

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PREPARED BY



ON BEHALF OF

**IGLOO CARE LTD (DEVELOPER) AND
EQ CARE EAST GRINSTEAD LTD (OPERATOR)**

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND
ERECTION OF A CARE HOME (CLASS C2) AND
ADDITIONAL CARE UNITS (CLASS C2)**

**HIGHFIELDS, WEST HILL,
EAST GRINSTEAD**

DECEMBER 2024

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1. **Background**

- 1.1 On 22nd December 2022, Brundell Property submitted to the Council, an outline application (DM/23/0007) seeking planning permission for demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a Care Home with up to 85 Bedrooms.
- 1.2 Amongst the documents submitted with the application was a 'Statement of Community Engagement'. This confirmed that pre-application consultations had occurred with the local planning authority and subsequently, engagement with local residents. The Statement summarised the feedback received in response to both initiatives.
- 1.3 The earlier planning application was the subject of statutory consultation, including with residents and other local interests. The Officer Report of 22nd June 2023 summarises the responses received by the Council. Members of the public also attended the Planning Committee meeting, with some making deputations to Members.
- 1.4 Ultimately, the principle of development was established with the Committee resolving to grant permission, subject to conditions and a s106 Agreement to capture certain infrastructure improvements.

2. Engagement

- 2.1 The proposed redevelopment builds on the principles established through the earlier scheme and engagement relating to it. This is now a detailed planning application and thus all matters of detail are under consideration.
- 2.2 The proposal comprises a care facility with a 78-bed care home and 7 additional care units in a separate detached building. The access arrangements remain as before; a new access from West Hill (with pedestrian and cycle access via the existing arrangement). The proposed care home is located in the centre of the site, away from immediate property boundaries. The care home is three storeys in height and built partially into the slope¹. The buildings take on a traditional form and design.
- 2.3 The applicants, Igloo Care and EQ Care, have a proven track record of acquiring, developing and operating high-quality care homes across the UK, predominantly in central and southern England. The applicants manage the majority of their homes, which means there is a long-term commitment to the schemes they develop and, therefore, a greater sense of care and engagement with residents and the community.
- 2.4 Whilst no specific further public consultation has been carried out, the design team has reviewed and had regard to, earlier public consultation responses, including from the public exhibition. A total of 17 feedback forms were received and these are summarised at Appendix A.
- 2.5 The Officer Report confirmed that 42 representations were received by the LPA during the subsequent statutory consultation period, identifying a broad range of issues. These are summarised at Appendix B and have also been carefully reviewed by the applicant and their consultants. Responses to those issues were largely resolved by the earlier proposal but more detailed responses are also provided at Appendix B.

1. The earlier scheme, albeit indicative, was to be constructed on a podium over basement parking.

- 2.6 Local concerns were primarily related access, traffic and the intensification of the use of the site, vis a vis, local amenity (noise, odour, light and outlook), as well as concerns regarding trees and biodiversity.
- 2.7 The proposed access was found acceptable in terms of its location, visibility splays and safety, having undergone an independent Safety Audit. The current proposal sustains the access location (noting that pedestrian and cycle access is achieved via the existing entrance from West Street). The situation on West Hill is further improved through the implementation of a programme of tree and landscape work, and the County Council proposal to introduce a permanent parking restriction (double yellow lines) on the south site of West Street.
- 2.8 The current application is submitted with full details of design. Care homes are highly regulated environments, noting the often-complex needs of residents. They are, by implication, quiet and carefully controlled places and frequently make better neighbours than high density housing.
- 2.9 Notwithstanding this, the concerns previously raised by residents are noted and planning conditions are therefore proposed in respect of:
- Site management
 - Construction working hours
 - Noise from plant and other operations
 - Fumes and odour
 - Lighting design
- 2.9 The planning application also includes extensive information regarding trees and habitats, including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, emergent surveys for Bats and Badgers, along with extensive information on how the scheme will deliver and manage (30 years) mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. Perimeter trees will be enhanced through a planting and management programme. Such matters will be controlled by planning conditions.

