

CAVENDISH

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Statement of Community Involvement Old Charlton Road, Hitchin

Prepared for McCarthy Stone
April 2025

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1. Executive Summary.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 McCarthy Stone is committed to consulting with the local community regarding the proposed redevelopment of land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin to deliver much-needed specialist Retirement Living accommodation.
- 1.1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement has been produced with the aim of clearly and concisely detailing the community consultation in respect of the process for the above site, and includes data and responses received during a public consultation process.
- 1.1.3 McCarthy Stone is committed to consulting with local stakeholders and the local community regarding its planning applications and as a result, have a strong track record of consulting and communicating with members of the local community, community groups, local councillors and other relevant third-party stakeholders.
- 1.1.4 To assist with the community consultation and communications around the project, McCarthy Stone appointed Cavendish Consulting, a specialist communications consultancy, to form part of its project team for the proposed development. Cavendish has produced this report to clearly and concisely outline the process followed and the feedback received.
- 1.1.5 This included a one-to-one meeting with immediate site neighbours March 2025, an online consultation hosted on the project website between 25 February 2025 and 11 March 2025, along with a public in-person exhibition on 27 February 2025.
- 1.1.6 Residents and stakeholders were given the opportunity to give their feedback regarding the proposals at all stages of the public consultation via several different channels. A freephone information line and dedicated website were made available throughout the course of the planning stages, for interested parties to receive further information and to provide their feedback to the project team.
- 1.1.7 This report documents the activities, findings and outcomes derived from the consultation process, and details how McCarthy Stone has responded to community feedback and incorporated local views into the proposals.

1

In-person consultation events, as well as a virtual exhibition

1

One-to-one meetings with neighbours and stakeholders

74

Pieces of feedback received

1,430

Website views

1,031

Invitations issued

37

Attendees at the in-person exhibition

46.3%

of respondents support the delivery of older persons accommodation in the area

2. Summary of consultation.

Timeline

1.

In line with McCarthy Stone's commitment to community engagement, a hybrid, two-phase approach to consultation was proposed.

This included one-to-one meetings offered to neighbouring properties and stakeholders in advance of the wider community engagement, to provide an early opportunity to view the proposals, provide their feedback to the team and ask questions.

The second round of consultation comprised virtual and in-person engagement, whereby over 1,031 local residents, businesses and stakeholders were invited to attend the event, view and comment on the proposals.

2.

Initial engagement began in mid-February 2025, whereby 34 immediate neighbours to the site were invited to a one-to-one meeting at a mutually convenient time. An invitation was also sent to local stakeholders to meet virtually or in-person at a mutually convenient time.

One meeting took place during the consultation period with an immediate neighbour to the site.

3.

The virtual public consultation was held from 25 February 2025 to 11 March 2025. The virtual exhibition website - <https://mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin> - was viewed by a total of 1,430 individuals during the consultation period.

4.

A consultation newsletter providing an overview of the project and inviting local residents to participate by viewing a virtual exhibition or attending an in-person exhibition was delivered to 1,031 local residents and businesses.

A short form feedback reply card and freepost return envelope were delivered alongside the consultation newsletter, ensuring ample opportunity for participation. A more detailed feedback form was also available on the website and at the in-person event.

5.

During the consultation, access to a freephone telephone enquiry line and email address was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposals, or to register their comments via the telephone or email.

The telephone number used (0800 298 7040) was in operation Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00am and 5:30pm and for voicemails to be left and responded to at the earliest opportunity, to ensure information was readily available and queries or concerns addressed.

The email address used was feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk and was detailed in all correspondence distributed to the local community.

6.

The in-person exhibition event was held between 3pm - 7pm on 27 February 2025 at the British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS. The exhibition was attended by 37 people, including a ward councillor.

7.

A total of 74 pieces of feedback were received. This comprised 52 responses to our survey, 15 online feedback forms, 2 postal responses, 3 emails and 2 reply cards. 46.3% of overall feedback was supportive of the principle of redeveloping the site to deliver specialist older persons housing, with 10.4% unsure.

Approximately 4.3% of respondents felt that the design was excellent. A further 11.6% of respondents felt the design was good and 40.6% of respondents were unsure.

Those who were supportive of the proposals welcomed the site's redevelopment, adding that they liked the design or would be interested in living in the development.

The concerns raised by objectors were visitor parking, building height and impact on privacy for neighbours.

3. The Site and local context.

3.1 Site context



Figure 1. Aerial view of the site (outlined in red)

- 3.1.1 The site is located on Old Charlton Road and is currently occupied by four bungalows.
- 3.1.2 The site is well connected by numerous vehicle, pedestrian, and public transport routes to the town centre and surrounding area.
- 3.1.3 The proposals would seek the site redevelopment to deliver 35 one- and two-bedroom Retirement Living apartments, as well as communal facilities, extensive landscaping, and associated car parking. These apartments would be provided alongside tailored shared facilities within the development, including a reception area, communal lounge, internal refuse, mobility scooter storage, guest suit along with landscaped gardens.
- 3.1.4 McCarthy Stone's proposals have been developed to be sensitive to the existing neighbouring properties, sitting comfortably with the surrounding buildings.

3.2 Policy context

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

McCarthy Stone has complied with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) which states that *"early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties."*

The NPPF also highlights that "good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

3.2.2 North Herts Council's Statement of Community Involvement

The Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2023) encourages developers to enter into early discussions before submitting an application:

Table 5 : Public consultation at the pre-application stage for planning applications
(This includes all applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act and associated legislation.)

Pre-Application Stage : Major Applications (see Appendix 2)		
Consultation Methods	Suggested Course of Action	By Whom
Letters to inform local residents / interest groups of the planning application site	Send letters / emails to local residents / interest groups / relevant statutory consultees	Planning applicant / agent
Public exhibition or public meeting	Publicise & prepare proposals for public consultation.	Planning applicant / agent
Pre – Application Stage – Other Applications		
Inform neighbours in the immediate vicinity	Verbal consultation	Planning applicant / agent

3.2.3 McCarthy Stone sought to incorporate these points into its engagement programme. Government guidance and the Council's SCI encourages pre-application discussions and community involvement at an early stage in the process.

3.2.4 McCarthy Stone has adhered to the guidance provided by the Council and has delivered a comprehensive consultation which has sought to engage with a wide variety of potential stakeholders and local residents.

