

SALE OF LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT BLACKWELL FARM ROAD, EAST GRINSTEAD

REPORT OF: Head of Corporate Resources
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Wards Affected: East Grinstead – Ashplats
Key Decision: No
Report to: Cabinet
16th September 2019

Purpose of Report

1. To seek the approval of the Cabinet to approve the sale of the plot of land on the corner of Blackwell Farm Road & Holtye Road, East Grinstead to The Guinness Partnership to provide 10 houses for social housing needs. This report summarises the background to the transaction and the proposed recommendations.

Summary

2. The land comprises an area of approximately 0.5 acres and is currently open space. It has been subject to a number of development schemes in recent years but has always been designated as suitable for a social housing project. Planning consent was granted in 2016 but this recently lapsed. Terms have been agreed to sell the land to The Guinness Partnership for the sum of £400,000 subject to the grant of suitable planning permission. A copy of the Heads of Terms are attached as Appendix I and a plan of the area as Appendix ii

Recommendations

3. **Cabinet are recommended to:-**
 - i) **It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the sale of land at Blackwell Farm Road / Holtye Road, East Grinstead to The Guinness Partnership for the sum £400,000 to provide 10 affordable homes.**
 - ii) **It is further recommended that the Council solicitor is instructed to agree the contract for sale on behalf of the Council in a timely manner and on such terms that are favourable to the Council**

Background

4. On 19th May 1947, the Council's predecessor in title, Urban District Council for the Urban District of East Grinstead, purchased the Property, together with other land for housing purposes pursuant to an authority from the Minister of Housing. Between 1947 and 1974 the land acquired in 1947 was developed by the Council for council housing within the meaning of the Housing Acts. The Property was left undeveloped and has been available for informal use as open space for at least that last 40 years
5. On 18 June 2015 Planning Committee granted, subject to the completion of a section 106 agreement, planning permission for a ten unit 100% affordable housing scheme at Blackwell Farm Road to establish the principle of housing on this site. The Council agreed to sell the site to a Registered Provider to deliver the homes

6. Officers invited offers for the land to ensure that we are achieving best value, at the same time as achieving a good quality scheme. Consequently, those Registered Providers who are active in the District in developing affordable housing were invited to submit their offers and proposals. Three chose to do so.
7. In March 2016 Terms were agreed to sell the land to Affinity Sutton Homes for £620,000, this was subsequently reduced to £500,000 in July 2016. This sale fell through owing to the problems with the services running through the site but The Guinness Partnership subsequently agreed to purchase the site in March 2018 at that figure
8. Subsequent surveys carried out by the purchaser detected additional services crossing the site, resolving these issues added substantial extra costs which would make development unviable
9. It has been subsequently agreed to sell the site for £400,000 but for the purchaser to receive a commensurate figure from commuted sums to enable the scheme to be delivered. Additionally, the purchaser will be applying for a HCA grant to bring the scheme forward.
10. At present the Property is informal open space yet housing need in East Grinstead is strong. Across the road from the land is the East Court estate where a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) has been developed following investment of SANG monies.
11. There are currently 291 people on the Common Housing Register with a local connection to East Grinstead and also 268 members who have expressed a first choice preference for East Grinstead.
12. Of the 268 members with East Grinstead as their first choice parish, 115 require a 1 bed, 119 require a 2 Bed, 29 require a 3 Bed and 5 require a 4 Bed property.
13. 33 properties were let in East Grinstead during the period 1st April 2018 - 31st March 2019 but no new properties were delivered there during this period. In fact, the last units delivered in East Grinstead were the 18 units at St Margaret's Convent completed between June 2016 and December 2016.
14. The only affordable units currently in the development pipeline in East Grinstead are the extra care units at Lingfield Lodge being developed by Eldon, which are not due to complete until October 2020.
15. It is therefore considered that the provision of new, much needed, affordable homes will help the Council to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.

Policy Context

16. A good affordable housing scheme on this site would contribute to the Council's aim to achieve opportunities and quality of life for all. Developing this site will contribute to new home building target set out in DP4 of the District Plan. Policy DP30 sets out the Housing Mix objectives in the plan and seeks to encourage "a mix of dwelling types (including affordable housing), reflecting current and future local needs". DP31 sets out the policy commitment for Affordable Housing. An entire scheme of social and affordable housing is an invaluable contribution to this target

Council's powers of disposal

17. The Council has a general power to dispose of land under Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act"), which provides that:

"Subject to the following provisions of this section, a principal council may dispose of land held by them in any manner they wish."

These powers are permissive and must be exercised strictly in accordance with the provisions of Section 123(2) and Section 123(2A) of the 1972 Act

Other Options Considered

18. The only option currently open to the Council would be to retain the land as open space but this would mean losing an opportunity to add to the affordable housing stock.

Financial Implications

19. A capital receipt of £400,000 will be generated for the Council but part of the commuted funds pot will be used to enable the development. The sale been handled in-house to date and the conveyancing will be handled by the Council's solicitor so there are no external consultant fees to pay.

Risk Management Implications

20. The planning permission granted in March 2016 has recently expired and a new application for full consent has recently been made by the prospective purchaser. The sale is conditional upon that consent being granted
21. A local Councillor has advised that the local school has reached capacity and raised concerns as to where any new children will be educated. This assumes that the occupants of the homes will be newcomers. It is entirely possible that they will be existing local families being provided with more suitable accommodation.

Section 123 Advertisements and Objections

22. As the Property has remained open to informal public use the Property is "de facto open space" and the Council has caused notice of its intention to dispose of the Property to be advertised in two consecutive weeks in the Mid Sussex Times, being a newspaper circulating in the area in which the Property is situated namely, on 24th and 31st May 2019 inviting members of the public who may object to the disposal of the Property to make their objections known to the Council by 21st June 2019.
23. The Council has received representations from 60 objectors in response to the statutory advertisements published on 24th and 31st May 2019.

