Planning Statement

Land off Billing Brook Road, Thorplands

On behalf of Northampton Partnership Homes and Northamptonshire County Council

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Introduction

1.1 General background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by WYG on behalf of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). The application seeks detailed planning permission for residential development of four pairs of semi-detached bungalows for persons with learning difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions on land off Billing Brook Road, Thorplands, Northampton.

1.1.2 The site is situated within the administrative area of Northampton. WYG has been instructed to prepare this planning statement to support a Regulation 3 application. This means that the application will be submitted to and determined by NCC, rather than Northampton Borough Council, due to the nature of the scheme to meet adult health and social care functions, which are the responsibility of NCC as the upper tier authority.

1.1.3 In the past ‘regulation 3’ permissions had to be developed by applicants (in this case NCC and NPH) and the planning permission would not run with the land. However, amendments to the Town and Country Planning General Regulations (1992), brought into force in February 2018, have removed the requirement of the development to be carried out by the applicants. As such, the scheme may be implemented by a third party, in accordance with any planning permission granted, if required. This means that the development, if granted planning permission, could be lawfully implemented by a successor body to NCC or third parties, subject to conditions or other legal agreements.

1.1.4 Irrespective of the authority that will consider the application, it must be determined in accordance with relevant local policies, national planning policy and other material considerations. This planning statement sets out the relevant background to the scheme, together with an assessment of the relevant local and national policy context.

1.1.5 The application is supported by this planning statement prepared by WYG, together with the following documents, as required by NCC’s ‘Regulation 3’ Local List Requirements:
- Planning, Design and Access Statement prepared by Maber (Architects), incorporating Landscape Assessment and Landscaping details
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan prepared by Jenkins Wier

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2 Town and Country Planning General (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2018
3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
• Flood Risk Assessment (incorporating drainage assessment) prepared by Watermans
• Geotechnical Report prepared by Watermans
• Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Waterman
• Transport Statement and traffic management plan, including parking and access arrangements prepared by Waterman
• Energy Statement prepared by CJR
• Utilities Statement prepared by CJR
• Tree Survey and Method Statement prepared by MacIntryre Trees

1.1.6 No archaeological or site level ecological report has been provided with the application. With respect to archaeology, an email from NCC’s archaeological advisor has confirmed that there is potential for evidence of prehistoric activity to remain and, as such an archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken. However, this can be completed post consent by way of condition.

1.1.7 In respect of ecology, the Geo-Environmental report prepared by Waterman Group has confirmed there are no ecological systems within 500m of the site. This includes SSSIs and other designated wildlife sites. Pre-Application discussions with NCC have confirmed that⁴, if required, site level assessments may be undertaken post submission.

1.2 The client

1.2.1 The proposal is being jointly promoted by NCC with NPH. NCC, as the upper tier authority, has responsibility for adult health and social care, whilst NPH is an ‘arm’s length management organisation’ (ALMO) that manages Northampton Borough Council’s housing services. NPH is responsible for a range of services include allocations and lettings, repairs and maintenance, housing management and tenancy support. The two organisations will work together as part of the development and management of this scheme, including the provision of the specialist care packages required by future occupiers.

⁴ Pre-Application discussion between Maber Architects and NCC Development Management 23.05.2019
2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1 Context

2.1.1 The application site is within the administrative area of Northampton Borough Council, located in the Thorplands area (Talavera Ward) at National Grid reference 179369, 264308. Thorplands is located to the north east of the town and was developed as part of the ‘New Town’ expansion of Northampton throughout the latter part of the 20th Century, with Thorplands largely constructed during the 1970s. Residential properties in the local vicinity are predominantly 2/3 stories based around ‘courts’ of semi-detached and terraced dwellings, with small parcels of public green spaces.

2.1.2 The site is located centrally within the Thorplands Estate on the east of the Billing Brook Road, the main spine through the estate. Local services and facilities, including a post office providing financial services and a local convenience store are within easy walking distance on the western side of Billing Brook Road accessible via a pedestrian footbridge.

2.1.3 The site is well served by public transport, providing access to the Town Centre and Weston Favell District Centre. There are presently five bus services which operate within 400m of the site including numbers 1 and 2 services which are high frequency services operating every 10 minutes during the day, 15-20 minutes in the evening and every 20 minutes on a Sunday. Bus stops to access these services are located within 250m of the site, with the closest bus stop for Service 1 approximately 70m north of the proposed site access.

