

Appendix A to Planning Statement - Statement of Community Involvement

This statement sets out the process of pre-application engagement that has been undertaken by the applicant, Devine Homes Plc, and is submitted to accompany the planning application for residential development at land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead. The planning application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure and highway works.

Policy background:

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. The most recent version was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in December 2024.

Section 4 of the NPPF outlines the importance of pre-application engagement in decision making. Paragraph 40 states, *“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussions enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”*

Paragraph 41 continues that whilst a Local Planning Authority (LPA) *“cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application”*, they should *“encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer”*. In addition, where considered to be beneficial they should *“encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.”* This is to front load the planning process and help ensure that issues are resolved as early in the planning process as possible.

The NPPF is supported by the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which emphasises the potential of pre-application engagement by prospective applicants to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system. This, in turn, can lead to an improvement in the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.

Pre-application engagement is a collaborative process between a prospective applicant and other parties, which may include the LPA, statutory and non-statutory consultees, elected members and local people. The PPG recognises that the parties involved at the pre-application stage will vary on a case-by-case basis, and the level of engagement needs to be proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposed development.

Mid Sussex Statement of Community Involvement

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in March 2019 and sets out the Council's approach to stakeholder engagement for planning applications determined by the authority. The SCI provides information on the Council's approach to engaging the wider community in the process of determining planning applications, particularly those involving major development proposals. The SCI encourages community engagement when determining major development proposals, which should be carried out at the pre-application stage.

Engagement with stakeholders and the local community

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in accordance with the principles of the Mid Sussex District Council Statement of Community Involvement, ensuring that engagement is proportionate to the scale of the proposed development of 44 residential units. Given the scale of the proposal, pre-application engagement focused on early discussions with relevant statutory, technical, and local stakeholders.

Pre-application meeting with MSDC

A formal pre-application meeting (reference DM/24/1199) was held with Mid Sussex District Council officers on 17 July 2024 to seek planning, design, and technical advice on a scheme for 43 dwellings. The layout included a flatted building to the north-east of the site, public open space with a pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation Ground, a SuDs pond to the southeast and an indicative landscape scheme. It proposed 14 affordable units and 29 market units. The presented layout is shown below.



Summarised below are the key points from the pre-application response dated 10th September 2024. Further information is provided on page 20 of the submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS).

- At the time of the pre-application advice request, the emerging District Plan could only be given minimal weight due to unresolved objections to the majority of policies in the Regulation 19 consultation. The principle of development would not accord with the development plan as the site is within the countryside and is not allocated for development
- The layout is well thought through, with houses and apartments facing the street and open space overlooking the pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation ground. Buildings are aligned well and create clear, readable streets. The main open space is located correctly, close to the site entrance, the system of pedestrian links creates good levels of permeability, and there is strong building frontage presence along West Hoathly Road.
- Some improvements were suggested such as the preparation of a character study, a drawing to identify broad connections, movements through and around the site, long street sections. Other improvements suggested included some amendments to building relationships including rearranging units 29 and 34, removal of the diagonal green link which has the potential to feel uncomfortable in places and lacks natural surveillance, introducing further trees to create interest in the streets, review of car parking spaces in a number of locations and a preference to include flats over garages, opening up hedging to the east edge of the site, introducing elements of play to the landscape and that apartments are dual aspect.
- The scheme provides less dwellings than allocated so justification would need to be provided for a lower provision.
- To provide a better mix against the SHMA, the proposal should provide a higher number of smaller market units.
- The Conservation Officer noted that the Grade II Listed Old Dunnings Mill is considered to possess archaeological interest as well as communal value as a former focus on the farming community. The elements of the original setting of the mill remain legible and contribute positively to its special interest. The site to the southeast constitutes perhaps the most prominent remainder of the countryside which originally surrounded the mill and there will be intervisibility between the mill building and/or its immediate setting and the field constituting the site. This field also influences the character of the backdrop against which the mill is seen in views looking south. The proposed development is unlikely to have any material impact on the setting or special interest of Boyles Farmhouse. The proposal will have a fundamental impact on the currently open and rural

character of the site, and the scale and intensity of the development will inevitably be apparent in external views, including those that contribute to the character of the setting of the mill. This will result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the special interest of the listed building and therefore the balancing exercise of paragraph 208 of the NPPF applies.

- The Council's Housing Officer commented that the overall affordable housing provision is acceptable, as is the proposed mix, however the rented flats will preferably need to be located in a separate block. The car parking spaces for open market Plot 16 should be relocated.
- With the site being within a brick clay (Wadhurst) Mineral Safeguarding Area, any subsequent application should be supported by a Mineral Resource Assessment.

Design response:

The final scheme has been informed by the pre-application advice with the overall site approach retained where it was positively received. This includes the access arrangement from West Hoathly Road, a clear and legible layout, strong frontage to streets and open spaces, and the provision of public open space, pedestrian links and sustainable drainage features. The revised layout builds on these fundamentals while refining the design to better respond to the site's context and constraints.