4. Community engagement.

4.1 Consultation process

- 4.1.1 There were two stages to McCarthy Stone's consultation regarding its proposals for the Site.
- 4.1.2 The first round included a series of one-to-one meetings offered to immediate neighbours and political stakeholders.
- 4.1.3 The second round comprised of a hybrid virtual and in-person exhibition, which was open for comments through the website - <https://mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin> - between 25 February 2025 until 11 March 2025, alongside an in-person consultation event held on 27 February at The British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS.

4.2 Neighbour & stakeholder engagement

- 4.2.1 McCarthy Stone felt it was important to discuss the proposals for the site's redevelopment with local stakeholders and residents in advance of the wider community consultation.
- 4.2.2 An initial letter was sent to 34 immediately neighbouring properties on 14 February 2025 notifying them of the plans offering a meeting to discuss the proposals with members of the project team. One neighbouring resident requested to meet with the team, an in-person meeting was held on 13 March 2025.
- 4.2.3 A copy of the neighbour invitation letter and distribution area can be found in the Appendices.
- 4.2.4 The meetings allowed McCarthy Stone to provide specific answers to questions and walk attendees through the proposals for the scheme. It was also an opportunity for McCarthy Stone to obtain and consider feedback prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 4.2.5 The key themes of feedback throughout the meetings were as follows:
 - Concern regarding privacy and impact on daylight
 - Concern regarding disturbance during construction phase
 - Concern regarding noise from the development
- 4.2.6 An initial stakeholder email was sent to all identified stakeholders on 18 February 2025 notifying them of the plans offering a meeting to discuss the proposals with members of the project team. The following stakeholders were invited to attend a meeting to receive a briefing on the plans:
 - Leader of North Herts Council

- Deputy Leader of North Herts Council
- Executive Member for Planning
- Ward members for Hitchin Priory
- Hertfordshire County Councillor for Hitchin South
- MP for Hitchin

4.2.7 A copy of the stakeholder invitation letter can be found in the Appendices.

4.2.8 Hitchin Priory ward member, Cllr K Hoskins MBE attended the in-person event on 27 February.

4.3 Consultation website

4.3.1 A website was set up displaying information about the proposals and is being updated throughout the public consultation and planning process. The website is hosted at: www.mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin and the virtual exhibition was live and open for comment between 25 February and 11 March 2025.

4.3.2 The purpose of this was to enable the local community to explore McCarthy Stone's proposals for Hitchin in detail and respond with their views, comments and suggestions.

4.3.3 The website address was printed on the virtual exhibition invitation newsletter and relevant correspondence. The website includes:

- An overview of the proposals
- Relevant plans and layout
- Approach to design
- Highways and access arrangements
- Outdoor spaces, including landscaping proposals
- Information about the in-person public exhibition
- Information about McCarthy Stone and the benefits of this type of accommodation
- Online feedback form

4.3.4 The website was viewed a total of 1,430 times over the consultation period and a total of 15 feedback forms were received through the website.

4.3.5 A copy of the consultation website homepage can be found in the Appendices.

4.4 Invitation flyer

- 4.4.1 A 2-page A4 flyer was distributed to mailing radius of 1,031 homes and businesses around the proposal site. The invitations were sent to those homes and businesses thought to be most affected by the proposals within the immediate and wider vicinity of the site. This invitation was sent as 1st Class Royal Mail and delivered in February 2025.
- 4.4.2 The invitation newsletter contained the following information about McCarthy Stone and the proposals for Hitchin, as well as information about the online and in-person consultation events:
- Background to the site
 - An aerial view of the site
 - A CGI of the proposed site
 - Details of how to access or attend the consultation and leave feedback
 - Benefits of the proposals
 - McCarthy Stone's contact information including the freephone information line and the website address
- 4.4.3 A copy of the newsletter can be found in the Appendices.

4.5 In-person exhibition event

- 4.5.1 McCarthy Stone also held an in-person exhibition to display its proposals for the redevelopment of the site. The purpose of the public exhibition was to present the proposals to the wider community and gain additional feedback prior to submitting a full planning application.
- 4.5.2 The consultation event took place on 27 February 2025 at The British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS, 3pm - 7pm. A total of 37 members of the community attended the event, including one of the local ward councillors.
- 4.5.3 The in-person consultation materials displayed the same information available through the virtual consultation, including information about:
- History and vision of McCarthy Stone
 - Information about the Retirement Living product
 - Location of the site
 - Overview of the proposals
 - Approach to design
 - Highways and access arrangements
 - Outdoor spaces, including landscaping proposals
 - Local need and benefits of retirement accommodation
 - How to provide feedback
- 4.5.4 The following materials were also available at the event:
- Feedback forms
 - Freepost envelopes for the feedback forms

Representatives of the project team from McCarthy Stone and Cavendish Consulting were available to answer questions about the site's redevelopment.

- 4.5.5 The exhibition boards displayed at the event can be found in the Appendices.

4.6 Feedback form

- 4.6.1 A feedback postcard and freepost envelope were issued alongside the exhibition invitation to encourage as many members of the local community to provide their feedback as possible.
- 4.6.2 Feedback forms were also provided at the in-person event, which could either be filled in at the venue or posted back by using the supplied postage-paid envelopes.
- 4.6.3 Local residents could also provide feedback online by submitting a feedback form on the project website, the questions on this form were the same as those at the in-person event.
- 4.6.4 A survey, containing the same questions as the feedback forms, was publicised via a Meta advert on Facebook and Instagram.
- 4.6.5 Over the course of the consultation, a total of 71 feedback forms were submitted or posted back to the team.
- 4.6.6 The questions used for the feedback form and the responses received have been detailed in Section 5 of this document.

4.7 Pre-paid post, email address and 0800 freephone

- 4.7.1 Local residents and stakeholders could also provide feedback and ask the project team questions by email via feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk. This email address was provided on the initial outreach letter, press release, exhibition invitation and website.
- 4.7.2 During the consultation, access to a telephone information line was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposal, or to register their comments via the telephone.
- 4.7.3 The telephone number used (0800 298 7040) was operational throughout the consultation period and remains live. The information line provided a voicemail facility for messages to be left and these were responded to at the earliest opportunity. During the consultation, one telephone call was received regarding the project, requesting further information.
- 4.7.4 Information was given to callers where possible, and, if questions were of a technical nature, these queries were passed on to project team members for a response.

5. Review of comments.

5.1 Overall feedback received.

5.1.1 The community consultation for the proposals took place between 25 February 2025 and 11 March 2025 with neighbour and stakeholder engagement also taking place prior to this. As outlined previously, this involved a range of meetings with key stakeholders, a consultation website, and in-person exhibition event. The sections below outline the feedback received throughout the consultation.

