

Leicester Local Plan Examination

Action 141

Examples of housing developed on neighbourhood green spaces by Housing Development Team

Background

In 2017, Leicester City Council undertook an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study to review land and sites within its administrative boundary and also considering the supply of different typologies of green space by geographical area. The study identified sites worthy of retention but also identified a number of underutilised sites in areas where there was adequate supply of green space. These sites could provide high quality and well-designed affordable homes for rent that would help to meet housing needs in the city. Rosshill Crescent and Felstead Road were two sites taken forward for development as part of a Phase 1 of direct delivery of new affordable homes by the Housing Division.

(1) Rosshill Crescent, land off (Planning Application 20190066, permission granted 01/08/2019, now occupied)

The development at Rosshill Crescent consists of five 1 bed-2 person bungalows, which were built on a Council owned area of green space. Four of the bungalows are M4(2) compliant and one is built to wheelchair accessible standards and all homes meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for 1bed-2 person dwellings. Housing need and mix was identified across the whole of the Local Authority New Build programme phase along with being balanced against the most pressing need in the area. Two key considerations were the identification in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment (2017) (HEDNA) of wheelchair adapted need (for which a wheelchair accessible property was provided), along with the need for specialist housing for the elderly. Whilst the proposal does not provide specialist elderly housing the HEDNA goes on to identify "there may for example be an option to substitute some of this specialist provision with a mix of one and two bedroom housing aimed to attract 'early retired' older people which could be designated as age specific or not". Accordingly, the bungalow typology utilised across the site helps to satisfy this consideration.

Pre-application was undertaken with the principle of residential development considered acceptable given the site's location. The requirement of separation distances of 21m and 15m was emphasised alongside appropriate garden areas and the need to retain the path / desire line to the south-east and only developing part of the site were also raised. The site was not designated as green space or open space and was within a Primarily Residential Area. Neighbours raised some concerns regarding the loss of 'the green' and principle of development and possible parking issues, although each dwelling provided on plot parking spaces.

The development of bungalows responded well to the scale of the existing bungalows to the north of the site. Careful consideration of the site layout and the arrangement of principle windows meant reduced separation distances were considered acceptable providing a denser solution. Working with the slope of the site also helped to reduce overlooking. Improvements were made to the remaining part of the site to improve biodiversity and amenity, in particular with the planting of trees and use of hedgerows as boundary treatments and periphery planting, secured via condition.



Link to Planning Application: [Planning Register - Leicester City Council](#)

Google link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/qroc1hA8GB9cGwHy8>

(2) Felstead Road (Planning Application 20190065, permission granted 22/08/2019, now occupied)

The development at Felstead Road consists of 12 semi-detached 2-bedroom houses which were built on a Council owned area of green space. The site was identified as 'informal open space', of which there was an adequate supply within the area and accordingly the decision was made to develop site to help meet Housing need. The houses built were M4(2) compliant and meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for 2 bed-4 person houses. As with Rosshill Crescent above, housing need and mix was identified across the whole of the Local Authority New Build programme phase along with being balanced against the most pressing need in the area. With bungalows and wheelchair accessible provided elsewhere, the resultant mix provided was 2 storey, 2 bedroom family homes.

During the design phase, pre-application was undertaken with the principle of residential development considered acceptable given the site's location. The requirement of separation distances was emphasised alongside appropriate garden areas for the size of the dwellings. The need to retain the paths on both the east and west side of the site was also raised and neighbour concerns included the loss of green space for play and car parking issue. The Council provided five off street car parking spaces to serve five adjacent properties which did not have off street provision. Options were sketched out and agreed prior in conjunction with Planning prior to a formal application.

As the site was not allocated under the Local Plan, to secure its retention as open space the case officer was required to balance the loss of open space against the need for housing. In the development footways were widened to maintain a reasonable level of outlook on the houses directly facing the site. Trees and planting were also provided to enhance biodiversity and amenity and the required separation distances were met.

The lessons learnt during this development, and the Rosshill Crescent scheme outlined above, have helped inform the local authorities ongoing housing delivery programme. Accordingly, should other open space sites come forward, as part of the local plan adoption process, then the authority considered itself to be well placed to deliver such schemes helping both meet wider housing needs but also the needs of the local community.



