

Planning Policy Statement

**Horncastle Care Centre, Plawhatch Lane, Sharpthorne,
East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4JH**

Proposal for a Replacement Care Home

On behalf of SHC Clemsfold Group Limited

Our Ref: 18230f

Date: May 2025

Contents

	Section	Page
1	Introduction	1
2	Site and Surroundings	5
3	Planning Policy	9
4	Development Proposal	13
5	Planning Considerations	17
6	The Planning Balance	28
	Appendix	
1	Pre-Application advice letter dated 25 October 2024	
2	Minutes from Design Review Panel meeting dated 22 January 2025	

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Policy Statement is submitted on behalf of SHC Clemsfold Group Limited (the ‘applicant’) in support of a detailed planning application for the redevelopment of land at the Horncastle Care Centre on Plawhatch Lane in Sharpthorne (the ‘site’) comprising:

- The demolition of the remaining parts of the redundant care home buildings in the western and southern part of the site and their replacement with an 80-bedroom specialist dementia care home (Use Class C2).
- The retention and internal conversion of an existing acquired brain injury (ABI) unit in the northern part of the site to provide 10 bedspaces and 8 units of overnight staff accommodation.
- A retained access from Plawhatch Lane.
- Associated car and cycle parking and landscaping.

Background to the Proposal

- 1.2 By means of background, SHC Clemsfold Group are the parent company of Splendid Healthcare. Splendid provides nursing and residential support in purpose-built facilities across Sussex. Their care homes provide specialist nursing care for those with dementia, physical and/or learning disabilities, neurological conditions, acquired brain injury (ABI), autism and other nursing and/or residential needs.
- 1.3 Splendid have embarked on an ambitious project to re-purpose their portfolio of outdated care homes into modern, purpose-built facilities that deliver exceptional care, including specialist dementia care, while enhancing the well-being and quality of life for residents and carers alike. The overarching goal is to create a continuing care pathway, allowing residents to access comprehensive support as their needs evolve within a comfortable, secure, and dignified living environment. Further details on the wider redevelopment programme are set out in the document ‘Splendid Healthcare’s Comprehensive Strategy for Transforming Care’ that accompanies this submission.
- 1.4 The application site currently lies vacant, having previously been occupied as a care centre. The various buildings provided care for up to 63 residents as well as staff accommodation. The long-term vacancy of the site arises in large part due to the significant constraints posed by some of the existing buildings in providing the quality of care necessary to meet the requirements of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the aspirations of prospective care home residents and their families. This is particularly the case in respect of the buildings in the eastern and southern parts of the site, including Horncastle House which has recently been subject to extensive fire damage and part of which has been demolished under health and safety grounds. By contrast, the existing building in the northern part of the site (Maple Lodge) has scope for re-use for specialist (ABI) care purposes.
- 1.5 The proposed new care home will be a purpose-built facility and will be registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide 24-hour support and care for the frail elderly, meeting a full range of residential and dementia care needs. The building will offer state of the art facilities, will operate to the highest care standards and will be of a sustainable design and construction.

Summary of Scheme Benefits

- 1.6 The proposal will deliver a range of significant planning benefits, including:
- Making best use of previously developed land.
 - Delivering much needed and high-quality care home accommodation for local older people including the provision of specialist dementia services.
 - Contributing directly to the Council's housing numbers and the 5-year housing land supply shortfall.
 - Freeing up other sectors of the housing market by releasing much needed and often under-occupied accommodation.
 - Creating local employment opportunities including jobs for local people - It is anticipated that approximately 60 full-time equivalent jobs will be created by the new care home.
 - Creating indirect employment opportunities, for example, during construction, in supporting local retailers and businesses and through associated facilities and services.
 - Protecting and enhancing the character of the local area through a high-quality redevelopment set within landscaped grounds.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation

- 1.7 The applicant has engaged in detailed pre-application dialogue with the local planning authority, the local community and other stakeholders prior to this submission. This process of engagement has included a pre-application submission to Mid-Sussex District Council (LPA Ref: DM/24/1685), a presentation to the Council's Design Review Panel as well as a public exhibition attended by local residents and members of West Hoathly Parish Council. The feedback has been generally positive and is documented in the Statement of Community Involvement accompanying this submission.

Scope of Supporting Information

- 1.8 In accordance with the Council's list of validation requirements, and following the Council's pre-application advice, the application is accompanied by the following drawings and supporting documents:

Site Location Plan

Drawing A-1034 04A – Site Location Plan

Existing Building Drawings

Drawing A-1034 E05A – Existing Block Plan
 Drawing A-1034 E09A – Existing Basement Plan
 Drawing A-1034 E10.1A – Existing Ground Floor Plan 1 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E10.2A – Existing Ground Floor Plan 2 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E10.3A – Existing Ground Floor Plan 3 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E11.1A – Existing First Floor Plan 1 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E11.2A – Existing First Floor Plan 2 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E11.3A – Existing First Floor Plan 3 of 3
 Drawing A-1034 E12A – Existing Second Floor Plan

Drawing A-1034 E13.1A – Existing Roof Plan 1 of 2
 Drawing A-1034 E13.2A – Existing Roof Plan 2 of 2
 Drawing A-1034 E20A – Existing Sections Plan 1 of 2
 Drawing A-1034 E21A – Existing Sections Plan 2 of 2
 Drawing A-1034 E30A – Existing Elevations Plan 1 of 4
 Drawing A-1034 E31A – Existing Elevations Plan 2 of 4
 Drawing A-1034 E32A – Existing Elevations Plan 3 of 4
 Drawing A-1034 E33A – Existing Elevations Plan 4 of 4

Proposed Scheme Drawings

Drawing A-1034 01A – Proposed Site Layout Plan
 Drawing A-1034 02A – Layout Comparison Plan
 Drawing A-1034 09A – Proposed Ground Floor Plan (in context)
 Drawing A-1034 10A – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 Drawing A-1034 11A – Proposed First Floor Plan
 Drawing A-1034 12A – Proposed Second Floor Plan
 Drawing A-1034 13A – Proposed Roof Plan
 Drawing A-1034 20A – Proposed Site Sections
 Drawing A-1034 30A – Proposed Elevations Sheet 1
 Drawing A-1034 31A – Proposed Elevations Sheet 2
 Drawing A-1034 32A – Proposed Elevations Sheet 3

Other Supporting Information

Planning Application Form and Site Notices
 Covering Letter
 Community Infrastructure Levy Liability Forms
 Planning Policy Statement
 Planning Obligations Instruction Form
 Statement of Community Involvement
 Design and Access Statement
 Care Needs Assessment
 Operator Statement: Strategy for Transforming Care
 Tree Survey Schedule
 Tree Constraints Plan
 Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 Landscape General Arrangement Plan
 Landscape Visual Appraisal
 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 Bat Survey
 Reptile Survey
 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Matrix
 Biodiversity Net Gain Checklist
 Biodiversity Validation Form
 Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment
 Lighting Assessment
 Drainage Strategy Plan
 Drainage Technical Note
 Drainage Attenuation Calculations

Transport Statement
Travel Plan
Sustainability and Energy Statement
Site Investigation Report
Water Neutrality Statement
Air Quality Assessment
Ventilation/Extraction Statement

Structure of Statement

- 1.9 This planning statement appraises the scheme within the context of the allocations that apply to the site and the planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and the Development Plan.
- 1.10 The Statement is set out as follows:
- Section 2 describes the site and surroundings.
 - Section 3 summarises the national and local plan policies relevant to the proposal.
 - Section 4 outlines the nature of the proposed use.
 - Section 5 assesses the scheme in respect of land use, design, residential amenity, highways and environmental matters.
 - Section 6 draws together the conclusions of the report.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The extent of the wider Horncastle Care Centre is outlined in red on the land registry plan and aerial image below. The site covers an area of approximately 13.8 acres (5.6 hectares).

