

## Open Agenda

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### Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

**Full Development Application: Proposed Change of Use from Residential Care Home to Ten Units of One Bedroom Social Housing Flats, Barn View Longwood**

### Memorandum by the Chief Secretary

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. **Executive Council is asked to consider and advise whether FULL Development Permission should be granted, with Conditions, for the Proposed Change of Use from Residential Care Home to Ten Units of One Bedroom Social Housing Flats, at Barn View Longwood as recommended by the Land Development Control Authority (LDCA).**

BACKGROUND & CONSIDERATIONS

2. At the Land Development Control Authority meeting held on 4 March 2020, it was recommended that Full Development Permission be granted for Proposed Change of Use from Residential Care Home to Ten Units of One Bedroom Social Housing Flats, at Barn View Longwood subject to conditions as set out in Section C of the report to LDCA included as Annex A.
3. In accordance with the directions under Section 23[2(i)] of the Land Planning and Development Control (LPDC) Ordinance, 2013, the Chief Planning Officer is required to refer to the Governor-in-Council all applications for Development Permission in respect “granting the application would be inconsistent with a Development Plan but that there are material planning considerations which suggest that permission should nevertheless be granted”.
4. Section 17 (b) reads: Full Development Permission, the effect of which is to permit the development subject to the terms and conditions of the grant of full development permission.
5. The following are the relevant Primary Policy clauses from the Land Development Control Plan (LDCP), however only the more significant in terms of their strategic use are listed in more detail:

#### 5.1 Intermediate Zone: Policies IZ1 (a, b)

*a) the siting, scale, layout, proportion, details and external materials in any development, including individual dwellings, form a coherent whole both in the development itself and in relation to surrounding development,*

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*b) the proposed use is not materially damaging to the amenity of existing development,*

### 5.2 Social Infrastructure Policy SI1 (a, b)

*a) Development permission will be granted for all development reasonably needed for the social development of the Island and such development shall be designed to be sustainable in all services including collection, storage and reuse of rainwater and storage, treatment and re-use of grey water;*

*b) Development permission will not be granted for new residential, employment or tourism-related development which does not include adequate provision for the social development of the island including provision for people with disabilities; and development permission will not be granted which would prejudice or preclude such development.*

### 5.3 Social Infrastructure Policy SI.4,

*Development permission will be granted for the expansion of Barn View, Longwood or for redevelopment of the Longwood First School site as a challenging behaviour / psychiatric unit to be run in tandem with Barn View.*

### 5.4 Social Infrastructure Policies SI.12

*Development permission will be granted for tourism-related development and new commercial and community development only where satisfactory provision is made in the design of the development for access and usage by people with disabilities to all publicly accessible buildings.*

### 5.5 Built Heritage 1(c)

*c) Development in Historic Conservation Areas will be permitted only if it enhances and protects the character of the Area by reference to scale, proportion, details and external materials of the proposed development in relation to those of the Historic Conservation Area.*

### 5.6 Water: Policy W2

5.7 Sewage, storm & Drainage: Policies SD.1(b, c), SD.3, SD.4 and SD.7

5.8 Road and Transport: Policies RT1(c, d), RT3 and RT7

5.9 Housing Policy H9

## 6. RATIONALE BEHIND THE PROPOSAL

6.1 The National Statistics Office forecasts the number of people

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over 55 on Island will almost double over the next 20 years. An aging population will create demand for more accessible friendly homes which this development will address. Furthermore, in the short to medium term it is envisaged that by moving some existing tenants to these homes this will reduce under occupation in the existing GLH housing stock.

6.2 The applicant has worked closely with the St Helena Government's Children and Adults Social Care Directorate, Statistics Office and Housing Department to understand the Island's long term needs for friendly accessible housing.

6.3 The development of this redundant building is next to existing Government Landlord Housing and close to a residential home and other residential properties. (Lady Margaret Fields) and Deasons Sheltered Accommodation to the east. To the south of the site sits bare Crown Land and Longwood House. To the east bare Crown Land and Bertrand's Cottage and to the north bare Crown land.

6.4 The development constitutes an efficient and suitable use of land within an existing village setting, thereby contributing to the housing supply and the sustainability of Longwood.

