



# **Proof of Evidence**

## **Executive Summary**

**Nigel Newton Taylor**

Addressing the Matter of Care Home Need and Supply

Site: 2, 4, 6 & 8 Danson Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 8HB

Planning Inspectorate: APP/D5120/W/22/3293225

Local Planning Authority Reference: 19/03072/FULM

1. The Care Act 2014 requires each local authority to facilitate a care market with ‘a variety of high quality services to choose from’. (Appendix IX).
2. The need for appropriate provision from a qualitative perspective is not only based upon resident aspiration but also wellbeing with modern design increasingly attuned to the limitation of virus spread.
3. The findings of this Proof are that not only is there insufficient appropriate accommodation to offer potential residents ‘variety’ but that the ‘high quality’ required is (from an environmental perspective) inconsistent throughout the Borough care home estate:
  1. 126 registered care beds are within shared bedrooms
  2. Only 11 of the 20 homes offer an ensuite bathing facility throughout
  3. 75 bedrooms offer no ensuite facility whatsoever
4. The table below overviews dynamics from a statistical perspective, identifying a quite significant shortfall in appropriate accommodation.

	Ensuite Bedrooms
Occupational Demand	1,426
Existing Supply	1,190
Outstanding Baseline Need	236

5. It should be noted that, in line with the Appendix IV commentary, the LaingBuisson methodology is an occupancy prevalence indicator rather than level of need. In order to ensure ‘variety’ for prospective care home residents, a level of additional provision comfortably exceeding the Outstanding Baseline Need is required.
6. The sole existing consented scheme (70 Bedrooms) within the Borough is insufficient to offset the quantitative shortfall.
7. Evidence of *actual* demand (rather than statistical) is contained within Appendix V and shows consistently high occupancy across the Appellants existing Bexley home coupled with a level of enquiry volume significantly exceeding bed availability.
8. The Borough wide shortfall of appropriate accommodation is mirrored within the locality Market Catchment Area analysis (Appendix III).

9. Long term planning is always to be lauded but the care sector is timing specific. This proposed development is being driven by a care operator, significantly enhancing the potential for swift delivery – a benefit in itself (Appendix XI Para AXI.5). People approaching end of life cannot wait for planned care home delivery and provision therefore needs to be ahead of the curve (Appendix XI Para AXI.3):

*‘..... Elderly people requiring care home accommodation are less able to wait than those in the general population needing accommodation because their needs are immediate. Accordingly, there is an urgency in meeting this unmet need and for all these reasons, significant weight is given to these housing and people care benefits.’*

(Source: Appeal Decision APP/B1930/W/20/3259161 Paragraph 34)

10. In June 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published planning guidance entitled ‘Housing for older and disabled people’. The opening words of the Introduction are forceful:

*The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing.....Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.’*

The Borough of Bexley has a proportionately high elderly (85+) population – 6% higher than the national profile and forecast to increase rapidly over forthcoming years (Appendix I). If the national level of need is deemed critical by central government, it is not unreasonable to assess this locality in a similar manner.

11. Reason 5 for Refusal of consent confirms:

*‘The proposed development results in the loss of the four family dwelling houses which is not outweighed by the benefits of the scheme, including the provision of 70 care home beds, contrary to Policies H8 of the London Plan (2021) and Policies CS01 and CS03 of the Bexley Core Strategy (2012).’*

12. To put the above Reason into perspective, my enquiries point towards a quite significant level of need for good quality nursing home accommodation. The proposal would greatly assist in meeting that need by increasing the level of ensuite bedrooms Borough wide by almost 6% - with the corresponding proportionate loss in family housing standing at 0.006% (Appendix VIII).