5.1.2 During the consultation period, a total of 74 pieces of feedback were received, which were comprised as below:

Type of feedback form received	Number
Online feedback	15
Reply cards received by post	2
Feedback forms received by post	2
Emails	3
Survey	52
TOTAL	74

5.1.3 Approximately 25.4% of respondents said that the delivery of retirement housing on this site was a good use of the site. A further 22.5% of respondents were unsure and 52.1% of respondents said it was not a good use of the site.

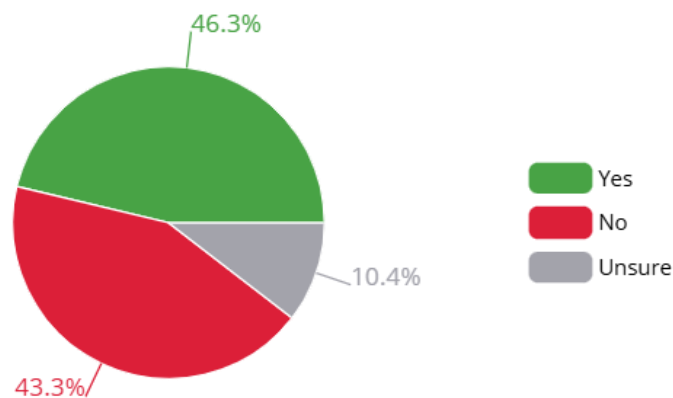
15.9% of respondents said that the design was either excellent or good. A further 40.6% of respondents had no view on the design and 43.4% of respondents were believe the design was either poor or very poor.

5.1.4 Those who were supportive of the proposals commented that they were well suited to the site. However, some of those that were broadly supportive of the delivery of older persons housing on the site, did have some concerns about the need for further retirement living housing and parking provision.

5.2 Feedback analysis

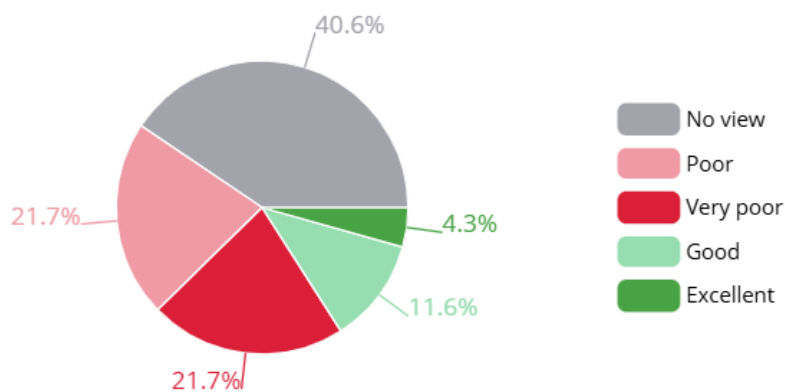
5.2.1 The analysis in this chapter will be divided into individual sections in order to address the specific questions asked via the feedback form. The email feedback responses did not answer the same questions, so have been analysed separately.

Q1. Do you generally welcome the provision of specialist housing for local older people in your area?



5.2.3 46.3% of respondents felt that this scheme represented a good use of the site, whilst 10.4% felt unsure and 43.3% felt it was not a good use of the site.

Q2. What do you think about the design of the scheme?

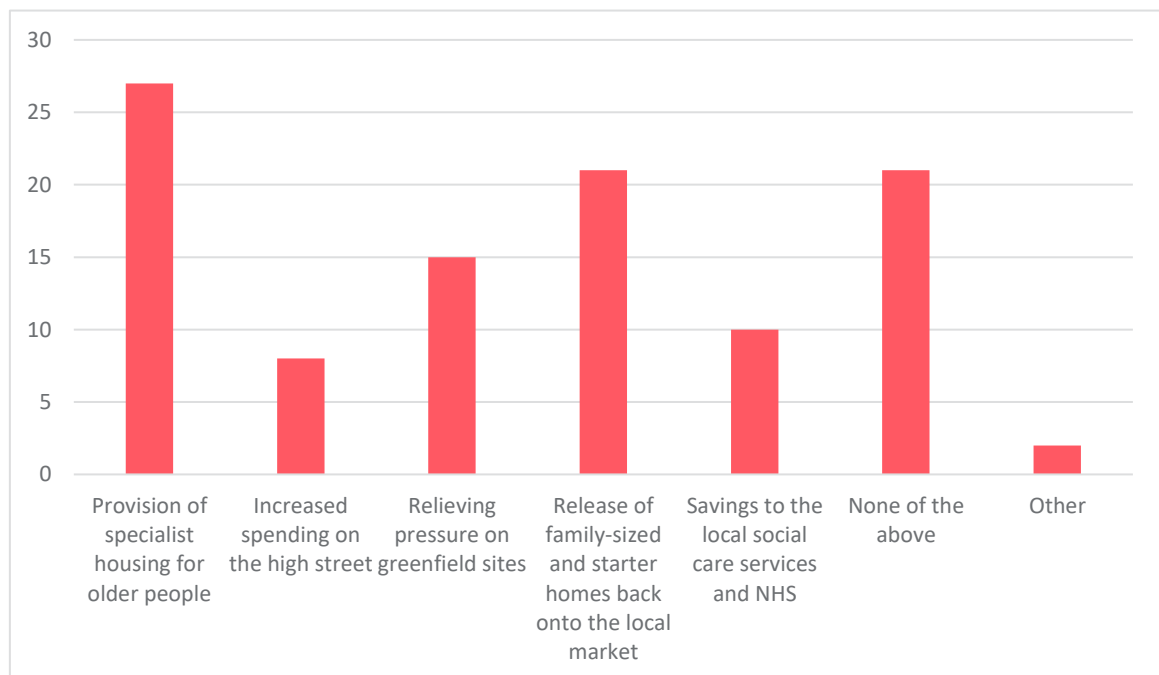


5.2.4 Responses to the design of the scheme were mixed, 15.9% felt that the design is excellent or good, 40.6% had no view and 43.4% felt it was poor or very poor.

