

Briefing Note – DC/22/1916



Written by the Executive Officer for consideration by the Planning Committee – 27th October 2022

DC/22/1916 - *'Outline application with all matters reserved for a mixed use strategic development to include demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 1,500 dwellings, up to 15,750 sqm (GIA) of flexible employment space (Use Classes E/B2/B8), up to 2,900 sqm (GIA) flexible community facilities (Use Classes E/F1/F2); education facilities; sports facilities; 5 gypsy and traveller pitches; public open space; landscaping and related infrastructure'*

Horsham District Council are unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply meaning that the presumption in favour of sustainable development (at NPPF paragraph 11d) applies. As a result, policies in the adopted development plan that are most relevant in the determination of the application are out-of-date. However, the application is entirely within the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan Area and NPPF paragraph 14 therefore applies. As a result, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The application documentation is considerable, and I have only had limited time to review the proposals. However, at this stage I would like to highlight the following conflicts with the made Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan:

1. The proposed development would result in the provision of 1,500 new homes in Southwater Parish. This greatly exceeds the quantum of development the Southwater community accepted through the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, which allocated land for 422 - 450 new residential units. The proposal therefore conflicts with the development strategy set out in the adopted development plan, and in particular conflicts with SNP1, SNP2, and HDPF Policy 15.
2. The proposed development introduces a secondary centre to Southwater Village, which is in direct conflict with the Core Principles set out in SNP1 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal includes a 1.67 ha mixed use community hub, containing a range of uses including retail and community facilities. The commercial and community space will have a GEA of 3,170m² and a GIA of 2,900m² (which includes up to 1,500m² for retail). This is a substantial cluster of shops, services and facilities. This hub is surrounded by higher density and taller development, reinforcing the area as a new secondary centre. SNP1 requires development to positively contribute towards Southwater Village remaining a single centre settlement, with shops, services and facilities centralised in/around Lintot Square. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP1.1(a).
3. The proposed development will extend beyond the Built-Up Area Boundaries (as defined by this Neighbourhood Plan and shown on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map). It is accepted that part of the proposal is on land allocated for development by the neighbourhood plan, but much of it is not. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP1.1(b).
4. The location of the proposed school is in an unsustainable location on the edge of Southwater Village. This location means that many in Southwater will not be able to travel to it by foot or cycle and instead will rely on the use of private motor vehicles, increasing unnecessary vehicular movements. This will negatively impact highway safety and increase pollution. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP1.1(c), SNP1.1(d), SNP1.1(f).



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5. The proposed development would result in the coalescence of Southwater Village and Christs Hospital, to the detriment of their unique and separate identities. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP1.3.
6. The proposed development is more than the level of development needed, and housing requirement, for Southwater Parish as established through the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP1 and SNP2.
7. Non-educational development is proposed on land safeguarded for educational use, prior to it being demonstrated that existing secondary schools (that are operational or under construction) have the capacity to meet the projected demand for school places. The proposal therefore conflicts with SNP3.
8. Regarding arboriculture, the proposal makes no consideration for tree planting in line with SNP policy SNP18.1, or the planting of new trees in accordance with SNP Policy SNP18.3. The proposal also conflict with Policy SNP2 which states that 'there should be no need for any Category A or B trees to be removed'.
9. Whilst I accept that the principle of residential development in proximity to Great House Farmhouse is to some degree established by the allocation in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. Insufficient information has been provided to confirm that unacceptable harm to the listed building is avoided. Great care was taken whilst preparing the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and through discussion with Historic England SNP2 was amended to include: *"(h) The extent, location and form of built development must be carefully considered, following completion of an appropriate assessment, and conserve elements of setting that contribute to the significance of Great House Farmhouse (a Grade II* Listed Building). In particular, any proposed development should allow for: (i) Parcels of land to the north and south of the listed building retained as open land; (ii) An visual inter-relationship with Courtland Wood and other parts of the medieval fieldscape between is maintained together with key landscape features; and, (iii) A considered approach to edges of built form likely to be seen from and in association with the listed building."* I do not believe these requirements have been met and as a result the proposal conflicts with SNP2.2(h).

I note the purported benefits of the proposed development as put forward by the applicant, however, as per NPPF paragraph 14, in this case it is apparent that the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The Planning Committee are to consider this application on 2nd November 2022, and I would recommend taking on board the contents of this briefing note.