# Former Welland Hospital, Holbeach Road
# Planning Statement

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

September 2017

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# Contents


**1.0 Introduction 1**

Structure of statement 1

**2.0 Background Information 2**

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust 2

Pre-application discussions 2

Site and immediate surroundings 2

Relevant planning history 2

Description of the proposed development 3

**3.0 Planning Policy Context 4**

National Planning Policy Framework (2012) 4

The Statutory Development Plan 4

Other Material Considerations 6

Key Planning Consideration 7

**4.0 Assessment against the Statutory Development Plan 8**

Principle of Development 8

Dwelling mix and affordable housing 8

Design, Layout & Landscaping 9

Density 9

Neighbour Amenity 9

Amenity Space 9

Transport and access 9

Parking 10

Flood risk and drainage 10

Noise and light 11

Ground Conditions 11

Ecology 11

Trees 12

**5.0 Conclusion 13**

# 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust to accompany an application for outline planning permission for residential development on part of the former Welland Hospital Site. The application includes two plots of land located to the west of Roman Bank ('West Plot') and north of Holbeach Road ('East Plot'), Spalding. The proposed development comprises:

*"Outline application for up to 36 residential units and associated works"*

1.2 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to assess the proposed development against relevant policies in the statutory development plan, having regard to other relevant material considerations, including the NPPF.

1.3 The scheme as proposed is wholly affordable housing. The development will therefore not only contribute meaningfully to an acute local housing need, it will also contribute to the supply of affordable housing.

1.4 This application forms part of the wider redevelopment of the former Welland Hospital and former Bettinson Garage sites that as a whole comprise approximately 2ha of brownfield land. Both the hospital and garage have been cleared. It is intended that the remaining site area between the residential plots will be developed as a class A1 food store to be occupied by Lidl and a separate application has been submitted for the development. In combination, the East Plot and West Plot measure approximately 0.94ha in size.

1.5 This Planning Statement draws upon other documents accompanying the application and should be read in conjunction with the following:

1 Planning Drawings prepared by Framework Architects;

2 Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Lichfields;

3 Transport Assessment prepared by SCP;

4 Flood Risk Assessments prepared by S M Hemmings;

5 Extended Phase 1 Ecology Survey prepared by CBE Consulting;

6 Tree Survey prepared by CBE Consulting; and

7 Phase 1 and 2 Geoenvironmental Report prepared by CSG Consulting Engineers.

## Structure of statement

1.6 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2.0 provides background to the proposal, including details regarding pre-application discussions, a description of the site and surroundings, and relevant planning history, and describes the application proposals.
- Section 3.0 summarises the relevant planning policy and guidance;
- Section 4.0 contains a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development in planning terms; and
- Section 5.0 sets out our conclusions.

# 2.0 Background Information

2.1 This section provides information regarding United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust ("The Trust"), a brief description of the site and immediate surroundings, planning history and a description of the proposed development.

## United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

2.2 The Trust is the sole owners of the application site. The site, now vacant, was previously occupied by the Welland Hospital, which was run by the Trust. The Trust is located in Lincolnshire and is one of the biggest acute hospital trusts in England, serving a population of 720,000 people. The former Welland Hospital site is surplus to the Trust's operational requirements, and they are seeking its redevelopment for suitable alternative uses.

## Pre-application discussions

2.3 A pre-application meeting with planning and housing officers took place on 2 November 2016. Key feedback included that residential proposals on this brownfield site would in principle be supported and the benefits of a housing development were recognised.

## Site and immediate surroundings

2.4 The former Welland Hospital site is located approximately 1.6 km to the north east of Spalding, to the north of Holbeach Road. Both the East Plot and West Plot are generally vacant grassy plots. The East Plot is accessible via Holbeach Road and the West Plot via Roman Bank. They are generally overgrown and contain some areas of hardstanding related to the sites' previous use.

2.5 A separate application has been submitted for the central part of the former hospital site for a Lidl food store. The residential and retail proposals are connected, with the retail development helping to bring forward the redevelopment of the wider site for affordable housing.

