

The Lettings Room Ltd

**Former Town Hall, High Street, Hoyland Town
Centre**

Planning Statement

July 2017

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1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Lettings Room Ltd ("the Applicant") to support a planning application for the change of use of part of the former Town Hall in Hoyland Town Centre ("the Site") from part office / part job centre to twenty seven residential apartments, including external alterations ("the Proposed Development").

Structure

- 1.2 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- First a description of the Site, surrounding area and Proposed Development is set out.
 - Next the planning policy context relevant to the Proposed Development is outlined.
 - Next an appraisal of the Proposed Development against relevant planning policies is provided.
 - Finally a summary is provided.

2 THE SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Site

- 2.1 The Site consists of the former Town Hall on High Street, Hoyland Town Centre. The Town Hall formerly consisted of job centre and office floorspace on the first floor, with office floorspace on the second floor.
- 2.2 The Site was used for local government purposes by Hoyland Town Council until 1974 when, following local government reorganisation, the Town Council was abolished. Since that date it has been used for a variety of office uses.

Local Context

- 2.3 The Site is located in Hoyland Town Centre on High Street. Hoyland Town Centre provides a wide range of shops, services, employment opportunities and public transport infrastructure.

The Proposed Development

- 2.4 The Proposed Development consists of the change of use of the upper two floors of the Site to provide twenty seven residential apartments. External alterations are proposed to the whole Town Hall structure to provide new window configurations.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

- 3.1 This section sets out the planning policy context that is relevant to the Proposed Development.

Development Plan

- 3.2 The statutory Development Plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises the following:

- "saved" policies of the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (2000)
- Barnsley Core Strategy (2011)
- Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Joint Waste Plan (2012)

- 3.3 Relevant policies are considered below. There are no relevant policies within the Joint Waste Plan and the document is not considered further.

Barnsley Unitary Development Plan

- 3.4 The Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted by the Council in December 2000 and various policies have been saved by the Secretary of State until such time as they are replaced by policies in the new emerging Local Plan. The Site is shown on the Proposals Map as lying within Hoyland Town Centre.

- 3.5 The UDP's strategic objective in relation to housing is to locate new housing development:

- a) Where it will provide for locally generated housing needs; support local shopping/community facilities and employment opportunities; and will reduce the need to travel
- b) Near corridors well served (or potentially well served) by public transport and near to public transport centres
- c) To provide a balance of provision to support economic regeneration and meet market demands
- d) To meet regional needs and stabilise the population

- 3.6 Policy BE6 relates to design for new development and sets out that the Council will seek to achieve good design standards for all types of development.

Core Strategy

- 3.7 The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2011 and sets out the key elements of the planning framework for Barnsley and the approach to its long term physical development.
- 3.8 Policy CSP 8 sets out that priority will be given to development in urban Barnsley and the Principal Towns, including Hoyland. The supporting text to the policy notes that the individual Principal Towns will be the main local focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, business and public services in the region.
- 3.9 Policy CSP 14 relates to housing. It sets out that priority will be given the development of previously developed land and the Council will seek to achieve between 55% and 60% of homes to be built on previously developed land. Housing proposals should also include "a broad mix of house size, type and tenure to help create mixed and balanced communities". The supporting text to the policy adds that "the mix of housing on a site should...be appropriate to the scale and context of the development and the character of the area".
- 3.10 Policy CSP 15 relates to affordable housing. It requires that housing developments of 15 or more dwellings will be expected to provide affordable housing.
- 3.11 Policy CSP 25 relates to sustainable travel. It sets out that *inter alia* that new development will be expected to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel by acceptable to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.12 Policy CSP 29 relates to design. It sets out that high quality development will be expected that respects, takes advantage of and enhances the distinctive features of Barnsley.

Other Material Considerations

- 3.13 Relevant material considerations in this case include:
- Emerging Local Plan documents
 - Designing New Housing Development SPD
 - South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide
 - National planning policy
- 3.14 These are considered in turn below.

Emerging Local Plan Documents

- 3.15 The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the UDP and Core Strategy. The Council has published its proposed Local Plan and it is envisaged that it will be adopted at some point during the summer 2017. As such, less weight should be attached to the emerging Local Plan than the adopted Development Plan documents. Emerging policies within the Local Plan largely echo those within the adopted documents.

Designing New Housing Development SPD

- 3.16 The Council adopted its Designing New Housing Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in March 2012. As an SPD it does not form part of the statutory Development Plan, rather, it aims to supplement policies within the Development Plan by providing additional guidance around the adopted policies.
- 3.17 The SPD sets out that all residential developments should achieve the internal spacing standards set out in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide – Technical Requirements section 4A.2.