- 2.10 The applicant has notified the highway authority of its proposals. It has also notified East Grinstead Town Council of the submission of its application.
- 2.11 Further consultation will be undertaken as part of the LPA's determination process and the applicants undertake to respond positively to issues raised. They also undertake, if successful, to liaise with immediate residents during the construction process, as they do for all care home development projects.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The NPPF identifies the benefit of engagement in the planning process. The Council acknowledges this and encourages applicants to demonstrate that the views of statutory consultees and the local community have been taken into account in the formulation of development proposals.
- 3.2 Equally, there is recognition of the need for a proportionate approach, depending on the character and potential implications of the proposed scheme. Feedback from earlier rounds of statutory and non-statutory consultation are important in understanding local attitudes towards new development and responding to these positively, both through design and other planning controls.
- 3.3 The site benefits from an earlier resolution to grant planning permission, where the response of the local planning authority and other statutory bodies was clearly set out. Notwithstanding this, a review of public exhibition and formal consultation responses has been undertaken and this has helped the design development process, particularly in respect access and local amenity. The applicant's responses to earlier feedback is also set out in writing.
- 3.4 There is confidence that all relevant construction and operational implications have been mitigated through design and planning conditions. However, the applicants stand ready to engage with officers and the community in moving their project forward.



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Summary of Public Exhibition Responses²

A summary of responses from the public exhibition of 20th October 2023 are set out below, along with comments subsequently received from the public.

1. Do you have a preference for this site for a type of housing, such as a housing development, retirement flats or a care home?

Feedback regarding this question was largely positive, with a clear majority stating a preference for a Care Home over other alternative uses;

Split	Response
58%	Would prefer the site to be developed as a Care Home.
12%	Did not provided a clear comment
6%	Stated that they would prefer retirement flats
24%	Stated they would prefer no development at all

2. Do you agree that this is a need for a new Care Home in East Grinstead?

Feedback on this question was mixed, with many residents not knowing whether there was a need for a Care Home;

Split	Response
63%	Respondents did not know or had no comment
22%	Believed there was a demand
15%	Believed that there was not a demand

3. Do you have any comments regarding the proposed access options for the proposals? I.e. access either from West Hill, Dexter Drive or other?

The feedback showed a clear majority in favour of West Hill, followed by some support for either Dexter Drive or a scheme utilising both accesses.

Split	Response
39%	Preferred or strongly preferred West Hill
22%	Strongly objected to Dexter Drive but not provide a preference
16%	Preferred Dexter Drive
17%	Did not provide a clear or direct comment on this issue
6%	Stated they did not want either access to be used

² As set out in the earlier Statement of Community Involvement

4. Do you like the initial layout of the proposals?

There were many positive comments made about the scheme's layout and indicative design approach, with no significant objections to this aspect of the proposals.

Split	Response
23%	Stated that they liked the initial layout of the proposals
11%	Stated that they like the initial layout, subject to further details
66%	Of respondents did not comment

5. Do you have any other comments or observations regarding the proposals?

Below is a summary of other comments submitted via the feedback forms relating to the proposals;

- General concern regarding traffic levels generated by the development.
- Some concern regarding visibility of the proposals from neighbouring properties.
- Would like the existing access to be blocked off to prevent via this route
- Request for Badger fencing to stop relocation of Badgers down West Lane.
- Concern over the potential impact upon Badgers on site and their Setts.
- Concern at the quality and long-term safety of the existing trees along West Hill
- Sought information regarding sustainable energy options for the development.
- Requested that the submission plans be scaled.

Reponses to Public Consultation³

No.	Summary	Response
1	Developments should not be given approval until MSDC and other associated service providers are prepared to invest in infrastructure of East Grinstead.	Development previously found acceptable. Infrastructure relevant to care home to be delivered via s106 Agreement.
2	Care home will place extreme pressures on overloaded GPs in the vicinity. Size of building will be overbearing.	Care home reduce pressure on GPs. Proportion of local residents moving into home benefit from private GP.
3	Concerns on the exit / entrance onto West Hill with access close to West Lane which has poor sight lines.	Site lines within control of applicant and found acceptable, including through independent Safety Audit.
4	Query provision for disabled pedestrians, footpath is minimum requirement on the south side of West Hill with crossings.	Pedestrian access to site will remain via existing entrance from West Street.
5	Overdevelopment which is a significant change of use. Exponential increase in noise, light and air pollution caused by increase in the number of people in and around the development and the associated vehicle movements.	All impacts of proposal will be assessed against relevant planning policy. Building specifically designed to minimise local effects. Planning conditions can be imposed (as they were previously) to control operational aspects.
6	Headlights shine into property (Cestria) when accessing the site; Significant disturbance to residential amenities with vehicle movements 24 hours a day.	Cestria sits on opposite side of West Lane, separated from access/car park by width of West Lane, and a significant earth embankment.
7	Proposed height of the building not in keeping with the area and the screening provided by trees will not protect surrounding properties from the development.	Careful consideration given to massing pursuant to earlier townscape appraisal. Majority of trees retained. Building set partially into slope.

