market assessment has led to the decision to invest in the area and find a suitable site due to lack of market standard care beds.

Principle of Development

- 5.7 This proposed development will provide a much needed care facility area. The principle of increased residential use on this plot of land is considered acceptable by the recent approval for 7 no. dwellings. The proposed care home would provide a mix of residential types within the immediate area, a community facility and an employment use.

- 5.8 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 an identified local need but would be accessible to the community, providing both service and employment.

Design

- 5.9 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 design. It will enhance the character of the site, maintaining the open aspects to the rear whilst enabling development to be carried out on a level plateau created towards the front of the site. The proposal optimises the opportunities the site offers for residents in terms of aspect, views and amenity provision.
- 5.10 The two-storey building would have the main entrance facing onto Clacton Road, giving a presence onto the main road albeit set back behind a walled entrance and established tree line, pedestrian access will also be provided at this point. Entrance into the building can only be gained via a secure intercom system to ensure all visitors to the home are seen.
- 5.11 The design of the building is proposed in this form 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.
- 5.12 The proposed care home would reflect some of the design features apparent within the surrounding area and responds positively to the local character and context. The use of red brick, render and timber detailing is proposed to provide articulation to the building and reflect the materials of the surrounding developments. There are a mixture of gabled and hipped roof elements within the immediate surrounding streets, the proposed scheme incorporates a varied roof structure to reflect surrounding design features.
- 5.13 Although the scheme is larger than the existing building on site it sits within a much larger plot than those surrounding. The 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. The proposal is a single building with amenity space contained within its boundaries. There is adequate distance to adjoining boundaries to prevent any undue or unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing of surrounding developments. The proposed building provides the opportunity for a high-quality design that adds to local character and redevelops a site of a single dwelling that has been neglected over time.
- 5.14 The proposed building follows the linear development pattern of Clacton Road, maintaining the views along the street scene and although outside the settlement limits the site is within the built form and not creating a merging of settlements. The proposed development follows the principles of Local Plan Policy SPL3.

Landscaping

- 5.15 The site will be landscaped as part of the proposed development; a scheme will be designed which will be attractive and inviting to residents and provide an enhanced setting for the building within the street scene. Existing trees will be retained where possible and new planting will reflect the local character, with native species included within the design and will be suitably managed and protected to ensure the longevity of the landscaping.
- 5.16 There will be landscaped amenity space around the care home, with various elevations of the building looking directly over these spaces and access to them from the ground floor main lounges and main and secondary entrance. In quantitative terms, 5803sqm of external amenity space would be provided, which equates to a ratio of 87.9sqm per resident. It is also considered that the application proposals accord with Local Plan Policy HP3 local and national policy in this instance.
- 5.17 A boundary wall is proposed along Clacton Road to reflect a number of other neighbouring properties, giving the appearance of a large residential dwelling. The trees will sit behind the wall maintaining the current visual amenity. The existing boundary treatment to the east and west will be retained with an open aspect retained to the southern boundary, retaining the relationship with the open countryside to the rear.

Trees

- 5.18 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the application identifies that a total of 13no. arboricultural features from the 51no. on site will need to be removed to facilitate the development. A number of these features have already been consented to be removed on the previously approved scheme.
- 5.19 4no. trees are required to be removed along the site frontage to form the access into site. There are a number of trees remaining along the site frontage to provide screening and filter the development from the street scene.

Ecology

- 5.20 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) submitted with the application concludes that no invasive species or protected plant species were found on site. It is unlikely the site is ecologically important for reptiles and is unsuitable for hazel dormice. Further surveys are recommended for bats and GCN, these surveys are underway and will be submitted with the application. Full details are included within the accompanying PEA. It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policy PPL4.

Land Contamination

- 5.21 The accompanying Geo-Environmental Appraisal has considered contaminative risks and geology characteristics associated with the Site. The Report does not raise any risks that would preclude the proposed development. The proposals will therefore accord with relevant Local Plan Policies and Paragraph 183 of the NPPF.

Air Quality

- 5.22 The application site is not located within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The proposed development would not result in the designation of an AQMA, as such no air quality statement or report has been submitted following the Local Validation Requirements.

Noise

- 5.23 The proposed development is not considered to raise issues of noise to the occupants of nearby existing buildings. The application site is not located close to existing sources of noise, as such no noise assessment has been submitted.

Drainage

- 5.24 A detailed Drainage Strategy has been prepared for the scheme including appropriate measures to ensure there is no flooding on and/or off site. This is compliant with Local Plan Policy PPL1 and Paragraphs 166 and 168 of the NPPF.