South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide

- 3.18 The 2011 South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (SYRDG) has been adopted by the Council as a good practice guide. It does not form part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 3.19 The SYRDG sets out the following internal spacing standards for residential developments:
- Studio 1 person – 33sqm
 - 1 bed 1 person – 46sqm
 - 1 bed 2 person – 47sqm
 - 2 bed 3 person – 62sqm

National Planning Policy

- 3.20 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.21 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14). For decision-making, this is defined as approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is silent, absent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is described as a 'golden thread' running through decision making.
- 3.22 The NPPF sets out early on that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in peoples' quality of life, including by improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure.
- 3.23 The NPPF includes 12 'core land-use planning principles' that should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. These include:
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to

identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;

- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas; and
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

3.24 Paragraph 18 sets out that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

3.25 Paragraph 23 relates to retail centres. It sets out that local planning authorities should:

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality; and
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.

3.26 Paragraph 34 sets out that plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movements are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

3.27 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing.

3.28 Paragraph 51 requires local planning authorities to identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings. Furthermore, they should "normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B use classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate".

3.29 Paragraph 69 relates to healthy communities. It sets out that planning policies and decisions should promote *inter alia* opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity.

3.30 Paragraph 70 sets out that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should *inter alia*:

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and
- Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

Summary

3.31 In summary:

- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity.
- The NPPF requires that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth.
- The NPPF encourages mixed use developments within sustainable town centre locations where opportunities for sustainable transport and linked trips can be maximised.
- The NPPF also seeks to boost significantly the supply of new housing and bring empty or commercial buildings into residential use.
- The Site is located within a town centre location where proposals for new housing should be considered favourably.

3.32 That is the policy background against which this Planning Statement considers the planning implications raised by the Proposed Development.

4 PLANNING ISSUES

Introduction

- 4.1 This section considers the planning issues raised by the Proposed Development in relation to the planning policy context outlined in Section 3.

Principle of Development

- 4.2 As set out in Section 3, the Site is within Hoyland Town Centre. There are no policies within the adopted Development Plan which specifically relate to housing developments on previously developed sites within town centres, but the overall planning policy context set out in Section 3 is very supportive of the principle of the Proposed Development. In particular the Proposed Development would:

- Reinforce the priority given to development of the Principal Towns, including Hoyland, which are the main local focus for new housing development (Core Strategy Policy CS 8);
- Contribute to the Council's targets for new housing development on previously developed land (Core Strategy Policy CS 14);
- Reduce the need to travel by being located in a highly sustainable location with good access to services, employment opportunities and public transport (Core Strategy Policy CS 25); and
- Reflect the UDP's strategic objective in relation to housing is to locate new housing development, specifically:
 - a) It will provide for locally generated housing needs; support local shopping/community facilities and employment opportunities; and will reduce the need to travel;
 - b) It is near corridors well served by public transport and near to public transport centres;
 - c) It will assist in establishing a balance of housing provision in Hoyland to support economic regeneration of the Town Centre and meet market demands; and
 - d) It will assist in meeting regional needs and stabilise the population.

Other Issues

Affordable Housing

- 4.3 Core Strategy Policy CSP 15 requires that housing developments of 15 or more dwellings will be expected to provide affordable housing.

4.4 The Applicant has undertaken extensive pre-application discussions with the Council's Head of Planning & Building Control (Joe Jenkinson) prior to the submission of this planning application. As part of these discussions it has been agreed that the Council will not be seeking the provision of affordable housing as part of this Proposed Development due to the overall limited financial viability of the scheme.

Spacing Standards

4.5 Table 4.1 below shows a comparison between the floorspace of each of the twenty seven proposed residential apartments against the SYRDG internal spacing standards:

Table 4.1: Comparison of internal spacing standards

Unit	Type	SYRDG Standard (sqm)	Provision (sqm)	Difference (sqm)
1	2 bed 3 person	62	68	+6
2	Studio	33	35	+2
3	Studio	33	33	-
4	1 bed 2 person	47	47	-
5	Studio	33	33	-
6	Studio	33	41	+8
7	Studio	33	43	+10
8	1 bed 2 people	47	48	+1
9	Studio	33	36	+3
10	Studio	33	33	-
11	Studio	33	33	-
12	1 bed 1 person	46	46	-
13	Studio	33	34	+1
14	1 bed 2 people	47	47	-
15	Studio	33	35	+2
16	Studio	33	33	-
17	1 bed 2 person	47	47	-
18	Studio	33	33	-
19	Studio	33	41	+8
20	Studio	33	43	+10
21	1 bed 2 people	47	48	+1
22	Studio	33	36	+3
23	Studio	33	33	-
24	Studio	33	33	-
25	1 bed 1 person	46	46	-
26	Studio	33	34	+1
27	1 bed 2 people	47	48	+1