24. While there is undoubtedly a link between planning applications considered by the Council's District Planning Committee and the need for this disposal report, it is important to remember that they are completely independent processes that must be followed by the Council and that, as a matter of public policy and law, we must not conflate planning issues with property issues and vice versa. The consideration of planning applications is not an executive function of the Council and they must be determined by the Local Planning Authority through the planning committees in accordance with planning policy and law; decisions concerning the acquisition, use, management and disposal of Council land is an executive function of the Council and must be determined by the Council's Cabinet in accordance with the Council's corporate policies and procedures and local government law.
25. A significant numbers of issues raised by the objectors relate to planning issues, such as traffic congestion, road safety, shortages of parking etc., policy and procedure, and fail to address the central issue of whether the Property should be retained for its present purpose as corporate land used as informal open space. In particular a letter from East Grinstead Town Council states that: "*The Council do not object to the sale of the land, but do object to the sale of the land to a developer. As you know this Council would be interested in purchasing the land and we remain interested in this position to increase the land at the Cemetery.*" While cemetery use of the land would to some extent preserve some of the present amenity of the land, it would no longer be accessible open space to the same extent as it is now.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

26. The recommendations contained within this report do not have an adverse or negative impact on Equality and Customer Service. Developing an affordable housing scheme on this site would help meet local housing needs at a time when affordable rented housing is increasingly difficult to deliver.

Other Material Implications - Local Housing Need

None.

Background Papers

None.

Heads of Terms**Appendix i****Heads of Terms – Conditional Contract – Offer to Sell Land****SUBJECT TO CONTRACT**

1.	Property Address:	Land edged red on the attached plan, registered at HM Registry under Title No. WSX287693, known as land at the corner of Holtve Road and Blackwell Farm Road, East Grinstead Please see attached Plan
2.	Seller:	Mid Sussex District Council
	Correspondence Address	Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS
	Contact Name	Peter Benfield
	Email	Peter.Benfield@midsussex.gov.uk
	Telephone	01444 477490
	Mobile	0786 468 9335
3.	Seller's Solicitor:	Christopher Coppens Property Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer Legal Services Mid Sussex District Council, Oaklands Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1SS Email: christopher.coppens@midsussex.gov.uk Telephone: 01444 477 213
4.	Purchaser:	The Guinness Partnership 31693R (and/or any other group company)
	Registered no.	Charitable Registered Society No.30337R, Homes & Communities Agency No. L4497
	Registered Office Correspondence Address	30 Brock Street, Regents Place, London NW1 3FG TBC
	Contact Name	Michael Gray
	Email	Business Development Manager Michael.gray@guinness.org.uk
	Telephone	07973 225625
5.	Purchaser's Solicitor:	TBC

6.	Purchase Price:	£400,000 (exclusive of VAT, legal and surveyor's fees and costs), <i>The Council has not opted to Tax the site, therefore no VAT will be payable on the purchase price.</i>
7.	Type of Sale:	Conditional contract for the sale of freehold interest, subject to the purchaser obtaining full planning permission for 10 residential units for Affordable Housing. Conditions Precedent for the Purchaser <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A satisfactory implementable planning permission free from challenge • The allocation of HCA Grant & up to £400,000 grant subsidy from MSDC
8.	Timing and other matters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The target date for the exchange of the conditional contracts between solicitors is 1st December 2019 - The target date for the purchasers to submit a full planning application, carry out all necessary legal and technical due diligence and site investigations, is 1st November 2019 - The target date for completion of the sale and date of entry will be 2 weeks after the grant of planning permission. <p>The Purchaser will use best endeavours to take forward the process of securing full planning permission, and advise the Seller's agent of any anticipated delays.</p> <p>The target dates may be varied by agreement between the parties in the event that the planning application is the subject of an appeal hearing or legal challenge.</p>
9.	Payment Terms:	Payment dates: Payable upon the grant of full planning permission. A non-refundable deposit of £10,000 is due on the date of exchange.
10.	Permitted Development:	The permitted scheme will be for the provision of affordable housing under varying tenure (75% rented and 25% shared ownership). 4 of the dwellings should be 2 bedroom houses and 6 3 bedroom.
11.	Planning Permission:	To secure full planning permission for 10 affordable units.
12.	Termination Rights:	Both parties have the right to terminate this conditional contract in the event that the Purchaser fails to secure full planning permission by 1 st June 2020 The Seller reserves the sole right to vary the timing, and to grant an extension of time in the event of unforeseen delays.
13.	Site Investigations:	The Purchaser agrees to undertake any further necessary desk and intrusive site investigations within 3 months of completion of the

		<p>contract. These reports shall contain all the data necessary to satisfy ground-related planning conditions, NHBC, Building Control, the Coal Authority and other statutory authorities.</p> <p>The Purchaser procures that all reports and surveys can be made available for the Council for their use and retention should the purchase not be concluded, for a reasonable agreed cost.</p>
14.	Assignment:	Is not permitted.
15.	Nomination Rights:	The land will be sold subject to the Council enjoying nomination rights to a minimum of 100% of first and subsequent lettings. This is in line with the usual arrangement with Guinness Partnership.
16.	Tenure Mix:	<p>The Purchaser will provide 100% affordable housing on the site, with 75% of this being for affordable rent and the rest for shared ownership.</p> <p>The allocation of properties between tenures will be agreed with the Council when the planning application is submitted.</p>
17.	Fees and costs:	<p>The Purchasers will be responsible for the Council's reasonable legal and Surveyor's (£750) fees and costs.</p> <p>The Purchasers will also be responsible for all fees arising from the transaction including Registration and any stamp duty land tax due.</p>

Appendix ii

Land at Holtye Road & Blackwell Farm Road



Appendix iii

Responses to advertisements pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 placed in the Kent and Sussex Courier on 24th and 31st May 2019 reference TC/EG/BFR/2019.

Email from East Grinstead resident of 19th June 2019 at 11:05

"The sale of land at the junction of Blackwell Farm Road and the A264 should not go ahead. When Mid Sussex granted themselves planning permission back in 2015 (which has now lapsed) there were over 150 objections from local residents. The first planning meeting that residents attended In Haywards Heath was cancelled at the last minute, without prior notification, a wasted journey for us all. The planning application was heard a few weeks later, with a different ref .number and we were informed that all previous objections would be discounted because of the change in the planning reference. The objections related only to the original plans, we were told, not to the plan as it stood now, even though the plans were unchanged. Why have you not canvassed local opinion about this sale.? Many people no longer take the local paper, and very few are aware of the plans to sell. The notice in the paper was very indistinct and the wording incorrect! It is Holtye Road ,the A264 ,not Holtye Avenue. Not properly informing local residents, whose lives may be affected on the outcome is unacceptable and undemocratic.

The traffic survey, in 2015, was not fit for purpose, it being done in the early hours of the morning during school holidays in January! A new, properly conducted, survey should take place before any decisions are made re planning permission. The road is extremely difficult to negotiate for much of the day as it is, with school parking, Hospital parking and residents parking. Cars have to park on the pavements to allow road access for the School and residents, and have been prosecuted for this! This road is an enormous cul de sac. At peak times it may be impossible for emergency vehicles to access the school or the houses at the end of the road.