Transport Considerations

- 5.25 The site is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport accompanying Transport Statement.
- 5.26 Given the nature of the development and location of the site, the level of car parking demand is unlikely to be significant as confirmed by the Transport Statement. The proposed development will not result in any adverse disruption to the free flow of traffic on the local highway network, as stated in the Transport Statement. 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.
- 5.27 The proposed access arrangements and availability of alternative modes of travel to the site, should demonstrate that the potential level of vehicular activity and impact on the local highway network is acceptable.
- 5.28 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 over the car park and access road. The main point of access to the site and building are both able to be monitored from either the main foyer of the home or the office to enable continuous surveillance. A suitable lighting scheme comprising low level bollard lighting to the footpath routes and car parking area will be deployed.
- 5.29 The application proposal will not unduly impact on the surrounding highway network. The proposal accords with Local Plan Policy CP1 and Paragraphs 104, 110, 111 and 113 of the NPPF.

Renewable Energy Considerations

- 5.30 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.
- 5.31 Low energy luminaires and occupancy sensors would be used throughout the home in communal areas, corridors, bathrooms, toilets and en-suites to minimise energy used. There would also be a control centre which would enable areas within the building to be isolated at night to further minimise energy use.
 - 5.32 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.
 - 5.33 A ground source heat pump system and photovoltaic panels are proposed to provide heating and electricity to the building which would generate in excess of 50% of the facilities energy requirements from renewable sources, with a commensurate reduction in carbon emissions.

6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- 6.1 The proposed development will bring with it important sustainable benefits (environmental, social and economic). These benefits each attract weight in favour of the development.

Environment

- 6.2 The proposal will enhance the site and surrounding area environment, retaining and enhancing high quality trees and vegetation. New landscaping will provide better assimilation with the surrounding area and an improvement in character.
- 6.3 The landscape proposals will deliver important and lasting enhancements to local biodiversity, using more native, sensory and pollinating species. Significant biodiversity net gain can be achieved on site along with permanent habitat creation within the building's fabric.
- 6.4 The building design utilises ground source heat pumps and solar panels to generate a majority of its energy demands on-site. Minimising the burdens of national energy infrastructure, significantly reducing potential carbon emissions; and therefore mitigating against and adapting the site to the adverse impacts of climate change. This further allows for the proposals to make more effective use of the site, offering improvements in terms of pollution reduction and waste management.

- 6.5 These circumstances will in turn provide significant social health benefits, notably by improving access to and experiences of a higher quality and more natural environment.

Social

- 6.6 The proposed development will address a significant shortfall and future need for residential care facilities (for the care of older people and people with dementia); in a sustainable and accessible location. This will directly benefit local residents looking for opportunities to live and work locally.
- 6.7 The proposals will provide efficiencies for care and health provision on-site, with clinical rooms provided for use by visiting health care practitioners. The increased capacity of care accommodation will also reduce pressures on health services.
- 6.8 The proposals will positively contribute to wider housing supply considerations. The care home is likely to attract local people living within three to five miles resulting in existing housing stock becoming available for local people, aspiring families and first-time buyers. This will in turn reduce development pressures on more sensitive and less sustainable greenfield plots.
- 6.9 The proposed accommodation is designed to be purposefully amenable to people with dementia and mobility challenges and is designed to enable socialisation and meet their health and wellbeing needs. Having access to the care home will provide an important opportunity for older people to leave situations of loneliness and isolation.
- 6.10 The proposals are complementary to the residential nature of the area, and will ensure that residents have a greater choice, quality and availability of local accommodation that meets their changing needs/circumstances. With the care home situated in the context of traditional residential uses, the proposals will also enhance the inclusivity and diversity of the local area.
- 6.11 The management of the care home will also function as a local community care facility, with staff playing an important role in engaging residents with the wider community. Maintaining important connections and encouraging broader socialisation with the local community.

Economic

- 6.12 The proposed development will bring with it important economic benefits to the local economy in terms of employment opportunities and investment in construction.
- 6.13 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.4 below.

