

Report to Council

4 September 2019

By Director of Place



DECISION REQUIRED

Planning Application DC/18/2687

Executive Summary

An outline application with all matters reserved, except for access, was submitted on the 14th December 2018. This application is for the erection of up to 300 dwellings (C3) including the conversion of existing offices buildings 3 and 36) up to 25,000sqm of employment (B1) floorspaces and provision of 618sqm of flexible commercial/community space (A1 A2 A3 D1 Crèche) use classes) within the ground floor of converted building 36. The scheme includes improvements to existing pedestrian and vehicular accesses from Parsonage Road and Wimblehurst Road, together with associated parking and landscaping.

This report informs Members of the assessment and recommendation of officers, addresses questions raised at the North Committee on the 6th August 2019 and provides other relevant updates.

Recommendation

The Council is recommended:

- i) To delegate the application for approval to the Head of Development, subject to completion of a legal agreement and appropriate conditions.
- ii) In the event that the legal agreement is not completed within three months of the decision of the Council, or other later date as agreed by the Head of Development, the Director of Place be authorised to refuse permission on the grounds of failure to secure the Obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Reasons for Recommendation

- i) It is recommended that the application be delegated for approval as the proposal would bring forward the development of a strategic site allocated for mixed use within the Horsham District Planning Framework. The proposal would provide much needed high quality employment space as well as an appropriate

residential area. The proposal utilises a brownfield site in a central and sustainable location, resulting in the regeneration of this strategic town centre site.

- ii) It is recommended to delegate to the Head of Development in order that the detail and clauses of the necessary Legal Agreement can be finalised and all necessary conditions imposed.
- iii) It is recommended that the legal agreement is completed within three months of the decision of the Council, or other later date as agreed by the Head of Development. If not agreed, the Director of Place is authorised to refuse permission on the grounds of failure to secure the Obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. This allows the Director of Place the ability to refuse the proposal if it is considered that there have been unreasonable and prolonged delays in the completion of the agreement. It also allows the Director of Place to extend this period if matters are progressing well, but further time is needed.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Committee Report to Planning Committee (North) on 6th August 2019

Appendix 2 – Addendum to Committee Report to Planning Committee (North)
(Addendum 1)

Appendix 3 – Additional addendum to Committee Report (Addendum 2)

Wards Affected: The Novartis site is within the ward of Holbrook East. The site is adjacent to the wards of Roffey North, Roffey South and Holbrook West.

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Background Information

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The site is allocated for development under Policy 8 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). The policy states that the land at the former pharmaceutical research development is allocated for re-use as comprehensive mixed use strategic development for a higher education facility and complementary employment uses. Policy 2 (Strategic Development) also states that one of the aims of the spatial strategy is to bring forward a strategic mixed opportunity at the former Novartis site for employment, education and specialist housing.
- 1.2 This scheme is in conflict with Policy 2 in that a higher education facility is not proposed. However the proposal is considered to comply with the spatial objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework and weight is given to the re-use of this brownfield land within the built-up area of Horsham and the benefits of the proposal, including the proposed mix of housing and employment. The development of the Novartis site is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle to enable the regeneration of this significant site. This is outlined in detail in the committee report (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The proposal has resulted in 70 objections to the proposal from local residents, including a local residents group. These objections are summarised in the officers report and addendums. Focus is given to the highways / transport impact of this proposal within these representations. As outlined in the committee report, given the details comments of two separate technical transport experts, which has resulted in amendments to the scheme, it is the view of officers that the proposal cannot be refused on either the lack of sustainable transport modes or highway safety, and the scheme is considered acceptable.
- 1.4 Should permission be withheld, this would delay the commencement of works on site and the delivery of both new homes and much needed commercial floorspace for Horsham town. A refusal on highway safety grounds would also leave the Council open to challenge for significant costs at appeal.

2. Relevant Council Policy

- 2.1 The development of this site will meet the objectives of the Horsham District Council Corporate Plan Priorities 2016-19 to implement the Horsham District Local Plan.

3. Details

- 3.1 The application for the Novartis site (reference: DC/18/2687) was reported to the Planning Committee North on the 6th August 2019 with an officer recommendation to delegate authority for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions. The applicant, their agent, representatives of North Horsham Parish Council, Denne Neighbourhood Council, Forest Neighbourhood Council, a representative of Wimblehurst Road Residents Group and two members of the public addressed the committee.
- 3.2 In accordance with Paragraph 3.6.2(d) of the Horsham District Council Constitution, the Director of Place referred the application to Full Council. The Director of Place referred the application as she was of the opinion that the Committee was minded to make a decision to refuse the application for highway / transport reasons, in which there were likely to be significant cost implications.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Should the application be delegated for approval, the next steps will be to progress and complete the necessary Legal Agreement and to finalise the details of planning conditions to be imposed upon the approval. Once the Legal Agreement and conditions have been finalised, the decision would be issued.

5. Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The responses received from all consultees and members of the public are summarised within the report at Appendix 1. No additional representations have been received.

6. Other Considerations

- 6.1 Consideration of crime and disorder, equality and diversity and Human Rights form part of the overall consideration of the application within the report attached at Appendix 1. Sustainability is a fundamental consideration within the planning process and is also fully considered within report at Appendix 1.