



North Horsham Parish Council

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Notes from the Novartis Parish Liaison Meeting held online on Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 2pm

Planning Application: DC/18/2687 – Outline planning application 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 Creche) use classes) within the ground floor of converted building 36. Improvements to existing pedestrian and vehicular accesses from Parsonage Road and Wimblehurst Road, new cycle and pedestrian accesses from Parsonage Road, together with associated parking and landscaping. All matters reserved except for access.

Purpose of the meeting: To be updated on and discuss the development at the Former Novartis Site, Parsonage Road.

In Attendance:

Jane Apostolou	Wimblehurst Road Residents Association (WRRRA)
Philip Ayerst	Horsham District Cycle Forum (HDCF), Horsham Society
Andrew Baldwin	Horsham District Councillor, West Sussex County Councillor
Ron Bates	Horsham Society
Lorna Byrne	Communications Potential Communications Consultant
Gary Cox	West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Novartis Regeneration Programme Manager
Ruth Fletcher	Horsham District Councillor, Horsham District Cycle Forum (HDCF)
Joy Gough	North Horsham Parish Councillor, North Horsham Community Land Trust (NHCLT)
Frances Haigh	Horsham District Councillor
Jason Hawkes	Horsham District Council (HDC) Principal Planning Officer
Brian Johnson	Langhurst Wood Road Residents Association
Donald Mahon	North Horsham Parish Councillor
Ross McCartney	North Horsham Parish Council Committee Clerk (Note taker)
John Milne	Horsham District Councillor, Forest Neighbourhood Councillor
Trudie Mitchel	Denne Neighbourhood Councillor
Ben Paterson	Horsham Trafalgar Neighbourhood Councillor
David Searle	North Horsham Parish Councillor
John Smithurst	North Horsham Parish Councillor
Jonathan Steele	Savills Planning Director
Ray Turner	North Horsham Parish Councillor (Chairman of the meeting)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Cllr R. Turner welcomed all in attendance to the first Novartis Parish Liaison meeting and invited all members present to introduce themselves.

Neil Hughes – Network Rail Level Crossing Manager had connected to the meeting but was having IT issues. Apologies were received post meeting alongside updates regarding Parsonage Road level crossing which were sent to all those in attendance and have been noted below*.

2. Cllr R. Turner clarified the purpose of the meeting and that the notes of the meetings will be formally noted at the Parish Council's Planning, Environment and Transport Committee.

3. Update from developer.

Gary Cox and Jonathan Steele gave an update on the development. Lorna Byrne gave updates regarding the public communication:

Tender process regarding the developer partner

Planning permission for the application was granted in February 2020. Thereafter WSCC started the development procurer process. This was originally scheduled to start in April 2020 however, due to Covid-19 this was delayed, the procurement process commenced at the start of July 2020. There were 8 expressions of interest, WSCC has reduced this to 3 bidders at the end of October 2020 to enter the final tender process. The final bids were submitted on 6th January 2021 and are currently being evaluated. A decision is scheduled in WSCC's forward plan for the beginning of March 2021. Schemes of this size take approximately a month to formally enter into the contract with the tenderer, as a result the formal contract is due to start in the middle of April 2021.

Development process

There will be one overarching developer (tier 1 company/developer) that will oversee the development until it is completed. Subsequent specialised sub-contractors (tier 2, 3 companies) will be utilised in conjunction with standard practices.

There is a contractual arrangement for a joint steering board to be set up, containing senior members of WSCC and senior representatives from the developer partner.

In addition to Reserved Matters applications that will be put forward in the future, WSCC are to have a community engagement strategy, enabling local representatives to be involved in the development process.

Cllr R. Turner clarified with attendees that North Horsham Parish Council are facilitating the Novartis Parish Liaison meetings to allow the developer to keep in contact with the local community, forming greater community engagement.

Parking

On-site parking during the construction phase – A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be in place which sets a wide range of parameters that must be followed, including parking on site for the construction workforce.

Site parking on completion – As a condition, a Parking Strategy is required to be submitted before the first Reserved Matters application. Any Reserved Matters application coming forward will also need to comply with the current parking standards.

Jason Hawkes highlighted that the outline planning application contains 308 residential and 872 commercial parking spaces, which falls within HDC standards. The Construction Environment and Management Plan must show how parking for workers is supplied and what the access to the site will be like. This plan, as standard practice, includes the requirement to have wheel washing facilities in place.