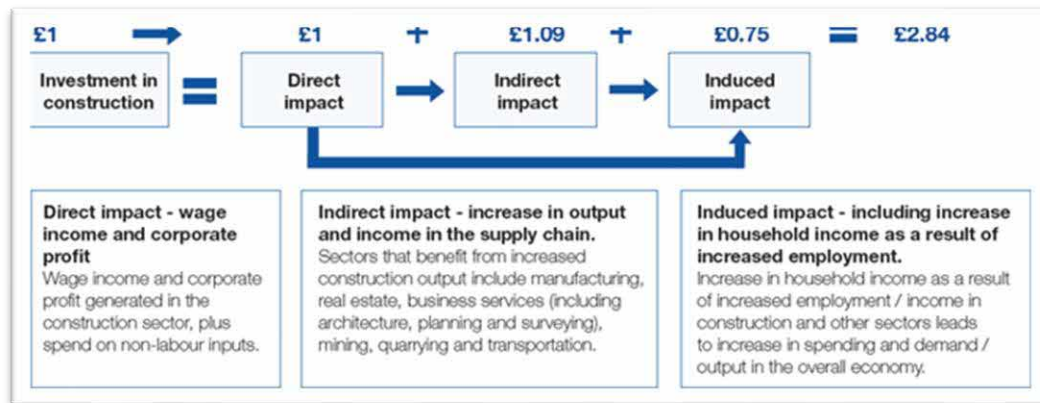


Fig 4: Image from UK Contractors Group study

- 6.14 The construction cost alone of the proposed development is substantial; bearing in mind the above table, this development should result in a considerable contribution to the local economy whilst creating a range of job opportunities (direct and indirect).
- 6.15 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.
- 6.16 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.
- 6.17 Staff would work on a shift 24/7 basis, during the day there are only ever likely to be 24 members of staff present on-site at any one time.
- 6.18 The increase in employment opportunities will generate opportunities for training and career progression. This will boost economic performance, community wellbeing and social mobility.
- 6.19 With this investment based on an understanding of local demographics within three to five miles there is strong potential for local people within this area to be employed by the care home, meaning the economic benefits from jobs and training will be predominately focused on the local area.
- 6.20 Once operational, the care home itself, as well as residents, visitors and employees will contribute to increased spending at local businesses and services. This in turn can generate further employment and spending within the local economy.