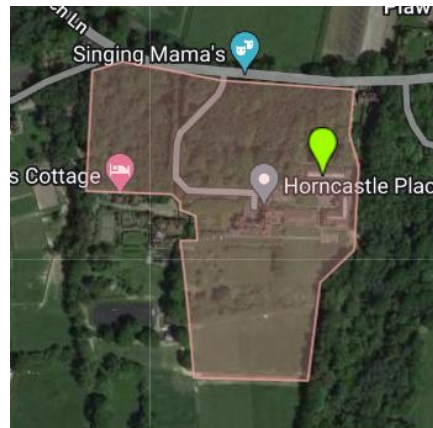
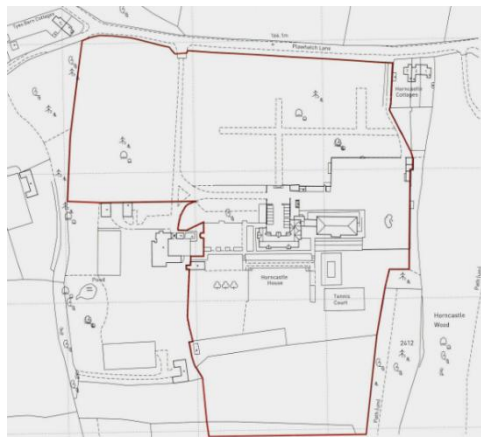


Figure 1: Land Registry Plan of the wider Horncastle site Figure 2: Aerial Site Image (taken from Google Maps)

- 2.2 The site, which was historically occupied as a school, is located to the south of Plawhatch Lane and approximately 1 mile to the east of the village of Sharpthorne.

- 2.3 As shown on the plan below, the existing buildings on the site comprise the following:

- (i) The remains of a former Edwardian manor (Horncastle House) which was the subject of extensive fire damage in 2023, and which previously had a lawful use for Class C2 care purposes. This building also has a more recent single storey extension to the east. We understand that the building (including the extension) previously provided a total of 43 care bedrooms offering care to the elderly.
- (ii) A one and a half storey building known as Maple Lodge which is positioned in the north-east corner of the site. Although now vacant this building previously provided 10 care units for adults with acquired brain injuries. The upper floor accommodation provided additional staff accommodation served by dormer windows set within the roof space.
- (iii) A one and a half storey building known as Willow Lodge which is positioned to the south of Maple Lodge. This building provided a further 10 care units for young adults and staff accommodation and is of a similar design to Maple Lodge.



Figure 3: Plan of existing buildings (taken from Mid Sussex District Council online mapping)

- 2.4 Overall, we understand that the buildings lawfully provided a total of 63 care bedrooms and 16 units of staff accommodation.
- 2.5 The site is accessed from a driveway which extends southwards from Plawhatch Lane. This leads to a car parking area to the west of Horncastle House as well as further informal parking areas to the front of each building. The access is shared with three residential properties to the west of the site.
- 2.6 The site is well enclosed to both the north and east by mature woodland and hedgerows which restrict views into the site. Although the aspect to the south is more open, the land slopes downwards and the site boundary is framed by a row of mature trees which obscures views from public vantage points.

Surroundings

- 2.7 The site lies within a predominantly rural area and is bordered as follows:
- To the west is a large, detached dwelling known as Horncastle Place and two other residential properties (Deerkeepers Cottage and Woodpeckers).
 - To the south, beyond the grounds of the site, is open countryside.
 - To the north, set behind a large expanse of woodland, is Plawhatch Lane. There are three attached properties, Horncastle Cottages, to the immediate north-east of the site.
 - To the east is dense woodland with open countryside beyond.
- 2.8 Images of the site are shown below:



Figure 4: Front of main house following fire damage (prior to demolition)



Figure 5: View of Willow Lodge from the rear (south)



Figure 6: View of Maple Lodge (to left), Willow Lodge (centre) and extension to main house (right)



Figure 7: View of main house and extension from the rear (south)

Accessibility

- 2.9 The site is located in a rural area, with the nearest settlement being Sharpthorne to the west. The site does not have any immediate access to public transport, with the closest bus stop route providing an irregular service from Sharpthorne to East Grinstead. The nearest Train Station is at Three Bridges, approximately 7 miles to the north-west.

Site Designations and Allocations

- 2.10 As shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map, the site is subject to the following designations and allocations:



Figure 8: Extract from Local Plan Proposals Map

- Within the designated Countryside Area of Development Restraint denoted by the green wash.
 - Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) indicated by the diagonal green line.
 - Within the Ashdown Forest 7km Zone of Influence denoted by the red diagonal line.
- 2.11 Based on the Council's online mapping system, none of the existing trees on the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 2.12 The site is not within a Conservation Area and the existing buildings are not listed. There are no other designated heritage assets within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 2.13 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at very low risk of flooding from rivers. As identified on the Environment Agency's flood risk maps, the site is also at 'very low' risk from surface water flooding.

Planning History

Horncastle House

- 2.14 Planning permission was granted in 1983 for the change of use of the building to provide a rest home for the elderly (LPA Ref: HO/034/83). Subsequent permissions in 1986 and 1987 allowed for the removal of prefabricated buildings and the erection of a single storey extension to the care home (LPA Refs: HO/006/87 and HO/043/86). A further outline application was granted in 1995 for a two-storey extension to the care home to provide 11 additional bedrooms (LPA Ref: HO/042/95). Due to the historic nature of these applications, the details are not available online.

- 2.15 Planning permission was then granted in 2000 for a change of use of the building from a nursing home to a single dwelling house (LPA Ref: 00/00645/COU). We understand that this permission was never implemented.

Maple Lodge and Willow Lodge

- 2.16 Planning permission was approved in 2007 for additions to the existing care facility to provide two separate ten-bedroom specialist care units with essential staff accommodation (LPA Ref: HO/07/00006/FUL). These are the units now built out and known as Maple Lodge and Willow Lodge. The approved layout plan is shown below:

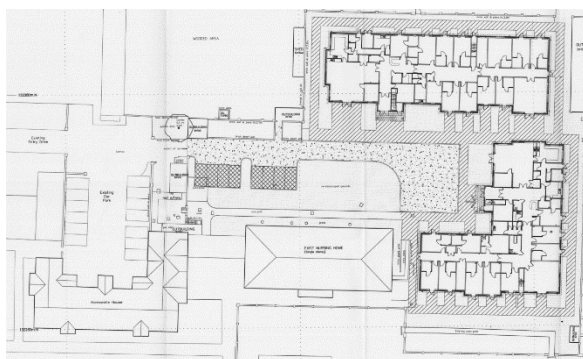


Figure 9: Approved Layout Plan – Ref: HO/07/00006/FUL

3 Planning Policy

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

3.2 Paragraph 8 of the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.3 Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework states that for decision-taking, where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless i. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

3.4 Paragraph 63 provides the overarching objective in promoting housing choice stating that: '*...the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include...those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people (including those who require retirement housing, **housing-with-care and care homes**), students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes*' [our highlighting].

3.5 Paragraph 112 states that parking standards should reflect the accessibility of the development, its type and mix, the availability of and opportunities for public transport and the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Paragraph 115 further states that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a. appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b. safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c. the design of streets and parking areas reflect national guidelines; and

- d. any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 3.6 Paragraph 116 confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 3.7 Paragraph 118 requires that all development that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.
- 3.8 Paragraph 124 (criterion b) states that planning decision should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside
- 3.9 Paragraph 130(c) states that local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in the Framework.
- 3.10 Paragraph 131 encourages the creation of high-quality buildings and places stating that: *'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'* Paragraph 135 further states that developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping (criterion b), sympathetic to local character and history (criterion c), establish or maintain a strong sense of place (criterion d) and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (criterion f).
- 3.11 Paragraph 187 requires that planning decision contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [inter alia]; b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity; e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- 3.12 Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. Paragraph 190 notes that permission should be refused for major development in these areas other than in exceptional circumstances.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 3.13 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) supports the NPPF. The PPG specifically addresses the need for older people's accommodation in consolidated guidance dated 26 June 2019. In assessing how local authorities should address the need for older person's housing, the PPG states that:

“Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan making through to decision-taking.” (Paragraph 001)

- 3.14 The need to provide housing for older people is described in the PPG as ‘critical’ as people are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing (paragraph 001).
- 3.15 Having regard to local housing supply, the PPG categorically states that *“Plan-making authorities will need to count housing provided for older people against their housing requirement”*, although for residential institutions calculations might be based on the average number of adults living in a household (Paragraph 016).

