

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 17 May 2016	
Application ID: LA04/2015/1191/F	
Proposal: Erection of 6 apartments and 1 complex needs bungalow with parking, landscaping, associated site works and access arrangements from Coleshill Gardens (7 units in total)	Location: Lands immediately east of the junction of Belvoir Drive and Dunseverick Avenue and west of 1-5 Colehill Gardens Castlereagh BT8 7DZ
Referral Route: More than 4 dwelling unit	
Recommendation:	Approval
Applicant Name and Address: Clanmil Developments Ltd Northern Whig House 3 Waring Street Belfast	Agent Name and Address: Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast
<p>Executive Summary: The application seeks the erection of 7 no units on zoned opens space within the Belvoir Estate. The proposal is for 6 apartments and 1 complex needs bungalow with parking, landscaping. The applicant is a social housing provider.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of development on an area of open space • The impact of the development on adjacent residential amenity • The layout of the proposal <p>The site is located on unzoned land as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. The site currently is undesignated open space within the Belvoir Estate. Planning Policy Statement 8 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation is applicable and the policy operates a presumption against development will result in a loss of opens space unless the redevelopment will bring substantial community benefit that outweighs the loss of the open space.</p> <p>The proposal is for 7 social housing units (including a complex needs unit) in an area where a severe shortage of social housing has been identified. Additional landscaping at the site entrance has also been approved to make the entrance to the development more visually attractive.</p> <p>The proposal has been also been assessed against the SPPS, Planning Policy Statement 3, Planning Policy Statement 7 – Quality Residential Development and supplementary policy guidance - Creating Places, DCAN 8 and Parking Standards.</p> <p>No neighbouring dwellings are unduly affected by the proposal. In terms of prospective residents, each unit has adequate outlook to the public street and sufficient amenity space provision.</p> <p>There is no planning history of previous development on this site.</p> <p>One representation has been received from the RSPB requesting consideration is given in the</p>	

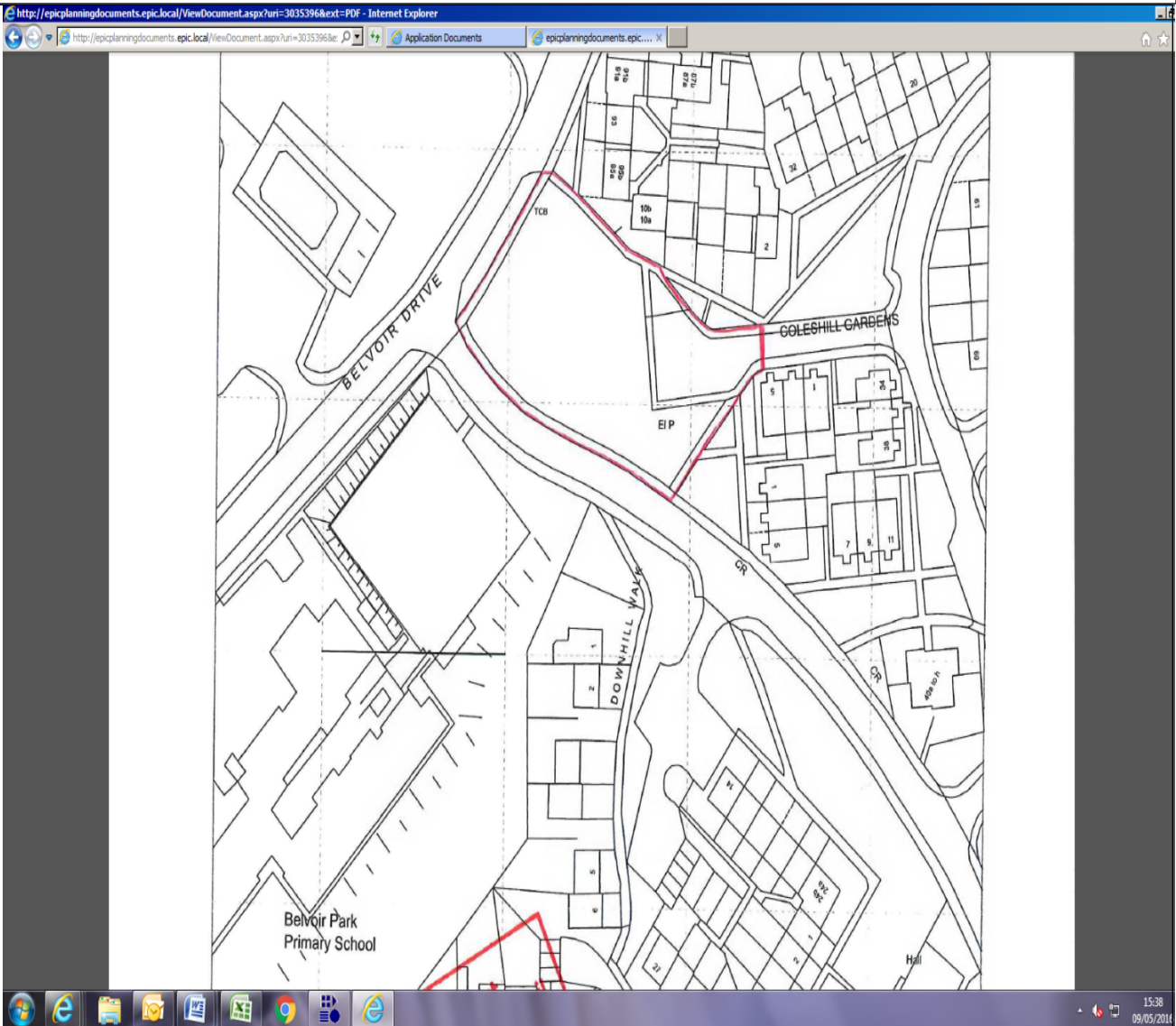
design stage for a development which will help cater for nesting needs of the species.