5.2.5 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on the design, most of the concerns centred around parking, building mass and privacy for neighbours. Examples of this are as follows:

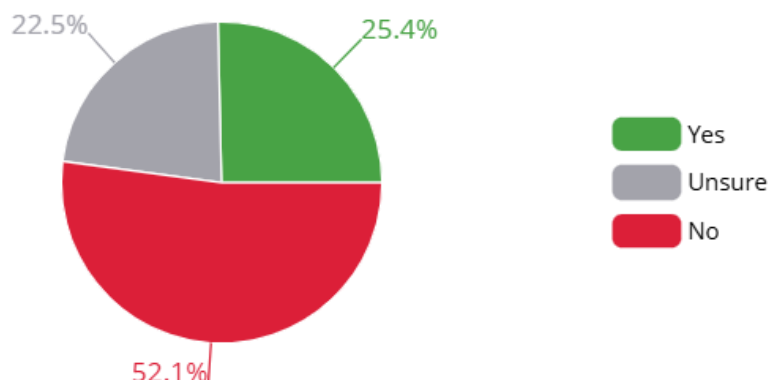
- *"Massively over developing the site, far too little outside space remaining and insufficient car parking provided"*
- *"Seems to fit in with the environment from what I've seen"*
- *"Housing is too close to Parkway, traffic fumes will cause problems with open balcony doors, therefore parking should be on the Parkway side of the development Insufficient green space for residents to enjoy"*
- *"Doesn't look particularly special, although I appreciate that some consideration has been given to the surrounding conservation area. More attractive than some developments"*

Q3. Which benefits of the proposals are most important to you?



5.2.6 Of the respondents who answered this question, the most important benefits of the proposal would be the provision of specialist housing for older people (27 responses), followed by both the release of family-sized and starter homes back on the market (21). 21 respondents did not value the listed benefits as important.

Q4. Do you think this scheme represents a good use of the proposed site?



5.2.7 25.4% of respondents felt that this scheme represented a good use of the proposed site, whilst 22.5% were unsure and 52.1% did not agree that the proposed scheme was a good use of the site.

Q5. Do you have any further comments about the proposals?

5.2.8 Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments, the key themes are shown below along with how many times this was raised as a point.

- *"A great shame that 4 family homes are going to be lost to the development, but appreciate that it is very important to provide housing for the elderly within walking distance of amenities. I am familiar with your properties (my mother in law had one in Hitchin) and it provided a safe environment for her in her later years. On balance, I would support your proposal"*
- *"There is insufficient green space for residents to enjoy. Too few parking spaces for staff, contractors & visitors plus residents"*
- *"I can't see any information on how it would support local environment and ecology. I am part of a local group who aims to protect and help secure nesting sites for Swifts and other cavity nesting birds. You may already have something planned, but as this is an area where there is an existing Swift bird population it would be ideal to add into the design, some universal swift bricks which would provide nesting sites for swifts and other birds that use buildings to nest. The bricks are cost effective and are very long lasting with no maintenance required."*
- *"The site is opposite another planning application for 45 flats with 64 parking spaces. These will do more for extra housing for first time buyers and families. There are already dozens of retirement homes unsold in Hitchin. Many empty flats are just across the A505 from the proposed site in a Churchill retirement complex."*
- *As an immediate local resident I am very concerned about the noise, traffic and safety aspect of the build, which I had hoped would be addressed during this proposal.*
The entrance onto Old Charlton Road via Tilehouse Street is a narrow old road. There are regularly issues with the limited lorries and van trying to deliver to properties around Old Charlton Road/Wratten Road East, and lorries which have been sent wrong by sat nav trying to reverse and

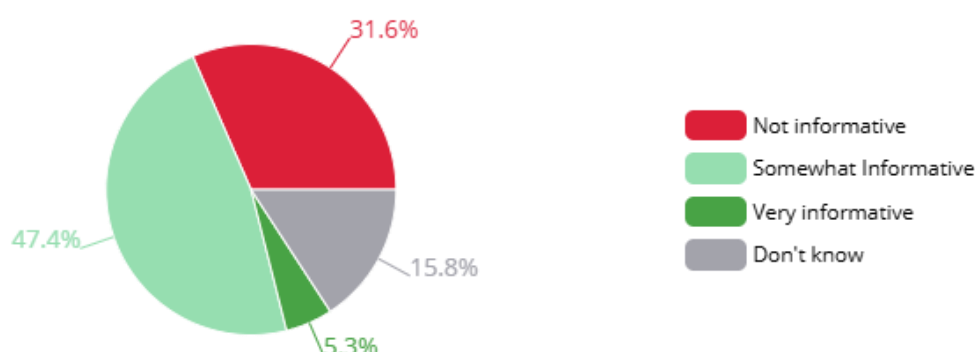
turnaround on Wratten Road East. It is not an easily accessible site and as someone who lives opposite, I am concerned about how all the heavy machinery that is needed for the build will access the site, and how much mess, noise and disruption this will bring to Wratten Road East and Old Charlton Way.

As developers, you may also wish to talk to the licensing department at the local council as the Hitchin Priory has, over the past few years, begun hosting multi-day music festivals. The noise level is excessive (multiple complaints have been put in by local residents) and is likely to be highly disruptive to residents of a retirement development. The events also bring significant parking issues on Tilehouse Street, Wratten Road East, and Old Charlton Road.

I am not against the development of further residential properties. To be completely honest, I have elderly parents who I would very much like to be housed in a retirement property so close to my home. However, given how narrow and old the roads around the site are, I am very concerned about how the works traffic will affect the immediate local residents.

- 5.2.9 Throughout the responses to this question, there was a mixed reaction to the proposals, with some concerns centred around parking capacity, impact on traffic and noise, plus the need for more retirement housing in the local area.

Q6. How informative have you found the consultation?



- 5.2.10 Most respondents said the exhibition was somewhat informative or very informative (52.7%).
- 5.2.11 A further question was asked at the end of the feedback form, which gave respondents the opportunity to register their interest in living in a McCarthy Stone development. Of the respondents that answered this question, six respondents did so.

5.3 Feedback received via email or phone.

5.3.1 Three emails were received providing feedback on the proposals. Due to the data sensitive nature of these emails, the key themes have been summarised below, rather than the exact emails repeated verbatim.

5.3.2 The key themes of the emails were as follows:

- Questions regarding the Construction Management Plan and impact on residents during demolition and construction period
- Concern regarding access and safety for pedestrians on Old Charlton Road
- Question regarding the need for a new retirement living development and loss of bungalows
- Concern regarding the number of parking spaces and potential traffic impact

6. Response to comments.

6.1 Applicant's responses to feedback received

Key theme raised

Feedback received	Applicant's response
Minimising the impact on local residents during construction period	McCarthy Stone will submit a Construction Management Plan as part of the planning application and the site hours will be as dictated by the planning permission. Construction will only be allowed to operate between the following hours: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday 8am to 1pm Saturday (Only if the programme dictates necessary) No working allowed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
Feedback received	Applicant's response
Concerns regarding visitor parking	McCarthy Stone has extensive experience from previous developments in respect of the number of parking spaces required for a development, both for residents and visitors. The proposed provision is in line with other operational sites. Visitors will also be encouraged to use public transport and the site has good public transport connections.