2.6 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character; however, in the immediate vicinity of the site there a number of commercial uses including a small convenience store, a Post Office, and a takeaway.

2.7 Accessibility to the site is dealt with in the Transport Assessment prepared by SCP. There is existing access to the West Plot directly from Roman Bank. The East Plot has no dedicated access. The site is easily accessible by public transport, with bus stops located on Holbeach Road.

2.8 The River Welland (west) and Coronation Channel (east) are situated in close proximity to the site. The site is within Flood Zone 3a, which is a classed as an area with a high probability of flooding.

2.9 The Site is not located within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on or in the vicinity of the site. There are six trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the East Plot.

## Relevant planning history

2.10 A review of the Council's online planning records reveal no relevant planning history to the current application.

## Description of the proposed development

2.11 Illustrative drawings submitted with this application show an indicative layout of the development. The drawings show 19 units on the East Plot and 17 Units on the West Plot. The intention is for the dwellings to be two storey with an approximate maximum height of 9.3m above internal finished floor level.

2.12 Given the sites' location within Flood Zone 3a, the accompanying Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) recommend that the floor level of the proposed housing to be a level of 5.0m AOD, with all bedrooms at first floor level. The indicative layouts are based on this assumption.

2.13 The proposed development comprises all affordable housing. The precise mix of dwellings in terms of bedroom numbers will be decided at the detailed stage.

# 3.0 Planning Policy Context

3.1 This Section identifies the planning policy and guidance at a national and local level relevant to these proposals. It then identifies key planning considerations against which the planning application will be determined. The proposed development is assessed against these key planning considerations in Section 4.0.

## National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. It is a material planning consideration in decision making. It states that the purpose of the planning system is 'to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (paragraph 6). Paragraph 7 sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development: 'economic' in contributing to a strong and competitive economy; 'social' in supporting strong communities and providing the supply of housing required for present and future generations; and 'environmental' in protecting and enhancing the environment.

3.3 Paragraph 14 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states:

*"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking…*

*For decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
    - i *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
    - ii *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

3.4 Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17) states:

*"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."*

3.5 Paragraphs 47-55 of the NPPF set out the policies seeking to ensure delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes. Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It confirms that "*relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites*". South Holland District Council at this time does not have an up-to-date five year housing land supply.

## The Statutory Development Plan

3.6 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

3.7 The statutory development plan for the site comprises of 'saved' policies contained within the South Holland Local Plan (2006, saved 2009).

## South Holland Local Plan (2006)

3.8 South Holland Local Plan comprises a Written Statement and Proposals Map. The Proposals Map shows the application site is not allocated for any site specific or any area wide allocations or designations.

Figure 3.1 South Holland Local Plan Proposals Map




Source: South Holland District Council

3.9 South Holland Local Plan was adopted in 2006, with policies saved in 2009. The policies contained within the Local Plan cover a period up to 2021. Policies in the 'saved' Local Plan are afforded some weight until such time as the new Local Plan is adopted. The weight that can be afforded to saved policies will depend of the level of consistency with the NPPF (Annex 1: Paragraph 215). Where there is inconsistency, the NPPF should prevail.

3.10 Furthermore, South Holland does not have a five year housing land supply and as such, as per paragraph 49 of the NPPF, relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. In such instances, paragraph 14 of the NPPF applies, which advises that planning permission should be granted unless "*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and*

*demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole*".