All Consultees have offered no objections to the proposal however minor technical details regarding the internal access to the development is still under consideration from Transport NI.

Having regard to the policy context and other material considerations the proposal is considered acceptable and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan

**Characteristics of the Site and Area**

1.0	<p>Description of Proposed Development Erection of 6 apartments and 1 complex needs bungalow with parking, landscaping, associated site works and access arrangements from Coleshill Gardens</p>
2.0	<p>Description of Site The site is 0.2 hectare in size and is located within Belvoir Estate at Coleshill Gardens and is comprised of undeveloped land. The land within the site is broadly flat and sown in grass and in the ownership of NIHE. The site boundaries are delineated by the public footpath along Belvoir Drive to the west and Dunseverick Avenue to the south and the existing pathway fronting dwellings at 95 Belvoir Drive and 10 Coleshill Gardens to the north and east. The land surrounding the site to the north and east of the site are primarily residential in character with a mix of apartments, detached and semi-detached dwellings. Belvoir Activity Centre is located to the west with associated playing fields to the west and northwest. To the south is Belvoir Park Primary School. A pylon is located towards the south eastern corner of the site.</p>

Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
3.0	Site History No relevant planning history on the site.
4.0	Policy Framework Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS): Good Design paras. 4.23 – 4.26 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Access, Movement and Parking: - Policy AMP 1: Creating an Accessible Environment; Policy AMP 6: Transport Assessment. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Quality Residential Environments-Policy QD 1: Quality in New Residential Development Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS) Addendum: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas- Policy LC 1: Protecting Local Character, Environmental Quality and Residential Amenity PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation - Policy QD1 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Housing in Settlements- Planning Control Principle 2: Good Design; Policy HS 4: House Types and Size Creating Places Development Control Advice Notice 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas Development Control Advice Notice 15: Vehicular Access Standards Parking Standards
5.0	Statutory Consultees Transport NI; Have no objection in principle subject to technical details NI Water: No objections
6.0	Non- Statutory Consultees Environmental Health: No objections
7.0	Representations None received.
8.0	Assessment
8.1	Policy PPS 8 The development is proposed on a piece of open space at the entrance the Belvoir Development which is existing open space. PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation sets out the policies for the protection of open space. The site comprises an area of informal recreation space, characterised as amenity green space as defined in the typologies of open spaces (set out in paragraph A2 of Annex A of PPS 8).
8.2	Policy OS 1 Protection of Open Space is a key policy from this statement which is also retained under the SPPS. The provisions of paragraph 6.205 of the SPPS apply where in the determination of planning applications there will be a policy presumption against the loss of open space to competing land uses irrespective of its physical condition and appearance. Any exception to its general approach should only be appropriate where it is demonstrated that redevelopment would bring substantial community benefit that outweighs the loss of open space; or where it is demonstrated that the loss of open space will have no significant detrimental impact. In such cases the policy advises that applicants will generally be expected to demonstrate local community support for their proposals
8.3	The applicant submitted supporting documentation on the 15 th October 2015 in the form of an open space justification statement and a PPS 8 exception case appraisal on the 11 th

