

## Planning Response

### **(i) Application: S.22/0460/FUL**

*S.22/0460/FUL | Full planning permission for residential development (Use Class C3), community hub (Use Class E), local retail and commercial space (Use Class E), allotments, bio-diversity habitat and associated infrastructure and landscape works*

### **Consultation Response:**

Hunts Grove Parish Council fully supports this application subject to the following observations.

#### **Delivery of 100% of the Scheme**

The council is concerned that the scheme may not be delivered in full. This unfortunately has been the experience of residents so far at Hunts Grove, a lot promised, however only houses delivered with no amenities. The council has taken a balanced approach in this response of overall approval, however, to be clear, there are pros and cons, and the scheme is only acceptable if delivered in full.

The council requests that any planning permission for the scheme includes conditions or legal agreements that bind the delivery of mixed-use and community amenities. Further, specifically for the allotments, these should be delivered as soon as possible following permission, and in advance of any other works.

#### **Engagement**

The council recognises and appreciates the engagement over the last two years by the architect and planning team representatives of the applicant. The scheme draws on sound planning and design principles that have been presented and discussed at several engagement meetings. Many ideas from those meetings have found their way into this application, therefore the council would like to express its gratitude for the involvement of councillors and the Hunts Grove community.

#### **Allotments**

This is the most controversial element of the application for our residents. Both implementation and location. Delivery of amenities at Hunts Grove is a critical issue. More than 10 years into the build-out of Hunts Grove and promised amenities have not been delivered by Crest Nicholson within the legal timescales. The village now has more than 1,000 completed dwellings, but no amenities, such as allotments, community building, sports pitches, and neighbourhood centre. Therefore, any further uncertainty in the delivery of the allotments is not welcome considering Crest Nicholson has planning approval for the original allotments scheme under S.19/2352/REM.

The approved permission is for 100% of Hunts Grove allotments provision to be provided in a single location adjacent to the motorway and Haresfield Lane. This application seeks to split allotment provision

across two sites, with 60% of provision at the original site and 40% at a site on the opposite side of the motorway accessed by the existing agricultural foot bridge motorway crossing from the Phase 2 Major POS.

The council intends to further engage with residents to capture further views on these proposals and encourage residents to leave their own comments on the planning portal. At this point, consultation feedback in July 2021 and more recently has been mixed:

- Concern at delay to delivery of allotments
- Concern that allotments will partly be located outside of Hunts Grove Parish
- Preferable to some as the second location will be nearer to some Phase 2 properties than the original location
- Preferable to some as the second location includes more biodiversity space and space for expansion in the future
- Concern about security and anti-social behaviour at a remote site with no overlooking by residential properties
- Concern at no tool storage provision at the second location
- Concern that the second location is more isolated and would benefit from WC facilities
- Concern about the safety and condition of the motorway footbridge – should this not be included in the planning application and redline boundary?
- Concern that there is a convoluted vehicle access route to the second location from Hunts Grove
- The allotments site must be secured with a fence and lockable gate
- The remote allotments do not appear to have any additional mitigation for traffic noise from the M5. It is a very noisy location and not a peaceful place for allotments. Could additional mitigation be included, such as acoustic fencing and additional planting?

With regards to highway access to the second allotments location over the motorway, Highways would need to ensure that this is sufficient for the purpose and that the junction back onto the lane is safe. These proposals would also change the use of the existing path. Would it be possible to divert the path away from this new access through the adjacent wooded area to keep pedestrian access separate?

With regards to the lighting plan, the DPA Lighting Consultants plan of February 2022 does not address the remote allotments site. The council would like to see a lighting plan that addresses the nighttime safety and security concerns of the remote allotments location, the footbridge and access. We feel that some lighting will be necessary to mitigate these concerns.

In addition to tool storage solutions at the remote allotments site, Council would also like to ensure that there is power provided at the site and an option for the future management to install CCTV for security purposes if determined at a later date. This means preparing power and data at the site for that purpose.

With regards the issue of long-term management of the allotments and the second location being in Haresfield Parish rather than Hunts Grove Parish, we would like to ensure that Haresfield Parish have a

secured role in the long-term management of the allotments. As stated above, we strongly request that the allotments are managed by the parish council rather than a management company. This also has the benefit of making it easier for Haresfield Parish to be involved if they choose to be. Under Parish responsibility, Hunts Grove Parish Council suggests a joint committee for allotments whereby Haresfield Parish is guaranteed membership if they choose, either now or in perpetuity.

In summary, regarding the allotments, the council considered there are potential negative aspects to the split location, however on balance with the other positive features of this application, it would be an acceptable compromise. Meanwhile the council would still seek further discussion with the applicant and planners to discuss and mitigate the concerns raised above.