Office Park

The project has been developed around a pre-let strategy. A specialist office architect has been employed to work alongside the potential occupants to develop specifications for the office building. Most of the interested parties are in the technology sector. If it is successful in acquiring the leases with the interested parties the business park will be close to full capacity.

There is one large interested party (anchor tenant), a number of medium sized tenants, and a lot of smaller sized tenants. Part of specification for the developers is to receive their concept for an enterprise hub. The enterprise hub will be a space for start-up businesses (with approximately 10 to 12 employees) and is in line to meet WSCC and HDC growth objectives.

There was concern that many office blocks are being converted into residential properties. If tenants move out from within Horsham town additional office blocks could be converted. It was queried whether the potential tenants are expanding out from inside or outside the Horsham District.

There is approximately two existing businesses within the Horsham District that are looking to expand, one of which has been looking at office space outside the district. It is believed the office market in Horsham is relatively old and limited. When businesses in the technology sector start to be successful, they often expand rapidly. The office park allows businesses to significantly grow and remain in the district.

Retail – There will be mixed use elements of the business park; retail (convenience shopping), nursery and a shared space for working. These elements will be locally centred and so high volumes of vehicle users are not anticipated.

Housing

There will be a mixture of housing types. WSCC and HDC expect the site to be of a high design standard. Horsham Society's 'Good by Design' document has been issued to the developers for their consideration.

It was requested to include accommodation for members of the public with disabilities to enable ease of access to workspace potentially available at in the office park, avoiding the difficulties that can arise using public transport.

Socially rented accommodation and affordable housing – Jason Hawes advised there are not any policy requirements to include socially rented accommodation and so it is unusual to receive this as part of a scheme, this is being revised as part of the Local Plan review. HDC are committed to the current policy requirements for 35% affordable housing with a split of 70% affordable rent and 30% shared accommodation.

Site access

There were concerns regarding site access with Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) in conjunction with Wimblehurst Road's 7.5-ton regulatory weight limit, which was introduced after a fatal incident on the road. It was requested this information is given to contractors, so they are aware of the issues. WRRRA suggested displaying large posters at the site exits, directing HGV drivers in the appropriate direction when leaving the site. In addition, site management should liaise with site managers in relation to other works in the surrounding area for example; Warnham Road works, work in the north of Horsham development, A24 works, to make sure the various detours don't impact on each other.

The only construction access to the site will be via Parsonage Road. The developers have been informed regarding the sensitivity of access to the neighbourhood. It will be put forward to the developer partner and will be written into Construction, Environmental Management Plan and ensure there is appropriate monitoring on site.

Public Communication

1138 postcards were distributed to addresses closest to the development site regarding the start of the enabling works. At the time of distribution, due to Covid-19, there was guidance not to produce a substantial amount of mailing. There is a website <https://horshamenterprise.co.uk/> which gives a variety of information about the development and enables users to submit feedback forms and ask questions. Links to the website have been distributed on WSCC'S website. Thus far there has been limited contact from the community. A total of 13 people have registered their interest through the website in being kept up to date. There have been 4 emails and 5 telephone enquiries. Some of the enquiries have been regarding the following:

Traffic management during the enabling works phase – The contractor on site confirmed that signage has been displayed to direct HGV's on the correct route.

Asbestos removal – There will be a specialist contractor on site in the next few weeks and the health and safety executive has been informed in advance.

One member, that lives in the West of Horsham, indicated that they hadn't received a postcard or notification directing members of the public to the website.

Due to the current Covid-19 climate, communicating with the community has been more challenging as interactions, such as face-to-face meetings, cannot take place. However, the enterprise park's communications team will continue to try and outreach further to gain additional public interest.

4. Update from Horsham District Council:

Jason Hawkes from Horsham District Council gave information and updates regarding the development:

Thanks is given to North Horsham Parish Council for arranging this and future meetings to come. At this stage there is not a substantial amount of additional information to discuss. However, as the enabling works have started on site, HDC is keen to begin the initial communication progress. It has been established liaison meetings such as these are useful for the developer to communicate with Parishes and residents to give updates, hear views, comments and concerns, similar to the North of Horsham Parish Liaison meetings set up for the land north of Horsham. These Novartis Parish Liaison meetings will be taking place on a regular basis.