3.11 Relevant saved policies are identified below:

- SG1 – General Sustainable Development
- SG2 – Distribution of Development
- SG3 – Settlement Hierarchy
- SG7 – Energy Efficiency
- SG11 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)
- SG12 – Sewerage and Development
- SG13 – Pollution and Contamination
- SG14 – Design and Layout of New Development
- SG17 – Protection of Residential Amenity
- SG18 – Landscaping of New Development
- HS4 – New Housing in Spalding and the Area Centres (Other Towns and Donington) (Non-Allocated Sites)
- HS8 – Affordable Housing
- TC2 – Cycling, Cycleways
- Appendix 2 – Maximum Car Parking Standards

## Other Material Considerations

### Emerging policy – South East Lincolnshire Local Plan

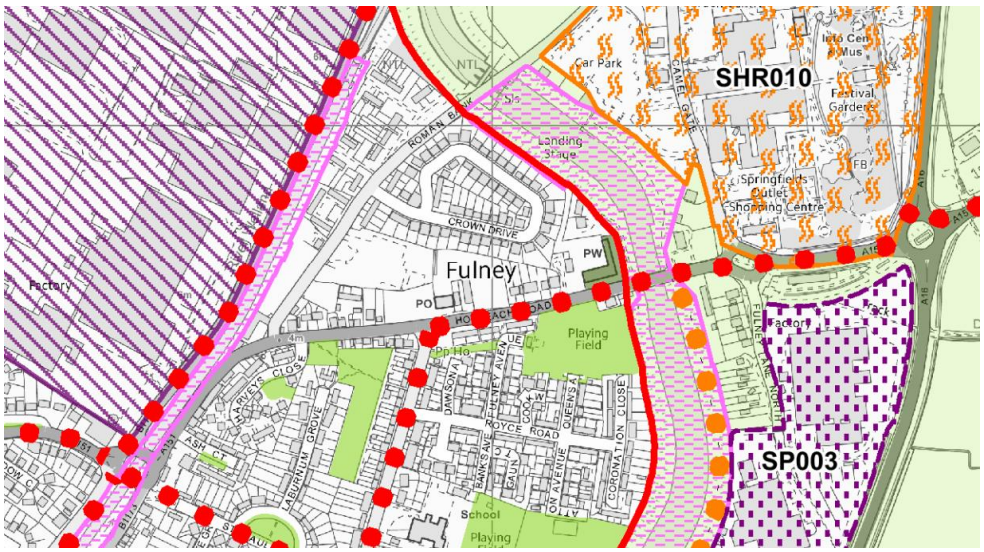
3.12 South Holland forms part of the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC). The JSPC submitted the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination in June 2017. Limited weight can be given to the policies in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

3.13 Provision is made in the new Local Plan for 445 dwellings per annum in South Holland District (11,125 over the plan period). Nearly half of the homes required in South Holland are planned to be developed in Spalding.

3.14 Policies of relevance to this application are:

- Policy 2 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy 4 – Design of New Development
- Policy 5 – Strategic Approach to Flood Risk
- Policy 6 – Meeting Physical Infrastructure and Service Needs
- Policy 7 – Developer Contributions
- Policy 10 – Meeting Objectively Assessed Housing Needs
- Policy 11 – Distribution of New Housing
- Policy 14 – Providing a Mix of Housing
- Policy 15 – Affordable Housing
- Appendix 4 – Car Parking Standards

Figure 3.2 South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036: Publication Version Proposals Map (March 2017)




Source: South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

3.15 The site is again not allocated for any specific purpose in the emerging Local Plan.

### SPD on Affordable Housing (2007)

3.16 This establishes the levels of affordable housing expected of new developments.

## Key Planning Consideration

3.17 From our analysis of the statutory development plan, national policy and the statutory tests we consider the following planning considerations represent the key policy issues against which the planning application should be considered:

1 The principle of residential development;

2 The acceptability of the proposed dwelling and tenure mix;

3 The development's design and layout;

4 The acceptability of the proposed residential density;

5 The standard of the proposed residential accommodation and residential amenity standards;

6 The impact of the proposals in terms of transport, access, and parking; and

7 The impact on the environment.

3.18 The development plan must be looked at as a whole taking into account an assessment of material considerations and legislative considerations. This assessment is provided in the following section.