It would be very wrong to sell off our green space for yet more housing, our town has no school places and no Doctor's surgeries are accepting new patients. This area is the wrong place for houses. it is a dangerous junction with the very busy A264. Hundreds of children need to get to the school every day, and the access roads to the proposed houses would make their journey more hazardous than it is at the moment. The road is already saturated with parking for the School and the Hospital,

We object most strongly to the proposed sale, Please take into account the previous 150 plus objections already made to the council

when considering your decision, and notify all the residents involved before such a decision is made, so they may be given a suitable space of time for their opinions to be heard."

Email from East Grinstead resident of 19th June 2019 at 12:11

"Dear Mr Clark

When the local elections were about to be held there were various references to keeping the integrity of East Grinstead. It appears to be the aim of planners to build on every space available. Eventually we become a gigantic block of housing. Lots of chat about the environment, plant trees etc. Instead it's build, build, build. I strongly object to any further development on any green site/area."

Email from East Grinstead resident of 19th June 2019 at 15:10

"I am writing to object to the proposal to build on the green space at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road. While I support the need for more affordable housing in the town I do not feel that this is the right place for the following reasons:

Traffic - this is the biggest issue. We already have huge issues with traffic blockages up and down Blackwell Road (not Blackwell Farm Road- I cannot comment on that). This makes it very difficult to get in and out of the drive. Blackwell Road is also now on a bus route which further causes problems when the buses have to negotiate park vehicles.

Emergency Services often have problems negotiating the traffic on the road.

Parking- parking on Blackwell Road is an absolute nightmare at the moment. Cars have been damaged by passing vehicles. If some one parks on my side of the road and the opposite side (left side as you go down to the roundabout) then it turns into a dangerous chicane. Remember this is the A264.

The land is often very boggy and waterlogged -it will need draining.

I know my point above probably negates this but I understand that the Mount Noddy Cemetery needs to expand. Surely if it could be drained or planned around the boggy bits this would be a better use of the space?

We like the green space (but I know this will probably not wash for planning purposes.)"

Email from East Grinstead resident of 19th June 2019 at 15:50

"I am writing to you as a local resident (I live on Holtye Road) and a parent of children who attend Blackwell Primary School to express my objection to the proposed development at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road.

We cannot cope with the volume of traffic and parking along Blackwell Farm Road as it stands due to residential, hospital and school parking but to then add further disruption and congestion just seems pointless. The plot of land will not give you enough housing to warrant the knock on affect this will have on the local area. I assume public services will not be taken into account and necessary improvements made to support the current and potential new residents; who will require schools, dentists, doctors not forgetting the road layout which is currently managed by 2 mini roundabouts, which when roadwork's are in play causes substantial congestion which can stretch the length of Holtye Road and along Blackwell Road into Cranston Road.

I look forward to hearing back form you in due course."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 13:22

"I would like to object to sale of land at the bottom of Blackwell Farm road for housing. The fact that planning has lapsed for the council to build is one issue – why have they not built the planned houses. Did they not have the money or is, as I suspect, the site is unsuitable and would cost too much to build.

1. There is too much traffic already in this area.
2. Anyone wanting to buy this would have to go through planning again and would always want more housing.
3. This area should remain a green space.

I am very interested to know why the council have allowed the planning to lapse.

Thank you"

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 12:44

"I just wanted to get in touch to put in writing my objections to the proposed development at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road, East Grinstead (No TC/EG/BFR/2019).

As I'm sure you already know, Blackwell Farm Road is already saturated with a ridiculous amount of traffic due to the School, Hospital Parking and Residents and it, therefore, makes no sense at all to extend an already crowded area. At times, it takes more than 20 minutes to get from one end of the road to the other due to the number of cars and the way in which they are parked. On a daily basis, cars park on both sides of the road, making it difficult to drive down the road and it also causes a danger to pedestrians and cyclists as there is nowhere for them to cross the road/cycle without endangering their lives with the traffic.

Alongside this, the number of new homes and flats being built across East Grinstead is increasing at a rapid rate. This has always been a small town and now, for some reason the council are allowing people to build on all of the available green space. Not only does this damage the aesthetics of the town but its also somewhat shocking that these plans are being approved without any additional local facilities being provided. The number of Nurseries, Schools, Activity Centres, Shopping facilities etc are not increasing (in fact most are decreasing), yet the council still believe granting new planning applications is a good idea?

Instead of focussing on where you can add more housing, it would be great if the council could focus on improving the current residential areas and making them safer for residents?

If you could make sure that this objection is noted alongside the planning application, it would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks"

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 14:08

"Please treat this email as an objection to the sale of the land at the entrance to Blackwell Farm Road. Blackwell Farm Road is already vastly unsuitable for the amount of traffic and parked vehicles it already has, without adding additional houses (this is obviously what will happen if it is sold to developers.)

I am a parent of children at Blackwell Primary School and a previous resident of Blackwell Farm Road. The area would not be able to cope with increased traffic, initially from building works, and then from even more residents. The left hand side of the road consists of flats and houses, the majority of which do not have allocated parking. This means over time the road has become single lane with very few passing places between parked cars.

The impact of works would be significantly disruptive to both residents and parents of the 300+ children which attend the primary school. I cannot walk my children to school as there is not enough time between the start of their school day and the start of my working day to walk to the other side of town. Any further delays would be detrimental to my job in another school. Recent roadworks that happened simultaneously on Blackwell Road and at the top of Blackwell Hollow proved just how disruptive delays in the area can be, some days taking over half an hour for what is usually a 5 minute drive.

I also believe this piece of land helps to form a wildlife corridor between Mount Noddy and East Court. In a time when leaders around the world are urged to take wildlife and our climate seriously I think removing yet another area of green space for profit is irresponsible. The building of houses would mean removing the trees and wildlife that have existed there for many years.

I urge the council to reconsider, and leave this little piece of green in a town which is becoming more and more built up each year."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 15:07

"The proposal to build more housing on the already congested A264 is absurd. Westbound traffic can already tail back as far as the pedestrian crossing at Moat Pond.

Please investigate this thoroughly before any plans are made.

Access and egress to/from Blackwell School, East Court Council Offices and ambulance depot, King Georges Field and Moatfield Surgery will all be negatively affected."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 15:06

"the sale and development of the above land, I must object on the basis of the difficulties of getting along Blackwell Farm Road. That green space permits very good sight lines across the corner of the junction of Blackwell Farm Road with traffic coming off the roundabout at the bottom of Cranston Road and into Holtye Road. This is a dangerous junction especially at busy times e.g. school starting and ending times and rush hours.