	<p>April 2016 explaining how the proposal was an exception case to the PPS 8 requirements. This contains information on how the development of the site will bring about substantial community benefit that outweighs the loss of the open space.</p>
8.4	<p>Within this the NIHE has confirmed that the site is located in an area of high social housing need. The scheme will provide a substantial area-specific community benefit by providing housing for vulnerable applicants assessed to be living in housing stress in the Belvoir Area. A Housing need statement was also submitted on the 11th March 2016 and this highlighted waiting list data for the area which indicated a large estate with relatively high demand and a lack of accommodation for applicants with complex needs, including wheelchair users. Housing stress has been persistently high in this area over the past 5 years. There is housing need across all household groups but mainly from small households. Singles are in greatest need, representing more than half of households on the waiting list. This scheme will provide a substantial area-specific community benefit by providing housing for vulnerable applicants assessed to be living in housing stress in the Belvoir area. The Council have not received any objections from any neighbours.</p>
8.5	<p>Under Annex C of PPS 8 this section discusses how the NIHE makes a valuable contribution to the development of open space, sport and outdoor recreation. It states that it is considered that there can often be substantial community benefit in permitting the appropriate redevelopment of a part of the open space provision where this forms part of a package of measures aimed at restructuring the remaining areas and improving the overall estate layout. Such benefits include the provision of more social housing or specialised housing in cases where a strong local need may exist amongst others.</p>
8.6	<p>Evidence was provided of other potential development sites however site specific restraints for these sites has demonstrated that the current site has the best potential for redevelopment and will have the least impact on the bio diversity of the area and/or existing residential amenity. This point has been supported with the overview and site analysis of available sites within Belvoir Park. The applicant has highlighted that the site is the most suitable and is the preferred option. The appraisal presents a comprehensive overview of potential development options in the context of future sustainable estate growth and taking account of existing housing need. These sites were chosen as a result of the area appraisal and evaluation of open space. All five sites exist as maintained grass amenity open space where PPS8 will apply, are either located side on or to the rear of dwellings with little passive surveillance and as such are classified non-core. Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS8) seeks to curtail development that “would result in the loss of existing open space” except “where it is clearly shown that redevelopment will bring substantial community benefits that decisively outweigh the loss of the open space”. The community benefit in this instance is badly needed social housing provision, as well as creating better defensible space and existing properties that are more secure.</p>
8.7	<p>In identifying transfer sites for disposal to Housing Association, NIHE has conducted an open space analysis of the Belvoir Estate. The analysis stated that within the Belvoir estate over 32% (18.82 hectares) of the lands are NIHE maintained open space within the NIHE open space assessment; 9.47 hectares have been classified as core open space which is structurally and/or strategically important and well supervised. A further 1.94 hectares is classified as streetscape. These are considered to be areas which are generally well overlooked and make a contribution to the streetscape. The remaining open space (7.41 hectares) is classified as noncore and is considered to be over looked, to the side or rear of housing, difficult to access, poorly maintained, have difficult levels, have little or no character, or make no contribution to streetscape. This site defined as noncore despite its prominent location. It is poorly overlooked and makes no contribution to the streetscape. Belvoir already benefits from an abundance of public open space within the existing estate and provides easy access to the Lagan Valley Regional Park. The site offers little in terms</p>