6.5 The development Scheme is considered to provide a small scale high quality friendly dwelling home for people over the age of 55 with mobility/accessibility issues who are eligible for government landlord housing.

6.6 The applicant's justification for the proposed development was set out in the Design and Access Statement that supported the development application and states that the development site lies close to the centre of Longwood and the development through the change of use class and internal alterations from a former residential care home will provide ten single mobility friendly one bedroom apartments for much needed social/specialist housing. The service and facilities for the people with disability and support for their families, previously from this building, will now be provided at six properties being made available at the Piccolo Estate this includes respite facilities.

6.7 The applicant also states that other site and properties were considered in the Longwood area but were deemed not suitable. The current site provides synergies with other SHG service providers. The applicant considers the Land and Development Control Plan ("LDCP") in policy SI.4 states that planning permission will be granted for the extension of Barn View and since the LDCP was written in 2012, care is now being provided

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in a different setting to allow residents to feel less institutionalised and therefore the current use class is no longer necessary.

6.8 The applicant further states that the change of use fits within S.1.4 of the LDCP which enables appropriate and well-located housing development, including for domestic demand. This development meets this principle and furthermore, S17.1 of the LDCP allows for social developments to ensure sustainable balanced communities are developed and maintained. All tenants at this development will either be single tenants or couples over the age of 55 with mobility issues. These properties will enable tenants to maintain positive relationships with family and friends in an independent setting. Provision for disabilities is an important consideration at S.17 of the LDCP at SI.1 (b).

## 7. BACKGROUND OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION AND REPORTS

7.1 Barn View is currently unoccupied with its previous use being a residential care home (Use Class C2). The applicant now wishes to change the use of the building for social housing development (Use Class C1), which will comprise ten units of one-bedroom accommodation.

7.2 Barn View was built for a specific use as a facility for persons with disability including giving respite for parents taking care of such persons. This service was provided in conjunction with members of what was then the Public Health Department. A large extension was later added. The service and the later extension was from money raised by the local people for the express purpose for people with disabilities and support for their families.

7.3 The development application property is situated at the lower side of the road, north of Longwood House. The proposed development will share a right of way access with Lady Margaret Fields building. The properties are currently separated by a simple post and wire fence which will remain. A small portion of the complex is within the Longwood House Conservation area, as such this will be taken into consideration in the assessment of the proposed development application, see Diagram 1 (Location Plan) and Diagram 2 (Site Plan) in Annex D).

7.4 The development site consists of the main original single storey building and the later addition of a small single storey building which was used as the day centre, see Diagram 3

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(Existing Layout) and Diagram 4 (Existing Elevation) in Annex D. The proposal is to create seven one-bedroom housing units in the main building and two one-bedroom housing units in the day centre building. The tenth one-bedroom will be created in the linked area between the two buildings with the roof extended and area enclosed see Diagram 5 (Proposed Floor Layout), Diagram 6 (Layout Units 3 and 4) and Diagram 8 (Proposed Roof Alteration) in Annex D. The proposal will require internal and external alteration removal of a number of internal wall and construction of additional partition walls to create self-contained residential units with kitchen, dining room, lounge, wet room and a bedroom. The units will have its own independent entrance and will be wheelchair accessible. The internal layout and all facilities will be designed to enable easy access and movability for persons with mobility issues or disability. The external alteration to the elevations will close some of the existing openings and create new openings for the entrance doors to the residential units and new windows to the living space. A number of bedrooms created in the development will not include a window to provide natural light, however all the kitchen and lounge areas will have the benefit of natural light into the living space, see Diagram 7 (Layout of Units 5 and 6 Annex D).

### 8. REPRESENTATIONS

8.1 Four representations have been received from members of the public in respect of the proposed development. The representations raise a number of issues regarding the use of public funds and money raised by the public for specialist facilities and for the development of facilities to support people with disabilities and provide respite for families and carers with family members with disability, however many of these are not planning and development issues and only those issues raised relating to planning and development matters are summarised as follows:

- a) Barn View was built from money raised from the public with the specific use for persons with disability including giving respite for parents taking care of such persons and a large extension was later added with the express purpose for use by persons with disabilities.
- b) Barn View has always been an establishment dedicated for the use of and for disabled people, as evidenced by the plaque and the building has been provided for the provision of care, help and support for disabled people and their families in the form of respite care;
- c) the facility is an invaluable resource providing much needed support to increasingly older clients whose parents and main care providers need and the demand is likely to increase in