The Development Plan

- 3.16 Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, when making a determination under the Planning Acts, that determination shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Local Development Plan against which the proposals for the subject site are to be considered comprises:

- The Mid-Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 (2018) (MSDP)
- Saved policies from the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004)
- Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD (2022)
- West Hoathly Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2014)

- 3.17 The policies in the MSDP that are relevant to this proposal are:

DP1 - Sustainable Economic Development
 DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy
 DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
 DP14 – Sustainable Rural Development
 DP15 - New Homes in the Countryside
 DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 DP17 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation
 DP20 – Securing Infrastructure
 DP21 – Transport
 DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services
 DP26 - Character and Design
 DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution
 DP30 - Housing Mix
 DP31 - Affordable Housing
 DP37 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
 DP38 – Biodiversity
 DP39 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 DP41 – Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.18 Policies in the DPD that are relevant comprise:

SA38 - Air Quality

SA39 - Specialist Accommodation for Older People and Care Homes

3.19 Relevant policies in the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan include:

WHP1 - Landscape

WHP4 - Visualisations

WHP12 - Existing Employment Sites

3.20 There are no policies in the saved Local Plan that are considered relevant.

3.21 Adopted supplementary planning documents and guidance that is potentially relevant to the development proposal includes the following:

- High Weald AONB Management Plan (2019)
- High Weald AONB Housing Design Guidance (2019)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2018)
- Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (2020)
- Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
- Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD (2018)
- West Sussex Car Parking Guidance (2020)
- West Sussex LLFA Policy for the Management of Surface Water (2018)

3.22 The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. The draft Plan (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination. There are currently unresolved objections to the majority of Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan. Relevant policies in the Draft Plan, which currently provide a useful direction of travel, include:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPS4 - Flood Risk and Drainage

DPN1 - Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPN4 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

DPN6 - Pollution

DPN7 - Noise Impacts

DPN9 - Air Quality

DPC1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DPC2 - Preventing Coalescence

DPC6 - Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPT3 - Active and Sustainable Travel

DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure

DPE1 - Sustainable Economic Development

DPE8 - Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy

3.23 An assessment of the proposed development against the policies listed above is provided in section 5 of this Statement.

4. Development Proposal

4.1 The proposal development comprises the following elements:

- (i) The retention and refurbishment of Maple Lodge to provide a 10-bedroom Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) facility and 8 units of overnight staff accommodation arranged over 1.5 storeys. We note that planning permission is not required for this element of the scheme.
- (ii) The demolition of the surviving parts to Horncastle House (and its associated extensions) and the demolition of Willow Lodge.
- (iii) Redevelopment to provide an 80-bedroom care home arranged over 2 storeys together with back of house facilities within the roof space. This building is positioned in the southern part of the site and orientated to maximise views over the open countryside to the south.
- (iv) The retention of the existing access from Plawhatch Lane.
- (v) The provision of 44 car parking spaces serving both uses positioned to the north and west of the proposed new care home.
- (vi) Extensive new landscaping and tree planting within the grounds of the site. The woodland trees that surround the site will be retained.

4.2 The new care home will be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and will provide 24-hour support and care for the frail elderly, meeting a full range of residential, nursing and dementia care needs. The home will offer a continuing care pathway, where the long-term needs of residents can be met on-site as their care requirements may change. The average age of residents will be approximately 85 to 90 years. Residents will move into the care home at the point at which their care needs have escalated and when they or their family/carers are unable to address these needs within their own home. The scheme will be an exemplar in terms of the standard of facilities and the provision of support and care and will incorporate the following facilities and features:

- All bedrooms to be equipped with full en-suite bathrooms
- 24-hour on site care provision
- Spacious communal and well-being facilities incorporating café/bar/lounge, hairdressers, nail bar activity rooms, lounges, dining spaces and quiet rooms
- On-site kitchen and laundry
- Staff facilities including lounge and changing rooms
- Landscaped amenity areas and sensory gardens
- Car and cycle parking as well as dedicated spaces for deliveries and ambulance

4.3 The wider design objectives are to achieve the successful integration of the new care home building into its sensitive surroundings, to deliver an attractive development that respects amenity interests, to provide landscape spaces that are usable, safe and enjoyable and to ensure that proposals meet the principles of inclusive design. The following principles are noted and are illustrated on the site layout plan provided at Figure 10:

- (i) To utilise the existing driveway and access arrangements.
- (ii) To retain Maple House in the northern part of the site and to bring it back into a productive care use.
- (iii) To position the proposed new care home so that it broadly respects the previously established building lines and thereby avoids undue encroachment into the countryside. The main southern elevation follows the existing building line and the stepped arrangement of the former Horncastle House and its more recent extension. At the same time, a section of the proposed building extends southwards to help break-up the length of the main building.
- (iv) To position the car parking areas between the two buildings to provide a convenient means of access and to minimise any impact on countryside views.
- (v) To respect the existing building height of Horncastle House by restricting the building to two storeys, together with back-of-house accommodation within the roof space.
- (vi) To break up the length of the proposed east-west elevation through the proposed treatment of the elevations, including a varied roof form, the use of setbacks and projections and a palette of materials that reflects the local vernacular.
- (vii) To protect residential amenity interests, including both existing and prospective residents, through the positioning and orientation of the proposed buildings.
- (viii) To retain existing trees, particularly those on the site boundaries that contribute to local character and provide a visual screen as well as other specimen trees within the site. As such the verdant characteristics of the site and of the adjoining countryside and AONB can be preserved.
- (ix) To provide high quality areas of open space around the proposed buildings to soften the impact of development and for the amenity of prospective residents. The scheme retains the existing brick walls to the western boundary which are used to frame a new courtyard garden.
- (x) To position the entrance, reception areas and communal spaces on the ground floor with a southerly aspect to take advantage of the long-distance views.
- (xi) To incorporate the form and materiality found in the original Horncastle House including gable projections, and the use of red bricks and ornamental hung tiles. At the same time, new materials are introduced to break up the horizontality of the building.

4.4 By means of comparison with the existing buildings on the site, the proposed development will result in a modest uplift in footprint from 2,445 sqm to 3,029 sqm. At the same time, the scheme reduces the amount of hardstanding compared to existing and improves the quality of the external amenity spaces and landscaping. Although the overall floorspace will increase, the building heights will not exceed those of the former Horncastle House.



Figure 10: Proposed Site Layout Plan

- 4.5 This proposal has been the subject of a pre-application enquiry that was lodged with the Council in August 2024 (LPA Ref: DM/24/1685). Following a site visit, the Council provided written advice on 25 October 2024 (a copy of which is provided at **Appendix 1**). The Council conclude on the general principle of development as follows:

“While the proposal for a completely new care home is not considered to comply with the development plan in principle, as it is not located within the built up area boundaries, it is not considered to be contiguous with the defined built up area boundary and it does not meet any of the special justifications of the countryside policies. Nonetheless, it is noted that the site has an existing care home use. The proposal is for an uplift of 19 units, but in comparison to the size and scale of the existing site, this would be considered small scale in line with Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, while supporting the redevelopment of the existing employment site in line with Policy WHP12 of the Neighbourhood Plan, therefore it is my informal opinion the proposal would be acceptable in principle.”

- 4.6 In respect of design matters the Council’s requested that further consideration be given to breaking up the built form, ideally into a collection of buildings; improving connectivity between upper floors and outdoor areas; separating public and private spaces to enhance independent movement for residents; improving wayfinding by repositioning internal servicing cores to open up views; and widening corridor ends and avoid long, monotonous corridors. It was further advised that this scheme would benefit from a submission to the Mid Sussex Design Panel for review.
- 4.7 The applicant has subsequently revised the scheme to address the Council’s design comments and to ensure that the proposal creates a non-institutional design through a household-based operational model that fosters a safe, homely and dementia-friendly environment. Further measures were also taken to support best-practice dementia design, including the use of smaller corridor sections with seating areas and points of interest, the provisions of recessed-bedroom entrances and enhanced access to outdoor spaces at both ground and first floor level. Further details are provided in the Design and Access Statement supporting this planning application.

4.8 The revised scheme was presented to the Council's Design Review Panel on 22 January 2025. The written advice from the Panel (provided at **Appendix 2**) supports the proposal stating that it respects the attractive original building whilst advancing a modern, simplified interpretation. The internal layout and overall appearance were also supported, subject to the following amendments:

- Opportunities could be taken to enhance the internal space by means of additional roof lights over the central corridor and stairs.
- The elements of render should be reconsidered.
- The impact of the roofscape could be reduced by dropping the eaves on the southern wing and substituting some gables of varied height or asymmetry in place of hips to break up the form, particularly when turning the corner.
- The lift overruns need to be resolved and should be integrated more elegantly.
- Greater articulation on the façade would improve the building's appearance, particularly within the central section. This could be achieved by use of bay windows to provide differentiation.
- Photovoltaics should be explored on the south-facing elevations and the flat roofs.
- The visual impact of the balustrade separating the kitchen gardens should be reviewed.

4.9 Further revisions to the scheme have since been made in response to the comments from the Design Review Panel and are incorporated in the planning application documents. These changes include:

- Window colours changed to a lighter shade of grey
- Roof design changed with lower eaves to side wings, and additional variation in height to further break the overall form and maintain the central portion of the building as the more dominant feature
- Repositioning of the lifts on the north side of the corridor and away from the south roof valleys, with overrun now only visible as chimneys from the front facade
- Addition of roof lights and integrated PV panels
- Modification of the parking layout at the care home entrance to allow a more generous space for pedestrian access.