2.1.4 Surrounding the site are residential properties on Greatfield Court and Waterpump Court, which back on to the site, and a children’s playground and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) to the north.

2.1.5 It is wholly owned by Northampton Borough Council (NBC) as shown on the title plan excerpt below (Figure 1). The location of the site, relative to the Northampton town centre, and the Thorplands Estate is shown in Figures 2, 3 and (below).

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5 See Section 2.5 of the Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan.
6 See Section 2.5.3 and Appendix B of the Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan
2.2 The application site

2.2.1 The application site extends to 0.77ha (1.9 acres). To the north, the perimeter footpath leads west to a pedestrian footbridge over Billing Brook Road and enabling safe access to the local amenities and road transport, whilst to the south and east the footpath connects the site with the established residential dwellings in the area. To the west the footpath ‘zig zags’ down to Billing Brook Road enabling access to the bus stops. The ‘Zig zag’ element (as indicated on Figure 3) is located outside the red-line site boundary. The Pedestrian Footbridge and ‘Zig Zag’ footpath is illustrated in Figure 5 (overleaf).
2.2.2 Whilst there is good pedestrian connectivity to the site, there is presently no vehicular access. A new access is proposed to be taken from the southern boundary of Billing Brook Road. Section 278 works to provide a new site access and alteration to the highway is included as part of the planning application and details are set out within Waterman’s Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan document.

2.2.3 In terms of topography, there is a 6-metre ground level difference between the southern corner adjacent to Billing Brook Road and the high plateau to the north and central areas. There are existing bunds to the north east (highest point of the site) which are likely to be remnants from the construction of the surrounding residential development during the 1970s. The Geo-Environmental survey carried out by Waterman did not identify any significant hazardous materials within this made ground.

2.2.4 The site is classified by the Northampton Borough Council Open Space Study as ‘amenity green space’ within the ‘urban’ classification and forms part of a larger parcel with the land to the north (outside of the red-line), which has more formal play equipment and the Multi-use games area (see Figure 6). The site itself is predominantly mowed grass, with clusters of trees. It is understood that the site is mainly used for informal recreation such as dog walking.

Figure 5: Panoramic Image looking South showing footbridge and footpath.
2.2.5 Based on Northampton Borough Council’s Interactive mapping data\(^7\), none of the trees on site are subject to statutory protections e.g. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and there are no ‘veteran’ trees on the site which are subject to additional protection due to their biological, cultural or aesthetic value. However, the site contains a number of mature and semi mature trees, which are scattered

\(^7\) Accessed May 2019
around the perimeter of the site. Of particular importance is the mature Oak Tree (T19), which pre-
dates the estate and would have once stood as part of the original agricultural landscape is retained
for its ecological, historical and environmental benefits as part of the proposals (see Figure 7).

2.2.6 The site is within flood zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding) and there are no records of surface
water flooding within the site. There are no SSIs, Local or County Wildlife Sites within 500m. Whilst
the site contributes to the urban Green Infrastructure network, it is generally poorly connected to
the principal corridor, which follows the Billing Brook connecting sites such as Lings Wood and Little
Billing Arbour.

2.2.7 There are no designated heritage assets within the local vicinity, the closest being the Grade II Listed
Thorplands Farm Cottages located approximately 0.5km north west of the site. As noted by the
Archaeological Advisor, there is some evidence of prehistoric activity on a neighbouring site. As such,
there may be some remaining evidence here. Such evidence is likely to be of local significance only.

2.3 Planning History

2.3.1 The northern part of the site was previously occupied by a pavilion and children’s adventure
playground. This is the area proposed for the bungalow units. The exact date of construction and
subsequent demolition/removal of these structure is unknown but is likely to be in excess of 10 years.
There is no other relevant planning history for the site.

2.3.2 Various residential applications have been submitted for properties in the immediate vicinity. In
addition, applications have been made for:

- Extension to Thorplands Primary School (2013)
- Creation of a play area at Thorplands Community Centre (2009)

2.3.3 None of these applications are considered directly relevant to the current proposals.

8 See Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (2019) prepared by MacIntyre
Trees
3.0 The proposed development

3.1 Design

3.1.1 This full application seeks permission for the erection of 8 no. one-bedroom semi-detached bungalows for persons with learning difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions (class C2), a management centre along with associated access and landscaping. It has been carefully designed to consider the safety of residents, staff, and visitors to the site and to consider Secured by Design principles but also to provide residents with a high quality of life and a degree of independence.