A number of specific changes have been made to improve how the development functions and feels on the ground. The layout has been simplified to provide clearer streets and better overlooked routes, removing areas that could feel less comfortable or disconnected. Building positions have been adjusted to improve relationships between homes, with additional tree planting and landscaping introduced to add interest, soften the built form and strengthen the overall character of the scheme in response to comments. Parking has also been reviewed to ensure it is well integrated and does not dominate streets or public areas. The character study requested and other contextual work is included within the DAS.

The housing mix has been reviewed in light of comments to ensure appropriate affordable housing provision and a higher number of smaller homes. The affordable homes are arranged in a coherent manner and are designed to be visually consistent with the rest of the development. The overall number of dwellings reflects a balanced response to policy aspirations while recognising the physical, landscape and heritage sensitivities of the site.

The final scheme also responds to heritage and landscape considerations, particularly in relation to the setting of Old Dunnings Mill and the countryside edge to the east and south. Development has been carefully arranged to reduce its visual impact in these more sensitive areas, supported by enhanced landscape buffers and open space. While development will inevitably change the character of the site, the revised scheme demonstrates a considered and proportionate response to the issues raised at pre-

Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead
Statement of Community Involvement – January 2026

application stage and delivers a well-designed residential development that sits comfortably within its surroundings.

West Sussex County Council

Pre-application engagement was also undertaken with the County Highway Authority to seek advice on matters relating to site access, traffic generation, highway safety and travel plan. The advice received on the 7th October 2025 (enclosed below) has been taken into account in the development of the highway access proposals and preparation of the Transport Statement.

East Grinstead Town Council

In addition, the applicant engaged with the local Parish Council at the pre-application stage to present the emerging proposals and to invite comment. Feedback received from the Parish Council was carefully considered, valued and has informed the design and layout of the scheme.

The applicant met with East Grinstead Town Council on the 4th November and this is reflected on their website and the agenda of this date. The meeting was open to members of the public to attend. The applicant made a presentation, a copy of which is provided below and had an open discussion with town councillors, answering questions raised. Feedback ranged from comments in regard to highway safety and ensuring robust highway assessment, impacts to trees and hedges and questions about s106 funding to ensure funds were spent locally with particular reference to the local rugby club and Toy Box Nursery.

The applicant is keen to continue discussions with the Town Council and the District Council through the application process regarding S106 provisions to explore how financial contributions generated by this development can be directed towards the priorities and local facilities which the Town Council have identified.

Conclusion

The applicant has carried out proportionate engagement in preparing the planning application and has responded to the feedback received through the various pre-application discussions in the final scheme.

The applicant remains committed to constructive engagement through the planning application process in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, including responding to representations received during the statutory consultation period.

**WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
PRE APPLICATION CONSULTATION**

TO:	Organisation: Motion Transport Planning FAO: Gemma Lester
FROM:	WSCC - Highways Authority
DATE:	7 th October 2025
LOCATION:	Land to the east of West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4LY
SUBJECT:	Internal Reference: PRE-83-25 44 mixed-use dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping and access onto West Hoathly Road.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice
S106 CONTRIBUTION TOTAL:	n/a

The Local Highways Authority (LHA) has been consulted for pre-application advice in regard to the proposed residential development of 44 houses at Land to the east of West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4LY. The highway aspects are supported by a pre-application Scoping Note (SN) dated 17th September 2025.

The advice provided below has been prepared by means of a desktop study, using the information and plans submitted with this request, in conjunction with other available WSCC map information.

The LHA has assessed the SN and would offer the following comments and advice to the proposals:

- A site location plan scale (1:1250) with site boundary indicated
- Schedule of existing uses including planning history with reference numbers
- Description, including site layout plans, of the proposed development and schedule of uses
- Summary of reasons supporting the site access/highways works proposals, including plan (scale 1:250 or similar) with achievable visibility splays indicated
- A speed survey should be considered to ascertain the 85th percentile road speeds which would allow the correct speed applied.
- Final Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) of the site access and any proposed highway works, with the Road Safety Audit Response Report (RSARR) in word format for the LHA to edit as Overseeing Organisation, including any amended plans.

- A Transport Statement/Assessment, including location plan of key services, availability of sustainable modes of transport should be included.
- In addition, the application should provide suitable links for pedestrians and cyclists within the development and explore opportunities outside the development. This could include localised improvements to bus stops such as Real Time Information or adding tactile paving to junctions etc.
- A Travel Plan Statement would be required for this application. A monitoring fee will be required and contained within any Section 106 Agreement.
- Parking strategy, including provision of parking for all modes of transport should be included. Parking should be in accordance with the LHA's standards.
- Proposed trip rates supported with TRICS outputs have been outlined with under 30 trips in the AM and PM peaks. Areas such as the site selection methodology have not been included, the SN acknowledges this point. We would seek to assess these criteria prior to agreeing the trips rates.
- Junction capacity isn't strictly required but it may be worth consideration for completeness to demonstrate the proposals do not result in a 'Severe' residual impact on the network.