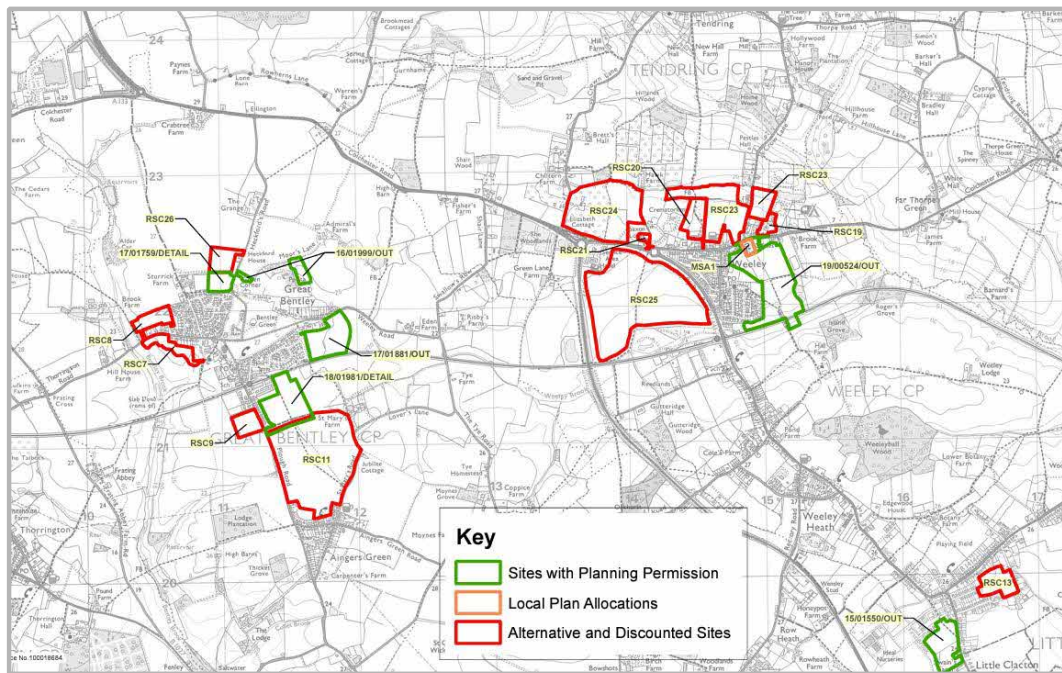
7.0 LAND AVAILABLE FOR CARE HOMES

- 7.1 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF identifies the importance of a significant amount and variety of land coming forward where it is needed and that the groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. To determine the minimum number of homes needed strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).
- 7.2 Local Plan Policy LP10 Care, Independent Assisted Living seeks to meet the care needs of future generations and generate growth in the care, independent and assisted living sector in line with the Economic Development Strategy. The Council will support the construction of high quality care homes and extra- care housing in sustainable locations. The policy states the Council will also consider, on their merits, proposals for the development of new care homes (Use Class C2) on land outside settlement boundaries where they will still support a sustainable pattern of growth in the District.
- 7.3 As recommended by para 60 of the NPPF there is a need to address the groups with specific housing requirements, such as the elderly, within the amount and variety of land coming forward. There are no specific allocations for care within the current local plan and associated documents. Sites available and allocated for residential development rarely include provision for care and competition is too high against residential developers resulting in care being overlooked.
- 7.4 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (Dec 2015) considers the needs of specific profiles including older persons. The report states that ‘as well as the need for specialist housing for older people there will also be an additional requirement for Registered Care. According to the Strategic Housing for Older People tool there are around 5,882 spaces in nursing and residential care homes in the HMA currently. Presuming the current occupation rate by age across the area is continued forward, the Strategic Housing for Older People tool indicates there will be a requirement for 12,483 spaces in the HMA in 2037, suggesting an additional 6,601 spaces will be required over the next 23 years. This additional accommodation is required to meet the future institutional population and therefore does not form part of the new housing to meet the Objective Assessed Need. (On a practical point it would not be appropriate to increase the housing requirement to meet this need (as it is not housing) – although it may be appropriate to plan for the provision of this need separately)’ (page 70).
- 7.5 All documentation identifies the increasing elderly population and the need to address the growing need for care homes. After an analysis of the allocated sites in the local plan, sites identified within the SHLAA and other supplementary documents such as Sites Promoted for Housing and Mixed Use by Third Parties the application site is the only site found that is suitable and available for development at this current time.

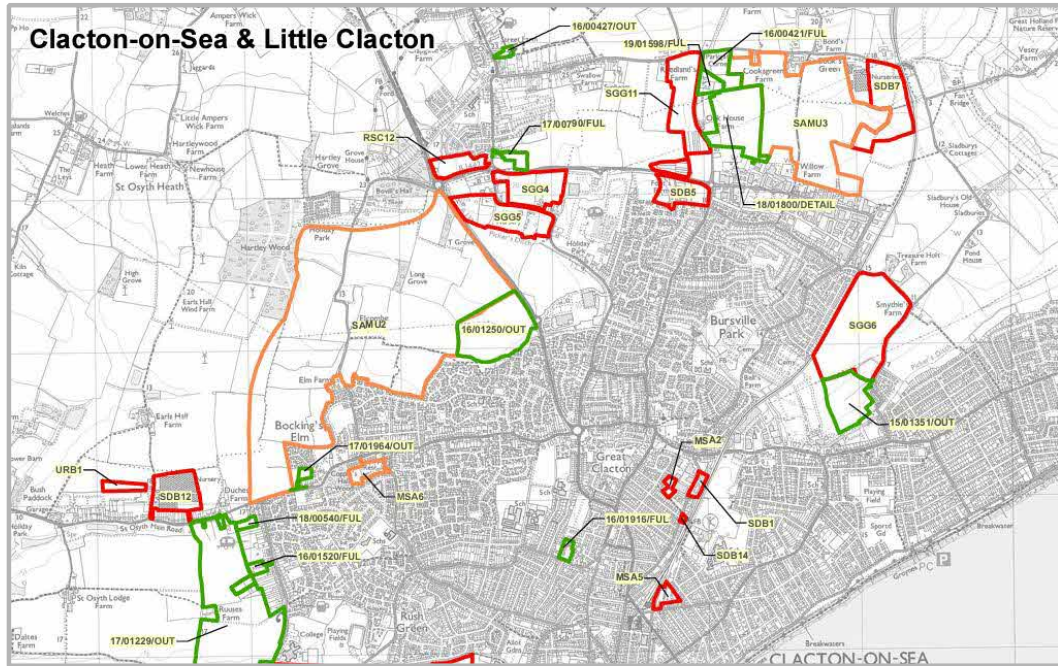
8.0 SITE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