### **Mixed-Use**

The council very much supports the notion of “walkable communities”, and a mixed-use strategy is key to delivering on that. We like how the design creates a public gathering space, a meeting space at the farmhouse, and two retail units for local businesses.

This arrangement helps resolve the negative effects of the masterplan changes implemented by Crest Nicholson that have led to housing en-masse with no mixed-use, character or destinations. The relocation of the neighbourhood centre from the centre of the village to the outer edge beside the A38 is specifically problematic, and this scheme would help alleviate that damage.

The Parish Council is aware of at least two Hunts Grove food businesses that have had to leave Hunts Grove as there are no commercial spaces whatsoever. The fact that this scheme includes two small retail units and a café space at the farmhouse is welcomed and we hope that this encourages Hunts Grove business-owners to set up in Hunts Grove.

### **Saving the Farmhouse**

The farmhouse building is the only original building at Hunts Grove. The council very much supports the restoration and re-use of the farmhouse rather than demolition. The building is a link to the past, provides some character and is being promoted for community benefit for flexible office space, café etc.

### **Long-Term Maintenance & Management**

The council is concerned that the amenities in this scheme are set to be transferred to the Hunts Grove Management Company Limited (HGMCL). HGMCL paying members represent only residents on part of the development, and the council feels this is both unfair (that the financial burden is only on a portion of the residents), plus it raises many questions of access to all the current and future residents of Hunts Grove to amenities that are supposed to serve the whole village. The council has expressly stated that it stands ready to adopt all open spaces and amenities, to manage and maintain them on behalf of all Hunts Grove residents, and fund through the parish council precept that means all residents contribute equally. This is our “one Hunts Grove” strategy.

### **Affordable Housing Provision / Clustering**

The council is pleased to see a significant percentage of affordable provision in the scheme, 23 units, 30%. The affordable units are concentrated in two areas of the layout. Policy suggests a preference to further distribution amongst the full-market dwellings, however noting that the provision is flats and the full-market dwellings are houses, it would seem acceptable for this arrangement on this small site.

Further, important to the council is the character of the primary flats building, it has a landmark value and density along the southern edge of the site bordering the community building / sports pitches site. Further, council understands that the applicant will be the long-term landlord of the affordable units which we consider a positive benefit for maintaining the long-term aims of the scheme.

### **Mews Properties, 1 Bed, 2 Bed**

With reference to the elevation plans below for the 1 Bed and 2 Bed Mews properties, we suggest that the properties would benefit from two skylights within the roofline on the rear of the properties. With the current design of dormer windows only on the front roofline, especially the properties that face north, will be dark and not benefit from solar gain, cross ventilation and light.

REF:

*S.22\_0460\_FUL-PERIOD\_3\_MEWS\_2\_BED\_FLAT\_-\_PLANS\_\_\_ELEVATIONS-2814861.pdf*

*S.22\_0460\_FUL-PERIOD\_4\_MEWS\_1\_NO\_2\_BED\_FLAT\_-\_PLANS\_\_\_ELEVATIONS-2814868.pdf*

### **Overall Character & Design Code**

The proposed building features and character are traditional and quite different to what has been built at Hunts Grove so far. The council considers this an attractive, high-quality architectural approach, by world-class architects at John Simpson Associates.

What has been built so far is modern and limited in architectural character and features – the exact same dwellings may be seen in hundreds of new developments across the country. Whilst this scheme is a departure from that, the council consider this a positive departure and hopefully will lead to further investment in design and character for the remaining parts of Hunts Grove when the 750-home extension comes to planning in the coming years.

### **Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

The council asks that there is more focus on establishing a CEMP with consultation to the community and Parish Council. The Hunts Grove site now comprises more than 2,000 residents and large areas of completed residential development and unfortunately lack of compliance with plans by other developers on site has compromised resident's amenity and safety.

The track record at Hunts Grove so far is very poor. There has been a huge investment in wonderful plans at the planning stage, however operationally they are ignored later. The Parish Council has instigated many enforcement reports regarding construction traffic, safety and working hours. Unfortunately, we have seen little response from SDC Planning Enforcement to address issues of compliance raised, despite the

magnitude of some of the concerns, such as danger to children at Hunts Grove Primary due to uncontrolled HGVs and speeding vehicles in front of the school.

For this application, we ask that there be specific conditions regarding routing of construction traffic to (and from) the site. Specifically, construction traffic must not be allowed to use the Waterwells access that takes traffic through many completed residential areas and past the school. Construction traffic must use the A38 access (when it is delivered) or the dedicated construction traffic route that currently exists out to the B4008.

HUNTS GROVE PARISH COUNCIL  
June 13, 2022