4.6 As Table 4.1 illustrates, the Proposed Development would be in overall conformity with the SYRDG spacing standards.

Housing Mix

- 4.7 Core Strategy Policy CSP 14 sets out that housing proposals should include "a broad mix of house size, type and tenure to help create mixed and balanced communities". The supporting text to the policy adds that "the mix of housing on a site should...be appropriate to the scale and context of the development and the character of the area". Nothing in the policy or supporting text provides any prescriptive guidance or standards on what constitutes an appropriate mix, for example, by specifying that town centre brownfield regeneration proposals should aim to achieve 33% two bed, 33% one bed and 33% studio accommodation. The policy and supporting text recognise that housing mixes should be specific to the scale and context of the development proposed and the character of the area.
- 4.8 Table 4.1 illustrates the housing mix that the Proposed Development would provide. This largely comprises one bed accommodation, although a single two bed unit is also proposed.
- 4.9 During pre-application discussions the Council has expressed some concern with the proposed housing mix, in particular that it could lead to an over saturation of one bed accommodation and in turn create unsustainable communities. These concerns, however, do not appear to reflect the evidence. The 2014 Barnsley Strategic Housing Market Assessment for example identifies that only 7% of properties across the Barnsley area are one bedroom. This is an insignificant proportion and the addition of the twenty six one bedroom units proposed as part of this scheme is hardly likely to tip the balance of housing provision into something unsustainable. In addition, a review of Rightmove reveals that, as of 13 July 2017, only three residential apartments were available for sale in Hoyland.
- 4.10 As part of preparing this scheme the Applicant has undertaken extensive discussions with the local community and local agents to determine local housing needs in Hoyland. These discussions have pointed to a local need for studio and one bed accommodation due to undersupply and availability issues. There is a clear need is for start-up rental homes for individuals moving out of home for the first time and affordable rentable property, and it is these needs that the Proposed Development aims to cater for. Overall, the Proposed Development provides an appropriate housing mix in the context of the Site's location, the scale of the Proposed Development, local character (i.e. sustainable town centre location), and local housing needs. There is no evidence that the provision of twenty six one bed apartments is an inappropriate mix in Hoyland.

Design

- 4.11 The proposed external elevations have been subject to pre-application discussions with the Council to arrive at a design which reflects and enhances the character of the Town Hall. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with policies relating to design.

Transport

- 4.12 As noted above the Site is located in the highly sustainable location of Hoyland Town Centre, with good access to services, employment opportunities and public transport. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with policies relating to transport.

Wider Housing Policy Objectives

- 4.13 One of the Government's main aims is to boost 'significantly' the supply of housing. To that end, paragraph 49 of the NPPF instructs that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.14 The NPPF also seeks to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. This is included as one of the NPPF's 'core planning principles'.
- 4.15 Of particular relevance, NPPF paragraph 51 requires local planning authorities to approve planning applications for change of residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate. There are no such reasons in this case.

Summary

- 4.16 In summary:
- The Site is located within Hoyland Town Centre where proposals for new housing should be supported in principle.
 - The Proposed Development would support the vitality and viability of Hoyland Town Centre whilst improving the mix of housing choice for residents.
 - The Proposed Development is in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan.

5 SUMMARY

Introduction

- 5.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Lettings Room Ltd ("the Applicant") to support a planning application for the change of use of part of the former Town Hall in Hoyland Town Centre ("the Site") from part office / part job centre to twenty seven residential apartments, including external alterations ("the Proposed Development").

Planning Policy

- 5.2 In summary:
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity.
 - The NPPF requires that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth.
 - The NPPF encourages mixed use developments within sustainable town centre locations where opportunities for sustainable transport and linked trips can be maximised.
 - The NPPF also seeks to boost significantly the supply of new housing and bring empty or commercial buildings into residential use.
 - The Site is located within a town centre location where proposals for new housing should be considered favourably.

Planning Appraisal

- 5.3 In summary:
- Hoyland, as a principal town, is one of the main focuses for housing growth in Barnsley.
 - The Site is located within Hoyland Town Centre where proposals for new housing should be supported in principle.
 - The Proposed Development would support the vitality and viability of Hoyland Town Centre whilst improving the mix of housing choice for residents.
 - The Proposed Development would meet the internal spacing standards set out in the SYRDG.
 - The Proposed Development would provide an appropriate housing mix given the Site's local context.
 - The Proposed Development is in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan.

Overall

- 5.4 It is considered that the Proposed Development is fully in accordance with the provisions of the statutory Development Plan and should therefore be approved without delay, as per NPPF paragraph 14.

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