If more houses are built there will be even more cars using the southern end of Blackwell Farm Road. Presumably there would also need to be an access road for the new houses which would cause even more problems around the junction of Elizabeth Crescent with Blackwell Farm Road. At the very least, it is imperative that the road is made wider around that area to allow safe access and egress. If houses are going to be put on the green, they certainly need to be set well back from the current road borders.

Parking at school times is very problematic. There is no available parking within the school grounds for parents and therefore there is a great deal of parking along Blackwell Farm Road at school start and end times and as far away as Hackenden Close which is often full of cars right down to the long section. This makes driving along the road almost impossible at times especially where vans and lorries come into the equation. More houses and inevitably cars can only worsen the situation. It would be really helpful if some parking could be provided on the green which would also help when the public attend the many town events in that area. People approaching from the east would be able to park and walk from there e.g. for the East Court Live events and the May Fayre when the town is closed to traffic.

I would urge you to look most carefully at this matter. A green space near to the town can never be regained once it has been built on and this particular one certainly gives a feeling of space as you approach the town from the east. It is much to be prized and I would hope that at least some of it can be retained near the current roads."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 13:34

"I object to this proposal for sale / development of this public green space.

This is already an incredibly busy traffic spot with severe parking issues, especially at peak times with nearby primary school and hospital. "

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 13:28

"I object to the sale of the land for proposed [housing.at](#) the junction of Blackwell Farm Road and Hotye Road on a number of reasons.

1. *Traffic - I was previously a governor at Blackwell Primary School and I know the problems currently experienced by traffic and parking and the risk to children by said traffic. Adding to this both in development and once completed will further endanger the children of Blackwell Primary and Sackville Secondary. Please do a traffic monitor*

on any morning and see how long children have to wait for cars to let them cross the road at the pedestrian island next to the roundabout.

2. *Parking - people from the hospital are parking further and further to avoid the charges. This added with extra houses with multiple cars and the primary school parkers rushing around trying to find spaces is again a risk to the children.*
3. *Green space - This provides a beautiful green entranceway to East Grinstead and helps give the appearance of the rural setting within the town. Building modern houses on it will make a drastic aesthetic change to this entrance to the town.*
4. *This space will be massively objected to and will cost the council in people feeling they don't listen to residents as well as financially in man-hours dealing with the objections. Its already becoming a big focus on social media."*

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 17:10

"This piece of land has been an important open parcel of land approaching the Mount Noddy Cemetery and the entrance to the town for many years.

Any development on this site will exacerbate the already highly congested use of Blackwall Farm Road where vehicular access and lack of parking space is already a major issue. Especially so at School arrival and departure times for both those children attending Blackwall Primary and Sackville Comprehensive schools. The existing good sight lines to the east and west at the junction to the A264 Holtye Road afford a level of safety which would be lost if houses were built within the vicinity of the junction with its mini roundabout where a continuous flow of children cross the road at this point.

If no option is available other than to build homes on this site, good parking, limited numbers away from the junction and proper consultation must be provided for those residents currently living along Blackwall Farm Road."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 17:19

"I am emailing to object against the proposed sale of the land at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road, East Grinstead.

This piece of land is a lovely green space in a town which is fast loosing its open spaces and is becoming over crowded with housing. It's also at the entrance to a housing estate which has a school and it's a no through road. The road is already at breaking point at school drop off and pick up and can not cope with anymore housing and cars. Leave this small piece of land alone!"

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 17:43

"I am writing to express my objection to the planning application of TC/EG/BFR/2019.

I have seen the recent planning application again for Blackwell farm road. This road is already busy/dangerous enough with the volume of traffic/parking/roundabouts (which people do not give way)! I'm surprised there hasn't been more accidents on the round abouts than there has! Building more houses here is adding to the problem as more traffic, access roads is adding danger to school children who are travelling too and from schools and pedestrians. Try accessing Blackwell farm road when it is school time, cars aim at each other with people parking wherever they feel already without another 10 plus cars adding to the problem! Also this is a flood plan from a former pond, countryside and wildlife is being ruined without taking any consideration to those who have to live and fight/deal with the traffic problems on a daily basis!"

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 18:26

"I would like to register my objection to developing the land in question.

This little green space is invaluable to break the continuous development and affords the local community some breathing space. It defines the area and any plans to build on this site should be thrown out without hesitation.

If this site is developed it would only illustrate the councils disregard for the local community and the aesthetic of the area.

No! No! No!"

Email from East Grinstead Resident 19th June 2019 19:53

"I have become aware of the above plan and as a resident of Hackenden Lane I would like to register my strong objection to the above plan.

We already have the planned building of housing in the current hospital grounds with the only exit rd through Oakfield Rd and Blackwell farm rd.

Blackwell Farm rd is the only exit/entrance to all us residents in this area and there is a school right in the middle.

If the council would like to consider making more residential space available they might consider demolishing the existing maisonettes on the road and making much better use of the space this would create.

Can you let me know when this is due to come up for council discussion again as I and many other residents would like to attend."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 20:04

"As a long time resident of East Grinstead I object to the disposal of the land for development purposes."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 21:00

"I would like to voice my opinions on the sale of the piece of land in question. There is amazing wildlife making its home there, to destroy this for money when you could sell plots of land that have already been built on previously like abandoned buildings is horrible. Please survey the area and make sure no rare species reside there. It appears stag horn beetle which is becoming increasingly hard to sight.

Just please be a more responsible human before allowing things like this just for money."

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 21:00

"I am contacting you regarding the above reference number.

I am writing to object to the proposed sale of the land at the end of Blackwell Farm Rd. I am a resident of the Blackwell estate living on Greenstede Ave and a parent of children attending Blackwell Primary School and Sackville School.

Blackwell Farm Rd is already saturated with traffic from the school, residence of the area and employees/patients of the Queen Victoria Hospital.

There is a huge parking issue in the Blackwell area which causes a lot of problems for us as residence. We are having to drive to and from our homes in single lane traffic due to cars being parked everywhere and dangerously.

As a parent this is a huge concern for the safety of my children en route to and from school. My eldest child is walking to Sackville independently and I worry for her safety crossing Elizabeth Crescent/Blackwell Farm Rd more than crossing the main road as it is easier to be seen by the traffic on the main road.

Adding additional housing will increase the risk of a serious accident and add to the already overcrowded parking situation.

This is a strong objection to the sale of the land.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 21:07

“I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to the building of homes on the land at the junction of Blackwell Farm Road/Holtie Road.