7. Post-submission engagement.

7.1 Ongoing engagement

- 7.1.1 Given the interest shown by residents and stakeholders in the proposals, McCarthy Stone will ensure information continues to flow through existing channels to interested parties.
- 7.1.2 A letter will be sent to the following groups and individuals informing them that the application has been submitted alongside addressing the main comments raised throughout the consultation:
- Leader of North Herts Council
 - Deputy Leader of North Herts Council
 - Executive Member for Planning
 - Ward members for Hitchin Priory
 - Hertfordshire County Councillor for Hitchin South
 - MP for Hitchin
- 7.1.3 Those who requested further information by telephone, letter or email will be responded to in the most appropriate manner.

7.1 Updating materials

- 7.2.1 The project website will be updated in respect of the submission of the planning application and its validation and once a decision has been made.

8. Conclusion.

8.1 Concluding statement

- 8.1.1 Over the public consultation period, a number of opportunities were provided for local residents, businesses, and stakeholders to review the proposals, ask questions, provide feedback, voice concerns and have discussions with the project team. Multiple platforms of engagement, both digital and in-person, have been deployed to aid accessibility and maximise engagement.
- 8.1.2 There is evidence from the feedback that respondents positively engaged with elements of the proposal. The key concerns raised by attendees related to the impact on parking and traffic, plus associated loss of light and overlooking.
- 8.1.3 Opportunities to provide feedback and engage with the project team were available online, by phone, by post, and by email as well as at the in-person consultation event, and through the offer of individual meetings with neighbours.
- 8.1.4 Throughout the pre-application period, McCarthy Stone has worked closely with the Council to ensure key officers and councillors are made aware of the proposals and the key consultation activities.
- 8.1.5 McCarthy Stone would like to thank all members of the local community and others who have taken the time to participate in the consultation, ask questions and provide feedback. McCarthy Stone will continue to engage with the local authority, local stakeholders and surrounding community following the submission of the planning application.

Appendix C - Newsletter



Delivering much-needed homes for older people in Hitchin

Welcome

Invitation to our public exhibition

McCarthy Stone is proposing to develop a new Retirement Living community on Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

We are proposing to develop 35 one- and two-bedroom Retirement Living apartments, together with communal facilities, landscaped gardens and associated parking on Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

There is a need for specialist older persons housing which our proposals would help to address, allowing local older people the opportunity to downsize and move into a more suitable home, while staying close to friends and family in the Hitchin area.

North Hertfordshire District Council's Housing Strategy 2024-2029 highlights that the borough has an ageing population which housing strategies must account for. The report highlights "by 2011, people aged 65 and over will account for almost one-quarter (23%) of the district's projected population".

As part of our commitment to community engagement, McCarthy Stone is informing local people of the proposals prior to their planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council. Please take time to visit our virtual consultation, learn more about our plans for Hitchin and let us know what you think!

Find out more via our public consultation

When?

Our virtual exhibition will be live between **Tuesday 25 February and Tuesday 11th March 2025**. Access the consultation by visiting the below website or scanning the QR code to the right.

www.mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin

We will also be holding a public exhibition

On: **Thursday 27th February**
At: **The British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen St, Hitchin SG4 9TS.**
Between: **3pm and 7pm**

Members of the project team will be on hand to answer any questions and provide further information on the proposals.

How can you comment on the plans?

- Complete the online feedback form on the consultation website
- Complete and return the enclosed feedback card in the postage paid envelope
- Provide comments via email to feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk
- Provide comments via the Freephone line via **0800 298 7040**

All feedback received will be evaluated and considered before a planning application is submitted.

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way



Our proposal

- Delivering much-needed Retirement Living accommodation, with around 35 one- and two-bedroom specialist apartments, all designed to meet the needs of the local ageing population.
- The proposal also contains a residents' lounge, forming a hub of activity as well as communal landscaping facilities, a hotel style guest suite and a mobility scooter store.
- Sustainable location, close to shops and services within Hitchin town centre.
- An attractive development with a design approach taking inspiration from the local area.
- New landscaping and planting, including a communal garden for both residents and guests to enjoy.
- Sufficient onsite car parking, with around 25 car parking spaces for residents, staff and visitors.

Who are McCarthy Stone?

At McCarthy Stone, we are focused on providing high quality homes and services to make later life a happy, healthy, and rewarding experience.

We recognise that getting older presents challenges, so that's why everything we do is built around the needs of our customers, from the design of our apartments to our on-site support services, the requirements of later living are always at the front of our mind.

Our retirement communities bridge the gap between family housing and care, removing concerns about home maintenance, and enriching the lives of our customers.

We believe that Retirement Living is so much more than downsizing into a more suitable home. It's an opportunity to embrace a new way of life, to have the freedom to live a lifestyle with more choice and more time to do the things they enjoy.

All developments built since 2010 are managed by our in-house management services team, Your McCarthy Stone, providing peace of mind that we will look after customers and their properties for the long term.

Benefits of this type of development

- Make significant savings of around £3,500 per resident, per year in NHS and social services costs
- Release under-occupied family housing back onto the local market, which will in turn improve the supply of homes for first-time buyers further down the chain
- Create new and permanent jobs through construction, management and repairs within the development
- Deliver homes on a vacant brownfield site approved for residential development, helping to reduce pressure from greenfield development
- Improve the wellbeing of those living on the site in the future, with residents half as likely to be lonely
- Reduce the risks of slips and trips, with residents half as likely to have falls than in their previous home
- Deliver a highly sustainable building with biodiversity improvements
- Every 2 in 3 moves enables a first time buyer to join the housing market



Get in touch

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the proposals further, please get in touch with our community engagement team via email at feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk or by Freephone on **0800 298 7040**.

McCarthy & Stone Retirement Living/Res Limited. Registered Office: 4th Floor, 180 Midland Road, Birmingham, B58 4RQ. No.6422231. Registered in England and Wales

Appendix D - Boards



Welcome

to our Public Exhibition

Proposals for land at Old Charlton Street, Hitchin

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

www.mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

Who are we?

Our history and vision

Since building our first development in 1977, we have become the UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities. We have sold over 58,000 properties across 1,300 developments.

We recognise that getting older presents challenges, so that's why everything we do is built around the needs of our homeowners, from the design of our apartments to our on-site support services, the experience of later living is always at the heart of our mind. We are dedicated to creating the best of older people's lives and providing vibrant communities to enable them to continue to live full and active lives.