3.1.2 The residential element of the scheme is located towards the north of the site on the flatter area of land (the plateau). It comprises 4 single storey residential blocks centred around a secure, internal courtyard which provides the focal point for activity. A fifth block (the management block) is also single story and is positioned to help manage access to the site, as well as providing natural surveillance. Car parking and the new access road are located towards the southern boundary. An illustrative block plan, taken from the Landscape Masterplan is included at Figure 8.
3.1.3 The site is enclosed through a 2m high weld mesh fence perimeter fence with the main point of access via the management building. The area within this premier fence is referred to as the ‘secure area’ for the purposes of this planning statement. Access to the secure area is via the management building or key code/fob-controlled gates. This includes all deliveries, as well as visitors to the site. The visual impact of this fence is minimised through screening and planting. Further details of security and management measures are set out within the Design and Access Statement prepared by Maber Architects (section 4.3).

3.1.4 Detailed landscaping proposals form part of the application (see Landscape Masterplan prepared by Maber). Within the secure area of the site, landscaping details include a variety of sensory experiences achieved through varied surface textures and sensory planting in addition to scaled social and quiet
areas providing a varied environment for staff and residents. Outside of the secure area, appropriate landscaping is achieved through the retention of existing trees and new planting, which will help to minimise any visual intrusion and maintain a green ‘feel’ to the area.

The bungalows:

3.1.5 The proposal is for 8, single storey one-bedroom semi-detached bungalows arranged around a central, enclosed courtyard. The bungalows are designed in a traditional ‘cottage’ style with pitched roofs. The proposed materials include brick on SIPS panel walls and simulated slate roofs to give the impression of more traditional brick and slate.

3.1.6 The cottages are accessible from the central courtyard and each provides a bedroom, living area, wet room and kitchen enabling residents to lead an independent lifestyle with access to small, secure, private rear gardens. Each cottage has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the intended customers regarding internal layout and space.

The Management Building:

3.1.7 The management building is of a similar architectural style to the cottages, as a single storey block with a pitched roof and will be constructed from the same materials to provide a comprehensive development. The management building will provide a staff office, meeting room, occasional overnight accommodation and lounge area with kitchenette and laundry. It is anticipated that there will be 8. No full-time staff managing the accommodation including care needs.

3.1.8 As noted, the management building also provides the principal point of control for all visitors to the site through a secure entrance.

3.2 Access and Car Parking

3.2.1 The site is accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. All current public footpaths are retained, and the access design seeks to ensure that there is a safe means of access for all road users.

3.2.2 There is presently no vehicular access to the site. Access is proposed from Billing Brook Road and utilises land within public ownership. The site access has been designed with to ensure it meets the

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9 See Tree Report prepared by MacIntyre Trees for further details
10 Gated access is provided between each garden for staff safety reasons.
11 Northampton Borough Council or Northamptonshire Highways Land
relevant guidance including visibility splays. The Transport Statement and Traffic Management Plan provided by Waterman provides additional technical detail regarding the proposed new vehicular access points (see section 3.2).

**Car Parking**

3.2.3 Car parking is provided within the site boundary and access is controlled through a barrier system. Parking provision is made for 24 spaces with an additional space for a minibus or support vehicle to park close to the reception area/ management building. Due to the nature of the building for supported housing, the carpark is anticipated to be used by staff members and visitors and are in line with the local guidance of 1 space per 3 beds for a C2 use class. Two additional disabled bays are provided.

3.2.4 Cycle and motorcycle parking of one space per 5 staff members has also been allowed for within the development footprint. In addition, there is a ‘clear zone’ to the front of the Management Building specifically for emergency vehicle parking.
4.0 Planning policy

4.1 Local policy

4.1.1 The starting point for considering development proposals is the Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.1.2 The relevant current Development Plan for Northampton Borough consists of the following documents:

- West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)
- Saved Policies of the Northampton Local Plan (1997)
- Any ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plans
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

4.1.3 Northampton is presently preparing a Part 2 Local Plan, which will replace the saved policies of the Northampton Local Plan. The Regulation 19 (Pre-submission) was published for consultation in May 2019. As the plan is now at a relatively advanced stage, relevant policies have been assessed and are capable of being material considerations. However, they are unlikely to attract any more than limited weight at the current time.

