

## **Planning Statement**

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McInerney Homes  
Land at Brunswick Street/ Banks Road, Garston, Liverpool

January 2011



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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the development of 18 dwellings on the former Bankfield House in Garston. This planning application is made by McNerney Homes together with the Diocese of Liverpool.
- 1.2 This Statement will describe the proposal and the site and surroundings, before setting out relevant planning policy at a national, regional and local level. The analysis will then explore the case for the approval of the development
- 1.3 The Statement is accompanied by the following documents which form part of the application;
- Tree Survey
  - Street Scenes / Block Elevations
  - House Type Planning Drawings
  - Fence and Wall Designs
  - Utilities Statement
  - Site Investigation Report
  - Design and Access Statement
  - Housing and Regeneration Statement

## 2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 This section provides additional information about the development proposals submitted on behalf of McInerney Homes / Liverpool Diocese. It should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement, which describes the physical characteristics of the development in more detail.

2.2 The application description is as follows:

*“Full planning application for the development of 18 market dwellings with associated access and parking”*

2.3 The dwellings are all 3 bedroomed in size, which will provide variation to the existing housing stock within the Garston area.

2.4 The properties on the proposed site are served by an access road off Brunswick Street. This is located directly opposite the formal public open space adjacent to the site.

2.5 The design, scale and appearance of the scheme will be described in further detail in the Design and Access Statement.

2.6 The proposed dwellings will be market housing and shall be sold as such. The Local Authority will support this approach to encourage economically active residents to the area. The scheme does not conflict with the existing housing regeneration within the South Liverpool area.

2.7 Further to the advice of Liverpool City Council, a Tree Survey was carried out and a number of recommendations have been considered as part of the submitted scheme.

- 2.8 The level of residential parking proposed is 111%. Eight properties have in-dwelling parking. There are a further 12 spaces provided within a parking court to the rear of plots 9 – 14.

### **3 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS (PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC)**

- 3.1 This is described in further detail in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning submission.
- 3.2 The 0.35 Ha (0.88 Acre) proposal site is vacant land situated within the Garston area of Liverpool. It was previously the Bankfield House, which was used as a community centre. This facility closed in 2006 following Health and Safety concerns. It was subsequently vandalised by arson and then demolished. The site has now become overgrown and unkempt. Local residents have complained that it is becoming a site for fly tipping. Any redevelopment plans will eradicate this unsavoury usage.
- 3.3 The site is generally flat and concealed by wooden hoardings. There are a number of important trees that are 'dotted' around the site boundary. The proposals fully retain most of these and respect the same.
- 3.4 Access to the site is currently via the main road called Banks Street.
- 3.5 The area surrounding the site is predominantly residential in nature although there are many industrial and commercial premises that are further a field.

## 4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

### National

- 4.1 **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development** advocates *“more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings. Planning should seek actively to bring vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings back into beneficial use to achieve the targets the Government has set for development on previously developed land.”*

- 4.2 **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing** considers the national picture in terms of how to deliver the Governments Housing Objectives. This guidance offers specific outcomes that the planning system should deliver:

High quality housing that is well-designed and built to a high standard.

A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural.

A sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand and seeking to improve choice.

Housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

A flexible, responsive supply of land – managed in a way that makes efficient and effective use of land, including re-use of previously-developed land, where appropriate. (parag. 10)

- 4.3 Local Planning Authorities should identify sufficient specific **deliverable** sites to deliver housing in the first five years of a Development Plan. To be considered deliverable, sites should, at the point of adoption of the relevant Local Development Document:

Be **Available** – the site is available now.

Be **Suitable** – the site offers a suitable location for development now and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.

Be **Achievable** – there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. (parag.54)

- 4.4 In deciding planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:

Achieving high quality housing.

Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.

The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability.

Using land effectively and efficiently.

Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives eg. addressing housing market renewal issues. (parag. 69)

- 4.5 The site is located within a designated **Primary Residential Area (Policy H4)** where ***‘new housing development that satisfies other Plan policies’*** will be



granted permission. As such, this statement is concerned only with those policies which relate specifically to the design and access of the development.