# 4.0 Assessment against the Statutory Development Plan

4.1 This Section provides a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development.

## Principle of Development

4.2 Policy SG3 of the South Holland Local Plan (2006) identifies Spalding as the District's principal urban settlement and as such will be the main location for new development. In addition, policy SG2, inter alia, adopts a sequential approach which gives priority to previously developed land and buildings within defined settlement limits in order to make efficient use of land.

4.3 Notwithstanding the above saved policies, South Holland does not have a five year housing land supply and as such, as per paragraph 49 of the NPPF the Local Plan is considered out-of-date. In addition, the emerging Local Plan identifies a need for 11,125 dwellings per annum between 2011 and 2036 equating to 445 dwellings per annum in the South Holland District. The South Holland District Council '5-year Housing Land Supply Assessment (March 2017) also identifies considerable historic shortfall in housing delivery within the district. Until the new Local Plan is adopted, paragraph 14 of the NPPF applies, which advises that planning permission should be granted unless "*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole*".

4.4 In the absence of a five year housing land supply the Council should be approving applications for sustainable housing development. The development of up to 36 homes will make an important contribution towards South Holland's housing objectives.

4.5 Furthermore, the site is sustainably located given its close proximity to Spalding town centre. The sites are also well served locally by a small convenience store, a Post Office, and a takeaway. The site is also well located in relation to existing major routes for good public transport links. One bus stop is located less than 100m from the proposed development site with buses to Spalding and Kings Lynn.

4.6 The proposal site is located within the Spalding settlement boundary on a previously developed brownfield site. It is evident from the assessment of the application that the scheme would constitute to sustainable development and housing development accords with policy at all levels.

## Dwelling mix and affordable housing

4.7 The South Holland Local Plan (2006) seeks a general commitment to securing an appropriate mix of dwelling size and type in new development. Policy 14 of the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan sets out the appropriate mix and tenure of housing. It seeks to secure:

- One bedroom homes: 0-5% of market housing and 20-25% of affordable;
- Two bedroom homes: 30-35% of market and 35-40% of affordable;
- Three bedroom homes: 45-50% of market and 30-35% of affordable; and
- Four or more bedroom homes: 15-20% of market and 5-10% of affordable.

4.8 Policy HS8 requires the provision of a minimum of one third of the residential units as affordable housing on the site on residential developments of three or more dwellings.

4.9 The proposed development is wholly affordable and will be developed by Longhurst Housing Association. This is a major benefit of the scheme. The mix of dwellings will be established at the detailed design stage in accordance with policy guidance.

## Design, Layout & Landscaping

4.10 The outline application is supported by a Design and Access Statement and indicative layout plans demonstrating the scheme's accordance with policies SG14 and SG18 of the Local Plan and paragraph 7 of the NPPF which requires high-quality design and layout.

4.11 The detailed design, layout and landscaping of the scheme will be secured at reserved matters stage. The size and form of the development will reflect that found in the neighbouring context, with all of the dwellings comprising two storeys. The scheme represents a high quality proposal.

4.12 The general layout, shown in the illustrative plans, has been designed in accordance with the principles set out in policy SG14 of the Local Plan. Access to the East Plot will be from Holbeach Road and access to the West Plot from Roman Bank. The development will include landscaping areas retaining all TPO trees.

4.13 As such the proposals fully accord with policies SG14 and SG18 of the Local Plan.

## Density

4.14 The indicative plans show up to 36 residential dwellings on the two sites. This reflects an average net housing density of c. 39 dwellings per hectare.

4.15 The proposals represent a positive and responsive residential development. As such, the proposed density is considered acceptable.

## Neighbour Amenity

4.16 Local Plan policy SG17 states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would cause material harm to residential amenity.

4.17 The proposed illustrative layout has been sensitively designed to ensure there would be no undue harm to the residents of the proposed dwellings or existing residents in the nearby vicinity. The proposed accommodation will provide generously sized dwellings. All dwellings will be provided with dedicated space for parking, which will minimise any impact on surrounding roads. As such, the indicative layout has been carefully designed to prevent any privacy or overlooking issues, and comprises generous separation distances between the proposed dwellings. All details will be confirmed at reserved matters stages.