4.1.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the site is not located within a designated Neighbourhood Area.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS)

4.1.5 The WNJCS was adopted in December 2014 and is the strategic plan covering the whole of Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District and Daventry District. The vision of the WNJCS for the area includes the provision of high-quality housing for all and a suburb quality of life for its communities. Northampton is identified as the principal urban area and will become a beacon of high-quality design. It will be the focus and heart for its well-integrated neighbourhood communities.

4.1.6 The vision is supported by a series of objectives. Of relevance to this proposal are: Objective 2- Infrastructure and Development; Objective 3- Connections; Objective 11- Housing; and Objective 15- Heritage.

4.1.7 Policy S1 addresses the distribution of development across West Northamptonshire, with the focus
of development within, and adjoining Northampton. Being wholly located within the urban area of Northampton, the proposal is in conformity with the spatial hierarchy.

4.1.8 Policy S3 sets out the scale and distribution of development. Over the plan period, it is expected that around 18,870 homes will need to be provided within the Northampton Borough boundary, with a further 9,600 homes in urban extensions located in Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District’s administrative areas to meet Northampton’s housing needs over the plan period (total 28,470). Policy S4 complements this policy to ensure that Northampton’s needs are met primarily within Northampton’s existing urban area [...]. Although this proposal falls into use class C2 (residential institutions), such proposals can count towards a local planning authority’s housing requirement. It is widely acknowledged that Northampton has been unable to maintain an adequate supply of sites for housing against the planned requirements of the WNJCS. This site would therefore assist in meeting the need for housing within the Borough.

4.1.9 It is acknowledged within the WNJCS that "different households require different types and sizes of housing". As such, Policy H1 seeks to provide an appropriate mix of housing. Specifically, paragraph 9.12 states: "The JCS seeks to meet the range of housing needs which exist in our communities. Some groups such as older people or those with disabilities may require specialised housing. These vary from traditional nursing homes to schemes which support independent living, but also offer care packages”. Policy H1 states that New housing development will cater for different accommodation needs including the needs of older people and vulnerable groups. In selecting the site, regard has been had to criteria a-g and the site meets the relevant criteria and will provide safe, secure and sustainably located housing enabling individuals with learning difficulties to lead an independent lifestyle whilst benefiting from specialist care packages as required.

4.1.10 The WNJCS sets high standards of design to achieve sustainable development. In addition to proposals being in accordance with the spatial strategy (policies S1, S3 and S4), Policy S10 provides a series of criteria to achieve sustainable development. This includes achieving the highest standards of design, incorporating safety and security considerations (criterion A) and being located where services and facilities can be easily accessed by walking, cycling or public transport (criterion e). As set out within the Design and Access Statement, and summarised within section 4 of this Planning

\[\text{12} \text{ The Planning Practice guidance (Paragraph 43 reference 3-043-20180913) specifically references the inclusion of residential institutions (use class C2) as counting towards housing requirements. Whilst this is famed in terms of Older Persons accommodation, there is nothing that would explicitly prohibit the counting of other residential institutions, such as the proposal, towards housing delivery.}\]

\[\text{13} \text{ For example, the Northampton 5 Year Land Supply Report (April 2018) which reports a supply of <3 years, and the Northampton Local Plan Part 2.}\]
Statement, the proposals are well located to maximise accessibility by sustainable travel modes and the highest levels of security are incorporated into the proposal.

4.1.11  Additionally, as set out within the ‘Supported Living Energy Statement’, the proposal incorporates passive and active design measures, renewable energy proposals, enhanced building fabric and lower u-values aiming to achieve 25% betterment on current recommended levels. Heat recovery ventilation plant will be used to heat water saving money and energy. The proposal is compliant with Policy S10.

4.1.12  Being well connected to enable travel choice is a key consideration to achieving the requirements of Policy C2- New Developments. Proposals for new development are expected to achieve modal shift by maximising travel choices from new development, as well as being supported by a transport assessment and travel plan. As noted, the main source of trips associated with this development will be from employees, rather than the residents.