Link to Planning Application: [Planning Register - Leicester City Council](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/planning/register/)
 Google link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/LsscMMZDZBf8JrMf7>

Housing Delivery and Exemplar Design Example by Housing Development Team

Background:

The Council has a good track record of high-quality housing delivery which has included development on various sites throughout the city, and this is projected to continue, especially with increasing pressures seen by the declaration of a housing crisis in Nov 2022.

Accordingly, the Council's affordable housing delivery programme is increasing its capacity to develop and deliver sites with an increase in resources and a scaling up of development plans, and a key part in achieving this is the bringing forward of sites proposed for allocation in the local plan.

In order to achieve a consistent and balanced delivery programme there are a number of key non-strategic site allocations where work is already well advanced, and these are summarised below:

- 19 - Saffron Lane: 38 Homes. Planning Ref: 20200287. Permission Granted 20/01/2021. Currently on site, construction contract awarded March '24.
- 190 - Lanesborough Road: 37 Homes. Planning Ref: 20220960. Permission Granted 25/08/2022. Natural England License Granted October '24. Start on Site projected Summer '25.
- 963 - Southfields and Newry: 53 Homes. Planning Ref: 20220960. Permission Granted 16/12/2022. Demolition Complete. Tender process complete. Start on site projected early 2025.
- 1034 - Forest Lodge Education Centre: 33 Homes. Planning Ref:20240741. Planning Submitted . Start on site projected Summer 2025.

To further outline the Council's commitment to high quality and exemplar affordable housing delivery, further information has been provided below on the Southfields and Newry project.

Site 963 Southfields Infant School and Newry Specialist Learning Centre

Located to the south of the city in the Eyres Monsell ward this brownfield site of 1.2ha was previously home to Southfields Infant School and Newry Specialist Learning Centre. The scheme sees the demolition of existing buildings and construction of 44 houses (2x1 bed, 30x2 bed, 12x3 bed) and 9 flats (5x1 bed and 4x2 bed) with associated landscaping, public open space, roads and car parking. With 53 units to be delivered this has resulted in a uplift of 23 units from the Regulation 19 Stage capacity estimate of 30.

The brief for the scheme was 'to create a new residential community which provides new homes reflecting the principles of exemplar development including public engagement, design quality, public realm, energy efficiency, access, legibility, community safety and cohesion, and environmental and economic sustainability.' Outlined below are key headings detailing how this has been achieved and how it will be carried through to construction and occupation:

- Design Quality: The design led layout maximises the opportunities across the site and delivers a high density but without compromising on quality. To help achieve this the project team have developed efficient housing typologies that work in smaller terrace blocks and developed a parking approach that considers wider site needs rather than allocated on-plot parking.
- Community Engagement: The Council engaged with the public via a fully inclusive consultation process that allowed the public to share their thoughts prior to the planning submission. This engagement was communicated via progress releases to media outlets, letter drops to over 2000 local addresses, LCC social media channels, and through wider

stakeholder engagement. Community led design promoting interactions, this will be fed back into the programme.

- Sustainability: Key elements considered across the scheme include passive design such as orientation of houses and the utilisation of terraces to limit heat loss, balancing sustainable urban drainage and rain gardens with green spaces and biodiversity across the site, use of sustainable technologies such as PVs, MVHR units and promoting sustainable travel.
- Open space: The scheme aims to deliver high quality sustainable homes at a high density but a low scale placing an emphasis on developing community, health and wellbeing. The public realm and green spaces are family focussed with legible accessible routes for both pedestrians and cycles delivering quality spaces and a development with identify.
- Financial: The homes are being directly delivered and financed by the Council, along with being supported by One Public Estate Brownfield Release funding.
- Delivery and Risk management: As with all sites in the Housing Delivery programme at LCC, the delivery process is principally supported and monitored by two key boards; The Housing Board which is the key strategic board for decisions and reporting of risks in the wider development programme and the Housing Delivery Operations Board which deals with schemes at a project level with reporting up as required.

Demolition of the existing buildings on site is now complete, planning has been secured and contractor selection is in progress in order to achieve a start on site for the building of new affordable Council housing early next year.



Link to Planning Application: [Planning Register - Leicester City Council](#)

Google link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/6iPaeC6FPyf2YVxN8>