4.18 The illustrative layouts show landscaping and trees along the boundaries, which would reduce impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties to the east and the existing dwellings to the north. The TPO trees form a line along the west side of the East Plot.

## Amenity Space

4.19 Each dwelling will be provided with private residential gardens.

## Transport and access

4.20 A Transport Assessment accompanies this planning application prepared by SCP. The Transport Assessment considers the cumulative impact of the residential scheme with the neighbouring retail proposals. It concludes that there are good opportunities to access the wider site by sustainable modes of transport, including by foot, by bicycle and by bus.

4.21 Access details are not being submitted for approval (remaining reserved). However, access to the East Plot is anticipated via Holbeach Road and access to the West Plot is anticipated via Roman Bank.

4.22 Overall, it is concluded that there is no evidence of any residual cumulative impact of the development and the retail proposals that could be categorised as 'severe' in highways terms. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF planning permission should not be withheld on highway grounds.

## Parking

4.23 Policy SG16 requires all new development to be provided with appropriate parking and servicing arrangements. Appendix 2 of the Local Plan sets out maximum parking standards across the District. In Spalding there is a set maximum of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. This would equate to a maximum of 54 spaces across the east and west plots. The number of parking spaces has not been finalised. Reserved matters application submissions will comply with relevant standards at that time.

## Impact on the Environment

## a) Flood risk and drainage

4.24 The supporting Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) have been prepared for the East Plot and West Plot respectively. Both plots are wholly within Flood Zone 3a as shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Map. As the sites are within a defended area the proposed development can be designated to be within Flood Zone 3(a) "High Probability" as detailed on the Environment Agency's flood zone maps.

4.25 The FRAs conclude that from a surface water drainage and flood risk assessment viewpoint is it considered that the development is appropriate for this location and will provide adequate levels of flood protection for the life time of the development, subject to appropriate detailed design. The proposals will have no impact with regards to surface water run-off on the surrounding existing properties, subject to ensuring that the surface water run-off is retained on site and directed into a full designed surface water system including Sustainable Drainage Systems. In addition the FRAs confirm that the development satisfies the requirements of the NPPF with regards to flooding and type of development.

4.26 In regard to the Sequential Test only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test is required. All of the area between the River Welland and the Coronation Channel is in Flood Zone 3. Indeed the majority of the land within the Spalding development limits is within Flood Zone 3. There are therefore no lower flood zone available sites, including within the centre of Spalding. It is therefore considered that the Sequential Test is passed.

4.27 The proposed residential use is categorised as 'more vulnerable', therefore in this location an Exception Test is required to be passed. In terms of the first part of the Exception Test, the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risks. The redevelopment of the site represents brownfield development and will deliver a wholly affordable housing scheme. The proposals will enhance the area and regenerate this vacant site. The site is in a sustainable location within the Spalding settlement boundary with good public transport links to the centre and beyond.

4.28 The accompanying FRAs demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking into account the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Overall it can therefore be considered that the Exception Test has been passed.

4.29 As concluded in both FRAs the actual risk of the site flooding from any Environment Agency water course is low. There is considered to be no actual risk of flooding at the present time in a 1 in 200 year event. The recommendations of the FRAs set out two options to overcome flood risk:

1 all habitable rooms will be on the first floor where the level will be at least 5.80m OD if the ground level is 3.70 OD. All of the ground floor of the buildings would be constructed to withstand flooding for a number of days; or

2 raise floor levels of the proposed houses to a level of 5.0m OD so that it is above the predicted flood level of 4.9m OD agreed by the Environment Agency.

4.30 Design and landscaping is a reserved matter and reserved matters applications will include appropriate mitigation to overcome flood risk in accordance with the recommendations set out in the FRAs.

4.31 The FRAs also detail the sites' drainage strategy. This includes the construction of polystorm plastic units placed underground with the outflow through a flow restrictor which will limit discharge to 5 litres per second.