4.1.13  It is acknowledged that the proposal will result in the loss of an area of open space. The loss of existing community facilities and open space is generally resisted by policy, unless specific criteria can be met (policy RC2: Community Needs). The use of the term ‘or’ within the bulleted list indicates that in order to be compliant with the policy only one of the criteria will need to be met. The exceptions include the improvement through the provision of a replacement facility or equal or better value; the proposal will bring about community benefits that outweigh the loss of the facility; or having regard to the relevant open space standards the space is surplus or little used.

4.1.14  Firstly, as set out within the Design and Access Statement, NPH are installing new play areas on the remaining land to the north of the site to comprise a Toddler, Junior and Urbanix and Street fitness area. Whilst the proposal does not include the creation of a new area of open space, the provision of play and street fitness equipment is considered to improve the facilities presently available.

4.1.15  Secondly, the proposal offers indirect community benefits arising from the development of specialist accommodation within Northampton. As noted, this proposal is for a residential institution (Use Class C2) to provide specialist housing for adults with complex needs. Costs can be up to £6k per week for current placements to ensure that individuals receive the care they need. At present, placements can be long distances from the family home, meaning that families may be split, and individuals placed away from their communities. The proposals will help to provide placements within Northampton, close to family and within the community. Moreover, the costs of placements are likely to be reduced from the current figures resulting in an indirect financial benefit at a time when public finances across the county are under significant pressure.
4.1.16 Finally, the site is identified as ‘Amenity Green Space’ under component H ‘Urban Open Space’. Amenity green space can play a key role in the delivery of local open space to residents; however as set out within the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Strategy for Northampton (2017/18) the provision of local amenity green space does not negate the need for more formalised provision, such as a park. Within Sub-Area 6 ‘Eastern District’, which includes the Thorplands Estate, there is a surplus of amenity green space of around 30 ha\textsuperscript{14} applying the proposed standards.

4.1.17 As stated, whilst only one of the criteria set out in policy RC2 needs to be met to benefit from the exception and justify the loss of the facility, in this case the proposal can satisfy at least two of three criterion, whilst offering an improvement to the current open space facilities through the provision of play equipment. As such, the proposal should not be resisted on the grounds of loss of a community facility.

4.1.18 The WNJCS also includes policies that are specific to the principal towns and the rural area. Chapter 12-Northampton provides additional detail as to how the spatial strategy will be realised within the town. Regeneration is a key priority, and housing within the existing urban area through urban capacity infill is one measure identified in policy N1 to achieve this aim. Policy N11 specifically deals with areas of community regeneration. Whilst the proposal is not specifically a regeneration proposal, it is considered to contribute to meeting the objectives of the policy through improving an area of poor-quality public space through the related improvement proposed to the north of the site and the creation of safe and sustainable environments (criterion B and E). As set out within the Design and Access Statement, the development site incorporates a range of measures such as CCTV. Whilst these are predominately for the benefit of the scheme, they may act as wider deterrents to low level anti-social behaviour (criterion D).

4.1.19 In conclusion, the proposal is compliant with the vision, objectives and policies of the WNJCS.

Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

4.1.20 The site was designated as Green Space and protected through policy E6. This policy was replaced by WNJCS policy RC2. This policy no longer forms part of the development plan.

4.1.21 Saved policy H29 is specific to residential institutions (use class C2). The supporting text specifically addresses the need for accommodation for people in care and notes that conditions may be applied

\textsuperscript{14} Northampton Borough Council Open Space Audit, Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Study (2018). Figure 26: Impact of population growth on existing amenity green space quality standard; and figure 29 Implications of growth on amenity Green Space requirements using proposed standard.
to restrict other uses within C2 (residential school, college, training centre etc).

4.1.22 The policy indicates permission will be granted where proposal comply with a series of criteria (A-D). As a new development, criterion A is not relevant. The proposal complies with criteria B-D for the reasons set out elsewhere in this statement namely by virtue of its location and that all parking requirements will be met within the application site.

4.1.23 Based on the saved policies, there are no conflicts with the relevant saved policies of the 1997 Local Plan.

**Emerging Part 2 Local Plan:**

4.1.24 The Part 2 Local Plan is at a relatively advanced stage, although it does not yet form part of the development plan it may be a material consideration. The plan was published in May 2019 under regulation 19 and implements the strategy within the WNJCS. The plan is subject to minor change and alteration as a consequence of the current publicity period and the examination process.