5.0 Planning Considerations

5.0.1 This section of the Statement assesses the proposal against the relevant Development Plan policies and having regard to the wider strands to sustainable development set out in the NPPF. The key planning considerations, as considered in further detail within this Chapter, comprise the following:

1. The presumption in favour of sustainable development
2. The established use of the site
3. The principle of improved care facilities within the countryside
4. The impact on the character and appearance of the area and the National Landscape
5. The impact on heritage assets
6. The impact on residential amenity
7. The impact on highways
8. The impact on the environment
9. The impact on local infrastructure
10. Other planning considerations

1. The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

5.1.1 As confirmed in recent planning committee reports, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land. This is a result of the new standard method formula for assessing housing supply, which was published alongside the NPPF, and which gives Mid Sussex a significantly higher housing requirement than the current District Plan. Having regard to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF the policies which are most important for the determining the application are therefore deemed out-of-date, and this means granting planning permission unless;

- i. The application of policies within the NPPF that protect areas of assets of particular importance (including National Landscapes) provides a strong reason for refusing development proposed; or
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

5.1.2 This approach, commonly referred to as applying a 'tilted balance', therefore needs to be applied in assessing this planning application.

2. The Established Use of the Site

5.2.1 The site benefits from an established Class C2 and prior to the fire damage and the subsequent demolition of Horncastle House, the existing buildings could have been re-occupied for this use without the need for planning permission. The historic use of the site is therefore as a care facility accommodating up to 63 residents and 16 units of staff accommodation (79 bed spaces overall).

5.2.2 The proposal that forms the subject of this planning application would continue the established C2 use by replacing two of the current buildings (which are not fit-for-purpose, and in the case of Horncastle House, are not capable of being restored after extensive fire damage) with a modern care home facility that will deliver a range of planning benefits (as

summarised in Section 5.8). The scheme includes a total of 90 care-beds, with 8 units of overnight staff accommodation, which represent an uplift in 19 bedspaces overall.

3. The Principle of Improved Care Facilities within the Countryside

- 5.3.1 As noted, the site falls outside of any defined development boundary and is therefore within the countryside for planning policy purposes. It is important to note that countryside policies are not intended to impose a blanket level of restriction on development. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF, for example, sets out a nuanced approach where all developments proposals must respect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan is broadly consistent with this advice and states that:

‘The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.’*

- 5.3.2 Having regard to the second criterion, it is our contention that this proposal is supported by other policies in the Development Plan.
- 5.3.3 Policy DP25 encourages the provision or ‘improvement’ of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities. The accompanying text is clear that ‘specialist accommodation and care homes’ fall within the definition of community facilities and local services. This policy does not explicitly require such development to be within built up area boundaries and, in any event, this proposal relates to the improvement of an existing facility. The proposed redevelopment of the Horncastle House site is therefore in accordance with Policy DP25.
- 5.3.4 Policy DP16 which relates to the High Weald National Landscape (AONB) states that “*Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.*” Having regard to the established use of the site, and the relatively modest uplift in floorspace and bed numbers, we consider the proposal to be ‘small scale’. The scheme would therefore satisfy this policy subject to it conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape (as assessed in further detail in Section 5(4) below).
- 5.3.5 Policy DP30 of the District Plan relates to housing mix and in respect of C2 care home states that “*If a shortfall is identified in the supply of specialist accommodation and care homes falling within Use Class C2 to meet demand in the District, the Council will consider allocating sites for such use through a Site Allocations Document, produced by the District Council.*” The supporting text further states for care homes “*provided the scheme makes efficient use of land, any site considered appropriate for housing development would be positively considered for such older person accommodation through the decision making process.*” In this context the proposal will accord with the Council’s housing mix objectives.

5.3.6 Policy SA39 of the Site Allocations Plan (criterion c) supports the provision of older persons housing and care home accommodation and indicates that proposals can be supported outside the Built-Up Area where the land is contiguous with the Built-Up Area boundary and the development is demonstrated to be sustainable, including by reference to the settlement hierarchy. Sites must be accessible by foot or public transport to local shops, services, community facilities and the wider public transport network and should demonstrate how reliance on the private car will be reduced and be accompanied by a Travel Plan which sets out how the proposal would seek to limit the need to travel. These sustainability objectives are reinforced through Policies DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) and DP21 (Transport). Emerging policy DPH4 (Older Person's Housing and Specialist Accommodation) retains the same criteria for new care developments, but proposals for extensions, upgrades and annexes to existing older persons' housing and specialist accommodation are supported where each of the following criteria is satisfied:

6. *There is a demonstrable need to support the existing accommodation.*
7. *The design respects the character and appearance of the host building and local area and is subservient to the existing building.*
8. *The cumulative additions are not disproportionate to the original building.*
9. *It does not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy for existing or neighbouring residents.*

5.3.7 The application site evidently does not fulfil each of these policy criteria, being beyond the settlement boundary. However, the proposal is for the replacement and improvement of an existing facility, and the nature of the proposed care home use is such that no residents of either the care home or the ABI unit would have access to a car. Travel to and from the site is therefore restricted to staff and visitors. In this regard the scheme is very different from a retirement housing use which is subject to the same policy provisions. Moreover, any future planning application would be supported by a robust set of Travel Plan measures to reduce the use of the car as far as possible, noting that the former care home use was not governed by any such controls. The Travel Plan would include a dedicated minibus service for staff and visitors to provide a regular link to the wider public transport network as well as cycle provision and the use of electric vehicle charging. In summary, the proposal will not result in a significant uplift in traffic generation relative to the established care uses on the site.

5.3.8 At a Neighbourhood Plan level, Policy WHP12 seeks to protect local employment opportunities to prevent West Hoathly Parish becoming a dormitory settlement. Employment uses are not defined by the Use Classes Order and the redevelopment of the Horncastle House site provides an opportunity to reinstate a former employment use.

5.3.9 In summary, we contend that this proposal for a replacement care home accords with the principle of the Council's countryside policies (DP12) by virtue of being an improvement to an existing community facility and local service (DP25). In being 'small scale' (with an uplift of 19 units overall) the proposal is also capable of meeting the requirements of Policy DP16 subject to the overall visual impact of the scheme. The scheme would also support the redevelopment of a former employment generating site in line with Policy WHP12 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst a care home in this location does not meet the locational requirements of Policy SA39 (being beyond the settlement boundary and having limited accessibility by foot due to the absence of footpaths linking the site to the wider pedestrian network), it is important to note that the proposal comprises an important upgrade to an existing care facility. In summary, when assessed across the Development Plan as a whole,

we consider the principle of the proposed development to be acceptable. This is a view shared by the Council in offering pre-application advice on this scheme.

4. The Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area and the National Landscape

- 5.4.1 As noted above, the site lies within the designated countryside and within the High Weald AONB (National Landscape). All proposals are required to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the district. Emerging Policy DPC1 reiterates these objectives. Alongside this, proposals must meet the general design criteria set out in Policy DP26 of the MSDP and Policy EG3 of the Neighbourhood Plan, which require schemes to be well designed and to reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. In respect of the National Landscape, Policy DP16 of the MSDP states that development is only to be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Emerging Policy DPC4, which reflects paragraph 190 of the NPPF further notes that ‘major’ development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the public interest.
- 5.4.2 With reference to the existing built form on the site, is our strong contention that the proposal for Horncastle House is not ‘major’ development when assessed against policies for protecting National Landscapes.
- 5.4.2 As outlined in Section 4, the proposed redevelopment scheme has been prepared to respond positively to the site designations (and associated policy criteria) and to ensure that it would not negatively impact on the existing quality of the protected landscape. We note the following aspects of the proposed design:
- The proposed layout protects the existing boundary planting and trees which provide an important screen and restrict views between the site and the countryside beyond. As such the verdant characteristics of the site and of the adjoining countryside and National Landscape can be preserved.
 - The siting of the proposed new care home generally aligns with the existing building lines and would not therefore materially encroach further into the countryside. Although the rear wing of the proposed building would extend beyond the current building line to the south, the approach is intended to break up the length of the elevations and this wing is designed to read subserviently to the main body of the care home.
 - The height of the proposed two storey care home is consistent with that of the existing building at Horncastle House and in some areas will be lower, ensuring that the maximum building height will not be markedly different than the existing context.
 - Although the proposed care home building will fill in the small existing gap between the Horncastle House and Willow Lodge, the design approach will introduce variety into the treatment of the elevations to break up the overall massing. The use of materials will be sensitive to the local context and ensure that the building assimilates into its setting.
 - The opportunity is taken to reduce the extent of hardstanding within the site as far as possible.
 - The building will be set within a high-quality new landscaping that will soften the impact of the proposed development and provide a valuable amenity to prospective residents.
- 5.4.3 Having regard to the above, and notwithstanding the National Landscape designation, we conclude that the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development will be limited,

even in winter conditions. A Landscape Visual Impact Appraisal has been prepared to inform the scheme design and this concludes as follows:

- The site is very well screened by existing vegetation which obscures views of the existing buildings from almost every direction.
- Even in winter conditions the surrounding woodland areas provide a substantial visual barrier.
- To the south of the site, the topography of the landscape and areas of woodland restrict views of the site from public vantage points.
- The massing of the residential development to the west obstructs views into the site from the adjoining public right of way.
- Due to the limited visibility of the site the potential impacts on the landscape character of the High Weald AONB and on visual amenity are likely to be very low to negligible and will be limited to a very small geographical area.
- Due to the topography of the surrounding area and screening by existing vegetation the proposed development would not have any material impact on views from public vantage points in the wider landscape.
- Whilst the potential visual impacts associated with the proposed development would be very low, limited landscape mitigation measures are recommended to further minimise the potential landscape and visual impacts, including the retention of the existing woodland surrounding the site, the planting of new native trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries to mitigate views from private properties and the architectural design to consider the appearance and materials of Horncastle House and the adjacent Horncastle Place.

