



Legal & General's later living business, Inspired Villages, achieves 4th major planning win since lockdown, as it gets green light for £100m Tunbridge Wells Scheme

Inspired Villages has achieved outline planning permission to deliver a £100 million retirement community on the edge of Tunbridge Wells. Creating 146 new homes, this planning approval is the fourth achieved by Inspired Villages since lockdown began bringing the total number of consented new homes secured this year to 788.

The approval is an important step forward in addressing the severe shortage of age-appropriate housing in the UK, as highlighted in a recent joint report from The Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation and ARCO¹. Currently there are more than 12m over 65s in the UK and this figure is expected to increase by 41% to nearly 18m by 2040². However, only 7,000 units are being delivered to market each year, so the disparity between supply and demand is vast due to complications in the planning stages.

A radical change in housing provision to meet our rapidly ageing population is not only crucial for wellbeing, but also for helping our overburdened NHS and social care services. This was starkly evidenced in the recent Home Builders Federation report, *Healthier and Happier*³, which calculated that building an extra 30,000 retirement living homes would create a fiscal saving of £2.1 billion annually.

With the support of partner Legal & General, Inspired Villages is set to develop a scheme with 146 age-appropriate homes for over 65s, as well as state-of-the-art communal facilities open to residents and the local community. Due to create 88 jobs per year during construction and up to 65 operational jobs once complete, the Tunbridge Wells scheme will bring significant economic benefits to the local area. Inspired Villages research has shown that the majority of people who live in an Inspired Village move from within a 10-mile radius of the village they choose. This means the scheme will have significant benefits for the local area's health and social care system, while also freeing up the housing market for young families.

Located in the Wealden District in East Sussex, the 9.5-acre site benefits from a beautiful landscaped setting with mature trees and a lake, and is only two miles from the centre of Tunbridge Wells. Facilities will include a restaurant, café, library, wellness centre (comprising a fitness studio, gym and swimming pool) and cinema room. Inspired will now progress a reserved matters application later this year with works expected to commence on site mid-2021.

Currently Inspired Villages is on track to deliver 2,500 homes for over 65s over the next six years. This ambitious pipeline has been cemented with the following deals achieved by Inspired Villages during lockdown:

- Planning permission for a 270-home, £215m scheme in Kingswood, Surrey, which will be one of the biggest retirement villages in the UK once complete
- Planning permission for a 130-home, £60m scheme in Turvey, Bedfordshire
- A site acquired with outline planning permission for a 200-home, £120m retirement village in Caddington, Bedfordshire

¹ The membership body representing retirement communities

² [*Too Little, Too Late? Housing for an Ageing Population by Professor Les Mayhew, ARCO and CSFI*](#)

³ <https://www.hbf.co.uk/news/homes-later-living-healthier-and-happier-report/>

- Planning permission for phase 2 of development at Inspired Villages' 7-acre Ledian Gardens scheme in Kent, which adds an additional 50 apartments to the existing works.

These schemes will create up to 500 jobs per annum while being constructed and once complete will create in excess of 250 operational jobs in total, giving a welcome boost to the local economies at a time of heightened need.

Neal Dale, Development Director at Inspired Villages, said:

“This site in Tunbridge Wells is an important addition to our portfolio due to the significantly growing demand for age appropriate housing in the local area. To win another approval is such quick succession during these unprecedented times is a testament to the outstanding need in our society for more retirement communities that support the physical and mental wellbeing of older people. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this process and supported us.”

Phil Bayliss, CEO of Later Living at Legal & General and Chairman of Inspired Villages, commented:

“Prior to the pandemic, loneliness and isolation was a debilitating and unexpected reality affecting around 1.4m older people in the UK⁴. As the UK marks Loneliness Awareness Week and comes to the end of the third month since lockdown began, never has independent community living focused on extending health span and leading to less reliance on the national healthcare system had a greater role to play in our society. This latest planning permission and those achieved throughout lockdown are a pivotal step forward in our ability to accelerate the growth of a new generation of purpose built stock, bringing them to communities across the UK.”

Ends

Notes to editors

About Legal & General

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Inspired Villages

Established in 2017 by long-term partner Legal & General, Inspired Villages operates and develops later living communities in suburban and rural locations across the UK.

Each village offers beautiful, age-appropriate homes with vibrant communities at their heart that enrich the lives of both residents and locals thanks to the numerous wellbeing facilities and activities on offer. Along with the added benefit of flexible, on-site care, Inspired Villages provides an outstanding lifestyle choice that promotes independent living for longer.

As a best-in-class operator, Inspired Villages was named 'Retirement Living Operator of the Year' at the Resi Awards 2019, and 'Property Investor of the Year' at the HealthInvestor Awards 2019.

www.inspiredvillages.co.uk

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⁴ https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/loneliness-research-and-resources/?_sm_byp=iVVP8bqH77P7Jk8H