



Summary

Proof of Evidence

Nigel Newton Taylor

Addressing the Matter of Care Home Need and Supply

Site: Land to the North of Bradmore Way, The Brookmans Estate, Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire AL9 7QR

Planning Inspectorate: APP/C1950/W/22/3307844

Local Planning Authority Reference: 6/2022/1097/OUTLINE

- 1.1 The Care Act 2014 requires each local authority to facilitate a care market with ‘a variety of high quality services to choose from’.
- 1.2 The need for appropriate provision from a qualitative perspective is not only based upon resident aspiration but also wellbeing with modern design increasingly attuned to the limitation of virus spread.
- 1.3 The findings of this Proof are that not only is the Brookmans Park locality unable to offer potential residents ‘variety’ but that the area is further devoid of ‘high quality’ accommodation.
- 1.4 The extent of the operational Market Catchment Area (MCA) care home estate is agreed at just a single facility within the Statement of Common Ground (Para. 8.31) and:
 1. Is situated 1.9 miles distant from the Site
 2. Incorporates just 13 bedrooms with an ensuite WC
 3. Offers no bedrooms with ensuite bathing facility
- 1.5 The table below overviews dynamics from a statistical perspective, identifying a significant shortfall in appropriate accommodation.

	Ensuite Bedrooms
Occupational Demand	150
Existing Supply	13
Outstanding Baseline Need	137

- 1.6 It should be noted that the demand assessment methodology is an occupancy prevalence indicator rather than level of need. In order to ensure ‘variety’ for prospective care home residents, a level of additional provision comfortably exceeding the Outstanding Baseline Need is required.
- 1.7 Whilst Borough planning policies are aligned in seeking to provide care facilities in localities where Need exists, there are no MCA schemes within the planning process (other than The Site) incorporating care home accommodation for older persons.

1.8 Long term planning is always to be lauded but the care sector is timing specific. People approaching end of life cannot wait for planned care home delivery and provision therefore needs to be ahead of the curve:

‘..... Elderly people requiring care home accommodation are less able to wait than those in the general population needing accommodation because their needs are immediate. Accordingly, there is an urgency in meeting this unmet need and for all these reasons, significant weight is given to these housing and people care benefits.’

(Source: Appeal Decision APP/B1930/W/20/3259161 Paragraph 34)

*Note: It is not contended that the entire circumstances of the above appeal mirror the subject appeal, rather the specific matter of timing was addressed.

The National Perspective

1.9 In June 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published planning guidance entitled ‘Housing for older and disabled people’. The opening words of the Introduction are forceful:

‘The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing.....Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.’

The County Perspective

1.10 Hertfordshire County Council (Adult Care Services) has identified a *‘shortage of high frailty / nursing care, which has become critical in some areas’* within their Market Position Statement.

1.11 The most recently available NHS data confirms the county to have a level of Delayed Transfer of Care (bed blocking) due to lack of care home availability comfortably in excess of the national level.

The Local Perspective

- 1.12 The Report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) accompanying the application to Committee acknowledged the care home element of this appeal to have no conflict with relevant planning policy (Para. 11.18). It further confirmed a specific planning objective of the emerging Local Plan to be the provision of a care home in Brookmans Park (Para. 11.17).
- 1.13 Brookmans Park has a proportionately high elderly (85+) population – 31% higher than the national profile and forecast to increase rapidly over forthcoming years. If the national level of need is deemed critical by central government, it is not unreasonable to assess this locality in a similar manner.
- 1.14 Whilst the Report to Committee attributes ‘significant’ weight to the benefit of care home provision (Para. 11.145), I believe that had the full scale of both qualitative and quantitative need been available to the Officer, the weight attributable to the benefit would have been greater still.