4.1.25 As presently drafted, the Part 2 Local Plan, policy 13 offers specific support to proposals for independent living, particularly in areas with easy access to services or facilities including public transport, retail and service centres. The proposal complies with this emerging policy.

4.1.26 The site is proposed for allocation within the plan for housing and/or housing led development (see extract below, figure 5) as allocations No. 1051a and 1051b. These sites are intended to provide a total capacity of 53 homes. The proposal would be compatible with the identified use. However, the proposal would mean that the total capacity identified within the plan could not be readily achieved.

4.1.27 Notwithstanding this development, it should be noted that even if the site were developed at an assumed gross density of 35 dwellings, it would still, in our view, be unlikely that the levels of development identified in Policy 12 could be accommodated. This is prior to consideration of site-specific constraints such as the topography. Accordingly, the weight that should be given to this conflict would be limited and would not outweigh the benefits of the proposal nor its compliance with the current adopted development plan.
4.2 National Policy

4.2.1 Although the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF (2019)) does not form part of the development plan, it sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and is therefore strong material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.2.2 The revised NPPF was published in July 2018 and subsequently updated in February 2019. It establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which underpins both plan-making and decision-taking.

4.2.3 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development – economic (building a strong, competitive economy); social (providing the supply of housing required to meet needs and creating a high-quality built environment); and environmental (protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment). Paragraph 8 confirms that these roles should not be taken in isolation and are mutually dependent. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

4.2.4 It is a requirement that Local Planning Authorities positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area (Paragraph 11). Paragraph 11 also states that development
proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay and where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless; the policies in the NPPF which protect areas or assets of important provides clear reason for refusal or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The site is not subject to any of the restrictions set out within footnote 6.

4.2.5 Section 4 of the NPPF (2019) describes the processes for decision-making, this emphasises the importance of pre-application engagement within paragraphs 39 to 42 and restates that the legal requirement is that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It also provides that relevant weight can be given to emerging plans dependent upon; the stage that the plan is at, the extent that there are unresolved object and the degree of consistency of relevant policies to the NPPF (2019). As noted, limited weight may be given to the emerging Part 2 Local Plan at the current time.

4.2.6 Section 5 on housing sets out that the Government is committed to increase the overall level of supply and mix of housing in order to meet local needs. It is also set out that small to medium sized sites can make a valuable contribution to housing supply and that windfall allowances can form part of the projected supply also. Paragraph 74 requires authorities to keep an up to date supply of deliverable housing sites, this should be monitored in accordance with paragraph 75.

4.2.7 Section 9 relates to promoting sustainable transport and requires impact upon transport to be assessed and for sustainable methods of travel to be sought. This development is in close proximity to services and facilities meet day to day needs and is readily served by existing, high frequency bus routes which connect the site to Northampton Town Centre, Weston Favell District Centre as well as a range of other higher order services and facilities.

4.2.8 Making effective use of land is the focus of section 11, it identifies that policies and decisions should “promote and support the development of under-utilised land”, the proposed development site consists of residual under-utilised land which can be positively redeveloped in a manner which responds effectively to its surroundings. As noted from the emerging local plan part 2, this site is considered suitable for residential development and, as such is surplus to current requirements.
5.0 Analysis

5.1 Pre-application advice and consultation

5.1.1 Informal Pre-application advice was sought from Northamptonshire County Council and has informed the design proposals and application. Follow up advice has been received by the architect (Maber) who are acting as the agents for the proposal which confirms that no S106 is required to accompany the application. Unilateral Undertakings, if required, will be advised during the determination period.

5.1.2 NPH, as joint applicant, has undertaken community consultation which has included community representatives and ward members, in addition to residents. The Statement of Community Involvement and Need sets out the detail of the consultation. The proposals were publicised via letter to approximately 60 homes, and via the NPH website. The site had 80 unique views.

5.1.3 There were no negative comments received from any of the key stakeholders consulted and the proposal has the support of the local ward member. Nine residents responded to the consultation, 6 living in properties that received letters. Of these, 3 raised concerns regarding loss of open space and 4 raised concerns over the new road. Positive comments were also received with one highlighting the location of the development as a positive.