The Office of National Statistics predicts that, by 2035, there will be an additional 1.5 million older households in England alone. This reflects a 40% increase on today, yet less than 7% of current housing in the UK is specifically designed to meet the needs of older people.

It is important that the housing needs of older people are not overlooked. Our retirement communities bridge the gap between family and care, removing concerns about home maintenance, and ensuring the lives of our homeowners.

Our exhibition showcases our proposals for a McCarthy Stone development in your local area and we look forward to hearing your views.

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk



A rapidly ageing population

In 2023
1 in 10
are aged 65 and over

In 2043
1 in 5
are aged 65 and over

Source: Office of National Statistics, Population Projections for the UK

Facebook: [facebook.com/mccarthystone](https://www.facebook.com/mccarthystone)

YouTube: [youtube.com/mccarthystone](https://www.youtube.com/mccarthystone)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/mccarthystone](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mccarthystone)

Website: www.mccarthystone.co.uk

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

What is Retirement Living?

Retirement Living creates safe and secure environments for our homeowners to continue to live an active, independent life. Our retirement communities are managed by our experienced company and we offer a range of services to support our homeowners. We have over 50 years of experience in the industry and we are proud to be a leading provider of retirement living solutions.

Apartment can be bought by cash or mortgage and we provide a range of services to support our homeowners. We have over 50 years of experience in the industry and we are proud to be a leading provider of retirement living solutions.

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk



All the independence, none of the worry

Having to maintain a large property can be a burden, especially for someone living on their own. That's why every Retirement Living development has its own fully trained House Manager - someone to manage the day-to-day running of the development and to be on hand when you need them. Our House Managers act as a friendly neighbour and help to arrange many of the social activities that take place in our developments.

We are experts in the experience of getting older and constantly adapt our offering to the changing needs of our homeowners, with flexible on-site services, including electric, car clubs, in care of our developments. Our House Managers also have a secure entry system linked to the TV in their apartment, and the peace of mind of having our 24-hour emergency call service available at the push of a button. Estate management and support services are provided by us - no third party is involved.

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

Designed to make life a little easier

Our developments are carefully designed with the needs of older homeowners in mind, with step-free access throughout the building.

The apartments are all built to Lifetime Homes' standards and are designed for wheelchair use. They are built to generous internal space standards and incorporate features designed to help homeowners maintain their independence, such as 24-hour emergency call points, level access bathrooms, good lighting, and wireless / electrical sockets at a raised height to reduce bending.



Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk



Average customer moves c.4 miles from rest of their development

c.13 million worth of local housing built by us since we started our retirement living business

c.166,000 worth of equity released by our customers after leaving one of our apartments

42% of vacant properties are released and re-occupied by new owners

1. Older people choose to move to a retirement development

2. Which have up to 10% lower house prices than similar properties in the area

3. Which help to release equity from their homes

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

Supportive and secure communities

Later life is filled with possibility and we believe there is value in staying together that gives purpose and a sense of fulfilment. Along with the benefits of independent living within their own apartment, homeowners are able to enjoy activities in the shared spaces within the development.

These include a shared lounge and a great room for when friends and family come to stay. All of our developments also include beautifully landscaped outside spaces which enhance both the building and the local neighbourhood, as well as providing a social area for homeowners to come together which is important to older people.

The shared spaces provided with our retirement communities help to combat loneliness and live more effectively. A study made supportive community is available for homeowners to assist, while retaining their independence and involvement in the wider local area, as they choose. We make this a priority within our development, ensuring that a range of social activities, events, organised outings and opportunities to make new friends are available to all our homeowners.

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

Improving quality of life

c. 9 out of 10 of our homeowners said their new property improved their quality of life

94% of our homeowners said their new home is a better place to live

92.3% of our homeowners would recommend us to a friend

79 years old is the average age of a Retirement Living homeowner

£3,500 saved on health and social care per person per year when moving to a Retirement Living development

The average 80-year-old lives 10 years longer than when they started working

10,000 social events held every month across our retirement communities

96% of our homeowners said their new home is a better place to live

Homeowners half as likely to have falls than they would be in their previous home

On average, costing £35,000 a year to have residential care in care home

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

A sustainable way of living

We work hard to build environmentally friendly developments, with each scheme having high standards of insulation and energy efficiency. The majority of our homeowners could save around £1,200 per year on running costs when compared with their previous property.

Our sites are usually previously developed land and are close to town, local shops, facilities and transport links, which means that our homeowners have a reduced reliance on their own cars and a smaller carbon footprint.

Indeed, in later life, the decision to move to specialist accommodation located close to the shops and services that they place most reliance on, often goes hand in hand with relinquishing their car.

Of those who decide to keep hold of their car, many will often decide to sell it after a year or so when they realise that it is no longer essential to maintaining their independence.

We also manage every aspect of the construction process and we look to ensure that our activities have regard to site neighbours and the general public.

Call 0800 298 7040 to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk



Contributing to the local community

98% of sites that we develop are located in previously developed land

80% of customers use the local shops, facilities and services

91% of customers said they have good access to local amenities

£670,000 per year total expenditure in the local economy by customers, per development

Heating bills noticeably lower after moving to a retirement development

£10.92 Million overall benefit to the local economy per development (includes taxes, rates, council tax, etc.)

£125,200 per year total expenditure in the local economy per development (includes taxes, rates, council tax, etc.)

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Our vision

The site

McCarthy Stone, the UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities, is preparing proposals for a new specialist retirement living development on the site at Old Charlton Street.

McCarthy Stone is proposing to develop the site with 35 one- and two-bedroom Retirement Living apartments, as well as communal facilities, extensive landscaping, and associated car parking.



Sustainable location

The current site, on Old Charlton Road, is a brownfield site containing four bungalows that has the potential to be developed into an attractive and high-quality space for residents and their visitors to enjoy.

The site is well connected by numerous vehicle, pedestrian, and public transport routes to the town centre and surrounding area. There is a public footpath along the southern boundary, that connects to an underpass beneath Park Way leading to area to the west. Old Charlton Street connects to the Town Centre to the northeast.

Our commitment to Community Engagement

Our two-week public consultation is being held from Tuesday 27th February until Tuesday 11th March. As part of our commitment to community engagement, McCarthy Stone is undertaking a community consultation programme before we submit a planning application. We will use this opportunity to inform local people about our proposals and gather feedback which, where possible, will be used to shape the plans prior to submission to North Hertfordshire District Council.