- 4.6 **PPG17 – Planning for Sport, Open Space and Recreation** refers to the need for community facilities for the *“promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion – well planned...recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they can bring together members of deprived communities and provide opportunities for people for social interaction.”*

## **Regional**

- 4.7 Following the unlawful revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies by Communities Minister Eric Pickles and the successful High Court Appeal by Cala Homes, the **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** for the North West still forms part of the Development Plan for Liverpool.
- 4.8 **Policy RDF1** Spatial Priorities confirms that *“in making provision for development the first priority for growth and development should be the regional centres of...Liverpool.”* The justification for this policy states *“This policy is the cornerstone of the RSS...The focus is on the cores of the...Liverpool City Regions...It is clear where the emphasis should be in terms of the overall priorities for investment and regeneration activity, it is in the regional centres and inner areas.”*(parags.5.1-5.5)
- 4.9 RSS also sets out Core Development Principles. **Policy DP4 Making the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure** is of particular relevance. This advocates a sequential approach compatible with PPS3 and additionally makes the following specific points *“Priority should be given to developments in locations consistent with the regional and sub-regional spatial frameworks...policy*

***RDF1...Development should accord with the following sequential approach: first, using existing buildings (including conversion) within settlements, and previously developed land within settlements; second, using other suitable infill opportunities within settlements, where compatible with other RSS policies."***

4.10 Chapter 11 of RSS deals with the Liverpool City Region in particular. **Policy LCR1** provides guidance on the sub-regional priorities to ***"focus residential development in the Inner Areas adjacent to the Regional Centre in order to secure a significant increase in population and to support major regeneration activity...The emphasis will be on providing a good range of quality housing in the inner areas in terms of size, type, tenure and affordability with a high quality environment and accessible local facilities and employment opportunities."***

4.11 **Policy L4** sets out annual levels of Regional Housing Provision. Local Planning Authorities are to ***"monitor and manage the availability of land identified in plans and strategies and through development control decisions on proposals and schemes, to achieve the housing provision set out in Table 7.1...In doing so they should: work in partnership with developers and other housing providers to address the housing requirements (including local needs and affordable housing needs) of different groups..."***

4.12 In respect of the supply of housing land, **Table 7.1** sets out the regional agenda;

	Total Housing Provision 2003 – 2021 (Net of clearance replacement)	Annual Average rates of Housing Provision (Net of clearance replacement)	Indicative target proportion of housing provision to use brownfield land & buildings
<b>Liverpool / Knowsley</b>			
Knowsley	8,100	450	At least 65%
Liverpool	35,100	1,950	At least 90%

- 4.13 The priority for Liverpool, in terms of housing is to provide *“sufficient new residential development to support the role of the Regional Centres...Outside the inner city areas, development should be complementary to the regeneration of the inner core, and be focused on regenerating existing housing areas which suffer from high levels of deprivation.”* (parag. 7.18). It is notable that the figures are not to be regarded as upper ceilings for housing provision.

### **Local**

- 4.14 At a local level, the **Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2002** shows the site to be within the Primarily Residential Area (Policy H4) where planning permission will be granted for new housing that satisfies other plan policies.
- 4.15 It is stated in the Housing Chapter that ‘...*an important element of the City Council’s commitment to urban regeneration involves improving the overall quality of the housing stock, whether by the demolition and redevelopment of the most unsatisfactory stock or by rehabilitation*’ (parag. 9.13). Policy H2 covers Housing Renewal and states “*The City Council will adopt an area regeneration approach in tackling problems in the City’s housing stock*”.(parags. 9.33-9.34).
- 4.16 **Policy C1** discusses where Social Facilities are acceptable: *“Planning permission will be granted for the development of new social facilities in locations accessible by passenger transport, particularly within the City, District and Local Centres.”* Paragraph 12.3 elaborates further on this and states that: *“Social facilities including...religious buildings are an integral part of the local community.”* The Plan seeks to... *“encourage the provision of new facilities in accessible locations”*

- 4.17 Since the adoption of the UDP the Council has produced a 2005 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on **New Housing Development** which aims to prioritise development within the regeneration areas in the City. This document pre-dates the withdrawal of Pathfinder funding.
- 4.18 Policy H6 states that ***"Within the context and timeframe of this SPD, proposals for residential development outside the HMRI area and strategic sites will only be permitted where there is a demonstrable regeneration benefit and where it would not undermine the HMRI Zones of Opportunity and the HMRI area as a whole."***
- 4.19 One example of such a regeneration benefit is ***"Redundant institutional (non-residential) sites in predominantly residential areas which are vacant or significantly under-used and where redevelopment leads to proven community benefit..."***
- 4.20 UDP Policy GEN7 states that ***"The Plan aims to promote the satisfactory provision and distribution of community facilities for all the City's residents."***
- Policies contained in the **Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD** concern the accessibility of proposed developments. The site is in a sustainable location with good access to public transport, pedestrian and cycle links.
- 4.21 Of particular relevance to the proposals is **Policy T12 – Car parking provision in new developments** which states that ***"All new developments which generate a demand for car parking will be required to make provision for car parking on site, to meet the minimum operational needs of the development. Additional space for non operational car parking will be permitted up to a maximum standard. This will be determined by: the nature and type of use; whether off-site car parking would result in a danger to highway and pedestrian safety; whether the locality in which the proposed development***

***is located is served by public car parking facilities; whether off-site parking would result in demonstrable harm to residential amenity; and the relative accessibility of the development site by public transport services."***

- 4.22 The accompanying Housing and Regeneration Statement also refers to housing and regeneration strategies which are a material consideration in the determination of the planning application.