Conclusion

I trust you appreciate that any advice given by council officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the council with regard to the granting of planning permission in the future. Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any application, which will be the subject of public consultation and ultimately decided by the Local Planning Authority.

Jamie Brown
Planning Services

LAND AT WEST HOATHLY ROAD EAST GRINSTEAD

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes



FORMAT

- About Devine Homes PLC
- The site
- The development
- Potential community benefits
- Moving forward
- Any questions

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes



DEVINE HOMES PLC

- Formed nearly 40 years ago
- Privately owned
- Build approximately 60-80 homes per year from STP opportunities only
- Focus on delivering high-quality family homes which complement surrounding environments
- Self-funded with group company retained profits of over £60m
- Area of operation – Surrey and West Sussex
- History of successful developments in Mid Sussex district, including current projects

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes

DEVINE HOMES PLC
builders of fine homes

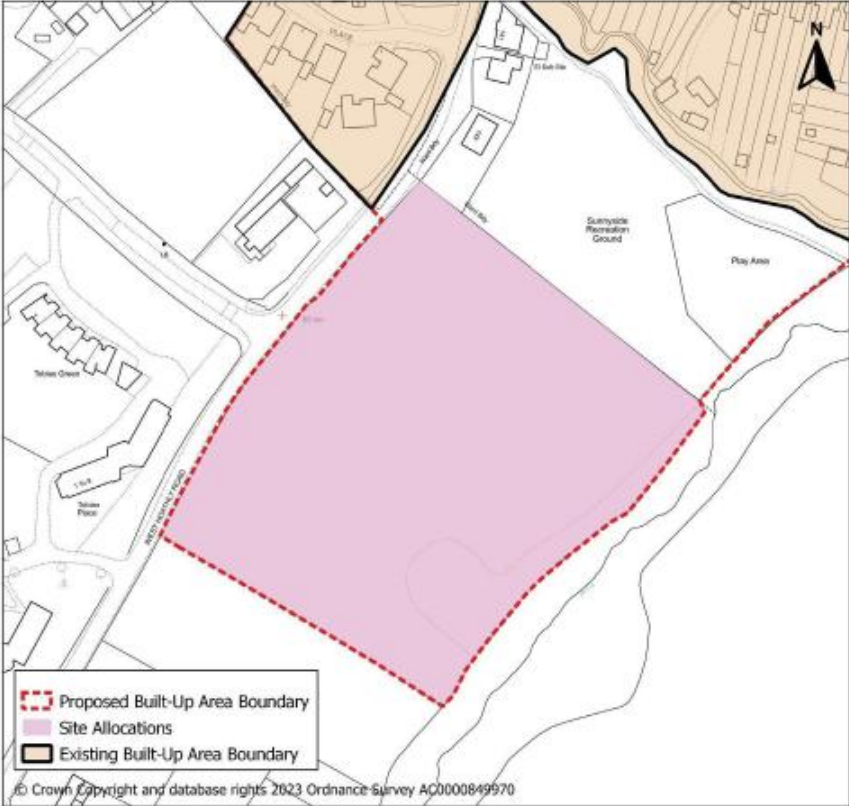
- Devine Homes have been promoting the land for development since the R18 phase of the local plan
- Draft allocation up to 45 homes (DPA4)
- Abuts Sunnyside recreation ground and the BUAB
- Sustainable location



DPA4: Land off West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead

The boundary shown on the site map below represents the extent of the site inclusive of all built development and any mitigation requirements (e.g. landscape buffers or open space) listed within the policy requirements.

Allocation		Housing	
SHELAA:	198	Settlement:	East Grinstead
Gross Site Area (ha):	1.8	Number of dwellings:	Up to 45
Infrastructure		On-site: • Open space • Natural, semi-natural and amenity green space Financial contributions towards the provision of: • Sustainable Transport • Education • Library • Community buildings • Local Community Infrastructure • Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC mitigation measures • Health • Play area • Other outdoor provision • Outdoor sports • Parks and Gardens Provision of: • Sustainable Transport measures • Highway works	



THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 44 two storey dwellings
- 13 affordable homes (at 30%)
- A mix of unit sizes and types (1, 2, 3 and 4 beds)
- BNG improvements
- Connection to existing open space

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes





STREET SCENE 01



STREET SCENE 02



STREET SCENE 03

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Affordable housing
- Range of housing types and sizes
- Section 106 benefits
- 10% Biodiversity net gain
- New and modern housing stock
- Much-needed affordable rented housing stock
- New pedestrian connections

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes

MOVING FORWARD

- Detailed planning application to be submitted December 2025
- Aim to start development Late 2026
- First houses delivered late 2027
- 2-year build programme

DEVINE HOMES PLC

builders of fine homes

DEVINE HOMES PLC