Location

- 8.1 Early consideration of the site concentrated on the accessibility and suitability of the setting. Policy LP 10 states the Council will consider proposals for new care homes on land outside of settlement boundaries where they will still support a sustainable pattern of growth in the District. The application site is approximately 130 meters from the edge of the settlement boundary of Weeley Heath, which is identified as a smaller rural settlement within the local plan. To the south is the rural service centre of Little Clacton, the application site is 340m north of the settlement boundary of Little Clacton. Policy LP10 requires care homes to be located on 'a site safely accessible on foot within 400 meters of the edge of the settlement boundary of one of the District's 'rural service centres'.
- 8.2 The site is positioned between two rural service centres, Weeley and Little Clacton. There is footpath connectivity between all three areas with a regular bus service connecting all three and Clacton-on-sea. Weeley train station is located approximately 1700 meters north of the application site.
- 8.3 Weeley is identified as an Expanded Settlement within the Settlement Hierarchy document (April 2016), with both Little Clacton and Weeley identified as the larger rural settlements, scoring high for accessibility to jobs, shops, services and public transport within Tendring District.
- 8.4 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) October 2022 identified a number of sites that have been considered to meet the future growth requirements and a number of applications that have been refused over recent years have been on prematurity grounds. The SHLAA has identified the potential for approximately 1600 dwellings within Weeley, the plan below is an extract from the SHLAA showing the location of the sites.



- 8.5 The extract below identifies the sites suitable for development within Little Clacton, further development sites are identified adjoining the settlement boundary and some recent approvals within the settlement. Some of these sites will not be delivered during the current local plan period to 2033, this does identify the desire to expand these locations supporting a sustainable pattern of growth around these settlements.



- 8.6 Recent approvals, local plan allocations and inclusion of sites within the SHLAA demonstrates that the surrounding rural service centres are both seeing significant development pressures for housing with limited employment provision. Both settlements are expanding with the need to provide sustainable employment to serve the population growth.

Site Characteristics and Impact

- 8.7 Policy LP 10 requires ‘all new care homes to pay particular attention to landscape character if located outside of settlement boundaries and offer a high quality, safe, secure and attractive environment for their residents and provide sufficient external space to accommodate the normal recreation and other needs of residents, visitors or employees. Proposals shall have no significant material adverse impact on the landscape, residential amenity, highway safety or the form and character of nearby settlements and shall be otherwise appropriate in scale and design for their location’.
- 8.8 The proposed home respects the local landscape character and existing street patterns. The design and layout maintains and enhances the existing street scene and the open countryside to the rear. The proposed development relates well to the site and surroundings in relation to its siting, height, design and materials.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Tendring District is a largely rural area, its countryside is one of its main assets and maintaining an attractive rural environment is important to the quality of life experienced by both residents and visitors, it can also be an important consideration for the location of some businesses.
- 9.2 The smaller villages within the rural heartland have limited access to job opportunities, local services, facilities and other infrastructure. Residents of these smaller villages are often reliant on neighboring towns and villages for work and other services. Small scale development which is sympathetic to the rural character of the settlement will help younger people to continue to live in the area, keep local shops and services viable and help bring balance to an ageing population.
- 9.3 The proposed care home helps to meet these needs by providing a small scale development that will reflect the character of the area, within a rural setting that is sustainable. The care home would have limited impact on the highway with low traffic generation, sit within the large plot without detriment to the neighbouring dwellings and will nestle within the site behind the established trees. The frequent bus service and acceptable walking distance into Little Clacton provides accessibility to job opportunities for the local residents.
- 9.4 The Local Plan encourages development of care homes in appropriate locations to ensure future generations of older residents get the highest quality of care and future generations of working age residents can access a range of job opportunities in a diverse and growing sector of the economy. Best located within the settlement boundaries, or within close walking distance as identified within local policy, with access to modes of transport and local services. The proposed development provides this.
- 9.5 The Council recognises that it is often difficult to find areas of land large enough to accommodate larger, high quality care homes set within open grounds with gardens, landscape and trees, which for the quality of life for residents is very important. The application site provides this which is a rare opportunity within an accessible location for staff and visitors.
- 9.6 The scheme provides growth in the area whilst ensuring the settlement maintains its character and role, avoiding coalescence between neighbouring settlements and re-using previously developed land which is an important objective in local and national policy.
- 9.7 The proposed development for a care home on this site is in accordance with government policy in the NPPF. The site 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.

- 9.8 The development of the site will contribute to providing a socially inclusive community and significant numbers of jobs/employment. It is considered that the proposal would enhance 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 Tendring Districts Local Plan, as discussed previously in detail.
- 9.9 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.