	of positive visual amenity.
8.8	The development of the subject site at Coleshill Gardens would result in negligible impact on the total area of public open space available relative to the total study area. A reduction of 0.32% of total open space, as a percentage of the overall study area, has been calculated. It is also noted that this would be a loss of non-core open space. Development of the site also offers scope to provide estate restructuring that could also remove the potential for future anti-social behaviour and improve passive surveillance.
8.9	As stated in Para C13 of Annex C of PPS 8, it is recognised that redevelopment of open space can often be considered substantial community benefit where it forms part of a package of measures aimed at restructuring the area. Not only does the application proposed social housing which meets a demonstrated social housing needs but the application also contains additional landscaping at the entrance of the site. This landscaping is proposed to screen the existing electricity pylon which dominates the site entrance and will therefore soften the approach to the development and provide an improved visual landscape.
8.10	This combination of enhancing the development by the proposed landscaping, and provision of 7 social housing units is considered is considered to outweigh the loss of the open space at this location.
8.11	Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 PPS7 sets out the Department's policies for achieving quality in new residential development. QD1 of the statement requires development to conform to all of the criteria stated (a-i).
8.12	(a)The proposed site shows a scheme which is sympathetic to the surrounding context. The proposal has respected the characteristic land form and the local townscape setting with the massing and appearance of the buildings in keeping with the character of the area. The proposed units are arranged as a dual aspect apartment block fronting onto Belvoir Drive and addressing the junction with Dunseverick Avenue and are designed over two floors of accommodation, served by communal entrances. The mix of accommodation is comprised of 3 one bed apartments, 2 two bed apartments and a single two bed wheelchair accessible apartment. A detached three bedroom complex needs bungalow is positioned to the southern boundary of the site and fronting onto Coleshill Gardens. The buildings are designed to reflect the established character of development in Belvoir Estate and all the units have been positioned to respect the amenity of existing properties at 2-10b Coleshill Gardens and 95a&b Belvoir Drive to the north.
8.13	The proposed access is taken from Coleshill Gardens to the east. The internal carriageway is proposed to terminate in a communal parking court comprising 10 spaces. The bungalow is served by a private driveway. Areas of defensible space are incorporated to the front elevation of the buildings with private amenity space in the form of gardens to the rear. A bin storage area for the apartments is proposed to the northern boundary of the site. Landscaped communal amenity space is provided beyond the western and southern elevations of the apartments. This will provide some relief for ground floor apartments from pedestrians walking along the public footpath to the west. The complex needs bungalow will be served by in curtilage parking spaces in the form of a private driveway and private amenity space is provided in the form of garden areas to the south, west and east of the building. The curtilage of the bungalow has been sited to ensure no development is located within the 5 metre exclusion zone of the NIE pylon adjacent to the south east of the site. The proposed development has been designed to meet current Housing Association

