

APPLICATION 59143 – CONSTRUCTION OF 4 HOUSES – Land to the rear of 2-4 Willowfield, Watercress Way, Medstead

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you this evening on behalf of the applicant.

The Application is for the construction of 4 family homes on land off Brackenbury Gardens. The application was submitted in February 2021 and has been the subject of extensive discussions in that intervening period. Chief amongst those has been the completion of detailed ecological assessments to ascertain the biodiversity value of the land the subject of the application. These findings confirm that the site has very limited ecological value and the additional planting and inclusion of the former sewage pumping station site as areas for biodiversity net gain enhancements have the full support of the County ecologist who raises no objection to the proposals. In addition, important trees are being retained on the site.

The site forms a logical part of the settlement being located amongst housing and has been identified by the Council as being suitable for inclusion in the SPB as part of the local plan review process. As the report confirms the views of your policy officer is that:

The site comprises a “...small area of land (which) does not serve any countryside function and is physically, functionally and visually related to existing urban area of South Medstead that lies within the existing settlement policy boundary. The land was formerly used as gardens and closely relates to the character of the built form and has enclosing features.” In reaching that conclusion the policy officer raises no policy objection to the proposed development.

The Officer Report concludes that the site is sustainably located, is not an edge of settlement site, and is positioned centrally within the adopted South Medstead SPB, whereby it is considered to be more characteristic of an urban area rather than that of a countryside location. As such, these material considerations are considered to weigh significantly in favour of the development proposal, whereby the site and development is considered to represent sustainable development and accord with the objectives of Policy CP2 of the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy.

This approach also complies with the requirements of the NPPF in particular paragraph 11 in promoting sustainable development and paragraph 60 on significantly boosting the supply of new homes.

This is not a countryside site – it does not form part of the wider open countryside and it is clearly seen in the context of built form. There are no other constraints to the development of the site, and the detailed assessments undertaken confirm this to be the case.

There are no other technical objections raised to the scheme from any statutory consultee. The applicant has a right of access to the land and no other consent from any other party is required contrary to representations received by the Council.

The development comprises an appropriate mix of housing – 2x3bed and 2x4bed homes at a density of 19dph which is appropriate for the context of the site.

In the light of the very extensive and detailed officer report which has given very thorough consideration to the development proposals I would respectfully request that members support the recommendation and grant planning permission for the development proposed.