Enabling Works

A postcard has been distributed to residents in November 2020 notifying them of the enabling works, which do not require planning permission. The works will last until at least April 2021 and consist of such things as clearing of the site and a small amount of demolition work.

Lorna Byrne advised that additional notification will be distributed regarding the demolition of the gate houses, which are to take place around 25th January 2021.

Concern was raised regarding the Cedar of Lebanon trees. It was requested reassurance they will be protected alongside any future planning application.

HDC's Tree Officer has been on site to ensure the trees in the area are protected during these works. There is a Tree Preservation Order in place for the Cedar of Lebanon trees and the outline planning permission does protect them. It has been established crown lifting work for the trees will need to take place to facilitate the development however, this will go through the usual planning processes.

Reserved Matters Planning Applications

Applications coming forward will need to be in accordance with the Outline Plan.

Once the developer has been established, pre-application talks will be held regarding the Reserved Matters and several conditions which must be addressed, including the Design Strategy. Outline planning applications do not include details such as commercial and residential design, subsequently, HDC felt it is important to have some parameters set before applications are put forward. It is not envisioned to meet with the developer until June 2021 at the earliest however, no date has been set.

Members present will be notified of any future planning applications that come forward.

5. Updates from other organisations

There were no updates from other organisations.

6. Any other comments

Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure

It was raised that pedestrian and cycle provision were not finalised on the outline application and since permission was granted, additional government guidance (Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20)) has been introduced. The guidance is not mandatory however, the government will assess Councils on their compliance. If certain criteria are met government funding will be granted. Clarity was sought on how developers are confident proposals are compliant with LTN 1/20.

Jason Hawkes drew attention to the fact that, accesses to the site have been approved in detail as part of the outline approval and cannot be altered. Parameter plans for the site have been approved in relation to; land use, building heights, density, open space, access and movement. Reserved Matters applications will need to be in accordance with the parameter plans, detailing information covering; design, layout, cycle infrastructure and landscaping. WSCC have a set of guidance to follow, one of which is the LTN 1/20 document. WSCC are expected to meet LTN 1/20 where applicable although, this may not always be appropriate. WSCC will need to show where they have and have not met the guidance, including reasons why.

There's also £100,000 contribution to cycling/pedestrian infrastructure to help link the site to Horsham Station.

A Travel Plan will be utilised involving a Monitoring Officer who is expected to encourage cycling as part of the plan to reduce the need to travel by car.

Gary Cox highlighted that in all the proposals put forward by potential developers, appropriate cycling provision has been provided. It has been recognized, while meeting with the pre-let occupiers and specialist architect, that they are all anticipating a substantial amount of their workforce to cycle into work.

Cycle/ pedestrian bridge – The installation of a cycle/pedestrian bridge over the railway line was considered as part of the application however, there were various reasons why a footbridge could not be included.

Network Rail: Parsonage Road Level Crossing

A query was raised to find out more information regarding the conversion of the half barriers on Parsonage Road level crossing to full barriers.

Both WSCC and HDC did not have any information regarding the conversion. WSCC noted they will be engaging with Network Rail as soon as possible after a developer has been selected and the barrier conversion works will be addressed. Jason Hawkes also took a note of this query for investigation to find out more information.

**Updates from Neil Hughes – Network Rail Level Crossing Manager received post meeting: We are on course to upgrade the level crossing on Parsonage Road to a safer full barrier crossing in April 2022. This will result in the Parsonage Road barriers being closed for a longer period of time as these type of level crossings are operated by a signaller, whereas half barriers are operated by a train striking a treadle prior to the level crossing. Due to the high volume of traffic on Parsonage Road half barriers cannot be utilised.*

Most of the work on the ground will be carried out during August 2021 while there is full closure to rail services at Horsham for a prolonged period. Part of this work will include platform extension at Littlehaven Station, meaning that long Horsham bound trains will not stop and block the Rusper Road level crossing.

Electric vehicle charging

It was alerted that the provision of vehicle charging points need to accommodate future needs of society, rather than the current standards that are in place.

The provision of electric vehicle charging points on the development must meet HDC current standards. All developers have come forward with these provisions and it is expected HDC standards will be exceeded.

7. Conclusion and date for next meeting

Once more information is available the date of the next meeting will be arranged.

Date of next meeting: Approximately June 2021.

Any updates received prior to the next meeting will be circulated to the members of the Novartis Parish Liaison group.