3. As set out in the Officer Report of 22nd October 2023

8	Development out of character with houses in the surrounding area of mainly detached homes. West Hill is a busy and dangerous road and development result in significant vehicle movements to the detriment to surrounding properties.	Site is unique in its degree of containment and able to accommodate a larger footprint without detriment to local character. New access to site found acceptable and tested through independent Safety Audit.
9	Visibility will be restricted for the access.	Splays found sufficient and within same control as site.
10	Existing parking issues on West Hill leading to unsafe movements which will be worsened.	Parking to north side residents only, whilst on south side, Highway Authority proposes doubled yellow lines.
11	The nearby access of West Lane already has poor visibility and difficulties with access and the additional traffic will cause further dangers to accessing West Lane.	Visibility splays found acceptable and are within control of the applicant. Nominal additional traffic. Access tested to satisfaction of independent Safety Auditor.
12	Concerns on impact to nature particularly badger, fox and wildlife activity. Loss of wildlife habitat.	Application supported by PEA and targeted surveys. Badger mitigation via license. Site delivers significant BNG.
13	Concerns on water run-off from site resulting in flooding at the bottom of West Hill.	Redevelopment of site provides basis to restrict surface water run-off. Scheme involves storm attenuation tanks.
14	Despite there being a TPO in place it has been suggested that many of the trees are diseased and dying and therefore can be removed. This is not correct as there is healthy foliage and it is down to poor maintenance.	Previous and updated Tree Survey and report identifies large number of low quality trees. Programme of tree work (clearance, significant replanting and long-term maintenance) will ensure wooded perimeter is sustained.
15	Concerns that the appearance is of a residential apartment block and could lead to in the future being changed to residential.	Design is consistent with general care home typology but with reference to local vernacular. Planning condition will restrict development to Class C2 (care only).
16	Site is boarded on all sides by domestic dwellings and the size and type of development is inappropriate.	Site is unique in its degree of visual containment and appropriateness for redevelopment.

17	Noise concerns on the proposed commercial scale heat pumps and also from larger vehicles accessing the site for deliveries and emergency vehicles. With the additional traffic pollution levels will increase which will have a detrimental effect on human health and the environment.	ASHP located within an enclosure on West Hill side of site, planning condition will ensure appropriate noise criteria met. Deliveries are sporadic. Care home trip generation modest and less than residential use of equivalent density (confined to staff and visitors).
18	Loss of privacy to surrounding properties.	Redevelopment previously found acceptable, inc. amenity.
19	Concerns on cooking smells from residential catering.	Kitchen located on top floor. Extraction will be conditioned.
20	West Lane is an Area of Townscape Character and receive low levels of light pollution. Proximity of development, especially the access road will significantly impact on the light quality, noise and pollution levels in a residential area.	Matters all found previously acceptable. Buildings placed in centre of site and all peripheral embankments and tree belts to be retained/enhanced. Planning conditions to address lighting and noise, as per earlier recommendation.
21	Footpaths not suitable for the amount of new residents to the care home which are narrow and not suitable for aids such as walkers and wheelchairs.	Care home is dementia-focused and where residents largely remain on-premises where the garden space and perimeter paths are specifically designed to meet their requirements.
22	Loss of views from West Hill.	Massing and design ensures no loss of relevant views.
23	Issues during construction of flooding, traffic, dust, working hours and noise.	Appointed contractor will adhere to Considerate Contractor scheme and Construction Management Plan (by condition).
24	Town has a saturation of retirement accommodation and traffic.	Application is for a 'traditional' care home, not retirement units. Traffic generation modest and found acceptable.
25	Concern on amount of parking proposed does not consider there is adequate parking for the proposed use and surrounding roads would not be able to accommodate parking.	Parking meets Local Plan standard and is consistent with provision at operator's other care homes, which operate successfully and without detriment. Immediate road is either residents only scheme or restricted in other ways.

26	Queries on fencing for the adjoining houses.	Adjoining properties are outside applicant's control.
27	Concern on safety of care/safeguarding of future residents.	Will be operated by experienced CQC approved operator.
28	Concerns on devaluation of property.	Not a material consideration.