## 5 ANALYSIS

### Principle

- 5.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan for Liverpool comprises the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- 5.2 The UDP shows the site to be within a Predominantly Residential Area where housing and community uses are acceptable land uses in principle in accordance with Policy H4 and Policy C1 of the UDP.
- 5.3 Regarding Policy Statement 6 of the New Housing Development SPD, there are demonstrable regeneration benefits resulting from the proposals. These are summarised below. However, we believe that this document is outdated and in need of review, due to the withdrawal of Pathfinder funding and the shortfall in housing completions in Liverpool. It should therefore only be given limited weight.
- 5.4 At a regional level, the proposals accord with the sequential approach in Policy DP5 through using existing buildings followed by previously developed land. It also accords with the priority for Liverpool from Policy LCR1 of providing a range of good quality housing in the inner areas.
- 5.5 The Council has not queried the principle of the development in pre-application discussions provided that the scheme does not disturb other housing regeneration in the area.

## Housing Supply and Regeneration Benefits

- 5.6 This document should be read in conjunction with the Housing and Regeneration Statement that accompanies the application. Notwithstanding the Pathfinder funding situation, the development does not undermine the aims and objectives of the HMRI or the other regeneration initiatives in the city but instead provides the demonstrable regeneration benefits sought by the Council.
- 5.7 Outside of the HMRI area and other strategic sites in the City, the explanation to Policy H6 in the New Housing Development SPD supports the application by stating that development on **“redundant institutional (non-residential) sites in predominantly residential areas which are vacant or significantly under-used and where redevelopment leads to proven community benefit”** would not undermine regeneration in the city and will be supported.
- 5.8 The site is vacant and we have been made aware of complaints from the local community that it is becoming a hive for anti social behaviour. Planning policy and guidance at a national, regional and local level encourages the efficient use of land in sustainable locations. In accordance with this, the proposals will consolidate a vacant and unused brownfield site in a predominantly residential area to the benefit of the wider community.
- 5.9 Additionally, the provision of new housing and its resultant economic benefits should be encouraged in light of the shortfall in completions across the City. It should be noted that, at the time of writing a High Court ruling has judged that Regional Spatial Strategies were unlawfully revoked and as such remain in force. According to the LPA there was an excess of five years supply<sup>1</sup>, based on RSS housing targets and Growth Point allocation. However ***“the figure for net additional dwellings was below the requirement for each of the last 6 years apart from 2006-07. Net additional dwellings are projected to be below the requirement for the next five years (i.e. 2009-10 to 2013-14)”***.

- 5.10 Clearly, the deliverability of certain sites identified in this supply of housing land has deteriorated in the current economic climate. This has had a significant effect on the shortfall in meeting annual housing requirements. Given this shortfall in supply it is entirely appropriate for the LPA to favourably consider housing schemes that can contribute towards an *available, suitable and achievable* supply of housing, in accordance with paragraph 54 and 71 of PPS3.



## Contributions

- 6.1 The requirements for developer contributions towards open space are set out in the UDP Policy OE14; this only applies to developments over 25 dwellings. A 'Developer Contributions SPD' had been produced by the City Council which advises of a threshold of 10 dwellings to be used for Development Control purposes. However, the production of the SPD has been deferred. It has not been subject to public consultation and therefore cannot be given weight as it is contrary to UDP policy which has been formally adopted.
- 6.2 The New Homes Bonus will apply to this scheme and provides an added incentive for the City Council to provide new homes. The scheme is currently under consultation, but expected to be rolled out in 2011. The consultation paper states that: ***"The scheme will incentives local authorities to increase housing supply by rewarding them with a New Homes Bonus, equal to the national average for the council tax band on each additional property and paid for the following six years as an unringfenced grant."*** (Parag.3.2)
- 6.3 With the provision of 18 new dwellings, this could create a total gross payment of **£118,000** over 6 years, based on the City Council's current Council Tax Band composition of stock. This figure is indicative and likely to change when the dwellings proposed are allocated Council Tax Bands.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This statement, in conjunction with the Housing & Regeneration Statement and the Design & Access Statement, has clearly demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations, including the New Housing Development SPD, with particular regard to demonstrating regeneration benefits.
- 7.2 Housing is an appropriate use in this location.
- 7.3 The opportunity to deliver market housing on a vacant brownfield site should be grasped at a time when economic uncertainty is rife.
- 7.4 We therefore conclude that there is an overwhelming case for the granting of planning permission, which will have the added benefit of obtaining housing funding for Liverpool which will otherwise not be secured.