5.2 Statement of Need

5.2.1 A statement of need has been prepared to support the proposals and is included within the Statement of Community Involvement. In summary, key matters include:

- Improvements to care for people with learning disabilities/ autism spectrum disorders to reduce institutional care and increase community-based provision;
- the provision of specialist designated housing as purpose-built schemes
- the absence of suitable accommodation currently on the market to meet NCC clients with complex needs
- The reduction in the number of customers who currently reside in high cost supported living placements.
- Reduction in the number of individuals being placed ‘out of county’ away from family and support networks.
5.3 **Principle**

5.3.1 The principle of development at this location is supported by local and national planning policies. The site is free of significant constraints to development and is not protected by virtue of any explicit designations as set out within footnote 6 of the NPPF 2019. It is not of significant ecological or historical value. The site is designated as amenity open space. Whilst the proposal will result in a loss of this space, the proposal meets the exceptions set out within the WNJCS (Policy RC2). The site is also identified within the emerging Local Plan Part 2 for residential development. The loss is therefore outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.

5.3.2 The site is sustainably located within the built-up area of Northampton, where the principle of development is supported. It is close to local amenities such as a post office, and well served by high-quality public transport routes, consistent with the WNJCS and national policy with regard to ensuring development is well located to promote and maximise sustainable travel choices.

5.3.3 The development will provide 8 units for individuals with learning difficulties allowing them to live independently, whilst also able to access the care they require (as set out within the statement of needs). The development falls into use class C2. Recent changes to government policy mean that such places can be counted towards meeting the overall housing requirements of a local area. It would contribute to housing supply generally, as well as the more specialist housing type requirements.

5.4 **Achieving sustainable development**

5.4.1 The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and are not criteria against which every application can or should be judged. However, decisions should plan an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions. The following table sets out how the various aspects of the scheme contributes to achieving sustainable development.
| Economic                  | Employment of 8 full time staff  
|                          | Cost savings for NCC for providing care against current arrangements (indirect benefit to residents of Northamptonshire) |
| Social                   | Development that will directly support health and social needs for adults with learning difficulties/autism spectrum disorders  
|                          | The proposal will allow residents to live near to family, friends or other support networks rather than being placed ‘out of county’ and have their care needs met whilst maintaining a degree of independent living  
|                          | Well located site, close to existing facilities including Post office, shops, and frequent public transport;  
|                          | High quality open space for residents; |
| Environmental            | Sensitive landscaping to maintain a ‘green’ feel around the site and screen the development from the surrounding properties and helping to promote biodiversity.  
|                          | Retention of Oak Tree T19 for its environmental and ecological value.  
|                          | Development that incorporates passive and active design measures, renewable energy proposals, enhanced building fabric and lower u-values aiming to achieve 25% betterment on current recommended levels.  
|                          | Heat recovery ventilation plant will be used to heat water saving money and energy |
6.0 Conclusions

6.1.1 The site been carefully considered and selected to meet the specific requirements of the client and to deliver a site that will provide a high-quality living environment for adults with complex needs and autism. As set out within this planning statement and the statement of need, current housing costs for residents are up to £6k per week with individuals having to be placed outside of catchment long distances from their support networks.

6.1.2 The site is in the ownership of Northampton Borough Council and is well situated close to local amenities and easily accessible via public transport and other sustainable modes allowing access to the services at Weston Favell District Centre and Northampton Town Centre.

6.1.3 The site is compliant with the relevant local policy and will support the vision and objectives of the WNJCS this includes policy RC2 which resists the loss of open space unless specific criteria can be met. As set out in this statement, these exceptions have been satisfied and there is evidence that the proposal will bring about community benefits that outweigh the loss of the space and, having regard to the open space study the space is surplus noting that there is an excess of approximately 30ha of this typology within the sub area. In addition, improvements and enhancements are proposed to the site to the north, providing areas of equipped play and outdoor gym equipment. Moreover, it is noted that the site is proposed within the emerging Local Plan Part 2 as a residential allocation, further supporting that release of this land for re-development.

6.1.4 As such, in accordance with the NPPF (2019) paragraph 11, this proposal, which is in conformity with the relevant policies of an up-to-date development plan, should be approved without delay.