5.4.4 As noted in Section 4 of this Statement, the proposals have been the subject of consultation with the local planning authority and its design advisors. Various revisions to the scheme have been made to address the comments raised and to enhance the overall appearance and design of the scheme.

5.4.5 In summary, subject to design mitigation, the proposed redevelopment scheme is capable of protecting designated countryside and landscape interests and of enhancing the appearance of a largely run-down, previously developed site.

5. The Impact on Heritage Assets

5.5.1 The existing buildings on the site are not located within a Conservation Area and are not listed by statute or included within a local list. In other words the site does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets. The extant remains of Horncastle House have since been demolished and, ahead of this, were assessed as having a very limited level of significance. The proposal nonetheless seeks to retain the garden walls which were built contemporaneously with Horncastle House, and which are in a relatively good state of preservation. As such, the limited significance that the walls possess will be preserved by future development within the site.

5.5.2 The proposed development will have no material impact on any other heritage assets beyond the site, or on their setting. This is achieved through a combination of their distance from the site, the local topography and the intervening natural screening.

- 5.5.3 Further details on heritage and archaeological matters are provided within the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment that supports this planning application.

6. The Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.6.1 The application site is in a secluded location. Although there are residential properties to the west, the nearest being Horncastle Place, vegetation and walls create a clear sense of separation between these two sites. The proposed care home will respect the existing building line to the west and will maintain a separation distance of over 38 metres to the nearest part of the adjoining property. Given the distances involved the proposal will not result in undue harm to residential amenity interests in respect of overlooking, loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, sense of enclosure and noise/disturbance. MSDP Policy 26 is therefore capable of being satisfied.
- 5.6.2 The scheme design also demonstrates how the proposal will provide an appropriately high-quality living environment for prospective residents. Internally the accommodation will meet current best practice principles in care (and dementia care) design, will significantly exceed the minimum size requirements set out by the Care Quality Commission, will incorporate generous communal areas and is designed to maximise the provision of daylight and sunlight. Externally, the building will be set within extensive landscaped spaces that will provide a range of usable amenity functions.

7. The Impact on Highways

Site Access

- 5.7.1 The proposed care home will make use of the existing means of the access into the site from Plawhatch Lane. As set out in the accompanying Transport Statement, the proposal will offer safe access and egress for vehicles with fully compliant visibility splays and will meet the highways safety and visibility requirements set out in the Development Plan (MSDP Policy DP21 and Policy EG11 of the Neighbourhood Plan)

Vehicle Movements

- 5.7.2 The principle of occupying the site for care uses has previously been established and as set out in the accompanying Transport Statement, the proposed development would not represent a significant uplift in vehicle movements to and from the site or have an adverse impact on the operation of the local highway network.

Car Parking

- 5.7.3 With regards to car parking, current WSCC parking guidance (September 2022) does not include specific advice on the parking provision expected for C2 residential care home uses and a site-specific assessment is required. In this case, no residents of the proposed facility would have access to a car, with travel to and from the site therefore being restricted to staff and visitors. The overall level of parking provision (44 spaces) has been informed by parking accumulation data as set out in the accompanying Transport Statement which indicates a maximum requirement for 29 spaces for the proposed care home uses at the peak hour. The scheme therefore includes a surplus above this to reflect the site location and the absence of alternative on-street parking. The provision includes 4 disabled bays, 9 electric vehicle

charging points, separate delivery and ambulance bays and 12 cycle parking spaces. Furthermore, a Travel Plan has been prepared to outline the strategies and measures to be implemented to discourage single occupancy car use and to promote sustainable travel. We note that no such Travel Plan was in place for the former care home on the site. For the reasons set out above, the proposed level of car parking provision is considered entirely suitable in meeting the requirements of staff and visitors and in supporting non-car modes of travel.

8. The Impact on the Environment

Trees and Landscaping

- 5.8.1 The proposal has been informed by a Tree Survey and allows for the long-term retention of most of the existing trees on the site and their long-term management. A limited number of trees are to be removed to facilitate the development and for safety reasons, including trees on the eastern boundary which have ash dieback. The landscape general arrangement plan indicates that these trees will be replaced with new specimens to increase the total number and diversity of trees and canopy cover at the site. Where trees are retained, and subject to the specific protection measures recommended within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment supporting this application, the proposal is not considered to have a material impact on arboricultural interests.
- 5.8.2 Alongside the proposed tree works, the scheme incorporates generous landscaped amenity spaces including opportunities for the planting of new trees, shrubs and flowers. The landscaping serves three primary purposes:
1. To soften views into and out of the site and to enhance the appearance of the proposed care home within the street scene.
 2. To supplement the existing planting and to act as a screen to enhance the amenity for adjoining residents.
 3. To offer a visual and amenity for prospective residents of the care home. The garden areas include spaces for sensory planting, raised beds, activity places, bench seating and socialising. In addition, all of the ground floor bedrooms will be provided with private patio areas, and the main communal areas will extend onto outside terraces.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.8.2 In accordance with MSDP Policy 38, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been prepared to assess the presence of any ecological species within or adjacent to the site. The PEA concludes as follows:
- The existing buildings to be removed are considered to have low to moderate suitability to support roosting bats. Therefore, further emergence surveys are required to determine presence or likely absence of bat roosts within three of the existing buildings and to determine any subsequent requirements for mitigation.
 - The development is considered unlikely to result in the loss or degradation of bat foraging and commuting habitat.
 - Subject to the retention of existing dense scrub beyond the existing buildings, the proposal is unlikely to impact on dormice habitats.
 - The absence of great crested newts in the wider landscape needs to be confirmed.

- Further reptile surveys are required to determine reptile presence/likely absence, reptile species diversity and population size.

- 5.8.3 In accordance with the recommendations further bat and reptile surveys have been carried out. The bat survey confirms that no bats were seen emerging from the buildings and therefore they are considered highly likely absent of roosting bats. The reptile survey similarly concluded that no reptiles or evidence of reptiles was recorded during the surveys and are therefore likely to be absent from the site.
- 5.8.4 With regards to great crested newts, the applicant intends to join the District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme and to make an application to NatureSpace Partnership. NatureSpace will assess the site and provide an Impact Assessment and, if relevant, identify any compensation required for the loss of suitable habitats on-site.
- 5.8.5 The proposal also includes the potential for biodiversity enhancements and the creation of new habitats of the site. The proposed measures include the planting of species-rich wildflower grassland, new tree planting using native species of local provenance, new activity lawn and shrub areas and the provision of bird boxes and log habitat piles. The Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Calculations that support this application show that the scheme will achieve a 10% net gain in habitat and hedgerow units on-site.

The Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area

- 5.8.6 The site lies within the 7km 'zone of influence' of the Ashdown Forest 7km Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and where it is necessary to mitigate the potential impacts of development to ensure the effects of any increase in visitors to Ashdown Forest are addressed. In this case the proposal is for a Class C2 development that will not result in a net increase in dwellings or associated recreational pressures. No contributions towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace are therefore required, although it is understood that a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) may be sought. Moreover, the overall level of traffic generation from the proposed development will be modest when compared with the established care use, such that any impacts on the amount of nitrogen dioxide pollution deposited into the SPA will be limited. As set out in the accompanying Transport Statement, this uplift is equivalent to only 3 additional two-way trips during both the AM and PM peak hours and the proposal incorporates measures to encourage more sustainable transport options. For these reasons the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the SPA.

