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Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation  
West Dorset District Council  
South Walks House  
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22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013

Dear Ms. Jordan

## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - CONSULTATION ON STATEMENT OF MODIFICATIONS

On behalf of my Client, McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd, I provide comments below on the Modification to the Charging Schedule of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd. are the market leader in the provision of private specialised accommodation for older people with over 30 years experience providing over 40,000 homes designed to address the specific needs of older people. McCarthy & Stone has consistently been recognised by the house building industry for the quality and expertise within this specialist field of development.

McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd. and Churchill Retirement Living Ltd. previously provided commentary on both the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule in June 2012 and the Draft Charging Schedule in November 2012. In each of our representations we expressed our concern that the emerging CIL could prohibit the development of specialist accommodation for the elderly at a time when there is an existing and urgent need for this form of development. Notably we raised concerns as to how specialist accommodation for the elderly differs from general needs housing through key issues including, amongst other things, communal floorspace built to a higher specification, a slower sales rate and higher empty property costs. On this basis we respectfully requested that a specific development scenario for sheltered accommodation be carried out for this form of development. For your convenience we have provided a copy of our initial responses.

It must be noted that, despite the above, a separate development scenario for specialist accommodation for the elderly has not been conducted and this form of development continues to be amalgamated into a general residential levy rate. Indeed, the viability of specialist accommodation for the elderly has been given marginal consideration, if any, by the Council.

The sheltered / retirement housing industry has become increasingly concerned over the potential effect that CIL could have on their ability to successfully compete for land and develop. As discussed at length in our previous representation, the viability of specialist accommodation for the elderly is more finely balanced than conventional housing and accordingly a uniform CIL rate applied to all forms of residential development could potentially render all development of this type unviable in the Authority. It is therefore imperative that when determining CIL rates the charging authority

completes an accurate development scenario for specialist accommodation for the elderly to ascertain whether it can support the same level of CIL.

Therefore to encourage Local Authorities to undertake a more robust viability assessment of retirement / sheltered housing McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd and Churchill Retirement Living Ltd, produced a joint position paper that was recently sent to every local planning authority in England and Wales. The paper provides a number of recommendations on testing the viability of specialist accommodation for the elderly for CIL and how it differs from conventional housing and has been attached for your convenience, although a copy of this document was previously sent under separate cover.

Additionally the Retirement Housing Group (RHG), a consortium of retirement housing developers and managers from the private sector and housing associations, recently commissioned the consultants Three Dragons to produce a paper that provides evidence and guidance for viability practitioners in appraising sheltered / retirement and extra care accommodation. This paper was sent to every viability practitioner in the UK with a copy sent to the Planning Minister, Nick Boles – a copy of this paper has also been attached for your convenience. It must also be noted that it has recently been reported that the Planning Minister has responded to the RHG's paper with a letter sending out a message to charging authorities that they should differentiate between retirement housing and new homes in general. This letter has yet to be made publically available, but the contents have been widely reported within planning industry publications.

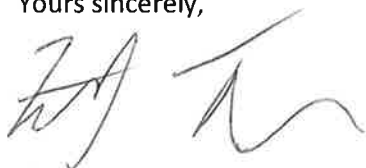
It is therefore clear that there is an increasing consensus that specialist accommodation for the elderly should not be viewed as an oversight or 'casualty' of the CIL regime. There is now a considerable amount of guidance available for charging authorities and viability practitioners to address this issue competently and quickly.

In light of the considerable amount of information submitted in our previous representations, and available in the public domain, it is extremely disappointing that West Dorset Council's response has been to seemingly dismiss this issue with the bare minimum of consideration.

**On this basis we can only conclude that there is no reasonable justification for a CIL charge on sheltered housing at the same level as general needs housing.**

In summary, both McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd wholly reject the Council's stance on the viability of specialist accommodation for the elderly, which we consider to be both an unreasoned and unjustified. **On this basis we feel it is necessary to present this issue at Examination.**

Yours sincerely,



Ziyad Thomas  
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The Planning Bureau Ltd.