4.32 Overall, it is concluded the development passes the sequential and exception tests. The development will not increase flood risk elsewhere and sufficient mitigation can be secured through reserved matters applications. Therefore, in accordance with the requirements of the South Holland Local Plan and NPPF guidance, planning permission should not be withheld on flooding grounds.

## b) Noise and light

4.33 It is not considered that there will be significant harm resulting from noise or light pollution, to existing residents. Street lighting can be controlled by condition.

4.34 As such, the development will not cause any materially unacceptable effects in terms of these environmental considerations, fully according with Policy SG13 and SG17.

## c) Ground Conditions

4.35 A Phase 1 and 2 Geoenvironmental Report accompanies this planning application presenting findings related to the East and West Plots. The report makes a number of recommendations that can be controlled by condition.

4.36 It is recommended that further delineation works subject to additional asbestos testing to determine the extent of the impacted area. Any material containing asbestos fibres should be stripped to a depth of 1.0m below proposed finished ground levels. The stripped material should be replaced with a suitable fill.

4.37 Within the West Plot some of the upper layer comprises on 'hardcore', and whilst not contaminated, this layer is not a suitable growth medium and would need a cover of suitable topsoil.

4.38 The development will not cause any materially unacceptable effects in terms of ground condition considerations.

## d) Ecology

4.39 This planning application is accompanied by a Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal. This Ecological Appraisal is site wide, considering the East, West, and Lidl Plots. The majority of the site surveyed has low ecological value as a result of its location and previous use. The site is

naturalising from its previous use, however, it is in its early stages with no significant habitat development having taken place with diversity of plant species limited. Overall it is considered that there would be no loss of any significant habitat areas of high biodiversity as a result of the development. Nor will the development of the site cause fragmentations of any such habitats within the locality by isolating these.

4.40 The site survey found no evidence of activity by protected species. Some of the trees within the site area building on site have been identified as having 'low or moderate roost potential'. The site inspection site did not identify any physical evidence to indicate the presence of roosting bats.

4.41 The scheme has been designed having consideration to features of relatively high value and has sought to replace or retain trees and hedgerows where possible. The planting of trees and hedges is included as part of the proposals, maximising ecological enhancement. It is considered that the proposals fully accord with the aims of the Local Plan to conserve or enhance features of value for nature conservation.

## e) Trees

4.42 This planning application is accompanied by a Tree Survey. The Tree Survey is site wide, considering the East, West, and Lidl Plots. The Survey identified a number of TPO trees all of which are to be protected with sufficient space provided to avoid any impact on the RPA and crown extents.

4.43 The survey identifies a number of trees that will likely be removed. In the main the trees that will be removed are from the West Plot. On this site trees will need to be removed to enable the development along Roman Bank. A landscaping scheme will be developed as part of detailed proposals. The tree survey overall concludes that the impact on the canopy cover within the local landscape will be minimal. It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the requirements of the Local Plan.

# 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This Planning Statement provides a detailed assessment of the proposed development of part of the former Welland Hospital Site for residential use in relation to national and local planning policy and guidance.

5.2 This application proposes a sustainable residential development falling within the Spalding settlement boundary on a brownfield site.

5.3 There are a number of benefits which arise from the scheme, including:

1 A significant boost to the supply of housing in accordance with the NPPF.

2 A scheme where the proposed units are all affordable and will be developed by Longhurst Housing Association.

3 Development of a site in a sustainable location, which is accessible and close to shops and services. The site is also a previously developed brownfield site.

4 The scheme complies with policies in the development plan relating to, flood risk, ecology and arboricultural issues**.**

5.4 In conclusion, the proposed development has significant merit in planning terms. It will form a sustainable development in an appropriate location and will make a material contribution to meeting housing need in South Holland.

5.5 It is concluded that the proposed development embodies the principles of sustainable development promoted through the NPPF. The presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply and we respectfully submit that outline planning permission should be granted for the development with all matters reserved.

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