



Adult Care Services  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Farnham House  
Six Hills Way  
Stevenage  
SG1 2ST

Email: [Growth@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Growth@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Former Hook Estate and Kennels, Coopers Lane Road /Firs Wood Close, Northaw, EN6 4BY 6/2023/2418/OUTLINE**

I am writing to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to set out Hertfordshire County Council's position in relation to the above-named site.

It is our understanding that the site is being proposed for 150 units of Housing with Care (extra care).

**Policy Position**

The county council's current policy for this type of accommodation is to seek the provision of Housing with Care at 65 units per 1,000 head of population aged over 75.

These figures reflect the county council's policy [accommodation-strategy-2017-27-nov-2018-final-for-publication.pdf \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media/12345/accommodation-strategy-2017-27-nov-2018-final-for-publication.pdf) to support a general increased provision of specialist housing. This also echoes the national government position which seeks to emphasise the key importance of the provision of housing for older people.

The county council are also seeking to reduce the reliance on residential care in most instances with a strategy of reducing this provision and steering it towards extra-care. This will ensure that the most appropriate and enabling environment is provided, allowing residents to stay within their own homes throughout their lifetime, whilst also allowing general needs housing to be released back into the market. As such, the county council are particularly supportive of additional provision of this type where there is an established need for it.

The county council are also supportive of the provision of very specialist accommodation such as nursing and dementia care.

## **Need**

The county council have undertaken an assessment of need for all types of accommodation in each local authority and based on the current provision and population our supply and demand estimate for Welwyn Hatfield Borough shows a deficit of 828 units for this type of accommodation in this area.

Based on an expected population growth in those aged over 75 of 15,111 people by 2042 we have identified a future need for 237 units of Affordable and 591 of Market Housing with Care. On this basis alone, the county council supports this development.

While this provides a mathematical assessment of need based on certain assumptions other real-world evidence such as vacancy rates, waiting lists and rate of sales/lettings can also indicate demand (or lack of) for specialist housing for older people and should be a consideration for the council.

Equally, a mathematical surplus does not suggest that the existing provision should be automatically reduced. Evidence of vacancy rates and sales/letting rates may often be a sign of the age and/or quality of accommodation and should be a consideration for the council.

## **Other Considerations**

- The county council would encourage the LPA to ensure that where there is an identified need any provision of specialist accommodation includes an element of affordable housing or off-site contribution to it.
- The county council also look more favourably on accommodation in sustainable locations and those that provide a range of facilities on site. This scheme should have access (ideally within 500m) to public transport links and community facilities such as a GP surgery and shops. It is noted however that the scheme benefits from a range of social and communal facilities on site, to ensure delivery of a high standard of accommodation.
- To ensure, wherever possible, that communities are suitable for a range of ages, larger strategic developments should seek to include an element of specialist housing for older people. The county council would also encourage a range of typologies, built form and tenures at a more local level and would broadly support any diversification of supply particularly where there is an identified need and where very specialist accommodation is included.
- The council should encourage the redeployment of any surplus stock to other tenures or levels of care in the first instance.
- The county council would also encourage the council to seek as much development to be built to M4(2) standards as possible, as well as seeking an element of M4(3), to ensure accommodation is better equipped to respond to changing needs. Although it is recognised that the provision of both

affordable housing and M4(2)/M4(3) compliance have ramifications to a site's viability.

On the basis of the information provided, the county council, in principle supports this application for Housing with Care.

Should you require further information or to discuss the county council's position please contact [growth@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:growth@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

Sarah Newman

**Business & Development Project Manager, Adult Care Services**