Call 0800 298 7040

to find out more.
feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

Have your say

You can share your views on our proposals in a number of ways:

- Complete our online feedback form on the consultation website at mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin
- Complete a feedback form during the in-person event on **Thursday 27th February**
- Complete and return the enclosed short-form feedback card
- Provide comments via email to feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk
- Provide comments using the Freephone line **0800 298 7040**

You have until **Tuesday 11th March** to provide feedback.



McCarthy Stone

Retirement living your way.

Our proposals

McCarthy Stone is bringing forward proposals to redevelop land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin to provide a new specialist retirement community, comprising:

- A high-quality Retirement Living development featuring 35 one- and two-bedroom retirement apartments.
- Self-contained Retirement Living apartments and associated facilities designed for older persons, securely accessed and connected via heated corridors.
- Tailored shared facilities within the Retirement Living development, including a reception area, residents' lounge, landscaped garden, guest suite and internal refuse and mobility scooter storage and guest suite.
- Sufficient on-site car parking for residents, visitors and staff to meet the needs of this type of development, which has lower levels of traffic generation and car-ownership than found in general market housing, and will be managed through McCarthy Stone's retained management of the site. There will be 25 spaces designated to serve the residents, staff and visitors.
- Sustainable location, close to shops and services within Hitchin town centre.
- For the wider Hitchin community, this new community would provide a vital boost to the local economy as residents of this development would be expected to spend approximately £270,000 in local shops and businesses every year. In addition to this the improved health of those living in the development would provide savings to local health care providers.
- New residents will live up under occupied family housing, with a knock-on impact all the way down the housing chain to first time buyers, which can positively contribute to the health of the local housing market and provide opportunities for younger generations.



Site Layout Plan

The proposal is designed to respond to the specific site conditions - physical context, surrounding character, site constraints and opportunities, and to respect the privacy and amenity of neighbouring and proposed properties.

The scheme has been developed in line with government policy and design guidance, accounting for relevant local planning policies and design guides. The McCarthy Stone model has been developed to offer an aspirational and needs-based housing choice for homeowners over the age of 60, significantly increasing the housing choice available for local people wishing to downsize. It is anticipated that the majority of homeowners in age-exclusive accommodation will originate from the local area, choosing to remain part of their community and enjoy peace of mind in a development to suit their needs.

Call 0800 298 7040

to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone

Retirement living your way.

Our Approach

to Design, Scale and Appearance

In order to ensure the proposal displays the best design possible, care is taken to investigate the architectural landscape of the area.

Before we begin designing any proposal, our team of architects spend time researching the architecture and character of the local area to ensure a sensitive design that is in keeping with its surroundings.

Our proposals bring 35 apartments in total, split evenly between 17 1-bed apartments and 18 2-bed apartments. This presents an exciting opportunity to bring forward high-quality, low maintenance homes to the area. We believe that these will provide genuine choice for older people so they can continue to live locally in a home that meets their needs and aspirations in their later years.

The proposed layout places the building at the part of the site with the most capacity to provide an increase in building scale, giving space to the lower scale buildings to the north-east. The design detailing provides a traditional roof form with varying heights to break up the building and sit within the context of the area.

The scale of the proposed building steps up from north-east to south-west to follow the pattern of development in the area.

The closest residential properties are to the north and north-east of the site. The building has been positioned south within the site to provide spatial separation to the closest neighbouring buildings to minimise any potential impact on residential properties.

We are committed to ensuring our development is sustainable and will seek to utilise locally sourced and A-rated materials, wherever possible.



Outdoor space

We seek to ensure that all our developments benefit from high-quality outside space for our residents to enjoy.

Many of our schemes have won awards for their outside space, and our developments are designed to blend in with their surroundings, achieved through quality gardens and landscaping.

The proposals include an appealing landscape design throughout the shared outdoor garden, private outdoor spaces, throughout the development and along the site boundary. The concept for the landscape design has been to create a high-quality amenity space within the development which will provide a variety of areas for the residents and visitors to enjoy.

The layout has been designed to maintain the primary frontage to Old Charlton Road and provide the communal garden to the rear of the site. The car park is located to the north-east of the site to provide spatial separation between the proposed development and the existing almshouses and related development to the north.



Call 0800 298 7040

to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

McCarthy Stone

Retirement living your way.

Local need

There is a significant need for this type of development both nationally and locally, and it is important that communities address the current and future needs of their residents.

North Hertfordshire District Council's Housing Strategy 2014-2029 highlights that the borough has an ageing population which housing strategies must account for. The report highlights 'By 2031, people aged 65 and over will account for almost one-quarter (23%) of the district's projected population'.



Call 0800 298 7040

to find out more.

feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk

Benefits

McCarthy Stone's specialist retirement housing has a number of benefits to the local high street, as well as wider health and social benefits.

- Average health and social care spending of £1,300 per person, per year when subjective income is a retirement community.
- The average 65-year-old feels a decade younger after moving in.
- Those in specialist retirement housing are half as likely to be lonely, making them significantly less likely to develop dementia.
- Our customers are grouped half as likely to have falls than they would have in their previous homes.
- Personal savings of £12.8 million are made every year in NHS and social care costs by building retirement communities.
- An average of 273,000 of spending have paid for retirement development, with more than 10% of this spent in the local high street.
- CEMEX's indicators show the cost of construction is 10% lower when compared to those of the same age group in wider society.
- Most of our customers move from within a 10-mile radius, reducing housing back into the market for families and first-time buyers.
- Every 2 in 5 review place retirement housing makes a five stars better to join the housing market.
- The creation of up to 10 new and permanent jobs through construction, landscaping and repairs, high street jobs and within the development.

McCarthy Stone

Retirement living your way.

Appendix E – Feedback Form

Feedback Form

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living your way

About the Consultation

We welcome feedback from local residents and stakeholders on our proposals to redevelop land in Hitchin. McCarthy Stone believes that the views of the local community are important, along with conservation and economic factors, when redeveloping sites.

Please return all feedback using either the freepost envelope enclosed or via email at feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk.

Privacy Statement

By filling in this form, you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

- Cavendish will only share your personal data with the McCarthy Stone group companies for planning evaluation purposes.

- Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Cavendish and McCarthy Stone will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).
- Develop a Statement of Community Consultation (or similar document) about this public consultation that will be submitted to the planning authority or similar body; this will be a publicly available document. Your comments will be anonymous, and we will only identify you in these reports with your express permission.

If you provide us with your contact details, we might also contact you to ask you more about the comments you've made.

Cavendish acts on behalf of McCarthy Stone to run public consultation activities.