Having spent the last six years negotiating the road in a combination of pedestrian and vehicular access / exit and as an East Grinstead resident I know the absolute gridlock that occurs along Blackwell Farm Road due to saturation of vehicles. It is not safe for children age 4-11 at present and will be less so if you give permission for this.

The family and Childrens centre has been added onto the school site. The QVH hospital staff park along Blackwell Farm Road at the exact place that building is proposed.

It is not acceptable to say that residential properties are needed when the local GP surgery has again closed its list to new patients including university graduates returning home to their parents.

I cannot begin to imagine the disruption that would occur if building is allowed there, since this is always done during school terms.

I do not choose to live this distance from my son’s primary school. His year was full at our nearest school when we moved here in 2013. Like it or not, in a socially mobile town, people move across town and with two parents in a family working, car travel for school run are very often unavoidable. The result of saturating a cul de sac with traffic and vehicles creates hazards and stress which is unnecessary. Every incident or accident that occurs should this work be allowed will be recorded, publicised and sent back to MSDC as a challenge to an irresponsible decision.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 21:00

“I object to the selling and development of this site, because the roads around, Blackwell Road, Blackwell Farm Road, Blackwell Hollow and Holtie Road are extremely busy already and more houses will just create more traffic, my parents live on Blackwell Road and sometimes during the day I cannot even pull up outside their house to visit, let alone back in the driveway, due to workers parking there all day.

Blackwell Farm Road is already busy as a lot of the houses there have no driveways, so residents have to park on the road, so blocking the flow of traffic to and from the large school and for residents.

Next to the school there is also a family centre for young families to visit Health Visitors, there is not always enough parking there and so visitors have to spill out on Blackwell Farm Road.

Please encourage a change of heart.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 21:39

“I would like to register my objection to the land at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road being sold.

If you need any further information on why I object please contact me.

I would be grateful if you would keep me up to date with any information on this.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 21:48

“I would like to register my objection to the land at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road being sold. It’s totally senseless! Look what used to be there, if its built on it there will only be problems with flooding!

If you need any further information on why I object please contact me.

I would be grateful if you would keep me up to date with any information on this.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 19th June 2019 at 22:16

“I am emailing in respect of the proposed sale of land at the end of Blackwell Farm Road and wish to register my objection of the sale.

I would be grateful if I could be kept up to date with how this proposal is progressing.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 00:18

“I would like to let you know about my objections to the planned building on the green on the corner of Blackwell Farm Road. I live at 10 Blackwell Farm Road and have done so for 27 years. My children have played on the green and we love looking out across it. It is so nice to have a green space where children can play and great to have a wander on there with the dog every day.

My objection is mainly down to the amount of traffic that will be generated. There is already far too much traffic on that road, especially at school times. People park on both sides of the road now and visibility is poor. Cars often have their wing mirrors broken off and their cars damaged by people scraping them when passing. I often have to wait several minutes to even get off my drive. At school times the queue to get out the end of Blackwell Farm Road is often backed right up to near the school. It is impossible to leave the house around 3.10-3.30pm.

I am worried if houses are built on the green on the corner of Blackwell Farm Road, we will get even more traffic which would be unbearable for residents. If you come and look at the traffic at the end of the school day you will see what I mean.

Another worry of mine is the loss of green space. And lastly there was a pond on the green in the past and this means it is always very wet and boggy. The bottom of the green floods with heavy rain.

I hope you consider my objections. We would prefer the green to be left as it is if at all possible.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 09:53

"I wish to object to the proposed land sale of the green space at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road for building purposes, due to the following

- *Highway Safety Issues*
- *Significantly increased noise and disturbance*
- *The effect on the appearance of the area*
- *Blackwell Farm School is already over subscribed and parking is difficult*

I am sure a discussion could take place and a more useful but still cost effective solution could be found. I understand the need for extra housing, you can see this taking place all over East Grinstead, but this little parcel of land is attractive and on show for our town. Everyone who passes it on their way to our world renowned Queen Victoria Hospital or driving down our beautiful Blackwell Hollow, sees this little oasis."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 07:36

"I would like to inform you that I strongly object to the proposed building on the land adjacent to Mount Noddy cemetery and Blackwell Farm Road on the above planning reference.

This green space is an important area for its residents and for the town.

More details could be supplied if requested as the suitability of developing on this site."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 10:24

"I wanted to drop you an email to express my strong concerns to the proposed development at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road. Although I do appreciate more housing is required across the UK and in areas of Sussex and in particular East Grinstead, what seems to be lacking is the infrastructure to cope with the continued building of new homes which I've listed below.

- **A22 traffic** - *Plans have still not progressed to handle the amount of traffic that travels through East Grinstead causing traffic jams along the A22 route, this is not a new issue and still fails to be resolved. Adding more housing only contributes to this.*
- **The roads around the proposed development:**
 - *Holtye Road - made up of two roundabouts at one end currently to try to help control the traffic and more importantly slow the speed of vehicles, this would need to be redeveloped to improve the flow and not hinder it. I would also look to address the speed people travel along this road after the roundabouts as there's nothing currently in place for this. The use of rumble strips and red coloured tarmac could help.*
 - *Blackwell Farm Road - Cars are constantly parked all the way along this road already, which causes issues every morning for the local school (Blackwell) drop off and pick ups.*
- **Hospital** - *A famous hospital renowned for it's work on burns patients, has had cuts of funding to a lot of the services it offered and for some time has not offered an A&E service or Maternity offering, something that should be contemplated as the town*

expands in population. I would also look at how Sussex as a whole increases, do we have enough hospital services to support? I'd also add to this other local services like the police and fire brigade are they recruiting to support the increase of people?

- **Schools** - Pressure on the local schools which are already at a high capacity and to accommodate more children needs to be addressed. Blackwell an under achieving school already had some development to increase the size of the school and even sold some of it's land for housing. We should be looking to reduce classroom number not increase them.
- **The site** - Now not my expertise but is this even suitable land for development, I believe this was once a small lake and is at risk of flooding due to the lay of the land, you only need to see how saturated the ground becomes after heavy rain - something that would need to be considered to ensure that the new housing is not flooded and that the water has somewhere to go.
- **Local parks** - A small but paramount part of our town is the parks in the area that bring children, friends and family together - at no cost. A lot of them could do with a revamp similar to the one done on Windmill Road or take a look at Reigate park in Surrey, I find it crazy that East Court doesn't have this kind of offering.