	standards, to reflect the current demands of the NIHE social housing waiting list and to respect the established character of the local area.
8.14	The proposed buildings are in keeping with the bulk, scale and massing of the dwellings in proximity to the site and the treatment and detailing of the elevations is in keeping with the established built context in the surrounding area. The apartment and dwellings are proposed to be finished in red facing brick with dark slate roof tiles, hardwood windows and door frames. Rainwater goods will aluminium. The proposed materials and finishes are in keeping with the character of the area. There are no windows proposed in the gables of the apartments which would give rise to the potential for overlooking into neighbouring properties.
8.15	(b) There are no features of archaeological importance to be protected. The proposal conforms to the built heritage in the sense that the layout and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the area. The scale, form, materials and detailing of the development respects the characteristics of buildings in the area. The scheme will not erode the character or amenity of the area and the proposal does not constitute over development.
8.16	(c) Amenity space is provided in the form of private gardens for the bungalow and communal amenity space for the apartments which meet the space requirements set out in the Creating Places guidance document. Hard and soft landscaping is proposed to enhance the overall quality and character of the space around the buildings and boundaries of the site. Buffer planting is proposed to the western and southern boundaries to soften the impact of the development from critical viewpoints. The circulation space around the buildings will be finished in paving with small areas of defensible space provided along the front elevation. There is also significant space within the development for bin storage, cycle storage and car parking.
8.17	(d) Private communal amenity space, in curtilage car parking spaces and bin storage is provided for the site.
8.18	(e) Access points allow for the provision of walking and cycling into the site. Bicycle parking has been provided to the rear of the development in an area which would be visible from residents' properties. The site is within walking distance to bus stops along Belvoir Drive.
8.19	(f) PPS 3: Policies AMP 1 and AMP 6: DRD Transport NI is the authoritative body on road safety and transport issues. They have no objections to the proposal. Parking for the apartments is provided in the form of 7 parking bays and 3 disabled bays arranged as a communal parking court to the eastern elevation of the apartment block. Parking is provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Creating Places.
8.20	(g) The apartment and dwellings are proposed to be finished in red facing brick with dark slate roof tiles, hardwood windows and door frames. Rainwater goods will aluminium. The proposed materials and finishes are in keeping with the character of the area.
8.21	(h) The staggered design and layout of the proposal reflects a pattern which already exists within the Belvoir Park residential area. There is no unacceptable adverse effect on existing or proposed properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overshadowing, noise or other disturbance. This is due to the layout and design of the proposal, separation distances, the absence of windows along gable walls in certain positions which would cause this and boundary walls.
8.22	(l) Crime and Personal Safety

	<p>The proposed units are designed to secure by design requirements which is standard practice for all social housing schemes. The site is delineated and enclosed by appropriate fencing and walls.</p> <p>To conclude the proposal complies with the criteria set out under PPS7.</p> <p>8.23 The Council's guiding principle in determining planning applications is that the development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposal will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance (SPPS, para 3.8).</p> <p>8.24 PPS 12- Housing in Settlements: Control Principle 1 Housing Density-An increase in density should be promoted in town centres and locations which benefit from high accessibility to public transport. Care should be taken to ensure that local character and amenity are not eroded. The form, scale, massing and layout of the new development should respect that of adjacent housing.</p> <p>8.25 Control Principle 2 Good Design-Development should respect its context, respect natural habitat and heritage, encourage walking and cycling, generous planting and open spaces.</p> <p>8.26 Creating Places General criteria for assessing such applications apply- design, overlooking, overshadowing and amenity considerations.</p> <p>8.27 The proposal for social housing is in accordance with prevailing local and regional planning policy and that the density of development is consistent with the established built context of the local area. The scale, form and finishes of the buildings have been designed to take account of the local area and the established built context in Belvoir Park. Adequate provision has been made for amenity space and car parking to serve the apartments. The buildings are designed and arranged to minimise any adverse impact on the amenity of residents in neighbouring properties. The loss of open space in this instance has been justified and is deemed acceptable following the submission of the loss of open space justification statement.</p>
<p>9.0</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p>Summary of Recommendation: Approval</p> <p>All statutory consultees are satisfied that the proposed development is in accordance with their guidelines and prevailing policy. Having regard to the policy context above, the proposal is considered acceptable, and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions and that Committee agrees the Director of Planning and Place is authorised to draft any necessary amendments and/ or conditions</p>
<p>10.0</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <p>1) As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: Time Limit.</p> <p>2) Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with stamped approved landscaping drawing</p>

	<p>Reason: In the interest of residential amenity and to provide a quality residential development.</p> <p>3) If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree, shrub or hedge, that tree, shrub or hedge is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the Department, seriously damaged or defective, another tree, shrub or hedge of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Department gives its written consent to any variation.</p> <p>REASON: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.</p> <p>Transport NI conditions re access, parking and cycle provision.</p>
11.0	<p>Notification to Department (if relevant)</p> <p>N/A</p>
12.0	<p>Representations from Elected Members</p> <p>N/A</p>