Drainage

- 5.8.7 The site lies within flood zone 1, where there is a very low probability of flooding, and is also identified as being at a low risk of surface water flooding. The application is nonetheless accompanied by a worked-up drainage proposal to demonstrate compliance with MSDP Policy 41. The proposed drainage strategy involves conveying surface water flows to a geo-cellular tank via permeable paving. This geo-cellular tank will then discharge at the greenfield discharge rate of 6.1l/s into an existing manhole in the east of the site into the ditch network within Horncastle Wood. Foul water flows from the proposed development will discharge into an existing sewage treatment plant which has been identified as being in good condition and with sufficient capacity.

Sustainability

- 5.8.8 As set out in the accompanying Energy Statement, and in accordance with MSDP Policy 39, the scheme adheres to the energy hierarchy and will incorporate a series of energy efficiency measures and the inclusion of an air source heat pump for space and hot water heating and the use of photovoltaic panels on the roof of the building to supplement the energy use.

Water Neutrality

- 5.8.9 Mid Sussex is supplied with water by Southern Water from its Sussex North Water Resource Zone, which is a supply sourced from groundwater abstraction sites in the Arun Valley. In September 2021, the Council received a Position Statement from Natural England that the existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone could be having an impact on the Arun Valley sites and that development within this zone must not add to this impact. To address this requirement, the planning application is supported by a statement setting out the strategy for achieving water neutrality within the development (using the existing care facility as a benchmark). The Assessment concludes that by utilising water efficiency fittings and fixtures (in accordance with Building Regulation requirements), the proposed development can become water neutral.

Air Quality

- 5.8.10 As set out in the Air Quality Assessment supporting this planning application, the proposal would not contribute to air quality exceedances or lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area, nor would it significantly increase emissions or lead to new exposure to emissions considered to be significant.

9. The Impact on Local Infrastructure

- 5.9.1 Having regard to the range of on-site communal facilities and the limited mobility of prospective residents, the applicant does not consider that the proposed care home development would result in any undue pressure on local services. No site-specific planning obligations are therefore envisaged, other than the proposed Travel Plan initiatives and any requirements in respect of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) relating to the Ashdown Forest SPA.
- 5.9.2 As a care home falling within Use Class C2, the proposal would not trigger the Council's affordable housing requirements (as confirmed in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD).

10. Other Planning Considerations

- 5.10.1 The proposed care home redevelopment will deliver significant public benefits that would collectively contribute to the strands of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – as set out in the NPPF. These benefits are outlined below:

Meeting a Need for Enhanced Care Accommodation

- 5.10.2 The proposal will meet a pressing local need for specialist dementia care home provision on a site where the principle of a Class C2 use has been previously established and will improve the quality of existing facilities.

- 5.10.3 At a national level, the need to provide a range of older persons accommodation is set out in Planning Policy Guidance on Housing for Older and Disabled People (June 2019). This states that:

“The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million.” [our underlining]

- 5.10.4 At a local level, the Council’s Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Addendum (August 2016), which informed Policy SA39, identifies a demand for 2,442 care home bedspaces in the district in 2031. The emerging Local Plan, which is based on the 2021 Strategic Housing Market Assessment, outlines a need for 300 residential care bedspaces.
- 5.10.5 The applicant’s own research corroborates the level of local need and concludes that the undersupply of appropriate accommodation over forthcoming years is substantial. The accompanying needs assessment prepared by leading analysts Healthcare Property Consultants indicates a shortfall in 2027 (the earliest projected opening date of the replacement care home) of 107 market standard care home bedrooms when accounting for any pipeline schemes. That figure increases to 285 bedspaces by 2030.
- 5.10.6 In addition, the proposal will secure the re-use of an existing facility for adults with acquired brain injuries (ABI). While planning permission is not needed to re-use the existing building for this purpose, the wider development of the site will secure the future of this facility and thereby address a specific need for this specialist care use. Data from Sussex Integrated Care Board confirms there to be a significant shortfall in appropriate ABI care accommodation locally, with over 50% of placements having to be made outside of the ICB catchment due to a lack of local facilities).
- 5.10.7 In summary, the evidence based prepared by both the local planning authority and the applicant shows local care needs to be significant. In the case of the application site, the proposal will upgrade an existing facility and contribute to this need through a net uplift in 32 care bedspaces.

Well-Being and Health Benefits

- 5.10.8 The provision of high-quality care home bedspaces for older people will make a material contribution towards the health and well-being of local residents leading to reduced isolation and associated mental health issues (something that has come sharply into focus in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic).
- 5.10.9 The provision of dedicated care services can also reduce the need for residents to make use of primary health care services or social services in the area, as well as relieving pressure on hospital bedspaces. This is an important local benefit, noting that for the most part, over 70% of people who move into a care home do so from within a 3-mile radius of the home. This then means that the majority of the people living within the home will remain registered to their current local GP practice and therefore the home would not be adding any additional burden to the local surgeries.

Housing Supply Benefits

- 5.10.10 The proposal will directly contribute to the Council's housing numbers. The most recent version of the NPPG clearly acknowledges that "*Plan-making authorities will need to count housing provided for older people against their housing requirement*" (Paragraph: 016a Reference ID: 63-016a-20190626). The proposed uplift in the number of care home bedrooms on the site will therefore make a meaningful contribution towards the Council's five-year housing supply shortfall.
- 5.10.11 A further benefit of the proposed care use is that it has the potential to free up other sectors of the housing market by releasing much-needed family housing accommodation. Residents moving into care homes often 'downsize' from larger dwellings and the proposal therefore delivers a knock-on housing benefit. This in turn will help to reduce pressure on other sites in the area. The recognition that older people will look to downsize is consistent with guidance in the NPPG.

Delivering Jobs for Local People

- 5.10.12 Not only will there be the direct short-term economic benefits arising from the construction phase of the development, but there will also be direct long-term economic benefits stemming from the employment opportunities associated with the day-to-day operation of the care home. The proposed care home has the potential to generate up to 60 FTE jobs (with up to 20 staff on site at any one time). The re-use of the ABI unit will provide an estimated further 10 to 15 jobs. Importantly the jobs created by the proposed care home would offer a range of different opportunities including managers, nurses, carers, housekeepers, chef and maintenance staff. Furthermore, the jobs created would primarily be for local people and would therefore minimize the potential for out-commuting.
- 5.10.13 In addition, there will also be indirect economic benefits arising from employment and activity in the supply chain companies providing support services for the care facilities. An induced economic benefit will also arise through expenditure from employees spending their income on goods and services in the local economy.

Environmental Benefits

- 5.10.14 The proposed development will make best use of currently redundant previously developed land and will deliver a scheme that will allow the site to be brought to a productive use. Much of the land is currently in a poor condition and the quality of the proposed design and landscaping approach, as well as the opportunities for biodiversity enhancement will support environmental sustainability.

6. The Planning Balance

- 6.1 Although the proposed development would be outside the planning boundaries identified in the development plan, the Council's countryside policies (DP12) do not preclude development where it maintains (and where possible enhances) rural and landscape character and where it is supported by other policies in the Plan. In this case, the proposal is to improve an existing care facility and the principle of development aligns with policies to support community facility and local services (Policy DP25), to promote small scale proposals that support the economy and social well-being of the AONB (Policy DP16), to promote housing mix (Policy DP30), to support the provision of older persons housing and care home accommodation (Policy SA29) and to retain existing employment sites (Policy WHP12).
- 6.2 By virtue of the proposed scheme design, and for the reasons set out in this statement, the character and appearance of the area, including the qualities of the National Landscape, would not be materially harmed. The proposed design and landscaping approach scheme will minimise the impact on the countryside setting such that any adverse impacts can be appropriately mitigated. Although the scheme would result in a modest uplift in vehicle movements, the proposed Travel Plan would introduce measures to limit the use of the car that do not currently exist. In addition, and subject to appropriate mitigation, the proposal is not expected to give rise to any other material harm in respect of other environmental matters.
- 6.3 As the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and because the application of policies protecting areas of assets of particular importance (including National Landscapes) do not provide a strong reason for refusing development in this case, paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is engaged. In this regard the proposal will deliver substantive collective benefits. These include making the best use of previously developed land and transforming the visual qualities of a run-down site; facilitating the improvement of an existing care facility to meet identified local needs and enhancing care outcomes; contributing to the Council's housing land supply (both directly and indirectly) and; providing jobs for local people. Overall, the limited adverse impacts of the site's location outside the planning boundaries do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In summary, we conclude that the proposal comprises sustainable development and accords with the policies in the NPPF and the Development Plan as a whole.