I would strongly urge you if you haven't already to come down and observe the area, look at the site, consider the traffic, visit the school and think about the points I'm raising."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 10:19

"So sad to hear that Mid Sussex Council are planning to sell the small green space at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road for development. I Myself live in Blackwell road and the parking is now at saturation point, not only on my road but Blackwell Farm Road as well.

To go ahead with this proposal would be a tragedy not only for the town but the residents within close proximity of any development. Having lived in East Grinstead for nearly fifty years I along with many others now feel the town is close to saturation point regarding development. I walk my Grandson to Blackwell Farm School and frequently take a shortcut across this small green space. To see it disappear would be so sad.

I therefore would like to raise an objection to this proposed sale."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 11:35

"I am writing to object to the building of houses on this open space.

Green spaces are becoming a rarity within the town and are so needed for wildlife and the beauty of the area itself.

The number of cars coming down Blackwell Farm Road are already very high and at rush hour and school end time, there is considerable congestion. We are encouraging children to walk to school and this raises the possibility of accidents along this road. My children uses to walk to Blackwell school, crossing the A264 with help from a crossing person. This wouldn't happen now, and with the pressure of parents to return to work, they cannot walk their children to school. Hence the volume of traffic.

I understand there is a proposed development behind the hospital and that access and egress will be down Blackwell Farm Road adding to congestion.

Volume of traffic along the A264 is already high, and this leads to long delays at the junction at the end of Moat Road with the A22. This is due in part to the number of cars coming from

all the houses further along the A264 that been built in recent years, especially Bluebell Gate.

We are getting to saturation point and our infrastructure is not expanding to cope with the increase in houses and population.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 12:09

“Iam writing to you to voice my objections on the sale and development of the green space on the above land.

As a resident of Hackenden Close I see on a daily basis the amount of traffic that goes up and down Blackwell Farm road and also along the bottom at Holtye Road. More development would cause even more traffic and parking wars that are already a problem especially for the school that has no parking and the parents of the children park on the road.

There are already two roundabouts in close proximity to one alone along the bottom of the road and I assume there will need to be a access road to the development which will cause even more problems.

Why does every bit of green space in this town need to be developed on? It’s actually a nice space to look at and enjoy, plus there are no school places/doctors/dentist for all these new people that are going to occupy all these constant town developments!

It’s already pretty impossible for any emergency services vehicle to get along Blackwell Farm road to the top if there was any emergency, what it going to be like with even more cars and traffic!.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 12:38

“With reference to the application Reference: TC/EG/BFR/2019 I would like to raise an objection.

The grounds for objection are that we would be losing valuable green space and also that there would be an increase in the traffic using an already crowded road, especially during school drop off and pick up. “

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 12:36

“I have been advised that it is yourself that I need to notify my objections to build new homes on the small plot of land on Blackwell farm road in East Grinstead.

I agree that we need more affordable home available but just don’t think this plot of land is a safe place to do this.

As a local resident to this area very close to the said plot I’m worried abour the extra increase of traffic on Blackwell farm road and the effects it will have trying to access Blackwell farm road from Holtye road so close to a mini roundabout and from exiting Elizabeth Crescent. It is already very congested without the extra traffic from the local school and hospital staff/visitors.

Surely the land would be more beneficial to the Mount Noddy cemetery.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 12:21

“I would like to raise my objection to the selling of green space at the bottom of Blackwell farm road for the purpose of building more housing. My objections are due to the following areas:

- *Blackwell farm road is already compromised with a large amount of on road parking, this becomes a health and safety issue for both access/exit of emergency vehicles and the safety of children walking to and from the local primary school.*
- *The local primary school is already at capacity, it is not fit for purpose to be expanded into a 3 form entry without a loss of outside play space for the children. With the road also being a no through road this also provides further issues at drop off and pick up time.”*

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 13:04

“I live on Blackwell Road in East Grinstead and whilst walking my son to school on Blackwell farm road noticed a minute sign stating that there are to be houses built on the small bit of green at the bottom of Blackwell farm road, please tell me this isn’t so?

Who on earth comes up with these ideas, the traffic going to the school is nothing short of dangerous and a nightmare, the traffic at the bottom of Blackwell hollow and Blackwell road a nightmare and this will cause further mayhem and accidents. Not to mention the loss of a lovely piece of green land and homes to various animals and birds and trees.

I strongly object and would be grateful if you could reply to this email.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 14:31

“You are supposed to be our representatives working to protect the people, tax payers and environment of East Grinstead, none of which are served by selling this block of land to which I Object.

- *Over development*
- *Over capacity parking an traffic on Blackwell Farm Road*
- *Loss of green space*
- *Loss of amenity space*
- *Inappropriate*

The district plan is not fit for purpose.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 13:04

“We are residents of Hackenden Close, East Grinstead and have recently heard that yet again there are proposals to build on the green area at the bottom of Blackwell Farm Road. This is not the first time that such a proposal had been forthcoming and the reasons why it was turned down are still applicable – heavy traffic using Blackwell Farm Road especially at school starting and closing times. Most of the houses on Blackwell Farm Road are either flats or have no garages or driveways meaning that when there is parking on the road it is nearly impossible to drive the length of the road without having to stop to let traffic pass in the other direction. Also the green area itself is very much subject to flooding and surely not suitable for building on.

We would ask you please to bear these objections in mind and turn down the building application for this attractive piece of green open space.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 16:06

"I'm a local resident at Blackwell Farm Road who lives in a flat with my Mum and Brother just next to a small green field and It has recently come to my attention that the Council plan on selling the small patch of green field at for potential Housing development again, and once again I am opposed to this idea For a few reasons;

The first being A small ecosystem at the bottom of the field will be damaged.

it is home to many little bugs, Potentially even endangered species, I have found larvae down there possibly of the stag beetle variety.

I have informed "rspb" of this sighting last time the land was due for development. bluetits nest in the trees and bushes at the bottom tree line of the field, not to mention foxes and squirrels one of which is albino (very rare) and on one occasion I've seen a deer that wondered down from a more wooded area. Any housing development will have an impact on this small ecosystem.

Secondly I'm also concerned about the risk of more frequent and worse flooding, the green used to be a pond (before my time) and the green sits in a dip due to this water collects here, also causing strain on the sewer system that runs just the other side of the tree line surrounding the field, this in the past has burst during heavy rain fall.

