

**Minutes of a meeting of District Planning Committee  
held on Thursday, 22nd June, 2023  
from 2.00 pm**

**Present:** C Phillips (Chairman)  
D Sweatman (Vice-Chair)

R Bates	M Kennedy	R Whittaker
K Berggreen	A Peacock	C Wood
R Jackson	E Prescott	

**Absent:** Councillors M Avery and A Eves

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Eves and Avery.

**2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.**

No declarations were received.

**3. TO BE AGREED BY GENERAL AFFIRMATION THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY AND 1 JUNE 2023.**

The minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 24 May and 1 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.**

The Chairman confirmed he had no urgent business.

**5. DM/23/0007 - HIGHFIELDS, WEST HILL, EAST GRINSTEAD, WEST SUSSEX, RH19 4DL.**

Joanne Fisher, Senior Planning Officer set out the outline application for the redevelopment of an existing single dwelling house and erection of a Care Home for up to 85 Bedrooms, with all matters reserved except for access. She highlighted that the location is within the built-up area as defined in the District Plan and East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan. The Care Home would provide specialist accommodation for the elderly and is a recognised need. The PPG states it is now critical to provide such accommodation; SA39 of the Site Allocations DPD supports the development so the principle is considered acceptable. The existing vehicular access which supports neighbouring properties would only be used for pedestrians to access the Care Home and those existing dwellings. The proposed vehicular access and visibility displays were outlined, and that the Highway Authority had no objections. A tree planting plan will mitigate the loss of trees on a one-to-one basis and the Council's Tree Officer raises no objection to the removal of existing trees and

their replacement. She drew the Member's attention to the agenda update sheet noting the amended conditions, 22 and 25, and the proposed Section 106 agreement.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee were only considering the principle of the development of the care home and vehicular access as the application was for outline planning permission only.

Graham Bostock, spoke in objection to the application.

Brian Gains, spoke in objection to the application.

The Chairman highlighted that Highways had not made any objections to the application.

Cllr Whittaker, East Grinstead Ward Member for Imberhorne noted the comments of East Grinstead Town Council, normally more cars would park on the road, and asked for confirmation that highway safety concerns had been addressed.

Cllr Sweatman, East Grinstead Ward Member for Herontye expressed concern over the removal of trees and the resulting impact on the street scene. He noted the proposed signage for the existing access to prevent Care Home visitors using that access, confirmed other statutory consultees had no objections, and advised the application should be approved.

The Chairman advised the Committee were only considering the principle of development and the access.

Members discussed the parking on the highway, expressed concerns over the safety of the proposed access and speeding traffic.

In response to Members' questions the Senior Planning Officer confirmed the access to West Lane was not at 90 degrees like the proposed access to the Care Home. She noted the Member's concerns regarding the road safety audit; the Highways Authority had signed off the road safety audit and this audit included their comments on the relationship of the new access and the existing parking bays on West Hill. The Highways Authority raised no concerns on the turning movements, the location of the parking bays or the visibility splays, which were acceptable. Signage for the existing access are set out in condition 22. The Tree Officer supported the removal of the trees which were of poor quality and the replacements would be in a better condition. She concluded that the Highway Authority supported the application and there was no technical reason to refuse the application.

Nick Rogers, Head of Development Management advised the Committee that they should consider the Development Plan and the Council's policy SA 39 had identified the need for specialist accommodation for elderly people. The Council will support applications where the site is within the builtup area and is accessible by public transport. SA 39 was thus met. National guidance and LURB has also identified the critical need to provide specialist accommodation for elderly people. The application thus met national policy in this respect. He reminded the committee that all planning decisions must be based on evidence, not supposition. West Sussex Highways are the experts, they have considered the road safety audit and there was no evidence before committee to warrant a refusal on technical highways grounds.

The Chairman advised any matters concerning speeding should be referred to Highways.

Members also expressed concern over potential issues with parking during the construction phase and the road safety audit.

The Head of Development Management confirmed condition 4 required a construction environmental management plan to be agreed before construction commenced.

The Vice-Chairman noted the concerns of the Committee, but advised they were not planning reasons to refuse the application and reiterated that the statutory consultees had no objections.

The Senior Planning Officer advised the agenda update sheet included comments made earlier by Highways, and the most recent comments were included in Appendix B. She confirmed the road safety audit had been updated, signed off and agreed. No details had been provided for the pedestrian access, which would be via the existing access and signs will be provided. Highways were content that the signage would mitigate pedestrians using the new access.

The Chairman noted that no further Members wished to speak so moved to the recommendations to approve the application, Councillor Sweatman proposed the recommendations, and it was seconded by Councillor Prescott. The application was approved with 7 votes for and with 3 abstentions.

## **RESOLVED**

### Recommendation A

It is recommended that planning permission is approved subject to the conditions listed in Appendix A and the completion of a section 106 legal agreement to secure the required infrastructure contributions.

### Recommendation B

If a satisfactory planning obligation has not been completed by 22nd September 2023 it is recommended that the application be refused at the discretion of the Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainable Economy for the following reasons:

The proposal fails to provide the required infrastructure contributions to serve the development. The application therefore conflicts with policy DP20 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031.

## **6. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.**

The Chairman confirmed that no questions were received.

The meeting finished at 2.48 pm

Chairman