Your Details

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):	Address:
First Name or Initial:	
Surname:	
Postcode:	
Age Group (please circle): Under 13 13-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85+	Telephone: Email:

I do not wish to provide personal details but can confirm that I am over the age of 13 ☐

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. If you would like to be kept up to date with these proposals, please tick this box ☐

Data Protection

We hold all personal data in accordance with the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679) (the "GDPR"), as it forms part of the law of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland by virtue of section 3 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 as amended, and any successor legislation. Your personal data will not be transferred outside of the EEA.

You can see our full Privacy Statement, Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy and find out how to make a Subject Access Request at the following website address: cavendishconsulting.com/data-protection or by contacting us on 01962 893 993 / data.protection@cavendishconsulting.com.

Do you generally welcome the provision of specialist housing for local older people in your area?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Which benefits of the proposals are most important to you?

Savings to the local social care service and NHS	Increased spending on the high street
Release of family-sized and starter homes back onto the local market	Provision of specialist housing for older people
Relieving pressure on greenfield sites	Other

Do you think this scheme represents a good use of the proposed site?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

What do you think about the design of the scheme?

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ No view ☐ Poor ☐ Very poor ☐

What is the reason for this?

Do you have any further comments about the proposals?

How informative have you found the consultation?

Very informative ☐ Somewhat informative ☐ Not informative ☐ Don't know ☐

What is the reason for this?

Would you like to register your interest as a potential purchaser of one of our homes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Email: feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk Call: 0800 298 7040

McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Limited, Registered Office: 4th Floor, 100 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AQ. No. 6622231, Registered in England and Wales

Appendix F - Website home page

McCarthy Stone

Retirement living your way

Home

Proposals

Benefits

Have your say

Proposals for land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin

Thank you for taking the time to visit our virtual exhibition about our proposals for the redevelopment of land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

Our vision involves developing this site with specialist Retirement Living accommodation together with indoor communal facilities, high quality landscaped gardens and on-site car parking.



We want to hear from you

We want to know what you think about our plans. Our virtual exhibition is being held from **Tuesday 25 February 2025 - Tuesday 11 March 2025**, to introduce our emerging proposals for the site and invite feedback.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the information, we encourage you to complete a feedback form so we can understand your thoughts and suggestions. Your feedback, where possible, will be used to inform the plans prior to their submission to North Hertfordshire District Council.

Alternatively, if you have any questions regarding the proposals, or wish to submit feedback via phone or email, you can contact a member of the project team on **0800 298 7040** or feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk.

Virtual Exhibition

Our virtual exhibition will be live until **Tuesday 11th March 2025**. Please submit your feedback by this date.

Details on our proposals can be found [here](#).

In-person Exhibition

We will also be holding an in-person exhibition on **Thursday 27 February** between 3pm-7pm at **The British Schools Museum, 41/42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS**.

WHY DO RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES MATTER?





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CAVENDISH

Appendix G – Letter to Stakeholder



Information line: 0800 298 7040

18 February 2025

Dear Councillor,

Proposed new retirement community on Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

At McCarthy Stone, we strive to create healthier and happier lives through our retirement communities, to enable older people to maintain their independence for longer.

We have recently acquired an interest in the land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin, which is currently occupied by four residential houses and will be bringing forward proposals for a new Retirement Living community. The proposals comprise around 35 one- and two- bedroom Retirement Living apartments together with communal facilities, landscape gardens and associated parking.

We are committed to engaging with the local community regarding this proposal and will shortly commence a pre-application community consultation programme. Cavendish Consulting is working with us to assist with the public consultation process which will run between Tuesday 25th February and Tuesday 11th March 2025.

Redeveloping this site with specialist retirement accommodation will help provide much needed homes for local older people and the need is well identified in local and national policy:

- North Hertfordshire District Council's Housing Strategy 2024-2029 highlights that the borough has an ageing population which housing strategies must account for. The report highlights *"by 2031, people aged 65 and over will account for almost one-quarter (23%) of the district's projected population"*
- National planning policy guidance identifies the need to increase the provision of homes for older people as *'critical.'*

We would like to invite you to an individual briefing meeting to discuss your feedback and to respond to any questions you may have at this stage. Should you consider such a meeting to be of interest, please contact our engagement team by email at feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk or on the project's freephone information line number – 0800 298 7040 – to arrange a mutually convenient timeslot.

You will also be able to review our proposals on the project website from Tuesday 25th February at www.mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin or at our in-person public exhibition on Thursday 27th February between 3pm and 7pm at The British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen St, Hitchin, SG4 9TS.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact our engagement team by phoning 0800 298 7040 or emailing feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk.

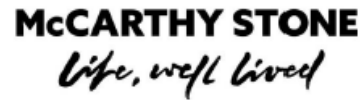
We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Bryan
Development Director at McCarthy Stone

c/o Cavendish, Jellicoe House, Grange Drive, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2AF
0800 298 7040 | feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk | www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk
McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Limited, Registered Office: 4th Floor, 100 Holdenhurst Road, Boumemouth, BH8 8AQ
No. 6622231, Registered in England, and Wales

Appendix H – Letter to direct neighbours



Information line: 0800 298 7040

17 February 2025

Dear Resident,

Proposed new retirement community on Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

At McCarthy Stone, we strive to create healthier and happier lives through our retirement communities, to enable older people to maintain their independence for longer.

We have recently acquired an interest in the land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin, which is currently occupied by four residential houses and will be bringing forward proposals for a new Retirement Living community. The proposals comprise around 35 one- and two- bedroom Retirement Living apartments together with communal facilities, landscape gardens and associated parking.

We are committed to engaging with the local community regarding this proposal and will shortly commence a pre-application community consultation programme. Cavendish Consulting is working with us to assist with the public consultation process which will run between Tuesday 25th February and Tuesday 11th March 2025.

Given that you are a near neighbour to the site, we would like to invite you to an individual briefing meeting to discuss your feedback and to respond to any questions you may have at this stage. Should you consider such a meeting to be of interest, please contact our engagement team by email at feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk or on the project's freephone information line number – 0800 298 7040 – to arrange a mutually convenient timeslot.

You will also be able to review our proposals on the project website from Tuesday 25th February at www.mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk/hitchin or at our in-person public exhibition on Thursday 27th February between 3pm and 7pm at The British Schools Museum, 41-42 Queen St, Hitchin, SG4 9TS.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact our engagement team by phoning 0800 298 7040 or emailing feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Bryan
Development Director at McCarthy Stone

c/o Cavendish, Jellicoe House, Grange Drive, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2AF
0800 298 7040 | feedback@mccarthystoneconsultation.co.uk | www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk
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CAVENDISH