Appendix 1

Pre-Application advice letter dated 25 October 2024

Dear Mr Kearly,

RE: Demolition of Horncastle House and Willow Lodge and the redevelopment to provide an 80 bedroom care home.

AT: Horncastle House Nursing Home, Plawhatch Lane, Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, East Sussex, RH19 4JH

REFERENCE: DM/24/1685

Following our site meeting and the virtual meeting these notes cover what was discussed.

The existing care home is currently closed, with the main building Horncastle House suffering from significant fire damage after it was struck by lightning and a recent demolition notice was submitted under Class B(2) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended to remove the remainder of the building due to health and safety concerns, which was agreed by the LPA.

The proposal is seeking to demolish the existing fire damaged building, together with Willow Lodge and construct a replacement care home within a similar location to provide an 80 bedroom care home, arranged over 2 storeys, with the back of house facilities contained within the roof space. In addition the proposal is seeking to retain and refurbish Maple Lodge to provide a 10 bedroom Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) facility and 8 units of overnight staff accommodation.

The proposal would utilise the existing access from Plawhatch Lane and off road parking for 44 cars would be provided on site. A proposal of this type would be assessed against the following policies:

Mid Sussex District Plan Policies:

DP1: Sustainable Economic Development
DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
DP12: Protecting and Enhancement of Countryside
DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DP17: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
DP20 : Securing Infrastructure
DP21: Transport
DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services
DP26: Character and Design
DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution
DP30: Housing Mix
DP37: Trees Woodlands and Hedgerows
DP38: Biodiversity
DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

Mid Sussex Site Allocations Document (DPD)

Site Allocations Development Plan Document as adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs 2031.

SA38:Air Quality

SA39: Specialist Accommodation for Older People and Care Homes

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/8381/site-allocations-dpd-adopted-2022-reduced.pdf>

West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan

WHP1: Landscape

WHP4 Visualisations

WHP12: Existing Employment Sites

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2850/west-hoathly-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

A copy of the Design Guide SPD is available via the following

link: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5611/mid-sussex-design-guide-spd.pdf>

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) was published for public consultation on 12th January 2024 for six weeks. At this stage the Local Planning Authority does not know which Policies will be the subject of unresolved objections and therefore only minimal weight can be given to the Plan. As such, this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

- DPS2:Sustainable Design and Construction
- DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
- DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
- DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DPN6: Pollution
- DPN7: Noise Impacts
- DPN9: Air Quality
- DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
- DPC2: Preventing Coalescence
- DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

- DPB1: Character and Design
- DPT3: Active and Sustainable Travel
- DPT4 Parking and Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure
- DPE1: Sustainable Economic Development
- DPE8: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy

MSDC Developer Infrastructure & Contributions SPD (2018)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

The NPPF is a material consideration.

Principle

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

‘In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.’*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

‘If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.’

The requirement to determine applications ‘in accordance with the plan’ does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, the Sites Allocation DPD, and the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan.

The District Plan is up to date and the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land.

As the proposed development is located within the Countryside the starting point is Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which states:

‘The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.’*

The proposals is not for the purpose of agriculture however, Policy DP25 does support provision of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities (a care home being included within this category). This policy does not explicitly require such development to be within built up area boundaries; however it does state that such development to meet local needs will be identified through Neighbourhood Plans or a Site Allocations Development Plan Document produced by the District Council.

While DP16 in part states: *‘Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.’*

Policy DP30 of the District Plan which relates to housing mix and in respect of C2 care home states:

‘If a shortfall is identified in the supply of specialist accommodation and care homes falling within Use Class C2 to meet demand in the District, the Council will consider allocating sites for such use through a Site Allocations Document, produced by the District Council.’

It also sets out that: *‘any site considered appropriate for housing development would be positively considered for such older person accommodation through the decision-making process.’*

SA39 relates to the provision of specialist accommodation for older people and states:

‘There is an identified need for specialist accommodation for older people comprising at least 665 additional extra care units (Use Class C2) by 2030, of which at least 570 should be leasehold. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Addendum (August 2016) identified forecast demand for care homes (Use Class C2) at 2031 as 2,442 bedspaces. The Council will support proposals that will contribute to meeting these types of specialist accommodation.

Proposals for specialist accommodation for older people and care homes will be supported where:

- a) It is allocated for such use within the District Plan, Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plan; or*
- b) It forms part of a strategic allocation; or*
- c) It is located within the Built-Up Area Boundary as defined on the Policies Map; or*
- d) Where the site is outside the Built-Up Area, it is contiguous with the Built-Up Area Boundary as defined on the Policies Map and the development is demonstrated to be sustainable, including by reference to the settlement hierarchy (policy DP4).*

In all circumstances, the site must be accessible by foot or public transport to local shops, services, community facilities and the wider public transport network. Proposals must demonstrate how reliance on the private car will be reduced and be accompanied by a Travel Plan which sets out how the proposal would seek to limit the need to travel and how it offers a genuine choice of transport

modes, recognising that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.'

At local level Policy WHP12 sets out that:

'There will be a general presumption against the loss of employment sites. Redevelopment of an existing employment site for alternative uses, including housing, with some employment opportunities retained on site will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the use of the site solely for employment is no longer viable.'

While the proposal for a completely new care home is not considered to comply with the development plan in principle, as it is not located within the built up area boundaries, it is not considered to be contiguous with the defined built up area boundary and it does not meet any of the special justifications of the countryside policies. Nonetheless, it is noted that the site has an existing care home use. The proposal is for an uplift of 19 units, but in comparison to the size and scale of the existing site, this would be considered small scale in line with Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, while supporting the redevelopment of the existing employment site in line with Policy WHP12 of the Neighbourhood Plan, therefore it is my informal opinion the proposal would be acceptable in principle.

Design and Character

The Councils Urban Designer has provided the following comments in relation to design and appearance that should be taken into account and addressed in any future application.

1. *The design would benefit from the build form to be broken into collection of buildings. It was explained to me this would create number of complications for running of the building. However, given a fact that existing buildings will be demolished, and site can be adapted and designed again without any major constraints, I would like to point out and strongly encourage to explore possibility of redesigning the scheme to create a built environment that could be completely different from all institutional nursing homes as we know them.*

<https://hogeweyk.dementiavillage.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-64648948>

1. *As presented building circulation is relying on the flow of people into and out of the building through the main lobby. Small changes to the internal layout were discussed during the meeting that can be done to improve the wayfinding and legibility of the interiors such as:*
 - *repositioning of the internal servicing cores that block the views*
 - *designing out the visual impact of the fire doors that are to be left open on daily basis and only used during a fire event, by inserting them into walls etc*
 - *ensuring all fire doors will be glazed fire doors*
 - *widening the ends of the corridors that touch directly on the main lobby, and introducing additional floor to ceiling glass panels next to fire doors that are planned to be closed.*

However, I am not convinced that those changes will solve the issue of the building being dominated by long corridors and elevations.

It can still be quite oppressive, monotonous and continues having a feel of an institution that does not support the residents need for wandering, sudden urge to roam and restless behaviour (refer to suggestion form point.1).

Upper levels of the main building feel disconnected and would benefit from direct access to the gardens. Fire escape staircases could be used as a direct way out from the 1st floor to the secured gardens. Creating those direct routes from upstairs would help with separating the public and private and allow residents for higher level of independent movement around the site.

- 2. I am looking forward to a 3D presentation and more detailed landscape proposals.*
- 3. I would expect that landscape/site layout together with the building's layout will support the aspiration to design a world that maintains as much a resemblance to normal life as possible, without endangering the patients.*
- 4. Other notes:*

Identify any long views where buildings would be visible and present them in form of 'existing' and 'proposed' photomontages

I have no reason to disagree with these comments and it is advised that these recommendations are given consideration. Furthermore, it is advised that this scheme could benefit from going to the Mid Sussex Design Panel for review.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states:

'does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution. (see Policy DP29)'

A similar ethos is found within Principles DG45, 46 47 and 48 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide.

Policy DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states:

'The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:

Noise pollution:

- It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted near existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.

In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:

- an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;'*

Due to the rural nature of the site, I have no concerns in relation to overlooking, loss of privacy, reduction in sunlight and daylight and a loss of outlook.

However, with the proposal having a shared access with residential dwellings and the proposal likely to include commercial plant and equipment consideration should be given to good acoustic design.

It is recommended that you have regard to neighbours in relation to:

- Suitable CEMP to control noise/dust during the demolition and construction phases, BS5228, IAQM guidance.
- No deliveries or collections of waste at from the home at unsociable hours (when operational) i.e. not before 7am or too late.
- Lighting in accordance with guidance from ILP for reduction of obtrusive light.
- Control noise from any plant - Planning Noise Advice Document Sussex, BS4142.
- Control odour from kitchen flue - EMAQ+ Guidance Control of odour and noise from commercial kitchen exhaust systems.
- Air Quality requirements - Sussex Air quality and emissions mitigation guidance.