With any proposal of building houses here not only would this put a strain on the existing sewer system but in turn less land available to soak up any rain water which would also mean the ground becoming more saturated and prone to flooding.

thirdly there is the issue with traffic and parking, residents like my mother have no driveway or designated parking spaces as we live in the flats so like most others we park on the side of the road, I remember seeing the previous building proposals and they had driveways, this would cause a knock on affect to the residents in the flats having less space to park their cars. it also becomes worse during school runs with Blackwell school being just up the road.

Queen Victoria hospital is also very close to Blackwell farm road and I have witnessed many people parking their cars down our road to walk to the hospital, again causing a parking space issue to existing residents of the area.

I understand that people require places to live but surely their are other alternatives?! like the many abandoned business properties in town and surrounding areas, repurposing those spaces could hold a lot of potential (a lot of new housing has already been erected anyway, so why the need for more new builds, on green spaces?) haven't people done enough damage to wildlife, isn't it better to try to preserve what little we have left?

I posted my concerns on social media and I've gotten a lot of support from people who are also against this development.

If anything must be developed on that green can't it be say a meadow or memorial garden? something that would encourage more wildlife. Or maybe use the land to extend the graveyard, because that wouldn't damage the wildlife too much. With all these new houses going up in the East Grinstead area for more living, where are we going to put the ever increasing population when they die?

I have attached some images as reference regarding the land for you to view."

Thank you for taking your time to read this and I hope you will think about my concerns and proposed alternatives to housing."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 18:11

"I would strongly object to the proposal of putting houses on the green at the above site. It is an absolute ludicrous idea, as Blackwell Farm Road has so much traffic and parking already, it's a nightmare, an accident waiting to happen there. It's even lethal to walk down the road at school times as there are so many cars parked on the pavements and they just move off without any consideration of people trying to get by. The road and both pavements are full with cars. Also if you are trying to turn in or out of Elizabeth Crescent it's impossible to see as there are so many parked cars. The danger to school children is immense. Also why are they even attempting to build houses on a site that used to contain a pond, surely there would be subsidence."

Also another green space will be lost, haven't we seen enough green space taken up for housing in and around East Grinstead, what used to be a market town is now becoming a hideous concrete jungle. Someone has suggested an extension to Mount Noddy Cemetery would be of better use if they must take the green space away, well perhaps that's not a bad idea as I'm told there is not many years left for grave spaces in there. But no more homes causing even more congestion, and danger to everybody."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 18:40

"With reference to the above plans for housing I am writing to express my objection to houses being built on this land.

Blackwell Farm Road, which is the only access road for the Primary School, Children's Centre and houses is already saturated with traffic and parked cars. The road gets extremely congested and often difficult to pass by other cars coming in the opposite direction. This is even worse at school drop off and pick up times.

Surely the safety of primary school children should be paramount! Additional cars makes it unsafe for these young children. Cars park and mount the pavement when passing other cars.

During road works it causes chaos and delays children getting to school on time.

This location simply cannot cope with additional traffic without the road regularly coming to a complete standstill.

I therefore strongly object to any houses being built on this land."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 21:11

"I am emailing regarding the proposed development of the Blackwell Farm Road site and I would like to register my objection in the strongest possible terms.

This area is heavily congested during the school drop-off and pick-up times, and I believe that any more traffic in this area would be highly detrimental to East Grinstead. The area is also heavily saturated for hospital parking.

Additionally, this is one of the only green spaces left, breaking up what is fast becoming a heavily urbanised area. I have personally witnessed that this land is a cut-through for deer crossing to Ashplats Wood from the area around St Margaret's Convent. Without this, their habitat is further reduced and this cut-through becomes inaccessible. In a time when man is driving wildlife out of all available habitats and pushing some species to the brink, we must consider what impact this constant development of all 'unused' green space is having on our wildlife. I think it would be an absolute travesty to develop this land and selfishly think only of the supposed needs of man.

I hope that you will take the objections of myself, and undoubtedly many other local residents into consideration and not grant planning permission for yet another housing development."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 22:48

"I would ask you to reconsider the sale of the land at the end of Blackwell Farm Rd for housing. The idea of more cars on that road is unthinkable. It is already highly dangerous for children either walking to & from school or alighting from cars. There are times of total gridlock & those of us who live at the far end of the road are finding it evermore difficult driving down there.

If there was to be an accident or any emergency at busy times it would be hard to see how any emergency vehicles could get through.

Blackwell Farm rd is the only access to many houses and has no more capacity for more traffic joining either from that road or the holtye rd roundabout.

Please do not exacerbate the traffic problem any further ."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 22:50

"Regarding the sale and development of the above land, I strongly object for the following reasons:

Firstly, Blackwell Farm Road is already over congested. Cars parked on both sides result in it effectively being a single track road with no passing bays for 100 metres or more at times. I was returning to my house one afternoon this week at school collection time and was forced to reverse my trailer several times due to on coming traffic failing to give way or find a passing place. Now this is inconvenient but for a fire engine responding to an emergency it has far greater consequences.

Secondly, green space is already limited and provides an invaluable area for leisure and children to play. I live in Hackenden Close and unfortunately as there is no green area like this, my children have no option but to play on the road. Thankfully being a Close there is little traffic and the residents are aware that children are about but for the familiar who live near the area in question it would be a massive loss."

Email from East Grinstead resident 20th June 2019 at 20:11

"I'm objecting about the building in Blackwell farm road site, Do all the objections we sent in before still count, I'm objecting too much traffic in Blackwell farm road too much over crowding, There are newts living on that green, why is Midsussex taking every piece of land, East Grinstead not looking good high rise flats everywhere, Not enough parking spaces,"

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 00:01

"You must know by now, we do not want our green destroyed! It's a pleasant and green open space! I work at the school at the top end of this cul-de-sac, and to be honest the road does not need anymore traffic in it, parked on the pathways or jamming up the already busy junction! For the sake of 10 dwellings, please find somewhere else less invasive and more suitable."

Email from East Grinstead Councillor 21st June 2019 at 08:47

"I am writing on behalf of Cllr Mrs Margaret Belsey and myself to state that we both object to the sale of this land for the purpose given."

Email from East Grinstead Councillor 21st June 2019 at 08:49

"District Councillors Bennett and Belsey strongly object to the proposed disposal of this land for housing and to the lack of dialogue or consultation that there has been on this matter between Mid Sussex District Council and the Ashplats councillors. The proposal to build housing on this piece of land is also strongly objected to by residents in the area due to road, parking, safety and traffic issues."