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- future given the demographics of the Island and if this resource is removed it will likely put increasing strain on other institutions or care facilities;
- d) challenge the decision for the property to be handed over to the Property Division of the St Helena Government without consultation with the Disabled Persons Aid Society (DPAS);
  - e) authority for the purpose of providing Social Housing without first consulting with the main stakeholders in the property the DPAS and the general public;
  - f) provision for this facility and service has lapsed, possibly due to an oversight by the appropriate department, but the need is still there and hopefully could be considered at a future departmental policy review and converting Barn View to social housing would hamper this initiative while, at the same time, ignoring the generosity and commitment of the Island community in the not too distant past;
  - g) there may well be more social housing required but there are other vacant premises owned by SHG which could serve this need, particularly the former Longwood Infant School buildings and Sundale in Half Tree Hollow;
  - h) this appears to be a land grab by SHG and suspect this has been suggested by a narrowly focused approach to community needs and involvement.

**8.2 Officer Response:** Members of the public are clearly passionate about this building, which was funded by the public generously for its purpose to serve those with physical impairments and provide respite and support for their families. Unfortunately from a planning perspective these representations are not material planning considerations. However, the views expressed have been forwarded to the applicant to address them, if they so wish. Material planning considerations are those related to the impact which the proposed change of the building may have on the neighbouring environment and the matters related to design and appearance of building or effects on proposed alterations on the adjoining conservation area.

## 9. OFFICER ASSESSMENT

9.1 The applicant has indicated in its Design and Access Statement submitted with the development application that the building is currently vacant and has been handed back to Property Division by the Children & Adults Social Care Directorate. The applicant has taken advantage of its size and location to provide much needed social housing for the Island. The building is in a condition, where multiple units of accommodation can be created, without having to undertake significant works. The appearance will not negatively detract from the existing amenity of the area or the setting of the

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Longwood House Conservation area. Furthermore the alterations proposed to the building for access and usage by people with disabilities are not considered to be detrimental to existing design and details and are considered to be acceptable. The overall change of use will provide some much sought after social housing, without additional strain on existing services and is considered to be within wider principles of the policy objectives of the LDCP.

9.2 The LDCA considered that the proposed development set out in this application, assessed against the various policies and the material consideration highlighted within the report can be supported. Furthermore a deviation from the social infrastructure policy SI.4, where permission would be granted for the expansion of Barn View can be justified as changes in the way social care is provided has changed since the LDCP was formulated and adopted. The LDCA therefore recommends to Governor-in-Council to support its decision in accordance with Section 23[2(b)(ii)] Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance 2013.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. Executive Council acts as the Planning Authority in this case.

### ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

11. The delivery and implementation of the development will promote growth in the construction sector and will contribute towards economic growth and prosperity.

### CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

12. Not Applicable.

### PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

13. The addition of specialist residential units to meet the needs of the elderly with mobility issues or disability to live independently would be welcomed. The development will therefore create a positive impact with improved facilities for elderly people with mobility issues.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

14. Overall there will be no significant adverse environmental impacts from this development and no adverse visual impact on the historic Longwood House Conservation Area.

### PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

15. The development application was advertised for a period of two weeks to seek comments from the communities and stakeholders on the development proposal.

16. During the consultation period on the development application, there have been four representations received from the public and

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these are set out in section 8 of the report.

17. Key Stakeholders have responded and their views have been considered by LDCA.

### **PUBLIC REACTION**

18. This could possibly generate public and media interest once the specialist care facility development work has been completed.

### **PUBLICITY**

19. The decision will be covered in the radio briefing following the meeting.

### **SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

20. This paper supports Strategic Objective 1.1 – ‘Ensure effective investment in physical infrastructure, including improved access to and around the Island’. It also supports Strategic Objective 4.1 Develop a Safe Environment.

### **LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS**

21. Goal 7 of the SEDP is to improve public infrastructure, to provide an environment that promotes investment.

SOB

### **OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM**

22. Recommended for the Open Agenda.

Corporate Support  
Corporate Services

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

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