Impact on Trees

The Tree Officer has undertaken a separate site visit, following which they have confirmed the following:

'It seems where the main development will be, there isn't much to be concerned about, tree wise.'

I note a group of category B oak trees to the North of the site, which I would like to see more details about protection. I also noted that a group of ash trees to the eastern border, the majority of which have ash dieback and would need to be removed for safety.

As previously mentioned, I would need to see a full AIA and AMS, as well as a tree protection plan for this site to comment more fully.'

It is therefore recommended that this additional information is provided with any subsequent application.

Highway impact and parking provision

In respect of Highways, access and parking you would be advised to seek pre-application advice from WSCC as the local highway authority before proceeding further. District Plan Policy DP21 sets out the transport related requirements for development. The proposed parking standards are set out within the WSCC Parking standards available via the following

link: https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1847/guidance_parking_res_dev.pdf

Drainage

The application will need to be supported by a foul sewage and surface water drainage strategy. Surface water drainage should utilise sustainable drainage principles (SuDS) and follow the drainage hierarchy. The drainage strategy should be developed alongside any landscaping and levelling works to ensure they do not negatively impact each other. Drainage should be designed

to the standard set out within the guidance and policy at the time, including climate change allowances. At present this results in a design standard of the 1:100-year rainfall event plus a 45% allowance for climate change. Where the 2050's climate change allowance is greater than the 2070's allowance the greater of the two should be utilised.

Ecological Implications

It is noted that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken, however, within this it recommends a number of further surveys. It is therefore advised that these surveys are undertaken before applying.

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to planning and land management that leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was before. BNG will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by enhancing or creating new habitats in association with development. The requirement for BNG does not alter the existing legal requirements and protections for the natural environment such as protecting important habitats and species.

Biodiversity net gain is already referenced in the NPPF para 180 d) and opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of the design of the scheme especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

From 2024, all planning permissions granted in England, with a few exemptions, will have to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under the Environment Act 2021. BNG is calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which measures the biodiversity value of habitats in 'biodiversity units' as a proxy for nature. The Biodiversity Metric is used to assess how a development might change the biodiversity value of a site. It can help to inform the design, layout and management of a site to support biodiversity. You are also advised to apply the mitigation hierarchy in your proposed development as set out in NPPF paragraph 180 a) and note the principle of additionality.

The Council has issued further guidance on its website: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/biodiversity-net-gain/>

Sustainability

You should be mindful that the application should be submitted with a Sustainability Statement that clearly sets out how matters of sustainable design and construction have been taken into account in accordance with Policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Infrastructure contributions

Contributions are requested in accordance with the councils adopted Supplementary Planning Document "Development and Infrastructure" and are requested in accordance with Policy DP20 of the District Plan and the NPPF. In the case of nursing homes the contributions are usually TAD (Total Access Demand) and Libraries contributions. On submission of an application WSCC would provide a response on the amount of the contributions based on the calculation as set out in the SPD. A planning obligation form should be completed and submitted with an application.

Ashdown Forest

Supporting information in respect of likely employee numbers, shift patterns and the surrounding area from which they would be expected to commute will enable the Council to assess the application in relation to the traffic movements with respect of any impact upon the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation.

The proposal has the potential to increase the number of traffic movements across the Ashdown Forest that may have an adverse impact on the amount of nitrogen dioxide pollution deposited on the lowland heaths that make up the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a site of European importance.

Proposed development planned as part of the Mid Sussex District Plan has been accompanied by a Habitats Regulation Assessment, part of which was informed by the Mid Sussex Transport Study. Where proposals have been included in the Transport Study, the council can undertake a Screening Assessment. However, where proposals have not been included, the council needs to satisfy itself on the potential traffic impacts as part of a Habitats Regulation Assessment in terms of screening and any further appropriate assessment.

Windfall sites such as this will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the time of determining any application. The case officer would contact you at an early stage once an application has been submitted, to advise whether there is sufficient capacity in the amount of development proposed in this area at the relevant time, meaning that the council can undertake a Screening Assessment, or not.

Further information on this matter can be found on our website via the following link (scroll down towards the bottom): <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/protecting-ashdown-forest/>

In line with the SAMM and SANG tariff, a C2 care home would be exempt from SANG, but SAMM would apply and would be charged at £1,170 per net increase in bedroom units.

Conclusion

To conclude, as it stands I am of the opinion that the redevelopment and enlargement of the existing care home would be acceptable in principle. It is recommended that any subsequent application takes into account the above mentioned comments and will also need to be supported by the following documents as set out within the Council Local

List <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/1976/validation-criteria-for-planning-applications.pdf>:

- Planning Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (and specific species surveys should these be identified by the PEA as necessary)
- Foul Sewage and Surface Water Assessment
- Tree Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Lighting Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Planning Obligation Instruction Form
- Road Safety Audit
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Transport Statement

- Travel plan
- Ventilation and Extraction Statement (if ventilation or extraction equipment is proposed)

Community Involvement

I would strongly suggest approaching the local residents in advance of any application submission (in particular the immediately adjacent residents) in accordance with the recommendations in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/consultation-monitoring/>

You may also wish to contact West Hoathly Parish Council to discuss your proposals as well.

The aim of pre-application consultation is to encourage discussion before a formal application is made enabling communities to have real influence over proposals before they are finalised. The process can help to identify improvements and overcome objections at a later stage.

The views in this email are at officer level only and do not prejudice the Council from making whatever decision it considers appropriate on any application subsequently submitted.

The information contained in pre-planning advice may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unless the information contained is legally exempt from disclosure, we cannot guarantee that we will not provide the whole or part of this advice to a third party making a request for information about the subject matter.

Yours sincerely

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Appendix 2

Minutes from Design Review Panel meeting dated 22 January 2025

Notes of Mid Sussex Design Review Panel – 22 January 2025

Present: Mark Folkes (Chair), Jake White, Gavin Sargent, Phil Winch

Apologies: Alice-Rose Hoile

In attendance: Anna Kramarczyk (MSDC Urban Designer), Andy Watt (Senior Planning Officer), Caroline Grist (Senior Planning Officer)
Catherine Carden (Planning Officer)

Horncastle House Nursing Home, Plawhatch Lane, Sharpthorne

Description of Scheme

Demolition of Horncastle House and Willow Lodge and the redevelopment to provide an 80 bedroom care home (Pre-application DM/24/1685)

Presenters

Architect/Designers: Melissa Magee, Monica Dhillon (Carless + Adams)
Landscape Architect: Nicholas Gard (Deacon Design)
Planning Consultant: Adrian Kearly (QED Planning)
Developer: Ed Rimell (Splendid Healthcare)

In attendance

Ware Councillor: Cllr Paul Brown
Case Officer: Joseph Swift

The Panel's Comments

The Panel praised a great presentation and a well thought through scheme. It respects the attractive original building but advances a modern, simplified interpretation.

Internally, the floor plan was commended and will work well for the future residents, being well lit with regular resting areas and no dead ends. Further opportunity could be taken to enhance the internal space by means of additional roof lights over the central corridor and stairs.

Externally, the choice of materials was supported (brick, slate and stone), although render would look a little out of place. Nonetheless the Panel queried whether grey windows might work better in places where there is no render and a lighter colour applied to the rendered parts, so windows wouldn't appear as "punched in".

In terms of the form of the building, greater interest was called for.

The proposed roofscape was considered to be monolithic but the Panel suggested that its impact could be reduced by dropping the eaves on the southern wing and substituting some gables of varied height or asymmetry in place of hips to break up the form, particularly when turning the corner. The lift overruns were unresolved, particularly in close views, not helped by landing within the roof valleys. The Panel urged the designers to give consideration to increasing the height of the central core section (even by another storey) to make it stand out from the rest of the building and integrate more elegantly the lift core, external access stairs and plant areas, which would assist with damping down plant noise and vibration.

Greater articulation on the façade would improve the building's appearance, particularly within the central section. This could be achieved by use of bay windows to provide differentiation.

The Panel queried whether a fabric-first approach had been taken to designing this scheme, as photovoltaics should have been considered from the outset for such a large building. These should be explored on the south-facing elevations and the flat roofs in particular. Further detail should be confirmed in respect of heat pumps.

The Panel questioned the visual impact of the balustrade separating the kitchen gardens, as it could be a lengthy and dominant feature. It was suggested that this issue could be overcome by terracing the kitchen gardens, or providing further detail of the finishes at this stage.

Overall Assessment

Support with amendments.