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 11:32

"I write with regards the proposal referenced above, this being in relation to the sale of the green space land adjacent to Blackwell Farm Road and Holtye Road, East Grinstead. Firstly, I note that the consultation for this development has been very low visibility - Many in the area not knowing there is a deadline of today for comment. I wish to convey my significant concerns in relation to the above, these being as follows:

This area of the town is already heavily congested with traffic entering and exiting East Grinstead towards to Tunbridge Wells, as well as to the Queen Victoria Hospital. Dense housing population, inclusive the creation of several housing developments along the Holtye Road (e.g Bluebell Gate) have already placed significant strain in local infrastructure, inclusive the local school Blackwell Primary. Significant congestion already exists on that junction during peak times owing to poor parking conditions along the length of Blackwell Farm Road, and the high volume of vehicle traffic entering and leaving that closed estate of housing and the school. This presents a significant risk to children and pedestrians attempting to traverse the road systems to get to both Blackwell Primary, and across Holtye Road (A264) towards Sackville Secondary School.

It should be noted that the road system in this specific area is a series if mini roundabouts, where A264 road traffic forks towards East Grinstead town centre along the B2110 Blackwell Hollow. Traffic consistently enters this region, directly adjacent to the parcel of land subject to this reference, at speed. There are inadequate highways measures in place here, and to increase housing density will only exacerbate the problem as well as the risk.

The parcel of land in question creates a natural green space area between the Mount Noddy Cemetery and the housing estate area of Blackwell, introducing a welcome break to the dense housing in that area. Despite the obvious aesthetic benefits, it also creates a safe space for the walking public to walk away from the main road. A more appropriate use of this space would be to convert for better public use (park area/play space), or indeed an extension of the Cemetery.

I would voice strong objections to the development of this area. There is no need to squeeze yet more housing into this space. All it will create is a view of density housing crammed onto any spare bit of land, and yet further erosion of green space in the town. Significant improvement to highways infrastructure is necessary in this area of East Grinstead, and as a resident of Holtye Road, I already see a rapidly rising risk of road collision along this road, down towards the intersections of Holtye Road, Blackwell Farm Road and Blackwell Hollow. I would much rather see this plot of land converted for public use, rather than just another means for developers to make money. All too often we are seeing numerous backland or intensification developments appearing in this area of the down, but no consideration to the impact of the direct infrastructure supporting it. The primary school and local GP surgeries are other examples of over saturation, where these are already nearing (or indeed at) capacity.

I trust you will take these significant concerns into consideration in reviewing the development of this space.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 13:58

“I would like to object to the sale & development of the green space/land on Blackwell Farm Road.

This road is heavily congested with parking along both sides of the road due to insufficient parking for residents living in the 2/3 blocks of flats, each block containing 10-12 flats on one side of the road and houses on the other side, the road leads up to a primary school, Blackwell farm road is only accessible to a single car being able to pass at any one time, the road is used regularly for parking for east grinstead football club due to insufficient parking at the club itself, hospital parking due to insufficient parking at the hospital and families who have lost loved ones visiting the cemetery, The top of Badgers way is also used for parking.

The residents along blackwell farm road struggle to find a space near their own home, surely this is an accident waiting to happen for the children who walk to school, including the older generation who have to cross between parked cars, The proposed building of further houses could lead to fatalities which I am sure you would want to be avoid at all cost!

Surely the green space would be more usefull to all who live along Blackwell Farm Road if this was turned into a parking area for residents who are already living in an extremely congested area.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 14:45

“I live at the end of Blackwell Farm Road, in Hackenden Lane. I wish to object to the sale or development of the plot of land at the entrance to Blackwell Farm Road.

Blackwell Farm Road leads into the largest cul-de-sac in East Grinstead, which is also ‘home’ to Blackwell Primary School. This area is already very busy with residents, not to forget school traffic and people who use it as a car park when using or working at QVH. It would be totally wrong to allow a development to go ahead without resolving the traffic flow issues for those that already use it.

I would strongly suggest that the green field at the entente to Blackwell Farm Roadis kept as a green field and that the council focuses it efforts in alleviating the traffic flow issues which would be much better use of their time and tax payers money.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 15:55

“I wish to register my objection to the proposed sale of the green space on Blackwell Farm Road for housing.

This section of road is already highly congested - especially during school drop off/pick up times with Blackwell School further up the road as well as being along the main route into EG from the A264 and also the only means of access into the town for residents like myself who live on the Ashplats side.

My concern is that Mid Sussex Council continually approve small/medium scale developments in our town generating revenue for the council but there is little or no consideration of infrastructure or investment in the town. It seems to be an after-thought. I appreciate that council budgets are severely tight however there will be a problem in the future if more houses are built without implementing additional vital community services. Ask most residents and I would imagine many would agree. I understand that there is a need for

affordable housing in this country but there is also already a HUGE pressure on our local primary schools and NHS services.

I would also be concerned as a developer or even a prospective buyer that the land at the end of Blackwell Farm Road is prone to flooding as it was once the site of a pond.”

Email from East Grinstead Councillor 21st June 2019 at 18:28

“Along with District Councillors Mrs Bennett and Mrs Belsey, who are both District Councillors for the Ashplats Ward in East Grinstead, I, as both a District Councillor for East Grinstead and a Town Councillor for Ashplats Ward in East Grinstead, strongly object to the proposed disposal of this land for housing and to the lack of dialogue or consultation that there has been on this matter between Mid Sussex District Council and the Ashplats councillors.

The proposal to build housing on this piece of land is also, most strongly, objected to by a very high number of residents in the area, due loss of amenity of this lovely piece of land, on a high-visibility corner of an approach road into the Town, existing difficulties in parking on this road already, which can only be further exacerbated by increasing parking still further and emergent traffic issues leading to reduced safety.”

Email from East Grinstead resident 21st June 2019 at 21:11

“I am emailing regarding the proposed development of the Blackwell Farm Road site and I would like to register my objection in the strongest possible terms.

This area is heavily congested during the school drop-off and pick-up times, and I believe that any more traffic in this area would be highly detrimental to East Grinstead. The area is also heavily saturated for hospital parking.

Additionally, this is one of the only green spaces left, breaking up what is fast becoming a heavily urbanised area. I have personally witnessed that this land is a cut-through for deer crossing to Ashplats Wood from the area around St Margaret's Convent. Without this, their habitat is further reduced and this cut-through becomes inaccessible. In a time when man is driving wildlife out of all available habitats and pushing some species to the brink, we must consider what impact this constant development of all 'unused' green space is having on our wildlife. I think it would be an absolute travesty to develop this land and selfishly think only of the supposed needs of man.

I hope that you will take the objections of myself, and undoubtedly many other local residents into consideration and not grant planning permission for yet another housing development.”